

# Rockcliffe



Woodpecker Trail and the Muckle: 1 mile / 1.75km waymarked circular route, taking you through some of the best parts of the area. Follow the white arrows from the small car park by Rockcliffe beach.

Castlehill Point and Sandyhills Trail: A fantastic 5 mile / 8km coastal walk over more challenging terrain.

Rough Island: A great spot to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Urr estuary and its birds.



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# Rockcliffe

## Coastal trails

### Description

Rockcliffe is a beautiful coastal landscape in the sheltered Urr estuary. From mudflats to meadows, rocky shore to heather-topped granite outcrops, this area is home to a huge diversity of wildlife. You can explore the coastal landscape and its wildlife by following the waymarked trails.

### Grade

Woodpecker Trail	Easy / Moderate
Muckle	Moderate / Strenuous
The Muckle Walk	Moderate
Rough Island	Easy / Moderate

### Terraine

Woodpecker Trail	Undulating / good surface
Muckle	Steep with muddy section
The Muckle Walk	Good surface / short climbs, steep descent with muddy sections
Rough Island	Flat, muddy, TIDAL!

### Distance

Woodpecker Trail	1½ miles
Muckle	½ mile
The Muckle Walk	2 miles
Rough Island	1½ miles

### Time

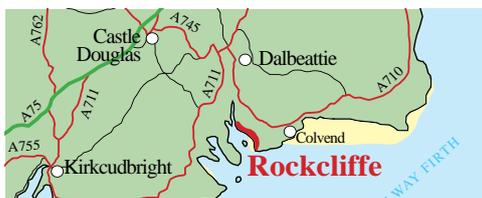
Woodpecker Trail	40 mins
Muckle	20 mins return
The Muckle Walk	60 mins
Rough Island	60 mins

### OS Map

Landranger Sheet 84

### Facilities

Parking  
Public toilets



The Trust is supported by



## WOODPECKER TRAIL AND THE MUCKLE

Follow the white arrows from the small car park at Rockcliffe beach on a waymarked circular route, which will take you through some of the best parts of the area. The meadows that you see from the Jubilee Path exist only because the land is carefully managed. They support a rich diversity of wild flowers and grasses, which in turn support many mammals, invertebrates and birds. The velvety-brown ringlet butterfly does particularly well here and can be seen from late June to early August. It is an insect of humid meadows where its caterpillars feed on the lush grasses. This route includes the Jubilee Path which links the villages of Rockcliffe and Kippford. From this path it is well worth a diversion up the short but steep slope of the Muckle to enjoy fantastic views out over Rough Firth and the Solway. Look out for a large boulder with a small blue arrow which marks the start of the Muckle path.

## THE MUCKLE WALK

The Muckle Walk is not shown on our map as it begins in Mark Hill Forest (Forestry Commission Scotland) at the access point from the Jubilee Path. Follow the first part of the Woodpecker Trail from Rockcliffe beach until you get to the entrance to the forest and then follow the FCS waymarkers. This trail follows forest tracks through the conifers and then winds its way up a small path on to the top of the Muckle where you get wonderful views across Rough Firth and the islands out in the Solway. From the top go down to the left to the Jubilee Path, where you step left, back to the start.

## ROUGH ISLAND

To prevent disturbance to breeding birds please avoid visiting the island from the beginning of May through to mid-July. Please remember that this island is tidal and leave adequate time for your return walk to the mainland.



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### Grade

Castlehill Point	Moderate
Sandyhills Trail	Moderate

### Terraine

Castlehill Point	Uneven with muddy sections
Sandyhills Trail	Steep sections, muddy with livestock

### Distance

Castlehill Point	2 miles / 3km
Sandyhills Trail	5 miles / 8km

### Time

Castlehill Point	60 mins
Sandyhills Trail	2½ hours one way

### CASTLEHILL POINT AND SANDYHILLS TRAIL

The walk to Castlehill Point starts on the small road around the bay but quickly narrows to a winding path which follows the shoreline. This path is a bit of an adventure with rocky bits, muddy bits, and if the sea has been stormy sometimes there are seaweedy bits! It is well worth getting your boots on to enjoy the fantastic views out over Rough Firth, Hestan Island and Rough Island. Castlehill Point was occupied during the Iron Age and has panoramic views across the Solway to the Lake District hills on a clear day.

The estuary is a very important feeding area for ducks and waders, particularly in the winter months, so you may see large numbers of wigeon, a duck which likes to eat eel grass. Oystercatchers probe for cockles in the soft estuary mud when the tide is out, and large numbers roost together on Rough Island or the beach below Castlehill Point when the tide is in. Look out for porpoise feeding close to the shore and in the winter you might see large rafts of sea ducks like scaup and occasional red-throated divers in the water off Castlehill Point.

The path beyond Castlehill Point takes you along the cliffs to Portling and then Sandyhills. The cliffs are nesting areas for seabirds during the summer months. Look out for cormorants and their large untidy nests and listen for the 'cronk cronk' call of the raven. You may be lucky enough to catch sight of a peregrine falcon as it hunts other birds on the mudflats and cliffs.

There is a bus service along the coast road linking Sandyhills and Rockcliffe but check bus time carefully as they are infrequent and don't run on Sundays during the winter.



Wigeon



Ringed plover



Peregrine falcon