



# Selkirk

The Ancient and Royal Burgh of Selkirk stands above the Ettrick Valley. Sir Walter Scott was Sheriff here for thirty-three years and his former courtroom features a fascinating audio-visual presentation telling the story of Scott's long associations with the town and its people. Halliwell's House, one of the town's oldest buildings, now houses a museum and also the Tourist Information Centre, while Clapperton's Photographic Studio is a working museum and photographic archive.

Selkirk's Common Riding has a tradition dating back to the Battle of Flodden in 1513, and today as many as 400 horse riders take part in this annual event. The twin valleys of Ettrick and Yarrow contain some of the most glorious scenery in the Scottish Borders. The area's rich heritage provided inspiration for writers such as Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg. At Bowhill House, not far from Selkirk, is an exhibition on the life and work of Hogg, the poet known as the Ettrick Shepherd.

## "Kirk'o'the Forest"

Selkirk Old Parish Church. According to local tradition, it was in the original parish church on this site that William Wallace was named 'Guardian of Scotland' in 1297 in the aftermath of his victory

at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. The present ruin dates from 1748 and the churchyard contains many interesting gravestones.

The area around Selkirk Hill was once part of the ancient Ettrick Forest. Around 1113, King David I granted land in this area to monks from Tiron in Normandy, so that they might build an abbey here. Selkirk Abbey was probably founded in the vicinity of Lindean Church to the north. The abbey was short lived and was relocated to Kelso around 1128 when the monks complained to the king that the land at Selkirk was not suitable. The grant of this land was reaffirmed to the town in 1535 to recognise the heroic Souters (Selkirk people) who fought and died at the battle of Flodden in 1513.

## Selkirk Hill

The area of Selkirk Hill (140 acres/ 56 hectares) has moor, ponds, trees and meadows. It is managed by a group of local people with an interest in the area. Work is done to enhance the wildlife interest of the area and to maintain paths in good condition. In the summer months common spotted orchid, mountain pansy, heath bedstraw and harebell can be found in the meadows and yellowhammer can be heard singing from the hawthorn bushes.

# Along the way Selkirk to Melrose

## Halfcrown Corner

'Halfcrown Corner' is so called after the half crown payment that was made by Sunderland Hall estates as a payment to the men who originally planted the woodland here in the mid 1800's. (Half a crown was equivalent to 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ p).

## Cauldshiels Loch

During the winter months ducks such as tufted, mallard and goosander can be seen on the water and in the spring coot and great crested grebe breed here. If you are lucky you may see the unusual courtship display of the grebe. The willow and birch woodland at the edge of the loch provides cover and food for small birds like redpoll, bullfinch, siskin, and long tailed tit. The mature coniferous woodland is home to roe deer, badger and great spotted woodpecker.

## Abbotsford

Abbotsford House (originally Cartleyhole) was renamed, rebuilt and lived in by Sir Walter Scott between 1812-1832. The house is open from March to October and at the entrance to the house, there is a café which can provide a welcome break.

## The ford across the River Tweed

This ford is used in June each year by the horses and their riders during the Galashiels Braw Lads Gathering.

## Redbridge Viaduct

This stone built bridge was built in the late 1840s to carry the Edinburgh to Hawick railway, which opened in 1849. The line was later extended to Carlisle and although the rail service ceased in 1969 it is still commonly known as the Waverley Route.

## Lowood Bridge

This bridge is visible from the route by the river at Lowood. The bridge was built in 1826 By Messrs. Redpath, Brown and Co. for a construction fee of £600. In due tradition a bottle containing newspapers and coins was inserted into a stone by R.W.M. Alexander Stevenson. This may explain the other name given to this bridge - The Bottle Bridge.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

1. Souter in wall 2. Cauldshiels Loch 3. Abbotsford House  
4. Galashiels Braw Lads Gathering 5. Redbridge Viaduct 6. Sheep



# Selkirk to Melrose

Farmland, views, riverside

**Path surfaces** - road, upland, tracks, riverside paths

**Distance** - 16km/ 10 miles approx

**Total ascent** - 300 metres/ 1000 feet approx



1. Butterwort 2. Red campion 3. Rowan 4. Scabious  
5. Orchid 6. Heather 7. Silver birch 8. Mountain pansy

1.	2.	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	8.

## Selkirk to Melrose

This section of the way climbs out of Selkirk to cross Selkirk Hill, which is a haven for wildlife and flowers. The route gradually rises through farmland to Cauldshiels Loch by using one of the Borders ancient drove roads. A short road section descends down to the River Tweed by Abbotsford House, where the route follows the south bank of the river to Melrose.

This section may be done in two shorter walks between Selkirk and Tweedbank via Abbotsford and between Tweedbank and Melrose.

Walk from Selkirk to Abbotsford and cross the Tweed bridge to the bus stop (on the A7 near Kingsknowes at the edge of Galashiels) to return to Selkirk. From Melrose take the bus to Kingsknowes or Tweedbank and join the route back to your start point.

## Maps

The section described here is covered by OS Landranger map 73 (Peebles, Galashiels) and by OS Explorer map 338.

## Car Parking

There are large car parks situated off the Market Square in Selkirk, at the abbey in Melrose and a small car park at Cauldshiels Loch. There are also a few parking spaces at Gunknowe Loch at Tweedbank. Please do not park elsewhere along the route, and never block access gates or farm roads.

## Tourist Information

There are Tourist Information Centres at Halliwell's House, off the Market Square in Selkirk and in Melrose opposite the abbey. For opening times and other information see [www.visitscottishborders.com](http://www.visitscottishborders.com) or tel: **0870 608 0404**.

## Buses

There is a regular bus service between Selkirk and Melrose (service 72) running hourly Monday to Saturday and a few on Sundays. The journey time between Selkirk and Melrose is about 15 minutes.

For timetable details, contact:

**Traveline on 0871 200 2233**

[www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com), or enquire at the bus stances in Selkirk or Melrose, or at any Tourist Information Centre in the region.

## Toilets

There are public toilets at Selkirk, just off Market Square and in Melrose at Abbey Street.

## Refreshments

There is a selection of shops including bakeries and general stores in both Selkirk and Melrose. There are a range of tearooms, restaurants, hotels and bars in both towns.



## Paths to Health

Short walks on this section include

**Selkirk Hill** - follow the Borders Abbeys Way from the A699 or Buxton and walk across the hill, return using a different route.

**Lindean Reservoir** - circular walk near the route.

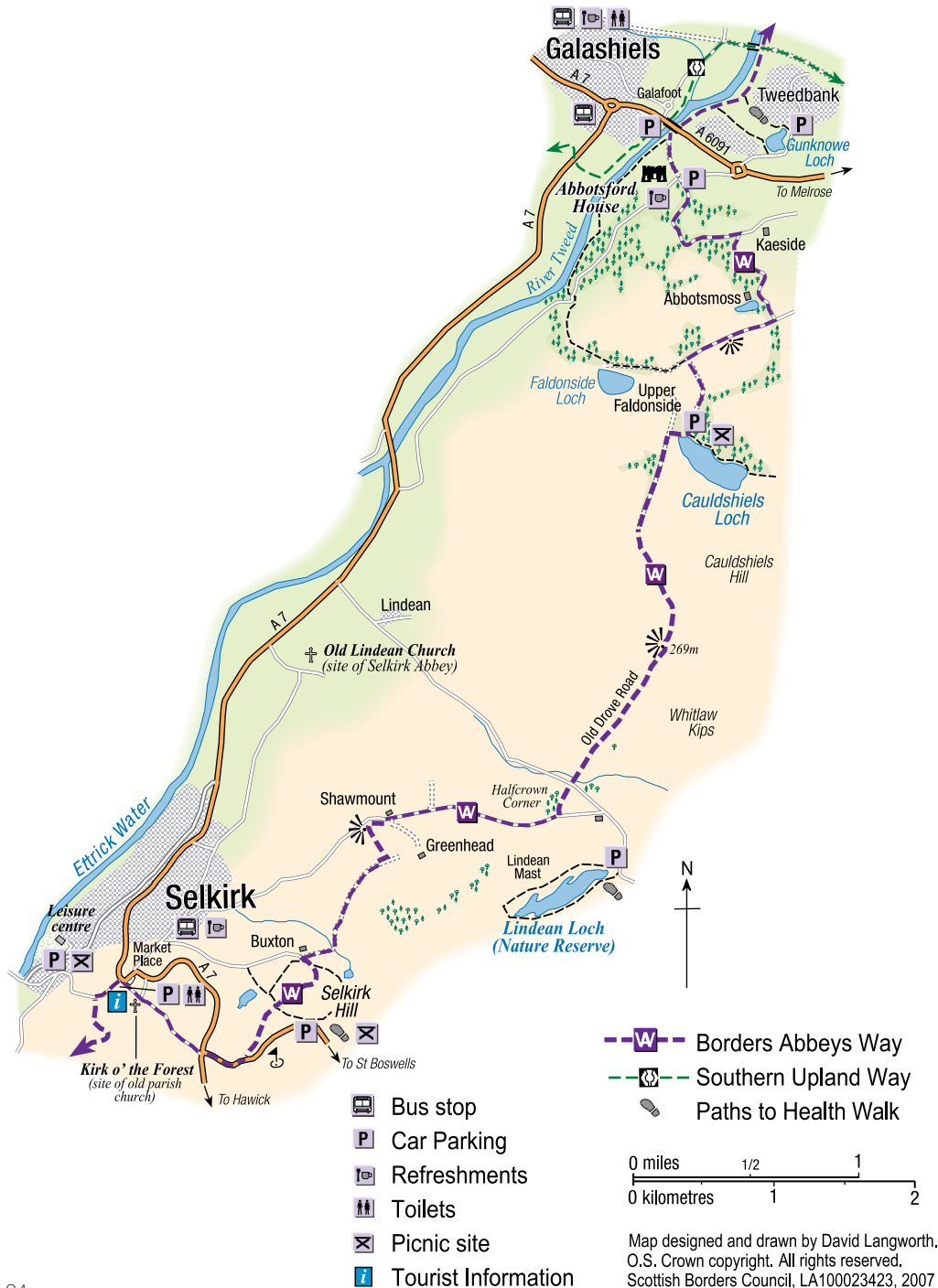
**Tweedbank Family Nature trail** - From Gunknowe Loch follow the signs to join the Borders Abbeys Way at the river and return to the loch. Level tarmac paths and grass.

**Lowood** - from the car parking area between Lowood Bridge and the A6901, follow the Borders Abbeys Way by the riverside and after walking under the Redbridge viaduct climb up the steps to join the Southern Upland Way to return to the start. A fairly level tarmac path and grassy riverside path.

**Melrose riverside** - From Melrose walk upstream on the riverside and retrace your steps to return. Fairly level tarmac, woodland and grassy paths.

# The Borders Abbeys Way Selkirk to Melrose

## Part 1 Selkirk to Cauldshiels Loch



Cauldshiels Loch

From Selkirk Market Place head uphill on the one way street, Kirk Wynd, passing on the left hand side a bakers shop which proclaims that it is "Home of the Selkirk Bannock". On your right you pass the "Kirk 'o' the Forest". Follow this road straight on to reach a junction. From here continue straight ahead as the road dips then rises again through an area of houses.

Continue until you reach the main road (A7) at the top of the hill. **Take care to cross safely**, straight over the main road, and keep to the left-hand pavement. In about 100 metres, just past a group of houses, turn off the road to the left on to **Selkirk Hill** and follow the waymarked path.

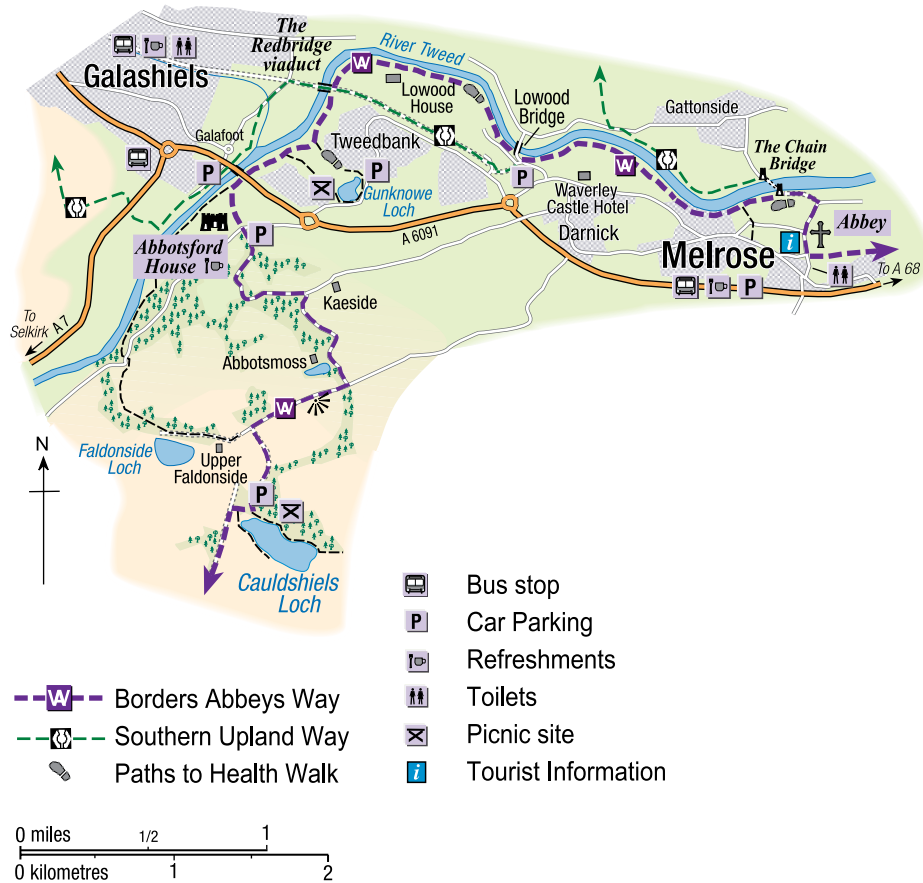
Exit the hill at the kissing gate and go right along the rough track. At the end of the track, pass through the small gate and follow onto the farmland. This old track is lined by hawthorn and skirts the edge of **Bell Hill**. Before **Greenhead Farm**, go through a small gate as directed on the left and follow the field edge to the top where there is a seat with a view back over Selkirk and the hills overlooking the Yarrow Valley. Follow the waymarks around the field edges until you reach a minor road near **Shawmount**.

Go right here and follow the road uphill until you reach a white fence and gate on the left-hand side. Go left through the gate and keeping to the right, head down the track behind the stables.

This area is known locally as '**Halfcrown Corner**'. Cross the road and head forward on to the track. This is an old drove road, which would have been used for driving cattle from Scotland to the markets in England. Continue through a series of gates keeping the dyke on your right over **Whitelaw Kips** and on to **Faldonside Moor**. Pass through a sheep handling area and follow the track up before turning right to **Cauldshiels Loch**.

# The Borders Abbeys Way Selkirk to Melrose

## Part 2 Cauldshiels Loch to Melrose Abbey



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**From Cauldshiels Loch** leave the loch through the car park and follow the track down to the road where you turn right. Notice the excellent views to the Eildon Hills here. Take the next left and continue until you reach the T-junction. Go left here and follow the minor road down to the car park at **Abbotsford**. Head straight across the road on to the track which leads to **the ford across the River Tweed**.

Before you reach the Tweed head up the wide track to your right leading to the road bridge. Pass under the bridge and continue along the path by the Tweed until you reach the **Redbridge Viaduct**.

Pass under the viaduct and continue along the river path. The path continues in front of **Lowood House** and then through some woodland to exit onto a drive. Go left here and cross the main road at the end of the drive. Head uphill on the pavement and then turn left over the stile following the river path, now shared with the **Southern Upland Way**. The path goes through the riverside meadow passing the back of the **Waverley Castle Hotel** built on Skirmish Hill, the site of the last clan battle to be fought in the Borders in 1526.



Abbotsford House

At the cauld, built to divert the water from the river through the lade to the Abbey Mill, continue on the riverside path to the **Chain Bridge**, then go straight on and turn right onto the road which leads up to **Melrose Abbey**.