

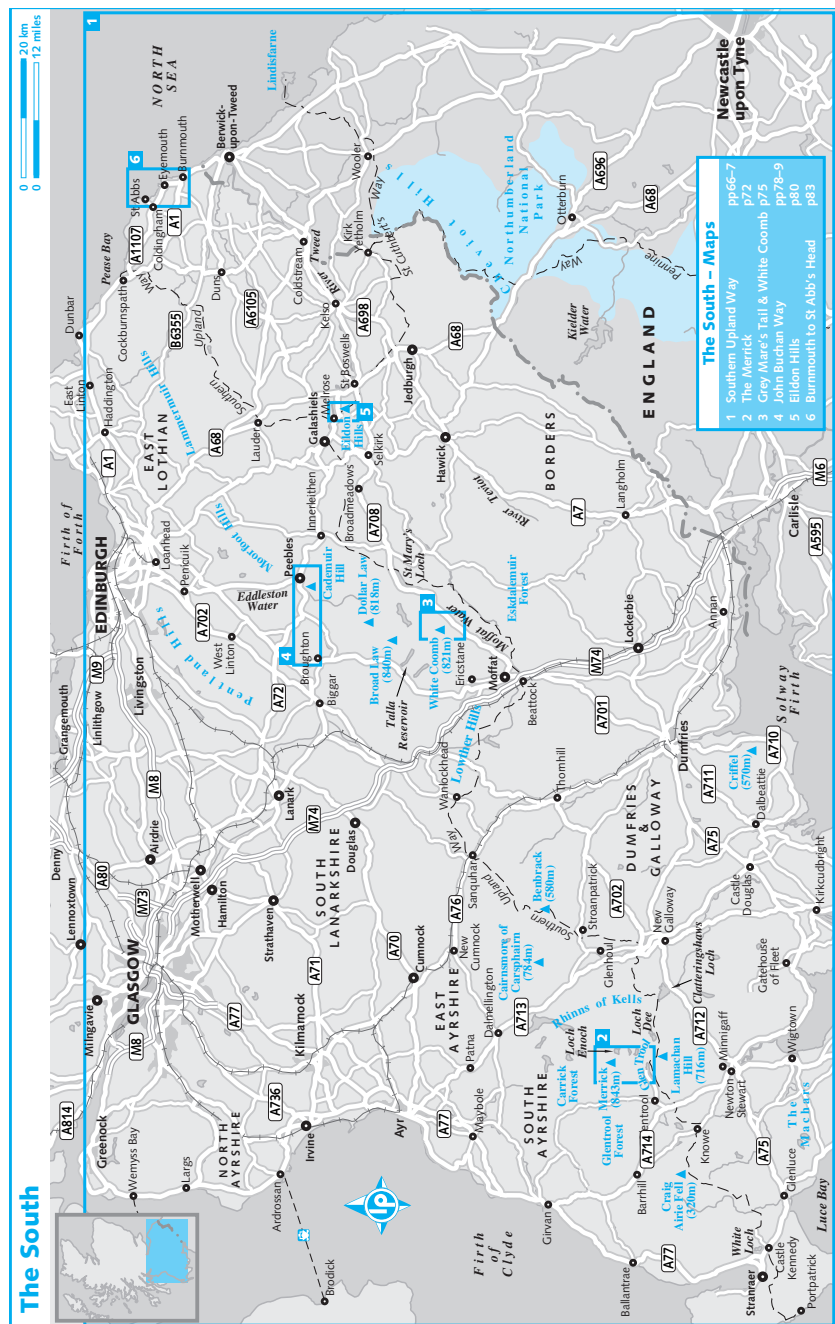
The South

Southern Scotland is dominated by an almost continuous range of rolling hills between the west and east coasts and to the border with England. Here, instead of Munros, you can tick off seven Corbetts (2500ft to 2999ft) and no fewer than 82 Donalds (2000ft to 2499ft), which yield nothing in challenge and beauty to the more lofty and better-known peaks further north. These 'hills' may lack the rugged grandeur of Glen Coe or the Wester Ross mountains, but their undemonstrative profiles have a quiet charm that quickly grows on you. By way of contrast, along the crinkled coasts, beautiful beaches hide below rugged, colourful cliffs.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The Southern Upland Way (SUW), Scotland's longest waymarked walk, links the east and west coasts in a demanding and infinitely varied epic. In the Dumfries & Galloway and Borders sections, reminders of the area's long and sometimes bloody history are brought home around the Merrick and in the Eildon Hills, overlooking Melrose, once home to Roman soldiers. The Borders' John Buchan Way has a more peaceful association, linked to a well-known, early-20th-century writer who loved the area. Among the sites of great value for nature conservation, the walk past the beautiful Grey Mare's Tail waterfall to White Coomb is largely within a nature reserve. St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve is the highlight of the Burnmouth to St Abb's Head walk, in the Borders' easternmost corner. Most of the described walks are conveniently located near the SUW, so you can plan a feast of walking in the south – enough for a month – or more!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Trekking the **Southern Upland Way** (p63) right across the country and sighting the east coast for the first time
- Savouring the panoramic views from the summit of the **Merrick** (p72), the South's highest peak
- Climbing from the cascading torrents of the Grey Mare's Tail waterfall to the lonely summit of **White Coomb** (p75)
- Imagining yourself following Richard Hannay in *The 39 Steps* along the **John Buchan Way** (p76)
- Tramping along the coast above the wonderfully contorted and colourful cliffs of the Berwickshire coast on the **Burnmouth to St Abb's Head** (p81) walk



INFORMATION Maps

The OS Travel – Road 1:250,000 map No 3 *Southern Scotland* is the one you'll need for general orientation.

Information Sources

The main tourist information centre (TIC) in Dumfries & Galloway is the **Dumfries TIC** (☎ 01387 253862; www.visitdumfriesandgalloway.co.uk; 64 Whitesands, Dumfries). In the Borders contact the **Peebles TIC** (☎ 0870 608 0404; High St) or **Melrose TIC** (☎ 0870 608 0404; Abbey House, Abbey St) or see www.visitscottishborders.com. All three are open year-round.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

Taking in virtually all the hill country across southernmost Scotland, through Dumfries & Galloway and the Borders, the Southern Uplands is an area of great diversity and interest for walkers. Although none of the mountains reach the much-sought-after Munro height of 3000ft (914m), they offer fine, often challenging, walking.

SOUTHERN UPLAND WAY

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Duration | 9 days |
| Distance | 209.5 miles (338km) |
| Difficulty | moderate–demanding |
| Start | Portpatrick (p64) |
| Finish | Cockburnspath (p65) |
| Transport | bus, train |

Summary An exceptionally challenging walk from one side of the country to the other, through remote areas in the west and more settled lands in the east, passing fascinating historical sites and with plenty of wildlife-watching opportunities.

The Southern Upland Way (SUW), Britain's first official coast-to-coast, long-distance path, traverses one of the broadest parts of the country. It cuts across the grain of the countryside, roller-coasting over hills and moorland and through conifer plantations, descending to cross rivers and streams, then climbing out the other side. It also passes through deciduous woods and agricultural land, mainly in the eastern half of the walk.

The going underfoot ranges from sealed roads to forest paths. Unfortunately, there are some long (over 2 miles) stretches of bitumen (although not on busy roads), which some walkers feel have no place on official routes. There's much comfort in the fact that they do link some very fine paths across the hills and through woodlands.

Accommodation is sparse in a few areas, so you have to anticipate some long days to get from one night's shelter to the next. Camping or staying in bothies gives more flexibility, but all the necessary gear can weigh heavily after several hours. These factors, combined with the route's length and remoteness, make it a far more serious proposition than the West Highland Way. Nevertheless, the rewards are considerable: you get a real sense of moving across the country, become attuned to the gradual changes in the landscape, meet fellow walkers and have the satisfaction of sighting the North Sea on the last day. It's essential to be fit before you start and preferably to have some experience of long-distance walking. Fortunately, there are many places where you can easily join the Way for shorter, less arduous walks.

Alternatives If you like the sound of the SUW but don't have time to go the whole way, shorter versions are possible. In particular we recommend taking two days to walk the section from St Mary's Loch to Melrose (p70), which has plenty of variety and minimal drawbacks.

PLANNING

The majority of people do the SUW from southwest to northeast. Usually this means the prevailing wind is behind you, but when the Way was originally walked in this direction for this book, the persistent north wind was coming either from the side or head-on. There is much to be said for finishing in the east, which has more open and settled countryside where shorter days are possible, than in the west, which has some unavoidably long daily distances.

The full walk may take as few as nine days or as many as 14 (although some spread the journey over a number of years, doing a bit at a time), depending on your walking speed and number of rest days. We have described the route in nine daily stages;

these are within the reach of fit walkers but should be used mainly as a guide to what's involved. It's worth having some flexibility in your plans as bad weather, likely at any time, may slow you down.

Daily stages between accommodation options can be as short as 8 miles (13km) or as long as 30 miles (50km); the amount of ascent is a significant factor when you're planning an itinerary, especially in the central section between Sanquhar and Beatock. You'll also often have to carry all the food and drink you need for the day – there are precious few watering places en route.

Another factor to reckon with is transport. Many hosts along the Way will pick you up from an agreed spot and return you there the next day. Some people may do this gratis, others may charge, so check first. The Way crosses several main roads with bus services and one railway line with a convenient station, enabling you to reach the SUW from many major centres and to walk parts of it.

The route is well waymarked with a thistle-hexagon logo and signposts, but you should still carry maps and a compass in case visibility deteriorates on the exposed stretches. Distances between markers vary widely, from line of sight across moorland to miles apart along minor roads. Sections of the route are changed (often for the better) from time to time, so waymarkers should always be more trusted over the mapped route.

When to Walk

You can expect a wide range of weather conditions during a complete crossing; thick mist and strong winds, as well as warm sunshine, are likely at any time between April and September – the best, if not the only, time to walk the SUW. Snowfalls over the higher ground are not unknown during winter, when the short hours of daylight make it almost impossible to complete the necessarily long days before dark.

Maps & Books

The Southern Upland Way Official Guide by Roger Smith is invaluable, with loads of background information and pointers to the many short walks near the Way. It comes packaged with separate maps, extracted from the seven OS Landranger

1:50,000 sheets covering the entire Way. The pack's price is less than half the cost of buying the maps individually.

Guided Walks

Make Tracks (☎ 0131 229 6844; www.maketracks.net; 26 Forbes Rd, Edinburgh) can save you a great deal of hassle by organising accommodation, luggage transfer, a pick-up and drop-off service, maps and printed notes.

Information Sources

Start planning your trip with the free brochure *Southern Upland Way* (with an annually updated accommodation list). It's available from the **Dumfries & Galloway ranger service** (☎ 01387 260184; Dumfries) and the **Scottish Borders ranger service** (☎ 01835 830281; Jedburgh), which can also provide leaflets on the wildlife, trees and shrubs, geology, history, archaeology and place names of the area, plus booklets describing short circular walks based on the Way. When you've completed the Way, send your details to one of the ranger services to obtain a free completion certificate.

Accommodation bookings are most conveniently made through **VisitScotland** (☎ 0845 225 5121; www.visitscotland.com).

Make sure you check the invaluable **Southern Upland Way** (www.dumgal.gov.uk/southernuplandway) official website. The commercial site at www.southernuplandway.com is helpful for accommodation and other services.

NEAREST TOWNS Portpatrick

☎ 01776 / pop 585

The peaceful harbour in the village of Portpatrick was once the port for ferries from Ireland. These days it quietly looks after anglers, sailors and walkers.

SLEEPING & EATING

Galloway Point Holiday Park (☎ 810561; www.gallowaypointholidaypark.co.uk; unpowered sites for 2 £10) is less than 1 mile from town.

Carlton Guest House (☎ 810253; 21 South Cres; s/d £30/52), on the seafront, is recommended among the several B&Bs in the village.

Harbour House Hotel (☎ 810456; mains to £18; ☒ lunch & dinner) offers the opportunity, with luck, to sit outside and enjoy a dinner of suitably generous proportions for the miles ahead, washed down with real ale.

LAWS & CLEUCHS

As you pore over the maps at home, the names of the hills, rivers and other natural features can help give a clearer picture of the appearance of the landscape, and can also reveal something of the local history.

While Gaelic place names are commonplace in the Highlands and islands to the north, in the Southern Uplands they're largely confined to the southwest, even though Gaelic is now little spoken in these parts. In the Borders, however, the names are mainly from Lowland Scots (Lallans), a distinct language (still in use) with origins in the languages of settlers from the east, rather than the Celtic-Gaelic influences from the west.

Starting at the beginning of the Southern Upland Way, Portpatrick's origin is obvious, given the Irish connection, although it was originally called Portree, from the Gaelic *port righ*, meaning 'harbour of the king'. Killantringan, the location of the fine lighthouse, includes the anglicised version of the common Gaelic prefix *cill*, meaning 'church', in this case of St Ringan or Ninian. Balmurrie, the farm near New Luce, has another widespread Gaelic element, *bal*, meaning 'farm' or 'small township', in this case of the Murray family.

Laggangairn, the site of the two prehistoric cairns beyond Balmurrie, means 'hollow of the cairns' (*lag* meaning 'hollow'). A bit further on you climb over Craig Airie Fell – a hybrid of Gaelic and Norse. Craig is derived from *creag*, Gaelic for 'cliff' or 'crag'; *airidh* is Gaelic for 'shieling' (a temporary dwelling); and fell, once a Norse term, is commonly used in the English Lake District to mean 'mountain'. Dalry is from the Gaelic *dail righ* or 'meadow of the king'. Benbrack, the hill between Dalry and Sanquhar, is the speckled *breac* or 'hill', while Fingland comes from the Gaelic *fionn gleann*, meaning 'white glen'.

In the east, the Lammermuir Hills feature prominently in the latter stages of the Way; the name comes from Old English for lamb – still appropriate today.

Among the most common names for geographic features is cleuch, which comes directly from the Lowland Scots for ravine; the similar-sounding *heugh* is a cliff. The name law pops up all over the Borders and is the equivalent of the Gaelic *beinn*, meaning 'mountain' or 'hill', often isolated and conical in shape. A *knowe* is also a high sort of place (a small hillock), while a *dot* is a bare round hill.

Scottish Hill and Mountain Names by Peter Drummond, the Scottish place-names guru, should answer almost any query you come up with.

There's a small shop, which has a good range of the sorts of things you will need during the first day on the track.

Stranraer, 8 miles northeast of Portpatrick, is a large town with plenty more accommodation. Contact **Stranraer TIC** (☎ 702595; Harbour St) for more information.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Stagecoach Western (☎ 01292 613500) operates bus service X77 from Glasgow to Ayr (£5, 1½ hours, every 30 minutes) connecting with route 358 to Stranraer (£6, two hours, six services Monday to Saturday). **First ScotRail** (☎ 0845 755 0033; www.firstscotrail.com) runs trains from Glasgow Central to Stranraer (£17, two hours, five services Monday to Saturday, two Sunday).

Stagecoach Western's route 358 links Stranraer to Portpatrick (£2, 20 minutes, six services Monday to Saturday).

For details of ferries between Northern Ireland and Stranraer and Cairnryan, see p306.

If you're travelling by car from Glasgow, follow the M77 and the A77 to Stranraer and on to Portpatrick.

Cockburnspath

☎ 01368

Cockburnspath is a tiny village just inland from the coast, unfortunately with minimal facilities for walkers – you have been warned.

SLEEPING & EATING

Chesterfield Caravan Park (☎ 830459; www.chesterfieldcaravanpark.co.uk; The Neuk; unpowered/powerd sites for 2 £8/10), a very well appointed site, is a couple of miles from town.

There are a couple of B&Bs on nearby farms: **Mrs Hood** (☎ 830620; The Cornbarn, Cove

Farm; d £40), who opens her B&B on weekends only, and Mrs Russell (☎ 830465; townhead@ecosse.net; Townhead Farm; d £40).

Unfortunately the nearest pub is at Grantshouse, a few miles south along the A1, but the small shop in Cockburnspath is licensed.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Perryman's Buses (☎ 01289 380719) service 253 between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed (on the main east-coast railway line) stops here (£6, one hour, at least three daily). The village, just off the A1 between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed, is 35 miles from Edinburgh and 20 miles from Berwick.

THE WALK

Day 1: Portpatrick to New Luce

8½–9 hours, 22.5 miles (36.5km), 370m ascent

In Portpatrick the Way starts at the foot of a flight of stairs at the northwestern end of the small harbour. From here it heads northwest above impressive cliffs (take care, especially in poor visibility) and around scenic coves. The route ahead isn't always obvious but trust the thistle waymarkers to show the way from the shore back up to the cliff top. Killantringan lighthouse comes dramatically into view and the SUW joins the minor road leading inland.

Minor roads and farm tracks lead to a high point with fine views on a clear day. From here, more minor roads, farm tracks

and short, sometimes muddy, paths take you down past the outskirts of Stranraer to **Castle Kennedy**. This village has a small shop (at the garage) and the **Plantings Inn** (☎ 01581 400633; unpowered sites for 2 £5, s/d £35/60, mains to £17), where you can choose a comfortable room or camp in the grounds and eat at the hotel.

From Castle Kennedy a bitumen drive takes you through the pleasant, wooded grounds of the ruined castle to a minor road. You soon leave this to follow farm tracks to another minor road, then right round the edge of a cleared conifer plantation. The route descends to a footbridge over a railway line, then goes down to a suspension bridge over the Water of Luce.

New Luce is off the Way, 1 mile north along a nearby road. If you feel like covering a few more miles before stopping at New Luce, continue across open moorland, past deserted Kilhern and down to a minor road about 1 mile east of New Luce.

NEW LUCE

☎ 01581

Here you'll find the fine old **Kenmuir Arms Hotel** (☎ 600218; 31 Main St; s/d £35/56) and its adjacent **camping ground** (unpowered sites for 2 £5; break-fast £5). There's a small shop in the village.

A limited bus service (No 410) operated by **Irvine's Coaches** (☎ 300345) links New Luce with Stranraer (£1, 27 minutes, one service Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday).

Southern Upland Way



Day 2: New Luce to Bargrennan

6¼–7¼ hours, 17.5 miles (28km), 340m ascent

Follow very quiet roads to Balmurrie farm, from where the route rises across moorland and then follows a wide, heathery firebreak through a plantation. Artfield Fell has been taken over by a wind farm with around 15 large swirling turbines. A short stretch of forest road leads to an open area with a timber, beehive-shaped bothy, which only has sleeping platforms; there is a fresh water supply nearby. Also nearby are the 4000-year-old **Laggangairn** standing stones, complete with information about their history. Beyond a large cairn the Way climbs over **Craig Airie Fell** (320m) providing an excellent view all round. It then descends past Derry Farm and follows minor roads past Knoave and Glenruther Lodge, over Glenvernoch Fell and down to Bargrennan (p72).

Day 3: Bargrennan to St John's Town of Dalry

9–9½ hours, 22 miles (34km), 500m ascent

This day starts off along mossy and partly overgrown paths through conifers. After crossing a minor road, the route passes through some pleasant woodlands and then follows the Water of Trool. The Way then traverses above Loch Trool, with some good views towards the Merrick – which at 843m is the highest point in the Southern Uplands – before dropping down to cross Glenhead Burn. Follow the burn briefly then diverge from the mapped route and head southeast across country to meet a forest road about 1 mile west of Loch Dee. **White Laggan Bothy** is about 350m off the route to the south.

Once past Loch Dee Angling Club's hut, the Way crosses the River Dee and then traverses a conifer plantation, much of it clear-felled. It then meets the road to Mid Garrary, which you proceed to follow west for a short distance.

The Way leaves the road on a good path, heading north through wide clearings between more plantations, and then rising across moorland before descending to Clenrie Farm. Further on, well down Garchoir Glen, the Way cuts east across Waterside Hill and follows the Water of Ken to a fine suspension bridge leading to St John's Town of Dalry.

ST JOHN'S TOWN OF DALRY

☎ 01644

Often shortened to Dalry, this large village has two hotels and a small shop.

Clachan Inn (☎ 430241; www.theclachaninn.com; Main St; s/d £30/60, mains to £18) is the place to go for a comfortable night.

Mrs Findlay's B&B (☎ 430420; fjames441@aol.com; Main St; s/d £25/50) is a good alternative.

MacEwan's (☎ 01387 256533) operates bus route 520 to Castle Douglas (£2, 43 minutes, three services Monday to Saturday), where route 502 connects to Dumfries (£3, 35 minutes, six services Monday to Saturday). Route 520 also continues from Castle Douglas to Dalmellington (£2, 1½ hour, two services Monday to Saturday), where **Stagecoach Western** (☎ 01292 613500) runs route 52 to Ayr (£3, 50 minutes, at least 12 daily) on the coast with good onward connections.

Day 4: St John's Town of Dalry to Sanquhar

10–10¾ hours, 25 miles (40km), 900m ascent

From Dalry the Way crosses rough grazing land, past Ardoch Farm, to Butterhole Bridge. Friendly **Kendoon SYHA Hostel** (☎ 01644 460680; www.syha.org.uk; dm £12) is about 1.5 miles further west, off the SUW, at Glenhoul (the warden may be able to help with transport from the Way). The route continues across rough grazing ground to Stroanpatrick, then climbs a wide clearing through plantations, skirting the summit of Manquhill Hill (421m). Continue up to **Benbrack** (580m) for excellent panoramic views. You descend over a couple of lesser tops, through a plantation, past Allan's Cairn and along a forest road, passing the rather spartan **Polskeoch Bothy** to the scattering of buildings at Polskeoch.

After about 2 miles along a minor road, the Way sets off across the ridge to the north along rough tracks. Sanquhar comes into view from the top but there's a long descent into the valley of the River Nith (Nithsdale), where you finally reach the bridge over the river and the path leading into Sanquhar (pronounced 'san-ker').

SANQUHAR

☎ 01659 / pop 238

Castle View Caravan Park (☎ 50291; ireneriddall@aol.com; Townfoot; unpowered sites for 2 £5) is located beside the Way.

Mrs McDowall (☎ 50751; marymcdowell@aol.com; Town Head; s/d £25/44) offers weary walkers a warm welcome.

Blackaddie House Hotel (☎ 50270; www.blackaddiehotel.co.uk; Blackaddie Rd; s/d £40/70, mains to £20) could tempt you for a bit of well-earned pampering.

First ScotRail (☎ 0845 755 0033; www.firstscotrail.com) operates trains to Glasgow (£10, 1¼ hours, six services Monday to Saturday, two Sunday), and **Stagecoach Western** (☎ 01292 613500) runs bus service 246 to Dumfries (£3, 50 minutes, at least five daily).

Day 5: Sanquhar to Beattock

10½–11½ hours, 28 miles (45km), 1550m ascent

Leaving Sanquhar there's a short climb straightaway, then two more bumps to cross, with Cogshead, a ruined farmhouse, set between them in a steep-sided valley. A steep descent on a good track leads into **Wanlockhead**, the highest inhabited village in Scotland (467m). It is an old lead-mining village with plenty of industrial archaeology, and a striking contrast to the bare, lonely moorland. Here you'll find a couple of B&Bs and **Wanlockhead Inn** (☎ 01659 74535; ☎ lunch Sat & Sun, dinner Wed-Sun). **The Museum of Lead Mining** (☎ 01659 74387; www.leadminingmuseum.co.uk; £6; ☎ Apr-Oct) and its tearoom are worth a visit.

From here the Way climbs to **Lowther Hill**, crossing and recrossing the sealed road to the surreal golf-ball-like domes (containing radar equipment) in a fenced enclosure on the summit (725m). Here, on a good day atop the highest point on the Southern Upland Way, it's possible to see the Pentland Hills (near Edinburgh) to the north. The Way continues over high ground, steeply up to Cold Moss (628m). It then drops down to the A702 at Over Fingland.

Just beyond the A702, in **Watermeetings Forest**, you reach the halfway point of the SUW. Cross the wall holding back Daer Reservoir (drinking water for Glasgow's southern suburbs) then tackle the long climb over Sweetshaw Brae, Hods Hill and Beld Knowe (507m), overlooking the reservoir. This is inevitably followed by an equally long descent through the plantation to Cloffin Burn. **Brattleburn Bothy** is out of sight, about 400m west of the Way. The SUW continues generally downhill, still among dense conifers, across a large clearing and Garpol Water, eventually reaching

a minor road at Easter Earshaig. Follow this down to Beattock.

EATTOCK

☎ 01683

Craigielands Country Park (☎ 300591; www.craigielandsleisure.co.uk; unpowered sites for 2 £12), about 1 mile south of the Way, has its own restaurant; there's a shop nearby.

Barnhill Springs Country Guest House (☎ 220580; s/d £35/60), in a historic building, is beside the Way.

Moffat (p74), just over 1 mile north of Beattock, has more accommodation, restaurants and shops, but the A701 is very busy, so try for a place that provides vehicle transfers. Buses link Moffat with Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Day 6: Beattock to St Mary's Loch

9–9½ hours, 21 miles (33.5km), 1200m ascent

From Beattock the Way goes under the A74(M), across the River Annan, over a small hill, then beside Moffat Water. It then winds through a plantation on a forest road to a path up a deep valley. This leads to the **gorge** carved by Selchoth Burn; the path traverses this dramatic cleft then climbs to **Ettrick Head** (520m), the boundary between Dumfries & Galloway and the Borders. Beyond here you soon meet a forest road, which leads down to **Over Phawhope Bothy** and a minor road beside Ettrick Water. Follow this valley – whose natural beauty is slightly compromised by a blanket of conifers – for six miles.

Turn off at **Scabcleuch** along a signposted public path, which climbs up a narrow glen then over Pikestone Rig to **Riskinhope Hope**, a once-solid stone house now a bramble-covered ruin. The route then turns around Earl's Hill and picks up a forest track for the descent to St Mary's Loch.

By the loch is historic **Tibbie Shiels Inn** (☎ 01750 42231; www.tibbieshielsinn.com; s/d £35/60, mains to £10), scene of the Way's opening in 1984, offering relatively luxurious accommodation and excellent bar meals. There's also a **camping ground** (unpowered sites for 2 £6) nearby, run by Tibbie.

Nearby **Glen Cafe** (☎ 01750 42241; mains to £15; ☎ breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Sat) is also a great place to relax and unwind over a drink.

A summer-only Saturday bus service to Moffat (p74), operated by **Houston's Minibuses** (☎ 01576 203874), stops at the café.

Day 7: St Mary's Loch to Melrose

12–13 hours, 30 miles (50km), 1120m ascent

This ultra-long day could be split into two, with an overnight stop at Traquair, 12 miles (20km) from St Mary's Loch. Of the total climb, 800m comes between Traquair and Melrose.

From the inn, pass in front of the St Mary's Loch Sailing Club building and follow a path, then a vehicle track, beside the loch. Further on cross Yarrow Water to the A708. The Way crosses the road and returns to open country. Good paths and tracks climb over a spur to Douglas Burn then it's up again, across heathery Blake Muir and down to the hamlet of **Traquair**, near Innerleithen, in the Tweed valley. **First Edinburgh** (☎ 0131 663 9233; www.firstedinburgh.co.uk) bus service 62 links Innerleithen with Peebles (p76) and Edinburgh (£5, 15 minutes, every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday, 12 services Sunday).

There are a couple of B&Bs in the village, including the **School House** (☎ 01896 830506; http://old-schoolhouse.ndo.co.uk; s/d £30/56); alternatively, try **Traquair Mill Bunkhouse** (☎ 01896 830515; dm £13). There's more accommodation and several shops in Innerleithen, about 1 mile north along the B709.

Turning your back on Traquair, follow a lane climbing steadily into a plantation. Just inside its boundary is a log cabin, which can be a welcome haven in bad weather. **Minch Moor** (567m) rises on the right and the short detour is well worth the effort for the panoramic view, which includes the Eildon Hills near Melrose to the east. The SUW continues through a plantation and rises to **Brown Knowe** (523m), which also provides good views. The tops ahead are skirted on the right and left. The turn-off to **Broadmeadows SYHA Hostel** (☎ 01750 725506; www.syha.org.uk; dm £13), Scotland's first youth hostel, is signposted; the hostel is 1 mile to the south, though the nearest shops are in Selkirk, 5 miles away. The route continues up to the three massive cairns known as the **Three Brethren**. Then it's down to Yair and a bridge over the River Tweed.

You then climb over a fairly broad ridge and go down across fields, crossing numerous stiles, to woodland on the outskirts of **Galashiels**. The Way follows a rather circuitous route through parklands and along suburban streets, skirting Gala Hill. Cross

the busy A7 and follow river-side paths and the hard-surfaced bed of the old Waverley railway to Melrose (p80).

Day 8: Melrose to Longformacus

9½–10 hours, 25 miles (40km), 900m ascent

From Melrose cross the River Tweed, this time on a 19th-century chain suspension bridge for pedestrians and 'light carriages' only. The Way goes back up beside the river then heads north, steadily gaining height. There are fine views on a good day from the highest point around flat-topped **Kedslie Hill**. The route passes through several fields occupied by grazing cows – very inquisitive but not aggressive. The descent into **Lauder** skirts the local golf course.

Lauder has three hotels and a couple of nearby B&Bs, of which **Thirlestane Farm** (☎ 01578 722216; s/d £40/60), about 1.5 miles east of the Way beside the A697, is particularly recommended. **Thirlestane Castle Caravan & Camp Site** (☎ 01578 718884; thirlestanepark@btconnect.com; unpowered sites for 2 £6) is superbly sited near splendid Thirlestane Castle. In the main street you'll find an excellent baker, a small supermarket and the Flat Cat Coffee Shop, which is just as well since Lauder is the last place where you can stock up on chocolate and other walking staples before Cockburnspath at the end of the Way. **Munro's of Jedburgh** (☎ 01835 862253) buses can take you to Earlstoun on route 51 (£2, 45 minutes, five services Monday to Saturday) and on to Galashiels on route 66 (£2, 25 minutes, one a day Monday to Saturday).

From Lauder the Way weaves through the grounds of **Thirlestane Castle** (open to visitors). Cross the A697 and follow a lane up through the curiously named Wanton Walls Farm and steeply up to a small plantation. The Way then wanders up and down across open grassland before crossing Blythe Water on a substantial bridge. Continue on to Braidshawrig, part of the Burncastle Estate grouse moor. It's essential to keep to the track, especially during the grouse shooting season, which always starts on 12 August. The track climbs across the vast empty moors, dotted with shooting butts and old tin sheds providing shelter for stock, to the ridge crest. It then turns right to the high point of **Twin Law** (447m), topped with two giant cylindrical cairns, each with a sheltered seat facing southeast.

From there the Tweed valley is spread out before you and the sea is in sight at last. The descent towards Watch Water Reservoir is easy – a good track leads to Scarlaw and onto a sealed road. If the weather is fine you should find a small **tearoom** (☎ Easter-Sep) at the reservoir. Continue down to the tiny village of **Longformacus** (pronounced 'long-for-may-cus').

Whinmore B&B (☎ 01361 890669; junren26@tiscali.co.uk; s/d £35/60, dinner £15) also offers three-course evening meals.

Day 9: Longformacus to Cockburnspath

7–8 hours, 18.5 miles (30km), 450m ascent

About one mile along a minor road east of Longformacus, the Way branches off to climb over moorland, going past some small plantations and down to the B6355. From here the route follows steep-sided Whiteadder valley through mixed woodland to the hamlet of **Abbey St Bathan**. Cross Whiteadder Water, just below where it joins Monynut Water. The Way follows the Whiteadder for a while then turns north; the **Riverside Restaurant** (☎ 01361 840312; ☎ Tue-Sun) is just across the river. The route here follows paths and lanes, crossing some fields in the process. From a minor road at Blackburn you can catch a last glimpse back to the hills. Then it's down to the busy A1 (cross with care) to follow an old road between the A1 and the railway to a pleasant green track into Penmanshiel Wood. It seems cruel at this stage but the route climbs through the wood – fortunately it leads to a very rewarding **view** of the North Sea and the Firth of Forth. A flight of steps takes you down to the A1107, beyond which is Pease Dean Wildlife Reserve, the site of a native woodland regeneration project.

Skirt the serried ranks of vans in Pease Bay Holiday Home Park and walk up the road above the bay. The final cliff-top walk, mirroring the start, is blessed with impressive coastal scenery, along to colourful Cove Harbour tucked below. Turn inland, under the A1 and the railway line, to the mercat (market) cross at **Cockburnspath** (pronounced 'co-burns-path' or just 'co-path'), the official end of the Way. It takes a while for the realisation to sink in that you really have walked almost 210 miles from Portpatrick – congratulations!

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Often described as Scotland's hidden gem, this sparsely populated area's rugged hills, extensive forests and varied wildlife make for a fascinating backdrop while walking on its often-remote paths. Within one of Scotland's most densely forested regions, the 290-sq-mile Galloway Forest Park, are the highest and most challenging mountains in the south, notably the Merrick (843m). The Southern Upland Way, Scotland's first coast-to-coast long-distance path, marches across the region from Portpatrick through the hills, glens and forests. The walks we've selected are but a tiny taster of the wealth of potential Dumfries & Galloway has to offer.

PLANNING

Books

Walking in the Galloway Hills, by Paddy Dillon, describes 33 circular walks. Also look out for *Southern Upland Way Western Section Short Walks* published by Dumfries & Galloway Council and describing 30 walks close to the Way. It's available from TICs.

Information Sources

Dumfries & Galloway Tourist Board (☎ 01387 253862; www.visitdumfriesandgalloway.co.uk) is the first point of call for information and accommodation bookings.

Dumfries & Galloway Council (☎ 01387 260184; www.dumgal.gov.uk) countryside ranger service produces a free comprehensive guide, *Countryside Events*, available from TICs.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Virgin Trains (☎ 0845 722 2333; www.virgintrains.co.uk) operate services between Glasgow Central and Dumfries (£12, 1¾ hours, at least eight daily). **First ScotRail** (☎ 0845 755 0033; www.firstscotrail.com) runs the same route (£12, one hour 50 minutes, at least five daily).

Stagecoach Western (☎ 01292 613500) runs bus service X77 from Glasgow to Ayr (£5, 1¾ hours, every 30 minutes), from where service 246 departs for Dumfries (£5, two hours 20 minutes, five services Monday to Saturday).

Dumfries & Galloway is a two-hour drive from Glasgow and Edinburgh.

THE MERRICK

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Duration | 4–4½ hours |
| Distance | 8 miles (12.9km) |
| Difficulty | moderate–demanding |
| Start/Finish | Bruce's Stone car park |
| Nearest Towns | Bargrennan (right) and Glentroof (right) |
| Transport | private |

Summary Classic walk to the Southern Uplands' highest peak along a stunningly scenic ridge above dark forests, tumbling burns and myriad lochs.

Standing at 843m (2766ft) the Merrick is the highest peak in the entire Southern Uplands – there's nothing to top it heading north until you come across Goatfell (on the Isle of Arran) and Ben Lomond. It's a big, bulky hill with a classic, highly scenic ridge route to the west and a string of wild lochs to the east. Part of the Range of the Awful Hand, its southwestern satellite Benyellary (Hill of Eagles) represents the Hand's thumb, while Merrick itself (from the Gaelic for 'branched finger') and the smaller hills to the north form the Hand's other fingers.

The surrounding area has its fair share of gory history. In Caldons Wood, at the southern end of Loch Trool, a memorial stone commemorates three Covenanters murdered for their religious beliefs. Bruce's Stone, at the start of the walk, perpetuates the victory of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, over the English army in 1307 during the Scottish Wars of Independence.

The good-quality path to the Merrick, which is quite steep at times, is easy to follow during the 750m ascent from Loch Trool. Rather than retracing your steps, you can return along the well-made path from Loch Enoch to Loch Neldricken (see the Alternative Route, opposite).

PLANNING MAPS

The best maps for this walk are either the OS Explorer 1:25,000 No 318 *Galloway Forest Park North* or the Harvey Superwalker 1:25,000 *Galloway Hills*. Alternatively, use the OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 77 *Dalmeilington & New Galloway*.

Information Sources

The Forestry Commission's **Glentroof visitor centre** (☎ 01671 840302; ☒ Easter-Oct), in a Swedish-style log cabin 1.8 miles from the A714 and Glentroof village (where the bus stops), has maps and books for sale, and can provide information about surrounding Galloway Forest Park. There's also a small café where you can stoke up with light meals and hot drinks.

NEAREST TOWNS

Bargrennan & Glentroof

☎ 01671

Bargrennan and the nearby small village of Glentroof, just west of Loch Trool, offer limited facilities but no shortage of warm hospitality.

Glentroof Holiday Park (☎ 840280; www.glentroofholidaypark.co.uk; Bargrennan; unpowered sites for 2 £11, holiday homes per night £47, minimum 2 nights) is a small, peaceful park with quality facilities, including a small on-site shop. Holiday homes are not available July and August.

Lorien B&B (☎ 840315; morag.lorien61@btinternet.com; 61 Glentroof; s/d £22/44) is second-to-none

for hospitality; Morag will set you up for the day with the heartiest of breakfasts.

House O'Hill Hotel (☎ 840243; www.houseohill.co.uk; Bargrennan; s/d £35/60; mains to £9; ☒ lunch & dinner) may have featured in John Buchan's thriller *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (see the boxed text, p77). In the informal bar, tuck into plenty of good, solid pub fare.

The nearest shops are in Newton Stewart, 8.7 miles southeast.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

King's Coaches (☎ 01671 830284) operates bus service 359 (four services Monday to Saturday) between Bargrennan and Newton Stewart (£2, 23 minutes) and Girvan on the east coast (£2, 50 minutes). From Bargrennan it's 1.4 miles to Glentroof village.

By car from Newton Stewart, take the A714 Girvan road for 8.7 miles to Bargrennan; turn right to Glentroof Village. From here it's 1.8 miles to the Glentroof visitor centre.

GETTING TO/FROM THE WALK

Bruce's Stone car park is 3 miles east from the Glentroof visitor centre.

THE WALK

At the eastern end of the Bruce's Stone car park look left for a sign to Merrick and follow the path ascending northeast. After 500m of moorland, birch and hawthorn trees, pass through a kissing gate. The trail borders Buchan Burn's western side. A bit further, take the recommended high path, which heads left, slightly above the burn. Another kissing gate and a 'forest trail' sign mark the entrance to the woods.

After just over 0.5 miles of easy going, the path emerges from the forest and passes an abandoned bothy at Culsharg, good for emergency shelter only. The path becomes rocky and the ascent more difficult. Reaching a forestry road, turn right, cross a bridge over a Buchan Burn tributary, and then bear left onto an ascending path through trees, marked 'Merrick Climb'. After 800m of very steep going, the trail leaves the forest and continues northwest along Benyellary's open slopes. Continue through a kissing gate to a dry-stone dyke and follow it northeast up to **Benyellary** (719m). Follow the wall for just under 1 mile towards Merrick's summit, along the scenic **Neive of the Spit** ridge crest.

Where the wall separates from the trail, head northeast to the summit of the **Merrick** (843m), marked with a view indicator. Northern Ireland's Mountains of Mourne, Ben Lomond and the Lake District fells are visible in the distance; nearby are Mullwharchar (northeast), Craignaw (southeast) and Muldonoch and Lamachan Hills (south). Retrace your steps to Bruce's Stone.

Alternative Route: via Loch Enoch

3 hours, 5 miles (8km)

From the Merrick summit, descend steeply along Redstone Rig to Loch Enoch's southwest shore. Go southeast along a col above Loch Arron, then descend to the lake. Follow the western slopes of Ewe Rig along a wall heading south to Murder Hole. Cross a wall then follow the outflow of Loch Neldricken to the Loch Valley outflow. Descend Gairland Burn glen from a gate in the wall. Buchan Hill is to the right. Cross a field southwest and follow the path to a stile on the right; once over, cross a bridge and go west along the road to the Bruce's Stone car park.

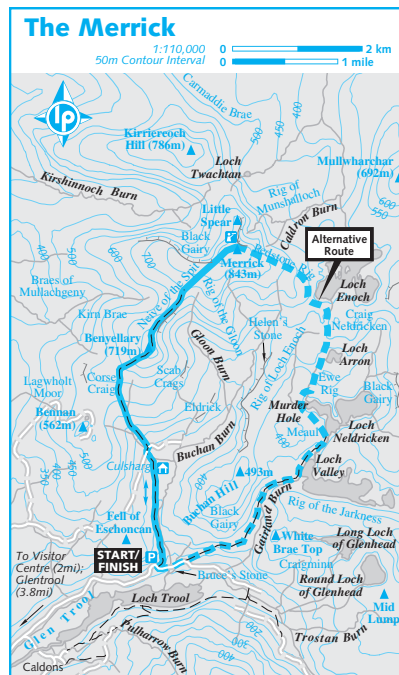
GREY MARE'S TAIL & WHITE COOMB

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Duration | 5 hours |
| Distance | 8.3 miles (13.4km) |
| Difficulty | moderate–demanding |
| Start/Finish | Grey Mare's Tail car park |
| Nearest Town | Moffat (p74) |
| Transport | bus |

Summary From the supremely beautiful Grey Mare's Tail waterfall to a classic horseshoe ridge walk high above spectacular Loch Skeen.

Celebrated by two of Scotland's best-known writers, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns, Grey Mare's Tail waterfall plunges 61m over rugged cliffs in a steep-sided glen on the northwestern side of Moffat Dale. Its tributaries, including Tail Burn, flow from the precipitous flanks of a horseshoe of broad-backed hills, of which White Coomb (821m) is the highest, impressively embracing brooding Loch Skeen.

Moffat Water's classic U-shaped valley reveals its glacial origins. At the end of the last Ice Age, glacial debris dammed Loch Skeen. Tail Burn was stranded in a glen hanging above the main valley, so forced its way down by becoming a waterfall.



Almost the whole walk is within the National Trust for Scotland's (NTS) Grey Mare's Tail Nature Reserve, dedicated to the protection of many rare plants and animals, and to enabling visitors to explore this magnificent corner of the Southern Uplands.

The total ascent on this walk is 750m.

PLANNING

When to Walk

This is a walk for all seasons, unless there's more than a few inches of snow on the ground, which would make the steep path across the precipitous slopes above Tail Burn potentially treacherous. Crossing the burn above the falls could be difficult after heavy rain.

Maps & Books

The OS Explorer 1:25,000 map No 330 *Moffat & St Mary's Loch* is ideal. *Dumfries & Galloway Walks* by Brian Conduit includes many other fine walks in the area.

Information Sources

At the small **NTS visitor centre** (☎ 01683 222714; ☞ Apr-Oct), you'll find countryside rangers, who are on hand to answer any questions and to take bookings for their program of guided walks.

NEAREST TOWN

Moffat

☎ 01683 / pop 2135

Famous as a Victorian spa town and for its woollen products, Moffat is also close to the Southern Upland Way. The **TIC** (☎ 220620; www.visitmoffat.co.uk; Churchgate; ☞ Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) is near the town entrance from the A74(M) and stocks OS maps and several local history books; ask for the brochure *Walking in and around Moffat*, a handy guide to several short walks.

SLEEPING & EATING

The **Moffat Camping and Caravanning Club site** (☎ 220436; www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk; Hammerland's Farm; unpowered/powerd sites for 2 £12/13) has flat, grassy sites close to the town centre.

Berriedale House B&B (☎ 220427; Beechgrove; s/d £25/44), in a large 19th-century villa, has huge, comfortable bedrooms in a quiet location.

Dell-Mar B&B (☎ 220260; dell-mar@tiscali.co.uk; 6 Beechgrove; s/d £35/54) offers a friendly welcome to weary walkers.

Bombay Cuisine (☎ 220900; Main St; mains to £11; ☞ lunch & dinner) specialises in unique Laziz Khama cuisine from Samarkand (Uzbekistan), in which each dish has its own sauce; the helpful waiter will explain these absolutely delicious dishes.

Claudio's Italian Restaurant (☎ 220958; Old Police Station; mains to £20; ☞ dinner daily Jun-Aug, Tue-Sun Sep-May), on the Selkirk road, has a lovely conservatory dining room where you can try a haggis-adorned Robbie Burns pizza.

For delicious cakes and filled rolls or sandwiches don't miss **Little's Bakery** (Main St). The Co-op supermarket is next to the well-signposted Moffat woollen mill, off the A701 near the TIC.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Located just north of the M74 on the A701, Moffat is 30 miles southeast of Glasgow via the M74, and 50 miles southwest of Edinburgh via the A701.

MacEwan's (☎ 01387 256533) bus service 100 travels regularly between Edinburgh and Moffat (£5, two hours, three services Monday to Saturday, one Sunday). From Glasgow, **Stagecoach Western** (☎ 01292 613500) runs service 974 to Moffat (£6, 1½ hours, three services Monday to Saturday, two on Sunday).

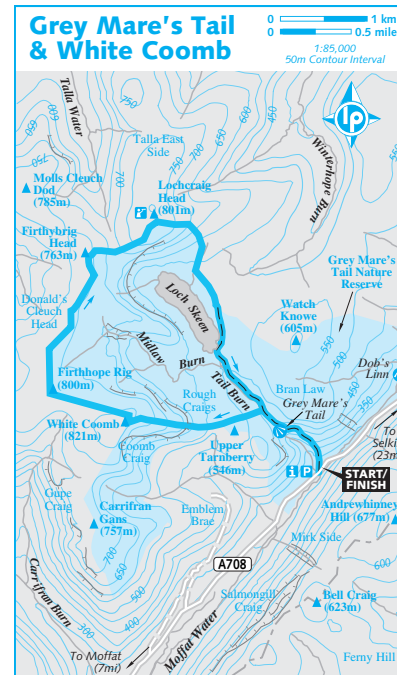
GETTING TO/FROM THE WALK

Houston's Minibuses (☎ 01576 203874) operates a summer-only Saturday service between Lockerbie and Selkirk via Moffat and the Grey Mare's Tail car park (£4 return from Moffat, 30 minutes); the timetable allows plenty of time to do the walk using this service.

By car follow the A708 from Moffat towards Selkirk for 9 miles to the signposted Grey Mare's Tail Nature Reserve. There's a pay-and-display (£2) car park on the north-west side of the road.

THE WALK

From the car park follow a well-made path with steps rising steeply above Tail Burn; soon you're high above **Grey Mare's Tail** – an awesome experience. Follow the path past the upper cascades as it levels out beside the burn. Cross it to follow a prominent stone



wall generally westwards, with the wall on your left. The wall arrows up a broad spur to a saddle. Now the going gets tougher as you ascend steeply past Rough Craigs where the wall vanishes briefly. Continue gaining height until you see the rounded summit of **White Coomb** about 150m to the south – a short stroll to bag another Corbett (2¾ hours from the car park).

Return to the wall and then follow a fence west across superb grasslands for just over half a mile to **Firthhope Rig** (800m). Make a 90-degree turn (north) and traverse the pleasantly undulating Donald's Cleuch Head ridge, following a fence and a wall for about one mile. At **Firthybrig Head** (763m) turn east at a T-junction in the wall and plunge down to a soggy saddle before rising steeply to **Lochcraig Head** (801m), one hour from White Coomb. The views continue to be impressive: White Coomb lies to the south, the three Eildon Hills are clearly visible over to the east and Loch Skeaen shimmers below. Descend beside the wall towards the loch for just over one mile. The wall ends in a morass and a fence

continues across the peat hags. After about 10 minutes the fence turns southeast; turn south and make your way down to meet the path just below Tail Burn's outflow from Loch Skeaen (45 minutes from Lochcraig Head). Follow the path back down to the car park.

THE BORDERS

The Borders is a hill-walkers' delight, a seemingly vast area of southeast Scotland laid out in rolls between the Moorfoot and Lammermuir Hills in the north and the Cheviot Hills on the English border in the south. In this sparsely populated area (compared with central Scotland), it's easy to feel that you're a long way from anywhere as you traverse the broad ridges and cross deep, lonely glens. The western fringe reaches 840m at Broad Law, the highest of the multitude of Borders' hills. Eastwards, the rugged cliffs and sheltered coves of the Berwickshire coast face the North Sea. Through the centre runs the River Tweed, a silver thread travelling 96 miles steadily eastward through several towns to the sea at Berwick-upon-Tweed in England.

The day walks described here explore the lush Tweed valley and nearby hills, and a magnificent stretch of coast. There's also the eastern section of the Southern Upland Way (p63) across the full breadth of the area to Cockburnspath, and Melrose is also the starting point for St Cuthbert's Way (p85).

PLANNING

Books

The Scottish Borders: 25 Walks by Peter Jackson concentrates on circular walks in the Tweedsmuir, Moorfoot and Lammermuir Hills. *Short Walks on the Eastern Section of the Southern Upland Way*, describing more than 35 walks, and the excellent Borders Council *Walks Around* series of booklets cover Peebles and Melrose (among others), and are available from TICs. The Borders Council also publishes a Heritage series of four titles, including *Christian Heritage in the Borders*, all by John Dent and Rory McDonald; also available at TICs, they represent great value and background reading.

Information Sources

The Borders' **TIGs** (☎ 0870 608 0404; www.visit.scottishborders.com) are very helpful and stock a veritable mountain of information for walkers, including the useful booklet *Walking Guide to the Scottish Borders*. They can also book accommodation for you.

The **Scottish Borders Council ranger service** (☎ 01835 830281; rangers@scotborders.gov.uk; Harestanes by Ancrum), in conjunction with several other agencies, issues the **Outdoor Diary** (www.outdoor-diary.info) describing loads of ranger-led walks and activities.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Amazingly, the Borders is bereft of train stations; bus services link the train stations at Berwick-upon-Tweed and Edinburgh to the main towns. By road the western Borders is most easily accessed from the A74(M). The A708 (Moffat–Selkirk) takes you to the heart of the region; the A7 and the A68 bisect the region as they beeline north to Edinburgh. The A1 traverses the eastern part of the region. Most of the Borders' major towns are within a one-hour drive of Edinburgh and 1½ hours from Glasgow.

JOHN BUCHAN WAY

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Duration | 5¾–6 hours |
| Distance | 13.5 miles (22km) |
| Difficulty | moderate |
| Start | Peebles (right) |
| Finish | Broughton (opposite) |
| Transport | bus |

Summary A vigorous and varied walk through the opulently rolling hills and eerily quiet, remote glens that inspired a noted Scottish writer.

Proving that size doesn't matter when it comes to hill walking, the John Buchan Way eschews climbing to any tick-me-off summit, taking you instead through irresistibly alluring hills and glens on either side of the Tweed valley west of the attractive town of Peebles. If ever a walk served to entice people back to the area, this is it.

Commemorating author John Buchan (see the boxed text, opposite) the route links Peebles to the village of Broughton, passing through farmland, both past and present,

and the hamlet of Stobo with its 12th-century kirk (church), one of the oldest in Scotland. Usually open for inspection, the kirk is graced with some beautiful stained-glass windows, and houses several ancient carved stone slabs. A printed guide to its history is available for a small sum. The Way is sheltered in places by groves of fine old beeches and oaks, and follows tranquil stretches of some of the Tweed's tributaries.

The route is very well waymarked, and the going underfoot is generally pretty easy, though be prepared for some boggy places. There are no refreshment places along the Way, but you can be sustained by the prospect of the excellent tearoom at Broughton.

PLANNING Maps & Books

OS Landranger 1:50,000 maps No 72 *Upper Clyde Valley* and No 73 *Peebles & Galashiels* cover the route. A detailed brochure, *The John Buchan Way*, is available from Peebles TIC.

Information Sources

The **Scottish Borders Council ranger service** (☎ 01835 830281; rangers@scotborders.gov.uk; Harestanes by Ancrum) looks after the Way.

NEAREST TOWNS Peebles

☎ 01721 / pop 8065

Peebles TIC (☎ 0870 608 0404; www.visitscottishborder.com; High St; ☎ daily Apr–Dec, Mon–Sat Jan–Mar) stocks a wide range of publications. The **Great Outdoors** (☎ 724263; High St) sells outdoor clothing and basic equipment.

SLEEPING & EATING

Crossburn Caravan Park (☎ 720501; www.crossburncaravans.co.uk; Edinburgh Rd; unpowered/powered sites for 2 £7/12) is a short walk or drive from the centre of town with plenty of space for tents.

Whitestone House (☎ 720337; www.aboutscotland.com/peebles/whitestone.html; Innerleithen Rd; s/d £28/50) in a beautifully kept 19th-century manse offers large, well-appointed rooms and a comfortable guest lounge.

Rowanbrae (☎ 721630; www.aboutscotland.com/peebles/rowanbrae.html; Northgate; s/d £30/50) sits surrounded by a luxuriant garden, producing fresh flowers to bedeck the beautifully

THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS & OTHER TALES

John Buchan would be pleased to know that a walking route in the Borders is named in his honour. Buchan (1875–1940), a prolific writer of fiction, historical works and biographies, and a man of many other parts, spent youthful summer holidays in the Borders. Exploring the hills and glens on foot, he nurtured a lifelong passion for their wild, wide spaces.

His prodigious output of more than 100 books, plus short stories and articles, is all the more surprising considering that writing was not always his full-time calling. A varied career in government, parliament and newspapers culminated in his appointment as governor general of Canada in 1935 with the title of Lord Tweedsmuir (after the Borders' river). However, he is best remembered for *The Four Adventures of Richard Hannay*, which were pioneers in the realm of thriller-cum-detective stories.

Set in the years before, during and after WWI, the stories evoke a bygone era, imbued with ideas about duty, loyalty, race and class relations that are way out of step with the 21st century. That matters little, for his clear, uncluttered, engaging style, and his ability to paint landscapes, delineate all kinds of characters and to pile up the tension and excitement, make for compulsive reading. Scenes in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (famously and incomparably filmed by Hitchcock in 1935) are set in the Borders, probably near Dollar Law, not far south of the John Buchan Way. In those days people lived in the sad, ruined cottages you'll pass today. A gripping interlude in the much longer *Mr Standfast* is set in the Cuillin hills on the Isle of Skye and on the nearby mainland, and is vividly and convincingly evoked.

The **John Buchan Society** (www.johnbuchansociety.co.uk) website is a rich source of 'Buchanalia' and well worth browsing if you're hooked. And don't forget the John Buchan Centre in Broughton (see below).

furnished rooms of this traditional Victorian home.

Prince of India (☎ 724455; 86 High St; mains to £10; ☎ lunch & dinner) features tasteful Indian décor and a wide selection of vegetarian dishes.

The award-winning **Sunflower Restaurant** (☎ 722420; www.thesunflower.net; 4 Bridgegate; mains £12–16; ☎ lunch & dinner) uses top-quality local ingredients in delectable combinations of Scottish, Mediterranean and Far Eastern cuisine.

For groceries head to **Somerfield** (38 Northgate) supermarket; there's a second Somerfield on Dovecote Rd, off the Edinburgh road. People come from Edinburgh to buy bread at **Forsyth's Bakers** (21 Eastgate).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

First Edinburgh (☎ 08708 727271) bus service 62 links Peebles and Edinburgh (£4, 1¼ hours, every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday, hourly Sunday).

Broughton

☎ 01899

There's no accommodation in Broughton, but there is an excellent tearoom and a brewery – who needs anything else!

The **John Buchan Centre** (☎ 880258; Moffat Rd, Broughton; £2; ☎ 2–5pm May–Oct) houses photographs and other memorabilia relating to John Buchan.

Laurel Bank Tea Room (☎ 830462; light meals to £5; ☎ lunch & afternoon tea) offers a good range of snacks and superb homemade cakes; cold drinks include Australia's incomparable Bundaberg ginger beer.

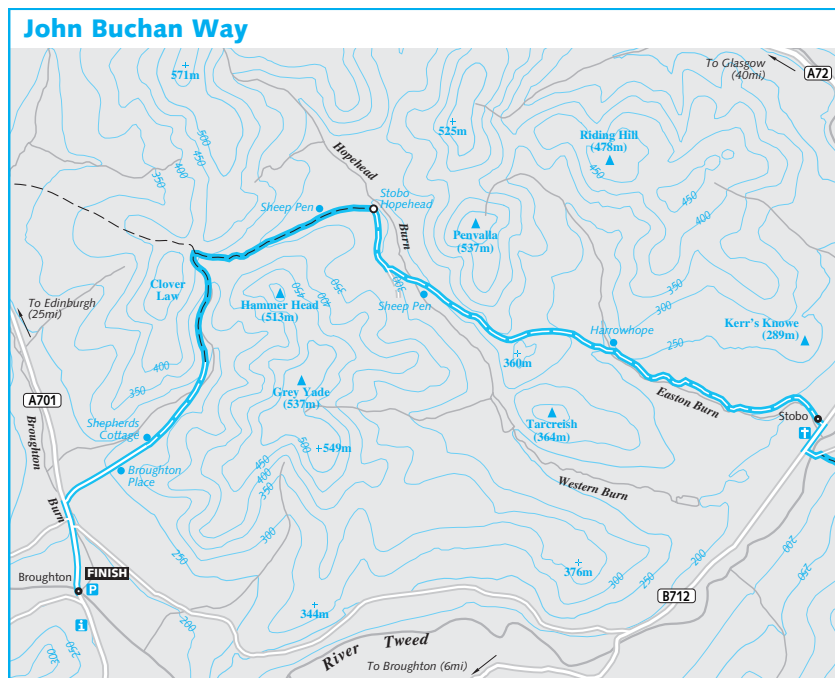
Broughton Brewery (☎ 830345; www.broughtonales.co.uk; ☎ Mon–Fri) sells gift packs and ales by the dozen.

Broughton Stores in the main street stocks Broughton ales (and much else).

MacEwan's (☎ 01387 256533) operates bus route 91 between Peebles and Broughton (30 minutes, six services weekdays, five Saturday). Cars can be parked next to the village hall at the northern end of Broughton, or outside the primary school at the southern end.

THE WALK

From the car park below the southeast corner of the Tweed Bridge, cross Caledonian Rd and follow waymarked lanes and minor roads through the southern fringes of Peebles to a minor road leading south, up past Tintah House, hiding behind a stone



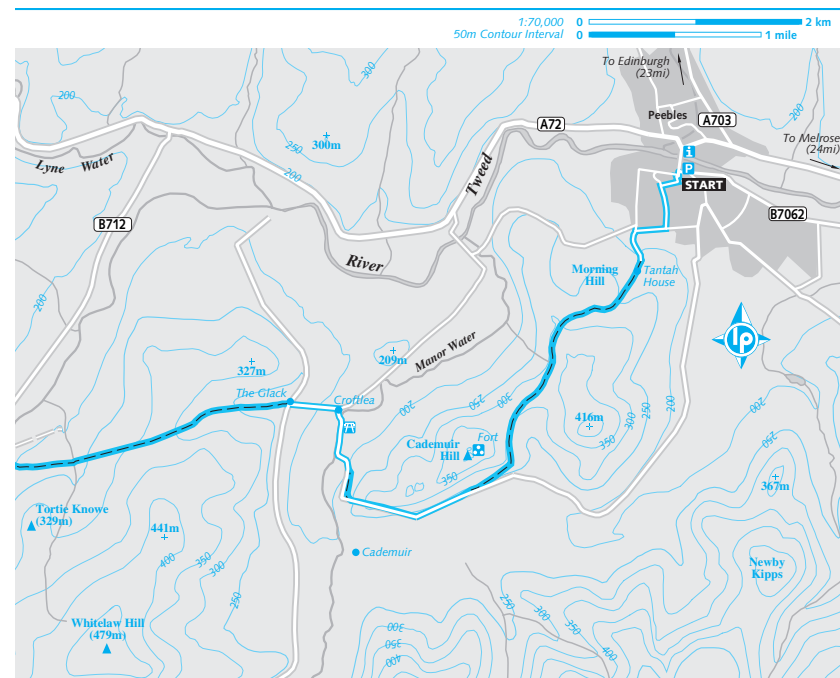
wall. Go through a gate in a wall on your right (west) and start ascending, soon following a path southwest across the open slope of a wide valley with Peebles in view. Veer west up to a minor saddle and continue on a grassy path steering southwest. Maintain that direction up to the ridge extending northeast from prominent **Cademuir Hill**. Though the official route bypasses the summit, it's worth taking an extra 25 minutes or so to climb it, if only for the fantastic views of huge rounded hills and deep, deep valleys.

The path pursues a generally southward route as it meanders downhill, with a dyke on the left. It then swings west and descends past a Scots pine plantation almost to the road (1¼ hours from Peebles). Follow the path until you're just past the more westerly of two entrances to Cademuir farm, then take to the grassy verge leading to the levee bank beside Manor Water, where there are a couple of very enticing picnic tables. Cross over a bridge, turn right then left and continue west, past Croftlea cottage to a T-junction at the **Glack**.

Go through a gate between a stone cottage and barn and keep walking west, aiming for the forest corner on the skyline. From there, go on to a stile then descend to a point just short of a gate in a dyke. Turn left, and continue up past the corner of the dyke and a small plantation to a fence corner; change direction to west and descend to cross a footbridge over a burn. Follow a short path then a farm track; turn right and follow the waymarked route across a field, over stiles and through gates to a vehicle track; turn left to reach the B712 (1¾ hours from the Glack).

Walk northeast along the road, diverging to **Stobo Kirk** if you wish. To continue along the Way, take the second turn left (west). Shortly, at a fork, bear left over a stile and follow a delightful track beside **Easton Burn** for 1 mile or so to a ruined cottage at **Harrowhope** (30 minutes from the B712). Cross a footbridge to a very pleasant spot for a decent break before tackling the next stage.

Continue west up the slope, through a belt of trees, over a giant stile and then



along a track leading northwest towards the massive bulk of Penvalva. Walking up the wide valley it's easy to imagine you are Richard Hannay (see the boxed text on p77). From a small saddle, bear northwest into the valley of Hopehead Burn along a track across the hillside. Descend steadily, past a curious circular stiel (stone-built sheep pen). Cross the burn on a footbridge then follow the farm access track past lonely **Stobo Hopehead** cottage. Bear left along a path, soon ascending west to the head of the valley, past an unusual hexagonal stiel. At the saddle (around 1¼ hours from Harrowhope), continue west briefly then turn south and descend steeply. Cross a burn for one last ascent on a wide track. Go down to Shepherd's Cottage on the right, through a gate then along a track and road, past the imposing mansion **Broughton Place**, which was built in 1937. Continue down past Broughton Place Farm, where there's an old water mill beside the road on your left, to the A701. Turning left, it's only 800m into Broughton (about one hour from the saddle).

EILDON HILLS

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Duration | 4 hours |
| Distance | 7.9 miles (12.7km) |
| Difficulty | easy-moderate |
| Start/Finish | Melrose Abbey |
| Nearest Town | Melrose (p80) |
| Transport | bus |

Summary Check out local history by scaling the Eildon Hills (once occupied by Romans), exploring the Roman fort Trimontium, and following an ancient path back to Melrose.

The charming town of Melrose sits at the northern foot of the Eildon Hills, a trio of distinctively shaped hills that seem to say, from near and far, 'Come and climb me'. Visible from miles around, and rising steeply from the broad Tweed valley, their volcanic rock cores are blanketed in sandstone with a coverlet of heather and grass.

Centuries ago, the pushy Romans commandeered the strategic summits and the saintly Cuthbert (see p85) moved through these parts. Today, the Eildon Hills Walk,

ALL ROADS LED FROM TRIMONTIUM

Around AD 80 the Romans, under Julius Agricola, established what grew into one of the largest Roman forts in Scotland: 370-acre Trimontium, meaning 'place of the three hills', just 1.5 miles east of Melrose. He ousted the locals, the Selgovae tribe, from their homes on top of Eildon Hill North and set up a signalling station or shrine there. Named on Ptolemy's AD 145 map, the fort was a strategic base and supply centre in the Roman campaigns to subdue Scotland.

It was also used as the zero point to measure distances. Of the 500 miles of Roman road in Scotland, only one milestone has been found. Engraved upon it is 'MP Trimontio', the MP standing for *milia passum*, meaning 'thousands of Roman paces' from Trimontium. Archaeological digs have unearthed metalwork, ditches and more settlements on the Eildon hillsides. The **Three Hills Roman Heritage Centre** (Market Sq, Melrose; £2; ☎ Apr-Oct), run by the **Trimontium Trust** (☎ 01896 822651; www.trimontium.net), houses displays about daily life on the Roman frontier; local guides lead the free weekly Trimontium Walk.

combined with some of the other paths crisscrossing the slopes, provides an extremely scenic, exhilarating outing. The last stretch is along Priorswalk, used by masons working on Melrose Abbey.

PLANNING

Maps

Both the OS Explorer 1:25,000 map No 338 *Galashiels, Selkirk & Melrose* and the OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 73 *Peebles & Galashiels* cover the walk.

NEAREST TOWN

Melrose

☎ 01896 / pop 1656

Dominated by the beautiful 12th-century Cistercian abbey, Melrose makes a particularly attractive base for this walk. **Melrose TIC** (☎ 0870 608 0404; www.visitscottishborders.com; Abbey House, Abbey St; ☎ Apr-Oct), opposite the abbey and next to a car park, stocks the useful *Walks Around Melrose* booklet, OS maps and local history references.

SLEEPING & EATING

Gibson Park Caravan Club Site (☎ 822969; High St; sites for 2 £18), close to the town centre, has a few tent sites and excellent facilities.

Melrose SYHA Hostel (☎ 0870 004 1141; www.syha.org.uk; Priorwood; dm £14) occupies a fine Georgian mansion, overlooking Melrose Abbey.

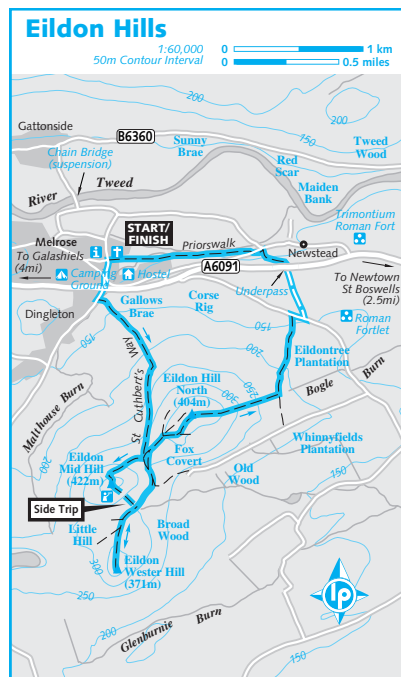
Braidwood B&B (☎ 822488; www.braidwoodmelrose.co.uk; Buccleuch St; s/d £35/56) offers high-standard facilities and a friendly welcome to this 19th-century townhouse.

Marmion's Restaurant (☎ 822245; Buccleuch St; mains to £17; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) is both a

quietly elegant restaurant and an art gallery, with works adorning the walls. Substantial dishes cooked with some flair are good value.

King's Arms Hotel (☎ 822143; High St; mains to £10; ☎ lunch & dinner), a 300-year-old coaching inn, offers a varied menu, including Mexican and curry dishes and has real ales on tap.

There are two supermarkets: **Co-op** (High St) and **Spar** (High Street).



GETTING THERE & AWAY

First Edinburgh (☎ 08708 727271) bus route 62 links Edinburgh and Melrose (£5.50, 2¼ hours, eight services Monday to Saturday, six Sunday).

By car from Edinburgh, take the A7 south to Galashiels and then head east on the A72 to Melrose.

THE WALK

From the car park opposite Melrose Abbey walk south up Abbey St. Cross Market Sq, then head up Dingleton Rd, following the St Cuthbert's Way markers (Celtic cross). Pass under the A6091 and in 150m turn left between houses, following an 'Eildon Walk' sign. Cross a stream and climb steps to a grassy path. Follow it up, passing through two gates on either side of a track, and up with a hedge on your left. A kissing gate leads to open ground; shortly turn south to reach a saddle between Eildon Hill North and Eildon Mid Hill (40 minutes from the start). Even though the Eildon Way sign directs left, turn west and soon bear right at a fork for a gentler ascent. Continue up to the summit of **Eildon Mid Hill** (422m), where you can identify the many features in the view on a direction plate.

To reach Eildon Wester Hill descend southeast on a narrow path to a wider path; turn right. Reach the **summit** (371m) via the second path on your left. Return downhill, past the path from Mid Hill and follow a track into woodland to a T-junction; turn north. At a fork, St Cuthbert's Way continues north; instead go straight on to the saddle you crossed earlier. Continue northeast along a grassed track and fork right (east) at the start of the main ascent; then a few minutes further on bear left (north) and follow the broad path up to the summit of **Eildon Hill North** (404m), one hour from the saddle, for an equally good view.

Head east, very steeply downhill, through gorse; a few Eildon Hills Walk waymarker posts indicate the route. Go through a kissing gate to a woodland path beside a burn and continue to a road (25 minutes from Eildon Hill North); turn right. A short distance beyond an information board about the 13th-century poet Thomas the Rhymer, turn left through a gate. Follow the track to an underpass beneath the A6091, then a disused railway. Turn left and follow a path

down to the western fringes of **Newstead**. You could break off here to explore Trimontium, the Roman encampment.

Follow a minor road to the left then go right onto a path between a house and stables. Beyond fields on the right, you reach a bitumen path leading to a road; bear right downhill and continue along beside a quiet road. Where it bends left, continue along **Priorswalk**, soon through a park and to the road opposite the car park (35 minutes from Newstead).

BURNMOUTH TO ST ABB'S HEAD

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Duration | 6 hours |
| Distance | 11.9 miles (19.2km) |
| Difficulty | easy |
| Start | Burnmouth (p82) |
| Finish | St Abb's Head Nature Centre |
| Nearest Town | Eyemouth (p82), Burnmouth (p82), Coldingham (p83), St Abbs (p83) |

Transport

bus

Summary Riveting cliff and beach walk, passing through fishing villages, a wealth of extraordinary geological formations, flocks of seabirds and abundant wildflowers.

Some of the finest coastal scenery in Scotland awaits you along this walk, part of a cross-border waymarked route linking Berwick-upon-Tweed and St Abb's Head. Small villages, tiny beaches, secluded harbours and the towering cliffs make for an exceptionally varied day out.

St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve, owned and managed by the NTS, protects a coastline of exceptional geological significance. In Burnmouth, sedimentary Silurian mudstone (greywacke) and siltstone, laid down on the sea bed 440 million years ago, appear in dramatic, swirling layers along the cliffs of Fancove. Around Burnmouth's harbour the same rock has been transformed by wave action into neatly packed layers rising vertically from the sea floor, and is bent and twisted at Linkim Kip and Coldingham Bay. Rusty-red sandstone sedimentary rocks, laid down in river beds 380 million years ago, form the cliffs north of Eyemouth. Between these two periods, harder igneous rocks, produced from lava flows, created the steep, erosion-resistant St Abb's Head.

THE SAINTLY EBBE

If you're wondering how St Abb's Head acquired its name, the answer is an amazing woman who lived 1300 years ago.

Born into a ruling pagan family in Northumbria (England) around AD 615, Ebbe arrived in Scotland as a young girl with her widowed mother and family. Following her conversion to Christianity she was hotly pursued by a persistent suitor but was saved by divine intervention. Later, the same force helped her to escape would-be captors, then sailed her boat to an isolated promontory on the Berwickshire coast, perhaps St Abb's Head. Monks in a nearby church witnessed her landing and promptly renamed their church in her honour. They then joined the unisex monastery she founded.

A pious woman, she drew kindred folk to the monastery, including the reputed misogynist St Cuthbert (see p85). Soon after her death in AD 683, the monastery was destroyed by fire.

Sea birds are the reserve's pride and joy. Puffins nest in the cliffs from May to July, and it's easy to spot shags, fulmars, guillemots and herring gulls. Grey seals, porpoises and even dolphins make an appearance from time to time.

PLANNING

The walk is described from south to north, so that you reach the main highlight, St Abb's Head, in the closing stages. Excellent public transport connections make it easy to pick and choose starting and finishing places.

When to Walk

May and June are best for wildflowers, and July and August for butterflies. For nesting sea birds plan a visit between May and July, while migratory sea birds pass through in May and from September to mid-October.

Maps & Books

The OS Explorer 1:25,000 map No 346 *Berwick-upon-Tweed* covers the walk. The free pamphlet *The Berwickshire Coastal Path* is a mini-guide to the complete 15-mile (24km) route, starting in Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Information Sources

St Abb's Head Nature Centre (☎ Apr-Oct) is at the end of the walk. Contact the **NTS head ranger** (☎ 01890 771443) for more information and to arrange a guided walk. The NTS booklet *St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve* is available at the nature centre.

NEAREST TOWNS

There are plenty of options near this walk, the largest of them being Eyemouth, though

you can also choose to base yourself in tiny Burnmouth, Coldingham or St Abbs.

Burnmouth

☎ 01890

Burnmouth is a tiny village divided into Upper Burnmouth, Partanhall (a string of cottages at the foot of the cliff), Cowdrait and Ross (just south, nearer the harbour).

White Craggs B&B (☎ 781397; www.whitecraggs.co.uk; d £70) is an attractively furnished bungalow above the tiny harbour.

The **Flemington Inn** (☎ 781277; mains to £15; ☎ lunch & dinner) prominently stakes its claim to be Scotland's last inn before the English border.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

GNER (☎ 0845 722 5225) trains from Edinburgh to London stop in Berwick-upon-Tweed (£17, 45 minutes, at least 10 daily), the closest train station to Burnmouth.

Perryman's Buses (☎ 01289 308719) operates two convenient services: route 253 Edinburgh to Berwick-upon-Tweed stops in Coldingham, St Abbs, Eyemouth and Burnmouth (£8, two hours, at least three daily); and route 235 Berwick-upon-Tweed to St Abbs, stops in Burnmouth (£1.50, 10 minutes, six services Monday to Saturday, three Sunday).

By car take the A1 either north from Berwick-upon-Tweed or east from Edinburgh to the A1107, which links (from south to north) Burnmouth, Eyemouth and Coldingham.

Eyemouth

☎ 01890 / pop 3383

Eyemouth, the only town along the way, is an active fishing port with an attractive

town centre where you'll find the **TIC** (☎ 0870 608404; Auld Kirk, Manse Rd; ☎ Apr-Oct).

Hillcrest B&B (☎ 750463; Coldingham Rd; d £46) is conveniently located and offers comfortable rooms with shared bathrooms.

The **Ship Hotel** (☎ 750224; Harbour Rd; s/d £25/56; mains to £12; ☎ lunch & dinner) is a homely place; there's a good choice of real ales in the bar.

Giacopazzi's (☎ 750317; 20 Harbour Rd; mains to £14) is famous throughout the land for its fish and chips, oven-fired pizzas and home-made ice cream.

There's a **Co-op** (High St) supermarket. See *Getting There & Away* for Burnmouth (opposite) for transport details.

Coldingham

☎ 01890 / pop 600

This delightful large village sits between lush undulating farmland and a beautiful crescent-shaped sandy beach.

Coldingham Sands Youth Hostel (☎ 0870 004111; www.syha.org.uk; dm £14) overlooks the ocean.

Priory View B&B (☎ 771525; prioryview@btinternet.com; Eyemouth Rd; d £60) has a lovely sea view from one of its rooms.

For a meal, try the New Inn on the main road in the centre of the village. There's a Spar supermarket in the village.

See *Getting There & Away* for Burnmouth (opposite) for transport options.

St Abbs

☎ 01890

St Abbs was named after the 7th-century monastery founded here by Ebbe or Abb (see the boxed text, opposite).

Murrayfield B&B (☎ 771468; 7 Murrayfield St; d £36) is a former fisherman's cottage.

Castle Rock B&B (☎ 771715; www.castlerockbandb.co.uk; d £58), on the route at Murrayfield, must enjoy the most spectacular B&B location on the coast. Evening meals are available by prior arrangement.

At the western entrance to the nature reserve at Northfield Farm is **Old Smiddy** (☎ 771707; lunch £6; ☎ lunch daily, dinner Fri & Sat), ideally located for a post-walk refresher.

See *Getting There & Away* for Burnmouth (opposite) for transport options.

GETTING TO/FROM THE WALK

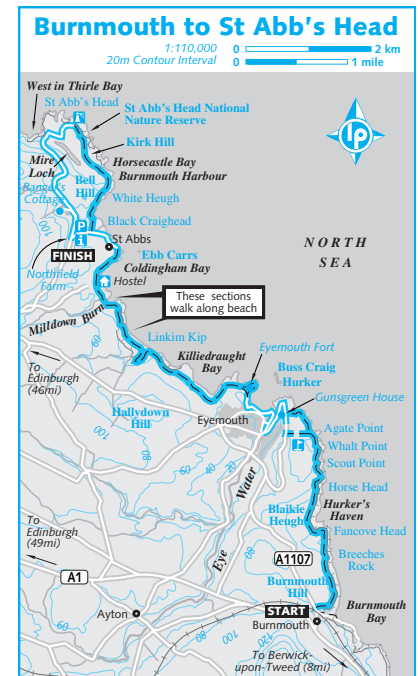
There are car parks at Burnmouth harbour (space is limited) and in the village, in the centre of Eyemouth and at the walk's

end near the visitor centre (£2.50 for a car with two passengers). Once in Burnmouth, walk to the northwest edge of the village where the main and harbour roads meet. On the ocean side of the main road you will see the primary school and, to the right, a sealed road descending steeply to the harbour. Locate the 'Coastal Footpath' waymarker.

The walk ends at the St Abb's Head Nature Centre. To reach the bus stop in St Abbs, walk down the B6438 Coldingham–St Abbs road or take the clear path into the centre of St Abbs village.

THE WALK

Set out eastwards along the signed coastal path and reach the cliffs in five minutes. To the south you can see Burnmouth's harbour and its curious combed rock. Once on the cliffs the way ambles north for 1.4 miles, past cultivated fields to the cliffs' highest point, Fancove Head. In 10 minutes the path reaches the golf course. Ignore a trail that heads off left and continue just over 0.5 miles along the cliffs, to a sign offering



a choice: either turn left towards the clubhouse and then right onto the sealed road to Eyemouth, or continue along the cliffs. Along the latter, beware of wayward golf balls at the seventh tee sign. Cross the course and exit through an opening in the wall. Turn right onto the sealed road to Eyemouth, joining the alternative route.

After a hairpin turn you reach Eyemouth's fish market. Keep the lifeboat station and **Gungreen House** – a renowned 18th-century smuggler's house – off to the left, cross a footbridge and continue along the quayside. At a road junction turn right towards **Eyemouth** and in 200m you reach Manse Rd and the TIC a few steps away. Continue along the harbour road and turn left onto the maritime walkway bordering the half-moon beach. Turn right at the swimming pool and go down to the beach. Leave it after 100m by a flight of steps up to the caravan park. About 50m further on, leave the coast path by turning right to inspect two rusting cannons at **Eyemouth Fort**, reminders of Eyemouth's past importance as a military centre in Borders' conflicts.

Follow the contour of the red sandstone cliffs west. The trail rejoins the path bordering the caravan park. Cross a grassy clearing and continue along the cliff edge for

500m; the path swings round to the right, passing above Killiedraught Bay and cultivated fields to the left. Continue straight across the field on the path to a gate and a red sandstone wall between the trail and the cliff edge. Follow the field edge path for 600m to a stile. Cross it then descend steps through a gully to Linkim Shore. Walk along the beach and at the far end go back up to the cliffs. In 15 minutes descend more steps to a pebble beach; cross it then climb out at the other end. Descend again and cross the sandy beach at **Coldingham Bay**, exiting at its northern end to rejoin the obvious trail, which is paved to St Abbs.

Entering St Abbs, a sign directs you left, but continue straight on the road fronting the cliff-side homes. Once you reach a phone box, turn right and then left past the Heritage Museum and church (both left), walking parallel to a high stone wall. At the wall's corner turn right and continue towards the sea and a kissing gate at the entrance to **St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve**. The cliffs soon begin to rise gently, offering splendid views of St Abbs village and Mire Loch from the crest. For the next 20 minutes the path undulates along the cliffs, passing the pebbly beaches of Burnmouth Harbour and Horsecastle Bay, before reach-

ing a summit and, finally, the lighthouse on St Abb's Head appears. Skirt left round the houses near the lighthouse to a sealed road. Turn left and in about 2 miles the road reaches the reserve car park and the nature centre.

MORE WALKS

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY Arthur's Seat & Hart Fell

A classic Moffat Hills walk is the double ascent of Arthur's Seat (731m) and Hart Fell (808m), returning above the Devil's Beef Tub, a steep-walled, enclosed valley. Taking the A701 (north) from Moffat turn right after the Moffat Academy and continue 3 miles to a 'Hart Fell Spa' sign before Ericstane. The moderate-demanding 7.2-mile circular route ascends steeply along Auchencat Burn, past the purportedly medicinal waters of Hart Fell Spa and up to the ridge crest. Continue northeast, reaching first Hart Fell then Arthur's Seat. The trail then uses the regional border fence to continue west to Whitehope Knowe (614m), Chalk Rig Edge (499m) and Great Hill (466m). Overlooking Devil's Beef Tub, look for the southbound trail to reach Corehead and Ericstane. OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 78 covers this walk.

THE BORDERS John Muir Way

Dunbar, a small coastal town in East Lothian, has been at the centre of the awakening of interest in one of Scotland's least-recognised famous sons, John Muir. Acknowledged in the USA, his adopted home, as the 'Father of National Parks', his name is perpetuated by the John Muir Trust (p31). Muir was born in Dunbar in April 1838; his birthplace houses an excellent **visitor centre** (☎ 01368 865899; www.jmbt.org.uk) featuring his passionate evocation of the importance of preserving wilderness areas. The John Muir Country Park, on the western side of the town, is a small, more-or-less-natural oasis along the coast with a scenic 2-mile cliff-top path.

The John Muir Way, a coastal path of approximately 50 miles, will eventually link Cockburnspath (at the end of the Southern Upland Way, p65) and Edinburgh. By

mid-2006 two sections were open: Musselburgh to Aberlady (18.6 miles/25.2km) and Dunbar to Dunglass (10 miles/16km). While you can't help but wonder what Muir would think of a path that passes through or very close to two power stations (one of them nuclear) and an unsightly quarry, the route does offer plenty of varied, often scenic, coastal walking. Long-distance enthusiasts will probably be lured by the prospect of walking from Portpatrick on the southwest coast to Edinburgh, combining the Southern Upland and John Muir Ways, a distance of around 260 miles. The best parts of the Dunbar-to-Dunglass section are between Dunbar and Barns Ness, and between Thorntonloch and Dunglass. For copies of the superbly illustrated leaflets (with maps), contact **East Lothian Council** (☎ 01620 827199; www.eastlothian.gov.uk) or drop into the **Dunbar TIC** (☎ 01368 863353; www.dunbar.org.uk; 143 High St) or John Muir's birthplace.

St Cuthbert's Way

St Cuthbert was a 7th-century Celtic saint whose vocation with the church began at Melrose in AD 650. He was eventually appointed Bishop of Lindisfarne (Holy Island), just off the Northumberland coast in England. For Cuthbert, walking was a time for peaceful contemplation.

St Cuthbert's Way links Melrose (p80) and Lindisfarne in a route of great variety and interest, passing through places associated with Cuthbert's life and ministry. It crosses the Eildon Hills and the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland National Park, follows sections of the beautiful Tweed and Teviot Rivers and part of the ancient Roman road, Dere Street, and traverses fertile farmland. At low tide you can cross to Lindisfarne by the causeway or by the Pilgrims' Route across the sands. The route is waymarked with the Way's Celtic cross logo. There's a reasonable supply of accommodation along the way.

The distance of 62.5 miles (100.5km) includes 1200m of ascent. It could be walked in four days but you'll probably need to allow five or six to fit in with safe crossing times to Lindisfarne. The Way links with the Pennine Way at Kirk Yetholm and the Southern Upland Way at Melrose, thus making possible a grand long-distance walk.

SHORT WALKS

It's uphill all the way to **Broad Law** (840m), the highest summit in the Borders, in a wonderful area of big, rolling, steep-sided hills and deep glens. Allow 2½ hours for this 4.7-mile (7.6km) moderate walk. It starts and finishes at the Megget Stone on the narrow minor road linking Tweedsmuir and St Mary's Loch (p69). The nearest towns are Moffat (p74) and Broughton (p77). Take OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 72.

Just follow the walkers' path paralleling a fence line, generally northwards from the road, up through heather moorland and grass to the flattish summit. The view includes the lowlands to the north, Eildon Hills to the southeast, St Mary's Loch, White Coomb and much, much more. Retrace your steps to return.

From near Peebles you can follow the delightful riverbank **Tweed Walk** and take in an easy ascent to a fine viewpoint over the valley. This easy-moderate walk of 4.5 miles (7.1km) takes 2½ hours and starts and finishes from the river-side car park in Peebles (p76). You'll need the *Walks Around Peebles* booklet from the TIC and/or OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 73.

From the car park on the south side of the river, cross the river and follow the Tweed Walk river-bank path upstream, through Hay Wood Park, past imposing Neidpath Castle, under an old railway viaduct and on to a road. Turn left (southeast), cross Manor Bridge then, in 100m, turn left (northeast) to cross Old Manor Brig. Follow the quiet road up to Manor Sware viewpoint. Opposite a small car park and picnic area, turn left (west) into the forest and bear left down a path. Ignore two paths to the right and descend steeply to meet a wider path. Turn right, follow the path down past the end of the viaduct then along the river bank. Continue along a paved path from near Fotheringham Bridge to the road bridge near the car park.

The official trail guide, *St Cuthbert's Way* by Roger Smith and Ron Shaw, comprises a detailed guidebook and a 1:40,000 Harvey map. The OS Landranger 1:50,000 maps are Nos 73, 74 and 75.

Information about accommodation is available from **VisitScotland Borders** (☎ 0870 608 0404; www.visitscottishborders.com) and the **Berwick-upon-Tweed TIC** (☎ 01289 330733; www.berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk). For public transport details go to **Traveline** (☎ 0870 608 2608; www.travelinescotland.com). Vital information about safe crossing times to Lindisfarne is available from **Wooler TIC** (☎ 01668 282123) and is displayed there out of hours – tide times are given for the coming fortnight.

Borders Abbeys Way

This 65-mile (105km) circular route connects the towns of Kelso, Jedburgh, Melrose and Dryburgh, each with a superbly preserved 12th-century abbey. The route, which divides easily into five sections, follows paths, tracks and quiet roads and is clearly waymarked with a distinctive AW logo. There are many other interesting historical features along the way, which also passes through the town of Hawick. A set of five information-rich leaflets, each with a detailed map covering the Way, is available from local TICs; alternatively, contact **VisitScotland Borders** (☎ 0870 608 0404; www.visit-scottishborders.com).