

PRIORWOOD & THE EILDON HILLS (Moderate)

What you'll see:
Walled gardens,
views of Melrose
Abbey and the
remains of an Iron
Age settlement

THIS is a walk of very contrasting sections, starting and finishing with gentle wanders around the National Trust for Scotland's two Melrose gardens, with a longer hillwalk over the Eildon Hills in between.

Harmony Garden lies at the corner of St Mary's Road and Abbey Street just a short distance north from the main car park opposite Melrose Abbey. This delightful 19th Century walled garden has an atmosphere of peace and serenity, with herbaceous and mixed borders, vegetable and fruit and a rich display of bulbs in springtime. In addition there are fine views of Melrose Abbey and the Eildon Hills beyond.

The hills are easily climbed from Melrose by returning to Abbey Street and following it south past the abbey ruins and the National Trust for Scotland Priorwood Garden to the market square. From there follow Dingleton Road due south under the Melrose bypass and shortly after that a signposted route goes left between houses to steps and a path.

Cross fields passing through various gates towards the Eildon Hills and climb the lower slopes to the saddle between the two hills. Mid Hill on the right has a trig point on its summit, is the highest of the

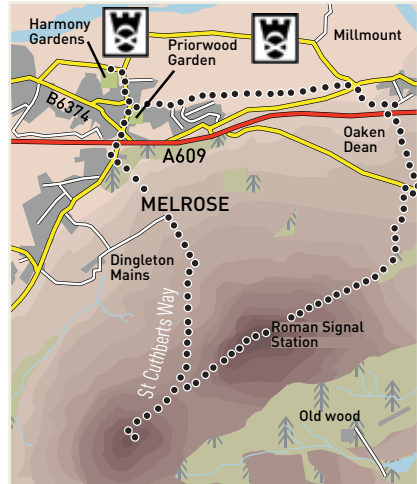
two, and should be ascended first, before returning to the sad-

dle and climbing North Hill. In some respects this is the more interesting hill with the remains of an Iron Age settlement dating from about the 6th Century BC and a Roman signal tower from the 1st Century AD.

The settlement is thought to be the capital of the Selgovae and may have supported some 2000 people trading and farming in the surrounding countryside. North Hill dominates main lines of communication along the Tweed and served the massive Roman military base at Newstead or Trimontium, on the banks of the Tweed just east of Melrose.

Signals from North Hill could be seen some 30 kilometres distant and the site was clearly too important to leave any locals in the immediate vicinity, even if the Selgovae were still in residence at that point. The three mountains of the Roman name being the North Hill, Mid Hill and the smaller Wester Hill to the south.

A return can be made to Melrose from here or the route extended by descending north-east from North Hill. Pass



the path which traverses the base of the hills and continue straight down through scattered gorse to gain a track and follow this down to a road. Turn right then left onto a lane which passes below the Melrose bypass at the bottom.

Go through the old railway bridge and left onto a wide path leading to the west end of Newstead and a road. Follow the signs to a path starting from the back of Dean Place, which leads to Priorswalk and a road which is followed to a path just after an electricity sub-station.

Turn right here and the path leads through a small park to arrive at Abbey Street between Priorwood Garden and Melrose Abbey.

As well as offering a fine garden in its own right, Priorwood specialises in the art of dried flower arrangement and most of the plants grown are suitable for drying. A shop shows just how the experts make it look so simple, and demonstrations can be booked in advance to learn the skills required.

The essentials

MAP OS 1:50,000 SHEET 573

DISTANCE 4 MILES [7 KM]

GRADE MODERATE

APPROXIMATE TIME 2-3 HOURS

START/FINISH MELROSE



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 for Scotland
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