

“Cardoness Castle” walk

about 2 miles

A gentle stroll with a short steep hill climb to get an overview of Gatehouse

Start the walk opposite the Fleet Valley Nursing Home on Fleet Street

Head westwards along Fleet Street and follow the road out of town.

After the first bend, on the left, you can probably make out some of the old river meanders which made it difficult to reach the harbour at Boatgreen. These meanders still fill with water at very high tides.

The river was straightened here in the early 1800s.

Continue round the next bend and take the opening on the left, which leads down to the river. This was the new harbour '**Port MacAdam**' built in 1836. There is an information board to study.

Follow the footpath to the right.

This part of the river was straightened in 1823 avoiding many of the meanders and allowing larger ships to reach the port. A large amount of fertile farmland was reclaimed on the opposite bank.

After about 400m the path turns right, At this point there is an information board on the left which gives details of the old swing bridge which crossed the river.

Rejoin the road which leads back to Gatehouse.

Where this riverside walk meets the road back to Gatehouse there is the entrance to Cardoness Castle which has been closed for some years awaiting funding to check it's structural integrity.

It was built in the 15th century, and at that the time the sea levels were higher and the castle had an excellent defensive position. Across the valley, near Cally, there was a similar stone keep - Cally Castle - but now only a few stones of this castle remain on Cally Golf Course.

Head back towards Gatehouse.

At a raised level and to your left is a blue and white house in the distance - **Little Boreland**. The area around here is part of Boreland of Anwoth farm, (The farm is beyond the castle on the main road.) Each parish in this area had a '**boreland**' - believed to be where the administrator of the area, known as a steward, was given free boarding when he came to collect taxes around the 14th century. The Stewart family held this position for many years. which gave rise to the official name for the old County of Kirkcudbright as the '**Stewartry of Kirkcudbright**'. There were other areas in Scotland known as 'stewartries' but this area is the only one to retain the name - but now only as a district within the Dumfries & Galloway Region.

Continue back towards Gatehouse but stop where the road takes a right angle to the right.

You are now at the bottom of **Vennie Hill**. There is a gate and a footpath up the steep hill leading up to a viewpoint. It has an information board naming points of interest in the panoramic view..



After you come back down Vennie Hill, walk the 200m or so along the lane to the left.

The house facing you at the far end of this 200m lane was built as the **Free Church Manse** (the church beside Fleet Bridge, now known as the **Rutherford Hall**).

Just before you reach this house, on the right, is the site of the old **town brickworks**.

The road up the hill on the left was one of the paths used by people who lived in Gatehouse to walk to Anwoth Church, about a mile away.

This path also leads to the **Rutherford Monument** ($\frac{1}{2}$ a mile) which remembers Samuel Rutherford (a famous minister of Anwoth), the **Millenium Memorial** naming ministers of Girthon and Anwoth parishes and also passes **Trusty's Hill**, ($\frac{1}{3}$ a mile), the remains of an iron age fort, with a Celtic carving. There are good views of the Fleet valley and beyond from the top of the hill.



Turn round and retrace your steps to the foot of Vennie Hill.

This completes the Cardoness Castle walk – we hope you found it interesting.

Margaret Wright

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