



**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:**

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

**When you're managing the outdoors:**

- o respect access rights;
- o act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations;
- o work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management;
- o respect rights of way and customary access;

Find out more by visiting  
[www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot)  
or phoning your local NatureScot Office



This publication is available on tape, in braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the Ranger Service below.

If you encounter any problems on your walk please contact **Scottish Borders Council Ranger Service on 01835 825070** or email: [rangers@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:rangers@scotborders.gov.uk)

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Maps by **David Langworth**  
Design by **Scottish Borders Council Graphic Design Section**  
Printed in the Scottish Borders, 2007

Contact information updated for web 2021

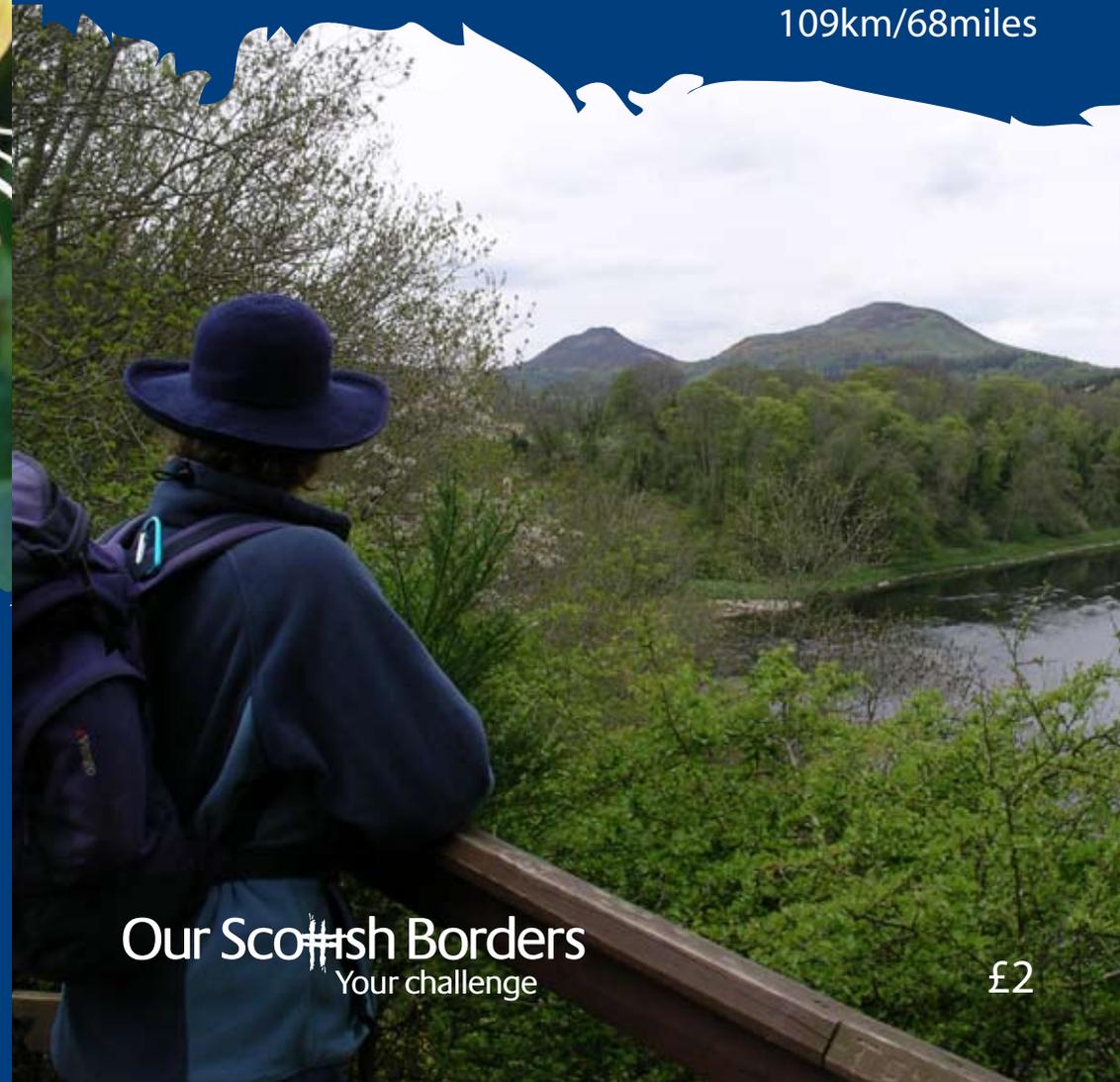
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# Scottish Borders Abbey's Way

CIRCULAR WALKING ROUTE

Jedburgh - Hawick - Selkirk - Melrose - Dryburgh - Kelso

109km/68miles



**Our Scottish Borders**  
Your challenge

£2



# The Borders Abbeys Way

provides an opportunity to explore the central part of the Scottish Borders area. Abbeys, towns villages and other points of interest are all part of this trail. The countryside of the area is a working landscape that changes throughout the year and over the years as well. Along the way look out for a few of the many locations locally which have some connection with David I.

above photo: Roxburgh Castle ruins  
front cover: The Eildons and Tweed from near Dryburgh

## King David I

David I reigned as King of the Scots from 1124 to 1153.

David developed Scotland's trading economy through development of Royal Burghs. This included the establishment or extension of trading privileges at the Royal Burghs of Berwick, Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Selkirk and Peebles. David is credited with establishing Scotland's first coinage, with royal mints at Roxburgh and Berwick. David introduced the feudal system from England and invited Norman families to settle in Scotland as local overlords and administrators of justice. Some built castles. Construction work was carried out at castles in Berwick, Jedburgh and Selkirk.

David established four monasteries in the region:

- ◆ Trefontains nunnery (Abbey St Bathans) 1118
- ◆ Selkirk Abbey c1119 (moved to Kelso by 1128)
- ◆ Melrose Abbey 1136
- ◆ Jedburgh Abbey 1138
- ◆ Dryburgh Abbey 1150 (part of abbey building programme approved by David I)

# The Borders Abbeys Way in the Scottish Borders

A circular route linking the historic border towns and villages of Jedburgh, Denholm, Hawick, Selkirk, Melrose, St Boswells, Kelso and Jedburgh.

## Total distance

approx 109km/ 68miles

## Total ascent

approx 1300 metres/ 4200 feet

## Paths

riverside paths, tracks, road, forest rides, farm fields, old railway lines and old drove roads

## Historic ruined Abbeys

Melrose, Dryburgh, Kelso and Jedburgh

## Rivers

Teviot, Tweed, the Jed Water, and the Ale Water.

## Countryside

hill farms, lowland farmland, forests,

## Wildlife

grey heron, goosander, grey wagtail, yellowhammer, skylark, buzzard, brown hare, tortoiseshell and peacock butterflies, also wild garlic, red campion, mountain pansy, rowan and silver birch.

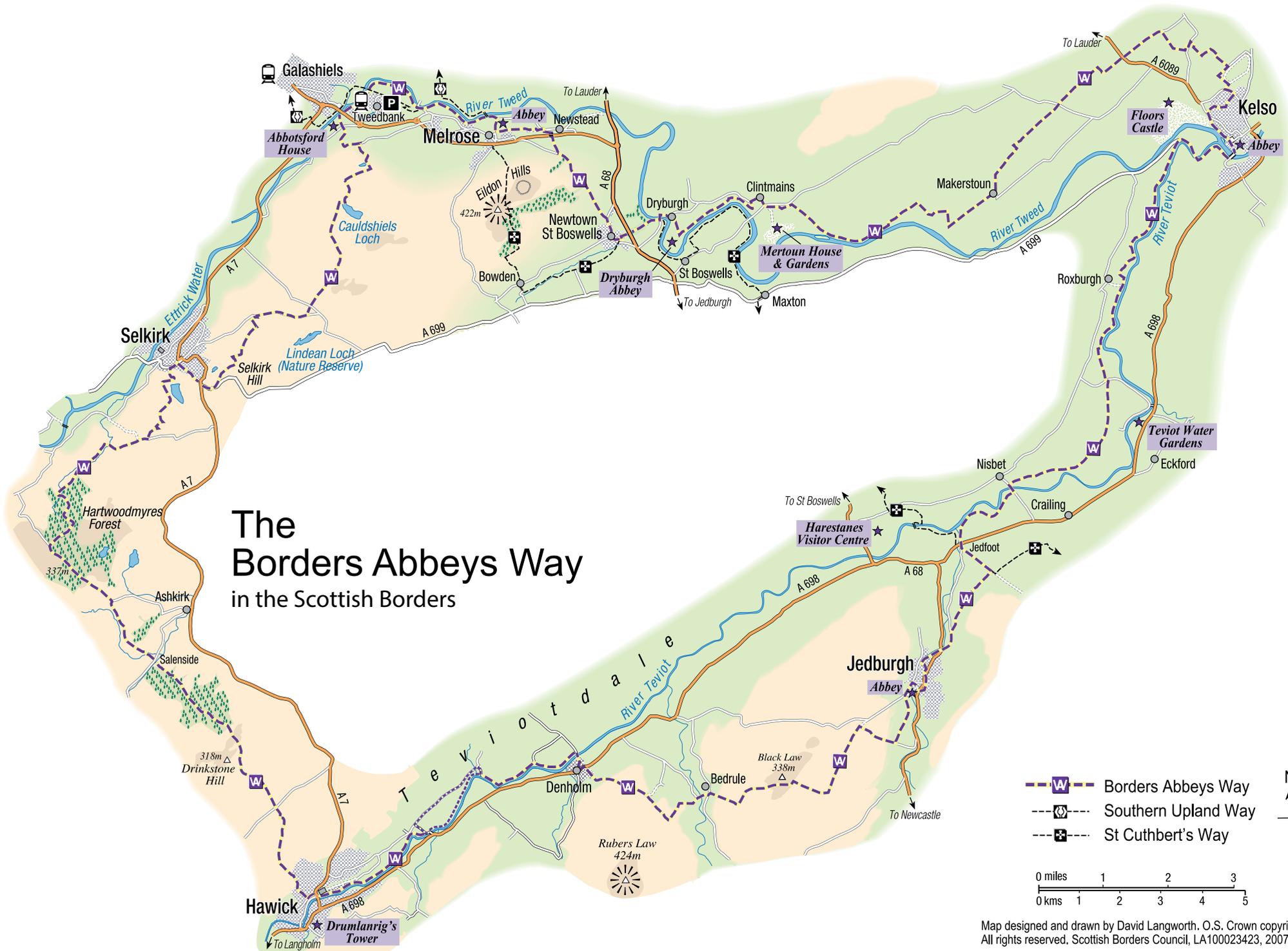
The route is waymarked throughout, in both directions, with an 'AW' symbol denoting 'Abbeys Way'.

This booklet describes the route in five stages:

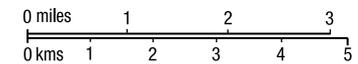
- ◆ Jedburgh to Hawick 23km/ 14 1/2 miles
- ◆ Hawick to Selkirk 19km/ 12 miles
- ◆ Selkirk to Melrose 16km/ 10 miles
- ◆ Melrose to Kelso via Dryburgh 29km/ 18 miles
- ◆ Kelso to Jedburgh 22km/ 13 1/2 miles



# The Borders Abbeys Way in the Scottish Borders



- Borders Abbeys Way
- Southern Upland Way
- St Cuthbert's Way



Map designed and drawn by David Langworth. O.S. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Scottish Borders Council, LA100023423, 2007

# Wildlife on the Borders Abbeys Way



## Lowland farmland and meadows

The Borders Abbeys Way provides a chance to spend some days in the heart of the countryside of the Scottish Borders. You will see the countryside at work with arable and livestock farming activities, such as sowing and harvesting of crops and feeding cattle, going on along the route depending on the season. On the country lanes and fields look out for brown hare, yellowhammer, meadowsweet, tortoiseshell and peacock butterflies.

## Rivers and riverbanks

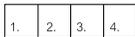
The route takes you along the Jed Water, the Rivers Teviot and Tweed and also crosses the Ale Water near Ashkirk and the Rule Water at Bedrule. Taking a few minutes to look over the river may reward you with views of grey heron, goosander, grey wagtail, oystercatcher, mallard, dipper and, if you are lucky, possibly even an otter. Riverside trees include alder and willow and plants along the riverbank include marsh marigold and wild garlic.

## Upland farmland and hill ground

The route traverses higher ground at a number of locations including Black Law, the edge of Rubers Law, Drinkstone Hill, Wollrig and between Selkirk Hill and Cauldshiels Loch. The short climbs involved should be rewarded with views for some distance in all directions. You will have the chance to look out to the Liddesdale Hills the Cheviots, the Tweedsmuir hills and the Moorfoots. You may see a skylark chirping high in the sky above you, or hear a buzzard mewing. Selkirk Hill is excellent for wild flowers. Look out for mountain pansy, tormentil, heath bedstraw, heather, blaeberry, wild thyme and wild orchids.

## Forestry and woodland

You should be able to see a variety of forest trees including Sitka spruce, Scots pine and larch within plantations. Small areas of rowan, cherry and oak are often planted too. Native and Semi-natural woodland can be seen along the route. This includes some riverside woodland and the Glen in Newtown St Boswells. Oak, ash and alder may be seen in these woods. Look out for signs of badger, fox or roe deer. Under the trees look out for woodland flowers such as wood sorrel, primrose, and red campion.



top. Fox 1. Straw bales 2. Alder 3. Cattle 4. Wild garlic



top. Red campion 1. Wild cherry 2. Badgers 3. Wood sorrel 4. Pseudocone galls on spruce



# Information on the Borders Abbeys Way

## Maps

The route of the Borders Abbeys Way is covered by the Ordnance Survey Landranger maps 73, 74, 79 and 80 and OS Explorer maps 331, 338, 339 and OL16.

## Buses

The Borders Abbeys Way is well served by buses. There are direct bus services linking the start and end of each section.

The 95 links Edinburgh, Galashiels, Selkirk, Ashkirk, Hawick and Carlisle.

The 20 links Hawick, Denholm, Jedburgh, (Eckford) and Kelso.

The 67 links Kelso, Clintmains road end, St Boswells, Newtown St Boswells and Melrose.

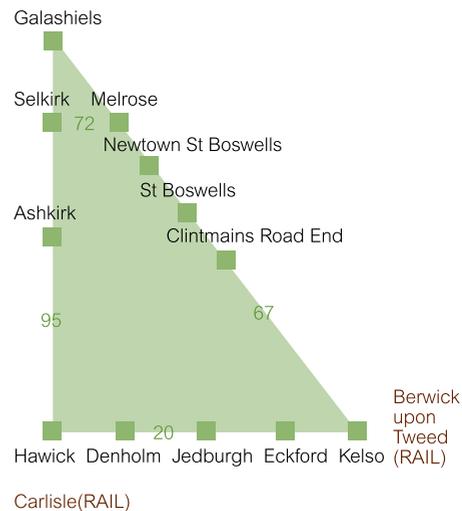
Other bus services link these towns and villages with Peebles, Edinburgh, Berwick-upon Tweed and other locations.

For timetable details, contact: **Traveline on 0871 200 2233** [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com), or ask at any Tourist Information Centre in the region.

For this walk, if you are using buses it may be worth considering using the bus at the start of your day. The walk can then be done at your own pace.

## Bus Routes

Edinburgh (RAIL, AIRPORT)  
Galashiels/Tweedbank (RAIL)



## Toilets

Toilets are available in towns at the start and end of each section. Disabled access toilets (RADAR key) are also available in each town. Other public toilets are shown on maps and mentioned in the text for each section.

## Car Parking

There are car parks shown on the maps for each section. Please do not park elsewhere along the route, and never block access gates or farm roads.

## The Borders Abbeys Way Path



Please note that this is a route especially suitable for walkers due to steps, stiles, kissing gates and the nature of the terrain. However some sections may also be suitable for cyclists and horseriders.

The Borders Abbeys Way should not be confused with the Four Abbeys Cycle route. This also links the Borders Abbeys and is marked with blue cycle signs.

Along the way you may see blue signs with a horseshoe marking paths including the Buccleuch Country Ride and the Hawick Circular Route. These routes are particularly suited to horseriders.

Scottish Borders Council wishes to thank the many land owners, land managers and farmers along the way whose support has made this route possible.

## Visitor Information

For accommodation, travel, visitor attractions and activities in the Scottish Borders area. Local Information Centres ( Jedburgh, Hawick other) or visit [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)

Look up [www.scotborders.gov.uk/walking](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/walking)

- ◆ Paths around Towns booklets (Hawick, Galashiels, Selkirk, Melrose, Kelso)
- ◆ Town Trail Guides (Hawick, Jedburgh, Selkirk, Melrose, Kelso)

Purchase from Northern Heritage [www.northernheritage.co.uk](http://www.northernheritage.co.uk) 01670 789940

## Rail Links

The Borders Railway was opened in September 2015. From Edinburgh, trains travel to Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.

Stations on the Waverley Route are Edinburgh Waverley -Brunstane, Newcraighall, Shawfair, Eskbank, Newtongrange, Gorebridge Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank.

## Websites

Official websites for long distance paths in the Scottish Borders.

[www.scotborders.gov.uk/bordersabbeysway](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/bordersabbeysway) for the Borders Abbeys Way

[www.stcuthbertsway.info](http://www.stcuthbertsway.info) for St Cuthbert's Way

<https://dgtrails.org/southern-upland-way> for The Southern Upland Way



## Calculating your walking time

The path has been described in five-six days walks. Alternatively most of the route can be done in shorter sections and could to be completed over a greater number of days

Everyone walks at a different pace so the time taken per section will vary a lot depending on various factors. Some walkers use Naismith's rule to estimate time of a walk.

If you know the average time it takes you to walk a kilometre then multiply this by the number of kilometres and add 30 minutes per 300metres of the total climb. Sections with climbs and those over rough terrain will take longer. The fitness level of your group may also be reduced by the size of your group, carrying heavy packs and the weather. Remember to allow time for breaks too.

Aim to finish before darkness falls at the end of the day- mid afternoon in the middle of winter. Navigating and walking in daylight is easier. Walking in the dark

may alarm farm animals and disturb people whose houses are adjacent to the path. In forest areas, there may be control of deer by shooting at night.

### Advice to Walkers

Before setting out check the weather forecast and prepare yourself accordingly. Bring with you water to drink and a packed lunch. Ensure you are well equipped for walking in the hills and countryside. Clothing should include a good pair of walking boots and warm and waterproof clothing (jacket/trousers). Gloves, hat and scarf, whistle and torch, a hot drink, spare pair of socks and jersey and emergency rations should be carried in a rucksack or similar, especially during the winter months. Carry a fully charged mobile phone. But be aware that some sections of the route may be out of range for some mobile phone networks. There are good quality outdoor clothing shops in Hawick, Jedburgh and Kelso.

### Access in Scotland

A summary of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code is shown on the back cover of this booklet.

The full code describes the responsibilities of users and land managers when in the countryside.

Visit [www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot) for further information.

An excellent spirit of cooperation exists throughout the Scottish Borders and there is generally no difficulty found whilst out and about in our beautiful countryside. The way is clearly marked with waymarkers. Please use gates and stiles to cross fences/walls wherever possible. While on farm and forest road tracks please remember that they are used by agricultural machinery, and care should be taken. Cyclists and horseriders may also be encountered on these tracks. While walking on farm and forest road tracks it should be remembered that they are used by agricultural machinery and care should be taken.

### Livestock

The code gives advice on access to the countryside with a dog. In exercising access rights you must keep your dog under proper control. Dogs are a great cause of concern for farmers, especially during lambing time (March to May) and when cows have young calves with them (mainly in the spring and autumn although some farms do calf all year round). Cattle and sheep, particularly those with young should not be approached. Dogs must not be taken into fields with cattle when they have young, as the cows see the dog as a threat and may try to attack it, nor should they be taken into fields containing sheep with young lambs.

Go into a neighbouring field. In more open country if there are lambs around keep your dog on a short lead and keep distant from them. During the bird breeding season (April to July) keep your dog under close control or on a short lead in countryside areas. Ground nesting birds can be found in areas such as moorland, forest grassland and riverbanks. Even without a dog, cows with calves can still react aggressively to your presence so keep a safe distance from them and watch them carefully.

### Let someone know your route

Make sure someone knows where you are going and what your expected time of arrival is. Make sure you inform them as soon as possible on your safe return. This booklet includes outline maps of the route, however, it is advisable to carry and use the relevant Ordnance Survey Map.

### Know the Code before you go...

Find out more by visiting [www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot) or telephoning your local NatureScot Office



# Planning your walk on the Borders Abbeys Way

Many people find that using buses allows them to walk the Borders Abbeys Way to a timetable that suits them. There are many possible itineraries and as it is a circular route it is possible to start at any point along the route.

## Itinerary 1

It is possible to do each of the five or six sections one after another and stay in the location where you arrive each evening.

## Itinerary 2

By using buses it is possible to do the route staying in the same accommodation for the whole route. This would fit in with a favourite accommodation provider, or if you live locally, or for using self catering accommodation for a week.

It is even easier using a car. Drive to the finish point of your day and get the bus to the start. Then you can do the route at your own pace.

Based in Hawick, Selkirk or Galashiels, Melrose, Jedburgh or Kelso

Use buses to reach your start point and/ or return from your start point as it suits.

- Day 1 - Jedburgh to Hawick
- Day 2 - Hawick to Selkirk
- Day 3 - Selkirk to Melrose
- Day 4 - Melrose to Clintmains road end to St Boswells
- Day 5 - Clintmains road end to Kelso
- Day 6 - Kelso to Jedburgh

## Itinerary 3

Another option is to stay in two or three locations possibly over a series of weekends. The following itinerary could be done using campsites and using Bed and Breakfast or Hotels, e.g.

Arrive at Selkirk (2 nights)

- Day 1 - walk Selkirk to Hawick, bus back to Selkirk
- Day 2 - walk Selkirk to Melrose  
Arrive at Melrose (2 nights)
- Day 3 - walk Melrose to Clintmains and St Boswells, bus back to Melrose
- Day 4 - bus to Clintmains, walk to Kelso, bus to Jedburgh  
Arrive at Jedburgh (2-3 nights)
- Day 5 - bus to Kelso, walk to Jedburgh
- Day 6 - walk to Hawick, bus to Jedburgh or depart



## Itinerary 4

Eleven medium length sections to complete the Borders Abbeys Way using bus links

- Day 1 - From Denholm, bus to Jedburgh, walk Jedburgh to Denholm
- Day 2 - From Hawick, bus to Denholm, walk Denholm to Hawick
- Day 3 - From Hawick, bus to Ashkirk, walk Ashkirk to Hawick
- Day 4 - From Selkirk, bus to Ashkirk, walk Ashkirk to Selkirk
- Day 5 - From Selkirk, walk to Abbotsford and Tweed Bridge (bus back from Kingsknowes, Galashiels)
- Day 6 - From Melrose, bus to Tweedbank, walk Tweedbank to Melrose
- Day 7 - From Melrose, walk to Newtown and circular via Eildon Hills
- Day 8 - From Newtown, walk to Clintmains road end, circular via Dryburgh Abbey and a section of St Cuthberts way
- Day 9 - From Kelso, bus to Clintmains road end, walk Clintmains road end to Kelso
- Day 10 - From Kelso, bus to Eckford (Kalemouth Bridge) walk to Kelso
- Day 11 - From Jedburgh, bus to Eckford (Kalemouth Bridge) walk to Jedburgh

walkit

## Paths to Health

Walk it is the Paths to Health Project in the Scottish Borders which aims to encourage people to take up walking as part of a healthier lifestyle. We have chosen short walks in each of the five sections in this book which are appropriate for Paths to Health walks. Our walks are usually short and easy though the routes can sometimes involve rough paths and low level gradients. For information about Walk it telephone 0300 100 1800 or email [walkit@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:walkit@scotborders.gov.uk)

## Paths to Health walks

Some easy short walks are possible and are listed within this booklet and marked with a footprint symbol on the map. Walks of 20 minutes-2 hours can be done using some sections of the Borders Abbeys Way. Most of these routes can be reached by public transport.

Look out for

- ◆ Countryside Visits booklet
- Easy Access to the Countryside