

Crichton Castle to Borthwick Castle

PLEASE READ THESE NOTES BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO WALK THIS ROUTE.

These notes do not constitute a recommendation to walk this route. They are intended to help you to find the correct route, and to make you aware of the obstacles on the route. This is a fine walk for the adventurous, but people walking the route should note the following:

- The path is quite rough in places.
- Adjacent fences off this route are electric and live; do not wander off route.
- Some parts are very boggy, so boots are essential.
- There is no reception for mobile phones in the bottom of the valley.

You are advised NOT to take a dog with you, as the route is across a field with sheep, cattle and horses in some places.

Route description:

Starting from the castle car park, continue past the castle entrance and along a grassy path to the right of the stable block.

Follow the steep path down into the valley, cross a minor stream and then a bigger burn by a bridge erected by volunteers in May 2011, led by the Midlothian ranger service; it was funded by a bequest from Scotways. The burn is the infant river Tyne, which flows past Haddington to the sea just north of Dunbar – i.e. it doesn't flow to Newcastle-on-Tyne; another river, another country...

After crossing the burn, head upstream through alder trees for approx 100m, where a stob and way-marker (WM) point out a path across the meadow, and thus avoid some boggy bits. You can see the path continuing steeply uphill ahead of you...

Climb the steep slope, following the path which is kept clear by volunteers. Cross a renewed stile, continuing through bracken to the top of the slope. Continue on right side of a barbed wire fence into woodland. The first part may be a little overgrown in summer. You may notice some old railway sleepers and cinders: these were dumped here from the railway many years ago. Much of the hillside here is ashes from steam locos and general railway debris.

Continue through the wood for approx 250m, through a kissing gate. There may be sheep or cattle hereabouts. Continuing in the same direction, through some gates (follow way-markers); ahead is the (Waverley) railway line. Cross over the bridge, following the right hand fence on the far side, down to another kissing gate (50m). The

faint path follows an old hedge on your left, through a very boggy section, heading upwards to the high stile ahead. Climb over it, heading up to the top of the steep slope. Continue along the brow of the hill; from this ridge there is a superb view of Borthwick Castle with the Pentland Hills in the distance. Sometimes there are horses in this field; if they are overly friendly, head for a patch of nettles- they won't follow you! And don't feed them!

Continuing in the same direction, follow the faint track as it gently descends along the ridge, towards a couple of substantial posts (WM), and veer left to the corner of the wood ahead. This is Currie Woods, owned by the Woodland Trust.

Here, you are taking access under the Land Reform Act, and have a duty to do so responsibly. At the very corner of the field, beside the straining post, it is easy to get over the fence into the woods (WM).

Descend along a narrow path for some 50m (WM), where you will pick up a good path taking you down to your right, through the woods. At the foot of the hill, double back to your left towards a burn (Gore Water). Walk downstream through a kissing gate to a tarred road.

Turn right, and go down the road, keeping to your left at 2 junctions, till you reach a bridge which you cross. Follow the wall round the right end of a cottage, and climb over the stile ahead (WM). Strike up the slope diagonally to a kissing gate at the church. There is a broken stile if you go straight up the hill beside the castle, but it is a rather steep ascent... There are often horses in this field. From here it is 1.0 miles to the A7 at North Middleton.

Borthwick Castle itself is presently being run as a hotel, and is closed to the public, other than guests. Sometimes they let you peep in, if you ask politely, and they are not too busy.

For any comments or queries, contact ScotWays: info@scotways.com; 0131 558 1222.

JDKP/IDB, ScotWays 1 February 2017
Mk11