paths around Melrose

Our Scottish Borders
Your destination

£2.00
How To Get There
Melrose is well served by public transport, with regular buses to and from a number of towns in the Scottish Borders. Connections are available to Edinburgh, Carlisle, Berwick upon Tweed and other places. For the motorist, Melrose is easily reached from either the A7 or A68 via the A6091. Car parking is available in the town.
Introduction
This booklet describes eleven circular walks in the Melrose area, nine of them starting from the town centre. The walks vary from easy strolls exploring local villages to more strenuous hikes into the nearby hills: if you glance at the summaries for each walk you will see distances and a brief description of the route. The walks include much of historical and natural interest; some notes are supplied in the text, and further information is available from the Visitor Information Centre in Melrose or from other outlets. Melrose is an excellent area for walking, whose main features are the Eildon Hills and the River Tweed. However, there are many other places to explore and this booklet will help you to discover this beautiful part of the Borders.

Melrose
The history of Melrose and its satellite villages of Darnick, Gattonside and Newstead is one of dispute, warfare and, surprisingly, an overall sense of peace and well-being! Set between the grandeur of the Eildon Hills and the renowned River Tweed, its lands and buildings have been settled, fought-over, sacked and re-settled a number of times in the last 2000 years or so of habitation. From the Roman occupation at Trimontium, through significant changes in the Middle Ages coupled with a constant threat and occasional invasion from both north and south, the town has survived to this day with a legacy of fine buildings, mostly still intact. Many of its inhabitants, including Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford together with prominent names in the fields of science, discovery and sport, have contributed greatly to Melrose’s name being widely known around the world.

Walkers are Welcome
In August 2010, Melrose was awarded ‘Walkers are Welcome’ status becoming the first town in the Scottish Borders to be recognized as a place which has something special to offer walkers. Obtaining WaW status brings a number of benefits as the criteria required to join the growing network of WaW towns include those designed to benefit walkers, local services and the general visitor.

This will help to strengthen the reputation of Melrose as a place for visitors to come and enjoy the outdoors bringing benefits to the local economy.

Access in Scotland
The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code came into effect in February 2005. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act establishes a statutory right of responsible
access to land and inland waters for outdoor recreation, crossing land, and some educational and commercial purposes. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code gives detailed guidance on your responsibilities when exercising access rights and if you are managing land and water. The Act sets out where and when access rights apply. The Code defines how access rights should be exercised responsibly.

General Advice
Before setting off on longer walks, always check the weather forecast and prepare yourself accordingly, but remember that weather conditions can change rapidly. Remember that hot weather, causing sunburn and/or dehydration, can be just as debilitating as rain or snow. Always carry adequate cover for your body in all conditions.

On longer hill walks you should always wear or carry good waterproofs, proper walking boots, windproof clothing, and take food and drink with you. These provisions may not be necessary on the shorter, low level walks, but a light waterproof and refreshments are still worth taking, just in case. When out on the hills a map and compass should be carried to aid navigation.

Take great care when walking on country roads.

- Pavements or paths should be used if provided.
- If there is no pavement or path, walk on the right-hand side of the road so that you can see oncoming traffic. You should take extra care and
  - be prepared to walk in single file, especially on narrow roads or in poor light,
  - keep close to the side of the road.
It may be safer to cross the road well before a sharp right-hand bend (so that oncoming traffic has a better chance of seeing you). Cross back after the bend.
- Help other road users to see you. Wear or carry something light coloured, bright or fluorescent in poor daylight conditions.

Know the Code before you go...
Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors - responsibly!

Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors! Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The key things are:

When you’re in the outdoors:
- take personal responsibility for your own actions and act safely;
- respect people’s privacy and peace of mind;
- help land managers and others to work safely and effectively;
- care for your environment and take your litter home;
- keep your dog under proper control;
- take extra care if you’re organising an event or running a business.

When you’re managing the outdoors:
- respect access rights;
- act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations;
- work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management;
- respect rights of way and customary access;

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or telephoning your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.
**Toilet Facilities**
There are public toilets on Abbey Street (between the Abbey and the Square).

**Livestock**
The paths in this booklet pass through livestock farming areas. Please remember that the farmer’s livelihood may depend on the rearing and sale of livestock, and always behave responsibly. Dogs can be a particular concern for farmers during lambing time (March – May) and when cows are calving (Spring & Autumn). Dogs therefore should not be taken into fields where there are young livestock. This includes all young livestock such as lambs, calves and foals. In more open countryside where lambs are present, keep your dog on a short lead. Disturbance at this time can separate young livestock from their mothers leaving them cold, hungry and exposed to predators.

Dogs should also not be taken into fields of cattle when they have calves, as the cows see a dog as a threat and may attack it and you. Go into a neighbouring field or onto adjacent land. There is the possibility of encountering lambs and calves on walks 4, 9, 10 and 11. During the bird breeding season (April – June) keep your dog under close control or on a short lead in ground nesting areas. Without a dog, if you go quietly through livestock areas, keeping a safe distance from stock and watching them carefully, you should experience little or no difficulty.

Please leave gates as you find them and ensure that if you have to open a gate, you close it securely behind you. Thank you for your co-operation, which will help to ensure that these walks are available for those who follow in your footsteps in future years.

**Health Warning!**
Infections from animals can cause serious human illness. Stay safe from diseases when out in the countryside by:

a. Washing hands with soap & water (or use wet wipes) after visiting the toilet, after activities, touching animals and before handling, cooking and eating food
b. Taking care to avoid spreading animal faeces on footwear
c. Avoiding camping or having a picnic on land which has recently been used for grazing animals
d. Not drinking untreated water from rivers, streams and lochs
e. Avoiding tick bites, cover legs when walking through long vegetation

Contact the Public Health Department for more information 01896 825560
Waymarking and Maps
The routes are often waymarked with the distinctive yellow and black ‘Melrose Paths’ discs. Where paths follow other waymarked walking routes (see below), the discs have not normally been used.

The Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger or 1:25,000 Explorer maps should be used in conjunction with this booklet so that walkers can identify the hills and other points of interest, as these are too numerous to include in the format of a booklet.

Other Routes
- The Southern Upland Way
- St. Cuthbert’s Way
- The Borders Abbeys Way

Information on these and other routes is available from VisitScotland and at the Visitor Information Centre. See Contact Information at back of booklet.

Scottish Borders Festival of Walking
The Scottish Borders Festival of Walking, a week long celebration of walking and the countryside, was the first of its kind in Scotland and has been held annually since 1995. It usually takes place in September and the host town rotates to give a different choice of walks each year. Further details are available from VisitScotland.

Walk it
Walk it is the Paths to Health Project in the Scottish Borders and aims to encourage people to take up walking as part of a healthier lifestyle. Our walks are usually short and easy though the routes can sometimes involve rough paths and low level gradients. You will find the Walk it logo on routes 1, 2 and 7. We have chosen these walks for their length and level gradient. For information telephone 01835 825060

Cauldshiels
Route 1

Newstead Circular

**Start and finish:** Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.

**Distance:** 3 miles/5km, with optional extension of 1/2 km.

**Time:** Allow 1 1/2 hours.

**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches can be muddy. Often flat, but with one moderate climb. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.

**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

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**walkit**

1. From the start point, take the tarmac path to the right of the Abbey graveyard (Priorswalk) and follow this path, turning left after a footbridge, to reach a housing estate. Go straight ahead for about 150 metres, then turn left along a narrow path in front of a small row of houses. Follow this path for 800 metres until reaching the road on the edge of Newstead.

2. Turn left and walk to the road junction, then go straight on along Main Street into the village. Newstead, according to local tradition, is the oldest inhabited village in Scotland. However, the name suggests that it was a “new stead” or farm dating the early mediaeval period. The Romans occupied nearby Trimontium intermittently from the 1st to 3rd centuries.
AD. The village was the home of the masons who built Melrose Abbey in the early 12th century and Priorswalk was their route between Newstead and the Abbey.

3. For an attractive short extension to the walk, at the bends in the road, turn left up Eddy Road and follow a track, then a path to the bank of the River Tweed. On the way, there is evidence of how the Tweed has changed its course over the centuries. What was formerly a deep pool and eddy is now a meadow, but it is still known locally as the Eddy. Retrace your route back into Newstead.

4. At the top of the village, turn right along Hazeldean Road and go straight on to a gravel driveway, then immediately bear left along a path. At the first path junction, turn left, then left again. Go through a kissing gate and under the subway to another kissing gate.

5. Turn left along the path going up the hill. At the path junction turn right and reach the road at the Rhymer’s Stone. Thomas the Rhymer or Thomas of Ercildoune lived sometime between 1220 and 1297. He was thought to have the gift of prophecy and many of his predictions came true over the years. His Stone marks the reputed site of the Eildon Tree. Just down the road, a display board illustrates Thomas’s tryst with the Queen of the Fairies and all that flowed from that historic meeting!

6. Turn right down the road (now closed to through traffic), passing Wairds Cemetery. This was a joint burial ground for Melrose and Newtown St Boswells and contains the grave of Ned Haig, the originator of seven-a-side rugby. At the end of the road, carefully cross the bypass at the crossing point provided, then follow the High Road back towards the Market Square through the East Port, the historic eastern entrance gate to the town. At the Market Square go right down Abbey Street back to the start point.
**Darnick and Gattonside**

**Start and finish:** Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.

**Distance:** 4 1/2 miles / 7km.

**Time:** Allow 2-2 1/2 hours.

**Terrain:** Roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches could be muddy after rain. Mostly flat or gently sloping. No special footwear needed when not muddy.

**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

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**Route 2**

1. From the start point, turn right onto Buccleuch Street. At the end of the street, turn right onto High Street and go past Melrose rugby ground. Cross the road when safe to do so and continue uphill to where the road forks. Go straight ahead along High Cross Avenue towards Darnick. Pass St. Cuthbert’s (or High Cross) Church on your left. The ‘High Cross’, which used to be sited nearby, was where pilgrims coming from the west caught their first sight of Melrose Abbey. On your right lies Holy Trinity Church, which was designed in the mid-1840s by the famous architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, who was also responsible for Liverpool Cathedral.

2. After reaching Darnick and crossing Huntly Burn, turn right on Aldie Crescent, then right again at the junction (Tower Road).

Follow Tower Road until reaching the junction with Fisher’s Lane, then turn left past Darnick Tower. The original Darnick Tower was built in 1425, but destroyed by English raiders in 1545. It was rebuilt in 1569 by the Heiton family out of local red sandstone and is still occupied today.

3. Turn right at the road through Darnick and continue to the T-junction with the main road. Darnick is a traditional Scottish village with winding streets and narrow lanes. A tile yard, near to Darnick and the property of the monastery, produced and supplied tiles and pottery for Melrose Abbey. Cross the main road carefully and head for a pair of metal gates to the left of the driveway to the Waverley Castle Hotel. The Hotel was completed in 1871 and is one of the earliest mass concrete buildings in Scotland.
4. Follow the tarmac track, then go straight ahead on a grassy track with a house on the right and through the gate at the end. This area is known as Skirmish Field and was the site, in 1526, of a battle between King James V’s supporters and many of the renowned Border families. Turn left and follow the riverbank path, now the Southern Upland Way, which eventually meets a road. Turn right along the pavement and follow the road down, carefully crossing the river by Lowood Bridge (also known locally as ‘Bottle Brig’, as a bottle was built into the stonework during construction). An older bridge was built in the 16th century on a site nearby.

5. Turn right towards Gattonside at the road junction and walk along the pavement, eventually rejoining the Southern Upland Way. Where the road bends to the left, go straight ahead on a path to the right of a cottage and an entrance driveway and down to the riverbank. Follow this path for about 800 metres, until reaching a path on the left, just before an open field.

6. Follow the path through the trees, then alongside a hedge until reaching a small road. Across the fields to the left lies Gattonside House, built between 1808 and 1811 in the neo-classical style of the period. Turn right, then left at the first junction, Hoebridge Road West, into the village of Gattonside. Gattonside enjoys a remarkable and well-documented history, including being the site of the orchard of Melrose Abbey. Gattonside was given to the Abbey by King David I in 1143. Place names such as Friar’s Close, Abbot’s Meadow and the Vineyard still remain around the village. Famous former residents include Sir David Brewster, the inventor of the kaleidoscope.

7. At the main road turn right, then right again after 100 metres, down Hoebridge Road East. Follow this road past the Hoebridge Inn, then left along Bridge Road to reach the Chain Bridge. Hoebridge was once the home of Dr William Turner, assistant surgeon at the Battle of Trafalgar and now buried in the Abbey churchyard. Cross the bridge and turn left at the Toll House along a small road. At the junction with the main road, cross to the pavement and go right, following the road back past Melrose Abbey to the starting point.
Route 3

Gattonside Circular

Start and finish: Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.
Distance: $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles/5$\frac{1}{2}$ km.
Time: Allow 1-1$\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
Terrain: Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches could be muddy after rain. Often flat, but with one moderate climb. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.
Toilets: Abbey Street, near car park.

1. From the start point, turn right onto Buccleuch Street. At the end of the street, turn right onto High Street and go past Melrose rugby ground to the junction with St. Mary’s Road.

2. Cross St. Mary’s Road and follow the tarmac path to the right of Melrose Parish Church and past the war memorial. Follow the path down towards the River Tweed to meet the Southern Upland Way (SUW) at the cauld. The cauld was built to divert the water from the river to the Abbey Mill. Turn right and follow the SUW along a tarmac path, across the Chain Bridge, then immediately left along a path on the riverbank. The suspension bridge was built in 1826 to avoid having to ford the river. Tolls were payable and the Toll House still stands at the southern end. The original notices can still be read on the bridge itself. Major repair work to strengthen the bridge was undertaken in 1991.

3. Follow the path upstream along the riverbank, which is fringed with alder, aspen and willow and where birds such as mallard, goosander and grey heron can be seen. After leaving the river to reach the road, turn left (still on the SUW), then right up an old lane for 500 metres to reach a road junction.

4. Leaving the SUW, turn right up the road that leads past Gattonside Mains Farm and down towards the village of Gattonside. As you turn down the hill to the village, on your left is ‘Castle Field’. This name may derive from the discovery in the 19th century of the foundations of a building thought to be a castle. Follow the narrow, winding road (The Loan) to reach the main road through the village. For information about Gattonside, see Walk 2.
5. Cross the main road, bearing right, then immediately turn left into Hoebridge Road West at Pink Cottage. Follow this road to a T-junction, turn left and then shortly right into Bridge Road, passing Gattonside’s war memorial, to reach the Chain Bridge again.

6. Cross the bridge and turn left at the Toll House along a small road. At the junction with the main road, cross to the pavement and go right, following the road back past Melrose Abbey to the starting point.

Chain Bridge
Confluence of time and place,
Latticed walkway spanning water,
Grand conjunction, iron, steel, space.

Symmetry of line and grace
Arcing, one side to another.
Confluence of time and place.

Buttressed, staunch in winter’s face,
Securely chained, defying weather,
Grand conjunction, iron, steel, space.

Walkers on this path retrace
The footsteps of Cistercian brothers.
Confluence of time and place.

Watchful parents’ safe embrace
Encircles children, netting summer.
Grand conjunction, iron, steel, space.

For older folk, a source of solace,
A flirting ground for younger lovers.
Confluence of time and place.
Grand conjunction, iron, steel, space.

M.L.
**Housebyres**

**Start and finish:** Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.  
**Distance:** 8 miles/12 1/2 km (or shorter option of 6 miles/9 1/2 km).  
**Time:** Allow 4 hours.  
**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches could be muddy after rain. Moderate gradients in places. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

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1-3 This Walk is an extension of Route 3, the directions for which can be followed until reaching point 4.

4 At the road junction go straight ahead on the Southern Upland Way (SUW) and follow this road, leaving the SUW at the first bend, for about 2 1/2 km, passing Wester Housebyres. To the left are good views across the Tweed Valley towards Galashiels. The fine beech hedges along this road are a common feature in the Borders, despite the species not being native to this part of the country. Buzzards can often be seen and heard circling above, on the lookout for food such as rabbits and smaller animals, as you walk through the rolling farmland.

5 For a shorter walk, at the end of the tarmac road turn sharp right and follow the track through to meet the SUW at point 7 and turn right.

Otherwise, continue straight on along a stone track passing the Byres Lochs. These lochs were constructed in the late 1990s to benefit wildlife, fishing and the local landscape. Follow the track past...
the lochs and up into higher, rougher grassland. Pass to the left of an attractive loch, Stoney Knowes Moss, where much bird life can be seen, including black-headed gull, oystercatcher, lapwing and various species of duck. The wetter, rushy areas are excellent habitats for a variety of plants and insects, complementing the rough grassland and stretches of open water.

6 At a gate the SUW is rejoined. To the north the SUW continues on a fine undulating track to Lauder along the line of an old mediaeval track, Malcolm’s Road. Turn sharp right and follow the path to the right of the dry stone wall, across farmland and, eventually, past a converted steading.

7 Continue south down the SUW with excellent views of the River Tweed and the Eildon Hills. On a clear day, the hills of Ettrick Forest can be seen in the distance to the south-west, and these hills are crossed by the SUW. The track eventually rejoins the road. Bear left and, at the junction ahead, turn left up the hill and follow the rest of Walk 3 from point 4.
**Route 5**

**Abbotsford**

**Start and finish:** Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.  
**Distance:** 6 miles / 10 km.  
**Time:** Allow 3 hours.  
**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches could be muddy after rain. Mostly flat or gently sloping. No special footwear needed when not muddy.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

1. From the starting point, go up Abbey Street and cross the Market Square. Pass to the left of the library, then turn right towards Melrose Station. Pass the building on the tarmac path, and then follow the path along the former railway line. There are views across the fields to the village of Darnick, Darnick Tower and the Waverley Castle Hotel.

2. After 1 1/2 km, the path ends at a subway under the by-pass. Turn right, then left up a narrow lane (Lye Road). On the right, you pass Darnick Community Woodland, planted with a variety of native trees and shrubs and a haven for wildlife. Short circular walks can be had in and around the woodland area and village. At the road, turn left over the bridge and follow the quiet, hedgerow-lined road through attractive countryside, with good views across the river towards Tweedbank, Galashiels and the hills beyond.

3. At a road junction after a small broadleaf wood on the left, this Walk joins the Borders Abbeys Way (BAW). Go straight on, past more woodland where coppiced...
trees can be seen. Coppicing is the ancient practice of cutting trees and shrubs down to just above ground level to provide a crop of wood. Cutting the trees back encourages new shoots to grow and gradually the tree spreads outwards. This stump of several shoots is known as a ‘stool’. Follow the BAW until the road drops down to emerge near the entrance to Abbotsford. Abbotsford House (originally a farm named Cartleyhole) was built and lived in by Sir Walter Scott between 1812-1832. The house is open from mid-March to the end of October, and there is a tea room that can be visited without paying the admission fee for the house.

4. Continue on the BAW down an old lane, heading towards a former ford crossing of the Tweed. Before the river, bear right along a wide track passing under the modern road bridge. Follow the BAW along the river, under the Redbridge viaduct and past Lowood House to finally reach the road at the Lowood Bridge.

5. Cross the road when safe to do so and follow the pavement uphill, until the BAW (now also the Southern Upland Way) follows a path on the left, down to, then along the side of the Tweed. The River Tweed is approximately 156km (97 miles) in length and drains about 4000 square kilometres of southern Scotland and northern Northumberland. The Tweed is internationally famous for its fishing and more Atlantic salmon are caught on it than on any other river in the European Union. Eventually, after passing Melrose Bowling Club and an information shelter for the Southern Upland Way, turn right on the path towards Melrose town centre and past Melrose Parish Church. Turn left on High Street, past Melrose Rugby Football Club, left at Buccleuch Street and back to the starting point.

Sir Walter Scott (1771 – 1832)
Scott was a prolific Scottish historical novelist and poet. He was the first English-language author to have an international career during his lifetime. His poems and novels are still read and many of his works remain classics. Famous titles include Rob Roy, Ivanhoe, The Lady of the Lake, Waverley and The Bride of Lammermoor.

In 1771 Scott was born in Edinburgh, his father was a solicitor. During Scott’s early childhood he suffered a bout of polio which left him lame. To cure his lameness he was sent in 1773 to live in the Scottish Borders at his grandparents’ home at Sandyknowe Farm, next to Smalholm Tower.

After finishing school in Edinburgh he was sent to stay for six months with his aunt in Kelso. Here he attended the local Grammar School where he met James Ballantyne who later became his business partner and printed his books.

In 1799 Walter Scott was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire and he and his family moved to the Borders, initially to Ashiestiel near Caddonfoot and then in 1812 to Cartleyhole farmhouse which he later renamed Abbotsford: a ford across the River Tweed used in olden days by the abbots of Melrose suggested the name. The house that now exists was built in stages over a period of 6 years and was completed in 1824. More land was purchased until Scott owned nearly 1,000 acres.

Sir Walter Scott was created a Baronet in 1820 by King George IV. On his death in 1832 he was buried beside his wife at Dryburgh Abbey.

Five months after his death the house was opened to the public and has been enjoyed by visitors ever since. Abbotsford now stands as a national monument to Scott and contains an impressive collection of historic relics, weapons and armour, and a library containing over 9,000 rare volumes. At the time of writing plans are in place to develop new interpretative and educational facilities in a new visitor centre. For details, visit www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk
The Eildon Hills have so much to offer naturalists, historians, geologists or walkers who simply want to breathe the heather-scented air and enjoy the magnificent panorama of the Borders. Views from Berwick to Ettrick Pen and from Cheviot to Soutra encompass many of Sir Walter Scott’s favourite haunts. All nature lovers and respecters of the countryside are welcome to these romantic hills which are so full of legend and history, and to share their delights with the grouse and the roe deer, the fox and the skylark – all within a few minutes’ walk of Melrose Abbey.” Introduction by His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury to the booklet prepared and published by The Scottish Wildlife Trust in 1976.
**Route 6**

**The Eildon Hills Path**

**Start and finish:** Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street or adjacent car park.

**Distance:** 4 miles / 6 1/2 km.

**Time:** Allow 2 - 2 1/2 hours.

**Terrain:** Paths and tracks mainly. Some paths are narrow and can be muddy. Steep gradient on Eildon Hill North. Boots are recommended.

**Toilets:** Abbey Street near car park

1. From the start point, take the tarmac path to the right of the Abbey graveyard signposted as the Borders Abbeys Way and follow this path, turning left after a footbridge, to reach a housing estate. Go straight ahead for about 150 metres and then turn left along a narrow path in front of a small row of houses. Follow this path (Priorswalk) for 800 metres until reaching the road on the edge of Newstead.

2. Turn left, then right up a lane on the Borders Abbeys Way. Follow the waymarked route under the Melrose bypass and up a double hedged track to the old main road between Melrose and Newtown St Boswells. From here you can turn left to visit the Rhymer’s stone (see Route 1) and return, or turn right and then left on the Eildon Hills Path up towards the summit of North Hill.

3. At the top of the track that emerges onto the open ground and the hills, go through the gate.

   (At this point other paths traverse the hillside of North Hill which provide the opportunity for alternative routes to be followed in the hills. Once on the hills, so long as you exercise responsible access by following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, you may find your own routes, viewpoints and picnic spots).

   From the gate follow the Eildon Hills Path as it continues uphill towards the summit of North Hill.

   The path does become very steep in places and care should be taken as you climb the hill.

4. At the summit of North Hill enjoy the views. Around the summit area you may be able to see small flattened areas where there were the sites of circular huts during the Iron Age period some 2000 years ago.

5. Descend North Hill by the main wide track – please note that descending by other routes may cause erosion. Look out for the ramparts of the Iron Age fort. These ditches and banks form three lines across the hill.

6. You will reach the saddle between North Hill and Mid Hill

   (Here you have the opportunity to explore the hills. Paths allow you to follow routes around the slopes of Mid
Hill and on to the top of Wester Hill and Little Hill. The path to the summit of Mid Hill is steep and involves areas of loose scree.

To reach Wester Hill and Little Hill go left following St Cuthbert’s Way until you reach a wide track going to the right. Follow this track until you come out in an open area where you now have a choice of routes to the summit of Wester Hill and Little Hill.

To return to the saddle retrace your steps. Alternatively follow the path from Little Hill that traverses around the west slopes of Mid Hill. Stay on this path as it contours around the hill to eventually meet St Cuthbert’s Way and the Eildon Hills Path back at the saddle.)

Here descend on the Eildon Hills Path and St Cuthbert’s Way towards Melrose.

7. Just before the gate at the bottom of the open hill you meet another path which traverses the lower slopes of North Hill. (Following this will lead you back to Point 3). To return to Melrose continue down the edge of a field, across a track and down the edge of another field. Wooden steps lead you back on to Dingleton Road and down to Market Square in the town centre.

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**The Eildon Hills**

**Geology and Geography**

It is very tempting to think of the Eildon Hills as long-dead volcanoes but in fact only Little Hill between Mid and Wester Hills, together with Chiefswood Quarry, are true volcanic vents.

The three main hills are the eroded remains of separate outpourings of lava, which erupted some 350 million years ago from Little Hill and neighbouring vents which are now concealed. Thus, sadly, are discredited those tales of Michael Scott, the famous wizard of the 13th century who, according to Border legend, clove the head of Eildon into three – perhaps, however, a romantic tale well worth preserving! Similarly, the belief that King Arthur and his men lie resting under the Hills, ready to spring to the defence of Melrose and the surrounding countryside in time of trouble or need must be treated in like-fashion.

The Hills are composed of fairly-acid rocks which in turn have eroded to produce acidic soils. As a result, much of the area is covered with heath vegetation including heather moor, blaeberry, wavy hair grass, gorse and rock screes. Because Little Hill is made of more basic rock, it supports different vegetation including many herbs. The lower slopes hold the older sedimentary rocks of the Borders, which are more fertile than the volcanic material and capable of supporting agriculture, grazing and forestry undertakings.

On a clear day, of which there are many, the views from the top of any Eildon are stunning. To the north lie the Lammermuir and Moorfoot Hills, to the west the hills of Upper Tweeddale, and to the south the Cheviots forming the border with England. On the summit of Mid Hill (1385 feet/420m) there is a viewpoint indicator, erected in 1927 at a cost of £140, raised by public subscription, bearing the dedication “to
the memory of Sir Walter Scott. From this spot he was wont to view and point the glories of the Borderland”

**History**

There is some evidence that prehistoric peoples regarded the Eildon Hills as a holy place. They deposited offerings of bronze axes at their base and water still springs from the ground at holy wells dedicated to Christian Saints but which are likely to have their origins in older religious beliefs.

In the 10th century BC, Bronze Age people built circular huts, enclosed by a rampart 1.5km in circumference, on North Hill. Nearly 300 hut platforms survive implying that people assembled here in large numbers although there is no convenient water supply and weather conditions can be severe.

Although traditionally regarded as one of Scotland’s two largest hill forts, the huge enclosure may have been mainly symbolic and, therefore, it is unlikely that a permanent settlement existed here. More probably, it was a focus for communal gatherings and may have provided opportunity for the dispersed population to meet for ceremonial occasions.

This importance as a communal focus seems to have persisted, for it is surely no coincidence that one of the most important Roman forts north of Hadrian’s Wall was built in the valley below and the military road north from the legionary fortress of Eboracum (York) was brought to the very foot of the Hills at Trimontium near Newstead. Further support for this theory followed excavations on the top of North Hill which uncovered postholes inside a surviving circular ditch, likely evidence of a Roman signal tower or, possibly, a shrine.

![Mid Hill](image)

**Wildlife**

On the poorer acidic soils on the hilltops grow heather, mostly ling and some bell, and blaeberry. Here live a few pairs of red grouse which depend on the heather for food. They are difficult to spot but, more often, can be located by their characteristic ‘goback, goback’ call and distinctive wing-beat in flight. Alongside can be found the common small brown meadow pipit and, above, circling kestrels and buzzards on the hunt for small mammals. The richer soils of Little Hill, a large variety of flowering plants can be found including birdsfoot trefoil, wild thyme and mountain pansy.

On the lower slopes, once the likely domain of ancient woodland and subsequently cultivated in the familiar ridge (rig) and furrow formation, gorse has invaded and, although a continuing problem for users, it provides a safe habitat for many small birds such as linnet, dunnock, wren, willow warbler.
as well as cover for rabbits, hares, foxes, badgers, squirrels and moles, voles, shrews and field mice and, to a minor degree, has also encouraged the re-establishment of native tree species. Butterflies, although not in abundance, are regularly recorded, mainly on the south-facing slopes and include Orange Tip, Whites, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Peacock, Common Blue, Small Copper, Meadow Brown and Scotch Argus. Among the hedgerows on the farmland and along the lower edges of the Hills yellowhammer, chaffinch and sparrowhawk can all be seen and, occasionally, roe deer may be observed feeding in the fields and wooded areas on the golf course. Vegetation in this area includes hill grasses, bents, fescues and selective herbs, alongside harebell, sedges, horsetail, vetches and many others together with established areas of bracken and broom, comprising in all over 200 species of ferns and flowering plants scattered throughout the area.

Ownership
The Eildon Hills, which are let as hill grazings, form part of the Eildon Estate of Buccleuch Estates Limited. Although there are several public paths over the Hills, most access routes on the southern side are in constant use for agriculture and forestry. Users are reminded of the continuous need to respect the various land-uses evident in this area, in particular sheep grazing and, at certain time, lambing and the rearing of young lambs, and in recognition of these and the generosity with which the outdoor facilities are offered to all users, every precaution should be taken to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code in all its advisory detail.
**Route 7**

### Around Tweedbank

**Start and finish:** Small parking area or bus stop beside road leading to Lowood Bridge. (Alternative start at Gun Knowe Loch).

**Distance:** 3 miles/4 1/2 km.

**Time:** Allow 2 - 2 1/2 hours.

**Terrain:** Minor roads, mostly good paths and woodland path. One stretch along the river could be muddy after rain. Fairly flat, but with two flights of steps. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.

**Toilets:** None en route.

**Public Transport:** Regular bus services pass the starting point. Ask at Tourist Information Centre for details.

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1. From the starting point, follow the Southern Upland Way along a tarmac path and past a modern office building, which was built to be environmentally-friendly. The green roofing system consists of sedum plants growing in soil. This not only provides a natural habitat for birds, insects and plants but absorbs local nitrates and humidifies the surrounding air. The site also features meadow and wild flower planting. At the road junction, turn left, then right, then left again at the sign for Tweedbank Industrial Estate.

2. At the ‘T’ junction, turn left and when the road bends left cross the grass to join the Solway Woodland Trail. Follow this trail through woodland for approx 1km. Alternatively at the ‘T’ junction go straight ahead past the Outdoor Sports Complex and then follow path straight on. Just before the road go left along the edge of the field to join the woodland trail.

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3. Leave the trail up the steps at the gate and turn right. Cross Tweedbank Drive to join the path around the left-hand side of the Loch. The Loch is man-made, created in the 1970s when Tweedbank was built. It is now home to a variety of waterfowl. At the corner of the Loch, bear left and follow the path between the trees. Near the river where the path meets the Borders Abbeys Way, turn right on a grass path and follow this route along the bank of the River Tweed.

4. Just before the railway viaduct, turn up a flight of steps on the right and turn right on the path at the top. This stone built bridge, the Redbridge Viaduct, was built in the late 1840s to carry the Edinburgh to Hawick railway, later extended to Carlisle and known as the Waverley line. It was the last line in the Borders to be closed to passenger traffic, in the late 1960s. The path is part of the Southern Upland Way and the National Cycle Network Route 1, which runs between Edinburgh and Berwick upon Tweed. Alternatively continue on the Borders Abbey’s Way beside the Tweed to reach Lowood Bridge (as Route 5) and the start point.

5. After 600 metres, turn left up a flight of steps. When reaching a quiet lane, turn right and follow the lane, with good views of the Eildon Hills on the right, back to the starting point.
Newstead Heritage Route

Start and finish: Car parking/bus stop near Trimontium site, eastern end of Newstead. (Alternative start from Melrose.)

Distance: 4½ miles/ 7½ km (extra 3 km/2 miles if starting from Melrose).

Time: Allow 3-4 hours (extra hour if starting from Melrose).

Terrain: Minor roads and mostly good paths, often across open country. Some stretches could be muddy after rain. Steep gradients in places. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.

Toilets: Abbey Street, Melrose (if starting there).

1. From the start point, head towards the village of Newstead. After 300 metres, turn left up Claymires Lane, turn right at the top, then left under the old railway bridge and subway.

2. Follow the well-waymarked Eildon Hills Paths (EHP), past the interpretation panel telling the story of ‘The Queen of the Fairies’ and up towards the Eildon Hills. At the top of the wooded track go straight ahead through the gate and, still on the EHP, continue to climb towards the top of the nearest of the main hills, Eildon Hill North.

3. To avoid the final steep climb, turn left at a waymark post and follow the path to rejoin the Walk at point 4. Otherwise, continue to climb to the broad summit of Eildon Hill North where there is a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside and the other two Eildon summits. Here there is evidence of nearly 300 hut platforms, the earliest of which may date from the 10th century BC. Around 1000 BC, the hilltop was enclosed by a huge rampart. However, it is unlikely that any permanent settlement existed here and it is thought that it was used for ceremonial occasions. Excavations on the summit have also uncovered the likely remains of a Roman signal tower or shrine. Retrace your steps back down to the first waymark post, then bear right along a path heading down towards the woodland on your right.

4. At the next post at a path junction, follow the path downhill on the left-hand side of the trees and go through a gate into the woodland. Continue along a track that turns left and meets the road near Eildon village.

5. Turn left and follow the road (known as Bogleburn road and now closed to vehicles) for 1 km, to the Rhymer’s Stone, the possible site of the Eildon Tree, where Thomas the Rhymer is said to have met the Queen of the Fairies.

6. Turn sharp right at the Stone and along a track past the site of a Roman fortlet and some Roman marching camps, although nothing of them can be seen today. Along the side of the track, can be seen an old beech hedge that was laid many
years ago, resulting in the strange angle at which the bases of the tree trunks are growing. At the end of the track, cross the main road carefully and follow the track towards Broomhill Farm. Go through the farmyard, then up a slope to reach the former railway line on your right.

7. Follow the path along the old railway to reach the site of Trimontium Roman Fort. The interpretation panels and viewpoints of Trimontium give an excellent understanding of the site, helping to discover what life was like in Roman times. Go left at the wooden fort and into a field, then turn right and continue along the field edge to the road.

8. At the road you can turn right and go down to the viewpoint where the three Leaderfoot bridges span the River Tweed. The site of the original Roman river crossing is unknown (crossing the viaduct and turning right leads to a path which follows the Leader Water upstream to Earlston). Retrace your steps up the hill to point 8 and follow the road to the start point at Newstead, passing the Roman amphitheatre and Trimontium Stone on the way.
1. From the start point, take the tarmac path to the right of the Abbey graveyard (Priorswalk/Borders Abbeys Way) and follow this path, turning left after a footbridge, to reach a housing estate. Go straight ahead for about 150 metres, then turn left along a narrow path in front of a small row of houses. Follow this path for 800 metres until reaching the road on the edge of Newstead.

2. Turn left, then right on the Eildon Hills Path (EHP). Follow the waymarked EHW under the Melrose bypass and through to the old main road between Melrose and Newtown St. Boswells.

3. At the top of the track that emerges onto open ground and the hills, go through the gate and bear right. Follow the path, through banks of gorse, a shrub that is both beautiful and aromatic when in flower. There are good views of Melrose and the Tweed valley from this path.

4. After about 1km, the path meets St. Cuthbert’s Way (SCW). Bear left and follow the SCW up and between the two main hills, Eildon Hill North and Eildon Mid Hill. As you progress up the slope, rowan, hawthorn and silver birch trees can be seen on either side, before the gorse is replaced by heather. After crossing the
saddle between the two hills follow the SCW down on the other side.

5. Shortly before reaching the woodland, turn right on a path up the slope, around the foot of Eildon Mid Hill, then go to the right of Little Hill. Although tiny by comparison to the three main Eildons, Little Hill is the only one that has a truly volcanic origin. Follow the path down and then around to the left of Bowdenmoor Reservoir.

6. When reaching the road, turn left. After nearly 500m, turn right on a stone track. Follow the track through to Lady Moss and turn right along the track to walk along the right hand side of the water. Lady Moss, originally a marshy area but now permanently water, is home to a variety of birds, including mute and whooper swans and coots. Continue on the track and pass through a gate into a field.

7. Head diagonally across the field to the corner of a dry stone wall, crossing an old earthwork. This earthwork runs for several miles through this part of the Borders. It was probably built as a land boundary and may date back to the Iron Age. At the wall corner, bear right up the hill and follow the route for nearly 500m with the wall on your left. Near the top of the hill, go through one gate and then left through another at a gap in the wall. Head for a post and a gap in the wall ahead. Go through the gap, then bear left across the field towards a small green hill (Cauldshiels Hill). Another earthwork can be seen to your right.

8. It is possible to explore Cauldshiels Hill and admire the view of the loch and the landscape below. This is Sir Walter Scott country where he gained much inspiration for many of his works. The hill holds the remains of a fortified Iron Age farmstead of a type commonly known as a ‘hillfort’.

9. At the bottom of the hill, turn right and follow the track along the edge of the field. Go straight ahead through a gate and follow the path along the edge of Bowdenmoor with the wall on your left. When you reach a small gate turn left, crossing further earthworks and follow the path into the wood. Scott bought the land here in 1817 as part of his Abbotsford estate. He turned this wild and picturesque ravine into ‘Rhymer’s Glen’, named after Thomas the Rhymer, with trees and wooden bridges to cross from one side of the burn to another. This land is no longer part of Abbotsford estate and Scott’s path and trees have been lost.

10. Continue down through the wood and on to a well-used track. Turn left and follow the track through to a narrow road. Turn right and continue down the road past Borders General Hospital. Just before reaching the by-pass, bear left on a path through the subway.

11. Turn right and follow the path along the old railway line parallel to the road, for about 1 1/2 km, until reaching the former Melrose railway station. Bear left down the path to the car park and follow the road into Market Square and back to the start point.
Route 10

Bowden Circular

**Start and finish:** Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.
**Distance:** 8 miles / 12 1/2 km.
**Time:** 4 hours.
**Terrain:** mostly good paths and tracks often across open country. Excellent views of hills and surrounding countryside. Some stretches could be muddy after rain. Steps and steep gradients in places. Boots or strong shoes are recommended.
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park

1. From the start point, go up Abbey Street and cross the Market Square. Take Dingleton Road (uphill and under the bypass) for about 200 metres until reaching a path on your left between houses. This path is signposted as the Eildon Walk and St Cuthbert’s Way. Climb the wooden steps and follow the well-waymarked St Cuthbert’s Way (SCW) towards the Eildon Hills and then towards the gap between the two hills in front of you, Eildon Hill North to the left and Eildon Mid Hill to the right. This area is ablaze with colour at times, with the gorse and hawthorn blossoming in spring, and heather in flower later in the year.

2. When you reach the point directly between the two hills, turn right onto a broad well-used path (that climbs to the top of Mid Hill the highest of the Eildons). However shortly bear right on a path through the heather that traverses round the west side of the hill with fine views opening up to Darnick, Tweedbank and Galashiels in the Tweed valley. Take care as the path becomes narrow in places.

3. When you reach flat ground in front of Little Hill (the only former volcano in the Eildons) bear left uphill and then sharp right at the marker post going around the back of Little Hill. Follow this path down going close to the field edge at the side of Eildon Wester Hill. Near the corner of the wood go through the small gateway, cross the stile and turn left along the field edge to another stile and follow the path around the edge of woodland.

4. Go through the gate then turn right and take the steps downhill through woodland to reach another gate at the bottom. Here, for a shorter walk, but missing out the village of Bowden, you can turn left and head up SCW over the saddle and back to Melrose. Otherwise, continue the walk by turning right along a wide stone track. At the next path junction turn right to reach Bowden’s curling ponds. They have not been used for the sport of curling for many years and were adapted, as a millennium project, to a small wildlife reserve. Retrace your steps to the track and go straight ahead. After 250 metres turn right through a gate and head down a hedge lined path to the main road, turn left and head into the centre of Bowden village.

5. The small octagonal building is known as the ‘pant well’. It houses what was the village well - supplying the village with both a domestic water supply and refreshment for horses. The structure was erected in 1861. Turn left here, back now on SCW to come out onto Bowden Common.

6. You will see a gate and sign pointing to Newtown St Boswells on the right. Go through the gate and continue on an ancient grass track between the fields till eventually passing Whiterigg Farm to join a road. When the road turns left, continue straight on along the field edge with extensive views opening out of the Eildons to the north and open Borders countryside to the south.

7. At the far corner of the field turn left at the signpost heading back towards the Eildon Hills. Go through the wooded glen over a footbridge and follow the path round and up through woodland and across the road. Continue on
Paths Around Melrose

the same line into Eildon Hall Woods, cross a track, continue ahead until you eventually reach another track with a gate in front of you leading out onto the open hills. Eildon Hall Woods which stretch along most of the southern lower slopes of the Eildons are owned and managed by Buccleuch Estates.

8. Pause at the gate here to admire the view looking eastwards towards Leaderfoot, Black Hill and beyond. Now continue on a path that skirts the edge of the hills close to some magnificent old beech trees. Eventually you will join up with the main path descending from Eildon Hill North which is the Eildon Hill Path (Route 6). Follow this down to the gate and down the track to the road close to Rhymer’s Stone.

9. To return to Melrose either turn right and follow the signed Eildon Hills Path down the track towards Newstead, then along Middle Walk (used by the Masons who built Melrose Abbey) to Priorswalk and past the Abbey to the start point. Or alternatively turn left and walk down the Old Bogleburn road and cross the bypass to enter the market square through the East Port.
Route 11

Cauldshiels and River Tweed

Start and finish: Melrose Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Street, or adjacent car park.
Distance: 9 miles/14 1/2 km.
Time: Allow 4-5 hours.
Terrain: Paths, tracks and minor roads. Some stretches could be muddy, especially after rain. Moderate gradients in places. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.
Toilets: Abbey Street, near car park.

1. Follow the directions for Walk 5 until point 2.

2. After 1 1/2 km, the path ends at a subway under the by-pass. Turn left through the subway to join a road. Continue on the road, past the entrance to Borders General Hospital, for about 800 metres, before turning left at a track heading down towards Rhymer’s Glen. After 500 metres, turn right at a grassy track beside some woodland.

3. Follow this track up into the woodland and into Rhymer’s Glen, once one of the most popular walks from Melrose and a favourite excursion of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford. (For more information, see Route 9.) At the top of the woodland, continue on the path across old earthworks until reaching a gate. Like the hillfort on nearby Cauldshiels Hill, these earthworks are thought to have been a small, fortified farmstead.

4. Go through the gate onto Bowdenmoor and turn right walking with the wall on your right to finally reach the edge of Cauldshiels Loch at a gate on your right. Go through the gate and follow the winding path through the woodland along the water’s edge. Reputed to be bottomless, the loch was supposed to be the abode of a water kelpie (a spirit in the form of a horse that drowned its riders). During the winter months, birds such as tufted duck, mallard and goosander can be seen on the water and, in the spring, coot and great crested grebe breed here. The mature coniferous woodland is home to roe deer, badger, great spotted woodpecker and the occasional red squirrel. Near the end of the loch, bear right on a path away from the water and joining the Borders Abbeys Way (BAW). Follow the BAW along a track to meet a road. At the road, leave the BAW and go left for 200 metres then bear right on a track, just before a cottage.
5. Follow the track through woodland with Faldonside Loch below through the trees on your left, then bear right up a track that leads into a field. Faldonside Loch is categorised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest; it is of local importance as a winter wildfowl roost because of its sheltered location. Follow the path along the left-hand edge of the field for 300 metres, then bear right down to the bottom of the field by the road. Walk a short way up beside the wall till you reach a gate on the left. Follow the path through woodland to the road.

6. Cross the road carefully to a path through the woodland down towards the River Tweed and walk with the river on your left for 600 metres. All the land from Rhymer’s Glen to the river here once belonged to Sir Walter Scott and is among the most significant designed landscapes in Scotland. Scott was highly influential in the fields of planting and landscape improvement and put his ideas into practice on his Abbotsford estate. At the second kissing gate, bear left into a field and follow the raised bank path beside the river. After a while, across the field to the right, you can see Abbotsford House. Continue across the field to reach a gate near the far corner. The path emerges on to a track and rejoins the BAW.

7. From here, follow the Borders Abbeys Way and Route 5 along the Tweed back to Melrose.
Acknowledgements
The routes in this booklet were devised by Melrose Paths Group and in co-operation with the owners and farmers whose land they cross. Their co-operation is gratefully acknowledged. Funding for the routes came from the European Union whose assistance is also greatly acknowledged.

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Melrose Visitor Information Centre is opposite the Abbey. Here you can book accommodation or find information about the area, including walks leaflets. Opening times vary contact 0870 608 0404
Information on paths in the Scottish Borders is available from the Scottish Borders Council website.
www.scotborders.gov.uk

Scottish Natural Heritage (Information on Scottish Outdoor Access Code)
Lothian & Borders Area Office
Tel: 01896 756652
www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Traveline
(for public transport information)
Tel: 0871 200 2233
www.traveline.org.uk

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Other websites
For more information about Melrose go to
www.melrose.bordernet.co.uk
www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk
www.scottishborderheritage.co.uk
www.walkmelrose.org.uk

For further information on walking in Scotland visit www.walkingwild.com
For information on other local paths:
Southern Upland Way
www.southernuplandway.gov.uk
St Cuthbert’s Way
www.stcuthbertsway.fsnet.co.uk
Borders Abbeys Way and Paths around Border towns booklets
www.scotborders.gov.uk/outabout
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*Melrose Abbey*
A short and easy walk you may like to try is the **Melrose Town Trail**. The Trail takes about two hours to complete and is an excellent way to discover the town of Melrose. It provides an added dimension of local history and a flavour of the town’s development through time.