

Ardwell Pond walk

Distance: 2.5km/1.5 miles

Time: 1 hour

Grid ref: NX109453

Park your vehicle at the picnic area at Chapel Rossan Bay, in Ardwell, which is on the A716 from Stranraer to Drummore. From here you have wonderful views over Luce Bay, towards the Machars of Galloway and, in the distance, of the Galloway Hills.

The start of this walk is across the road from the picnic area, just slightly to the right.

The Pond Walk is part of Ardwell Estate, and Ardwell Gardens. Walkers are welcome in all seasons, but the garden is closed from the end of September until Easter and the owners would appreciate visitors keeping to the signed path, and not entering the gardens during this time.

A small gap in the dyke beside the A716 leads you alongside a fast flowing burn - a sign to your left confirms your pathway - please read this sign. You are immediately given the choice of direction - this is a circular walk and can therefore be done either way. To go in a northerly direction, cross the bridge - on your

right, and follow the grassy, peaty path through the wood. This wooded path changes with the seasons - the pine needles making walking easy, dappled sunlight filtering through the deciduous larches in the autumn, and in crisp, frosty and occasionally snowy weather it is magical.

The largest of the ponds is on your left, even in the windiest weather the ripples are gentle and on a still day its surroundings reflect into its calm water. The pathway winds its way gently upwards, and gives wonderful views down onto the big pond and over to Ardwell House and Gardens. Two more bridges have been put in place to enhance the walk which now gives good views to your right, of Ardwell Village and across Luce Bay.

The pathway winds to the west, leaving Ardwell Village, and for a short while it runs alongside a minor road - there are two small gates to go through here, and then the track soon joins the long driveway leading to Ardwell House. Keep to your left, following the drive towards the walled garden. (There is a donations box next to the entrance to the walled garden.)

Just before reaching this, bear to the left and you will soon see the 'Pond Walk' sign, again confirming your direction. You can, for a short way,

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divert to your left, and go over the red-railed bridge to the other side of this small pond - take care here as green pond weed disguises the edge of the pond. Linger a while and notice the reflections of the trees in the water, then return to the pathway.

Follow the burn, then cross it, over the bridge, and continue alongside it until you reach the west side of the big pond. The surroundings are beautiful - take your time walking alongside the pond, or sit for a while on one of the benches provided here. In spring this area is a mass of bluebells and soon afterwards purple rhododendrons line this pathway.

The sound of fast moving water tells you that your walk is almost over as the pond becomes a burn again and

Luce Bay can be seen close by. The pathway brings you back to Chapel Rossan. This splendid walk can take from half an hour to a morning or afternoon - you will want to come back in all the seasons, especially during the summer months when you can enjoy visiting the gardens. You will have the chance also of purchasing some of the plants which are for sale, in the walled garden.

Please note that all walk times are approximate and appropriate footwear should be worn. Always advise someone of your intended route and provide an estimate of when you will return. Care should be taken around the coastal routes and we would ask you to adhere to the countryside code at all times.

Please be especially aware of gates and mindful of farm property and livestock.

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