



# Paths

around Melrose



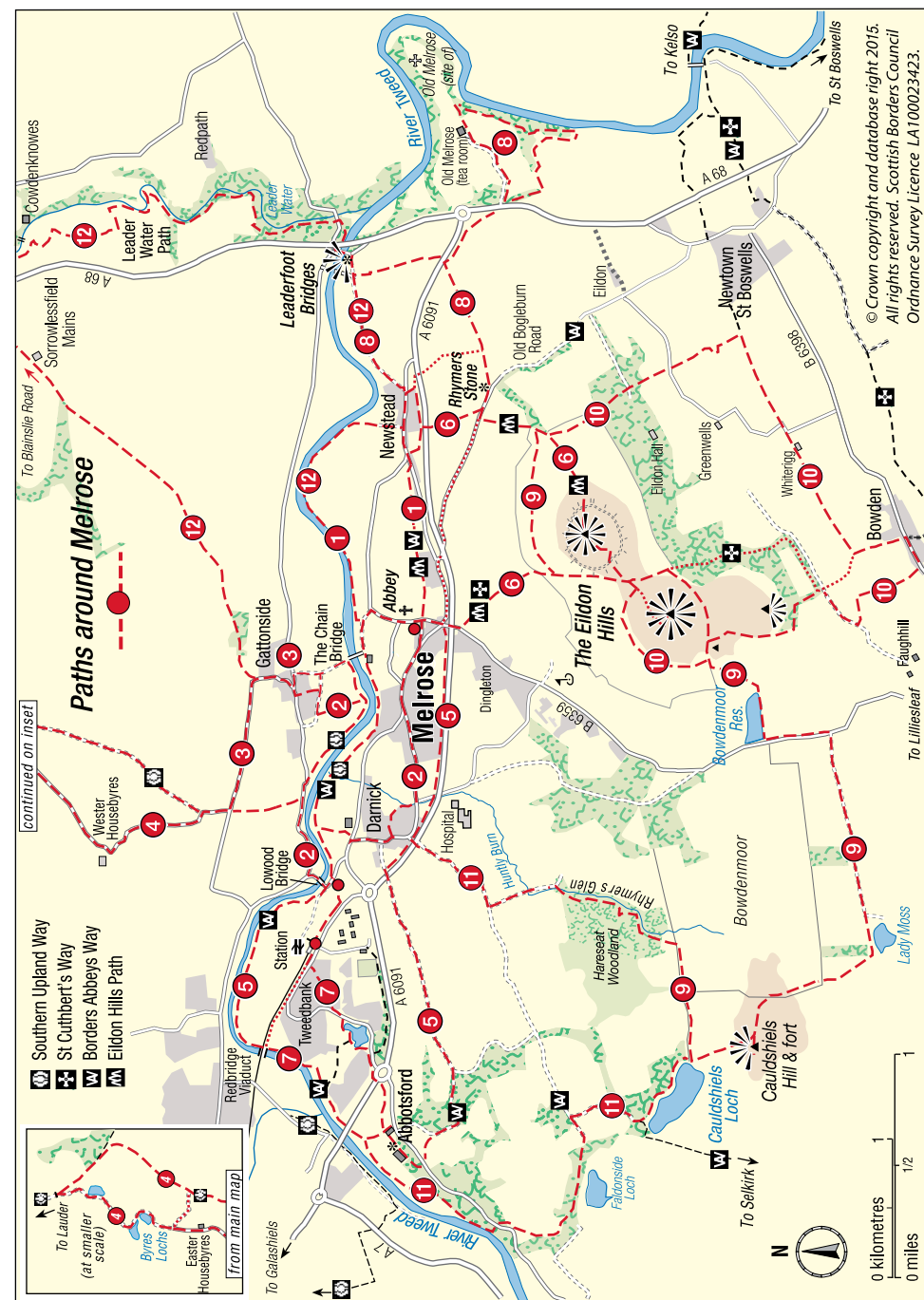
Our Scottish Borders  
Your destination



£3.00

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## Travel Information

Melrose is well served by public transport, with rail services from Tweedbank station close by and regular bus services to and from a number of towns in the Scottish Borders with connections available to Edinburgh, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle. The Border Weaver hop-on hop-off bus service links Tweedbank station with local settlements in the Central Borders.

Opened in 2015, the wonderfully scenic Borders railway links Edinburgh with Tweedbank close by. Trains run approximately every half hour. From Tweedbank station it is possible to walk to Melrose (approximately 1½ miles / 2½ kms) either following the Southern Upland Way along the River Tweed or on a tarmac path adjacent to the B6374 road past the Waverley Castle hotel (see map of route 2). Pedestrian access from Tweedbank station to Abbotsford (1 mile/ 2kms) is shown on the map of route 7.

For the motorist, Melrose is easily reached from either the A7 or A68 via the A6091. Car parking is available in the town.

For more travel information visit [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com)



Tweedbank Station

## Introduction

This booklet describes 12 circular routes in the Melrose area, with 11 of them starting from the town centre and 1 close to Darnick or from Tweedbank station. Alternative start points are suggested where appropriate. Melrose is an excellent centre for walking nestled below the Eildon Hills and close to the River Tweed. However, there are many other places to explore which this booklet will help you to discover.

### Note

The routes are primarily suitable for walkers. Other path users, (cyclists, horse riders) are welcome to use suitable routes where appropriate to do so.

The routes described vary from shorter strolls exploring the local villages and the River Tweed to more strenuous hikes into the nearby hills. Each has a summary giving the distance, estimated time to complete, start and finish points and an indication of the terrain to be expected. They include much historical, mythological and natural interest which is alluded to in the text. Further visitor information is available from various local sources in and around Melrose. Today it is one of the most visited small towns in Scotland.

## 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



Melrose Market Square

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 the name of Melrose being widely known around the world.

## Melrose Paths Group

The Melrose Paths Group was established in 2004 and their aim is to promote and help maintain a sustainable local path network around Melrose, giving access to the local countryside. Members come from the local communities around Melrose and all share a common interest in ensuring that the path network maintains its reputation as a place for visitors to come and enjoy.

## 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



Melrose Abbey

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 carry something light coloured, bright or fluorescent in poor daylight conditions.

### Toilet facilities

There are public toilets on Abbey Street (between the Abbey and the Square).

### Livestock

Many of 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. 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.



### 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.

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

### Health Warning!

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

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

Contact the Public Health Department for more information 01896 825560

### Scottish Borders Walking Festival

The Scottish Borders Walking Festival, 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 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. For information telephone 01835 825070

The routes are usually waymarked with the distinctive yellow and black 'Melrose Paths' discs except where paths follow other waymarked walking routes (see key below) where the discs have not normally been used.

An Ordnance Survey Landranger 1:50 000 or Explorer 1:25 000 map should be used in conjunction with this booklet to help identify the hills and other points of interest.

### Key to map symbols

- promoted route
- alternative route
- other path
- Southern Upland Way
- Borders Abbeys Way
- St Cuthbert's Way
- Eildon Hills Path
- viewpoint
- caution, take care
- car parking
- bus stop
- cafe
- public toilet
- visitor information

For information on other walking routes, such as the Southern Upland Way, St Cuthbert's Way, Borders Abbeys Way and Leader Water path, please see Contact Information at back of booklet.

**Route 1**

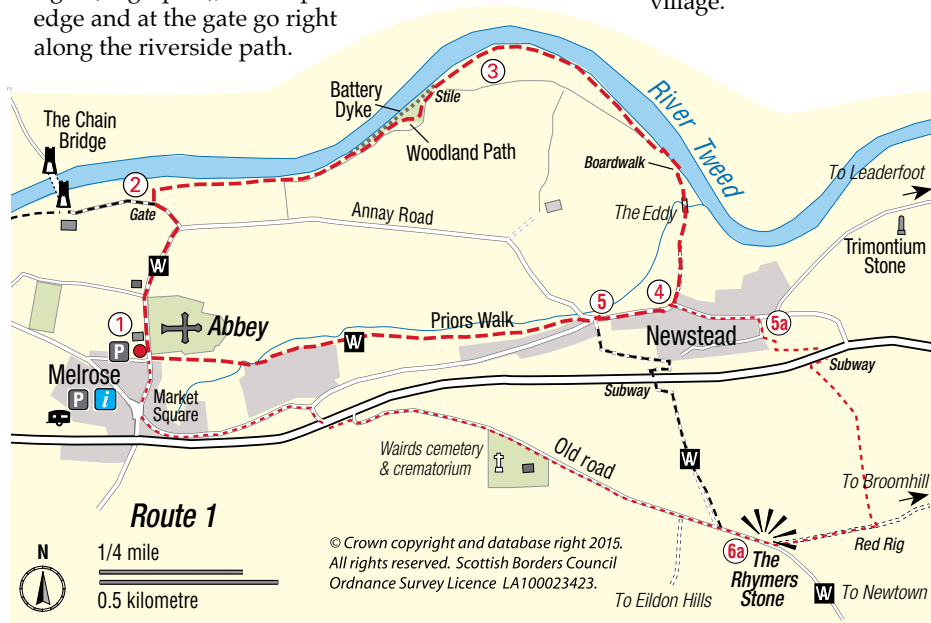
**Newstead Circular**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park, Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 2 miles/3 kms, with optional extension of 1½ miles/2.5 kms  
**Time:** Allow 1½ hours  
**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches can be muddy. Flat, with one moderate climb on the extended route. Boots or strong shoes are recommended  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park

**walkit**

1. From the start point, turn left down Abbey Street passing the Abbey buildings on the right. Continue onto Annay Road and at the right hand bend, bear left into Chain Bridge Road. Go through the second gate on the right (fingerpost), walk up the field edge and at the gate go right along the riverside path.

2. Follow the path passing behind a wood yard and sewage works. When the wall starts to appear continue on the path between the wall and the field fence. This path was created by Melrose Paths group and opened in 2013. The Battery Dyke was built by the monks to protect their fields 'haughs' from flooding. (It is still possible to walk along the top of the wall but it is narrow and can be slippery in wet or cold conditions). Continue on the path through the woodland to a kissing gate, then along the field edge and over a stile to reach the riverside haughs.
3. Follow the river round until the fields narrow and the path continues on a boardwalk over the riverbank. The path then turns away from the river and over a footbridge. Here 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 still is locally known as The Eddy. Continue on to a track (Eddy Road) into Newstead village.



*Newstead is, arguably, the oldest inhabited village in Scotland, although the name suggests that it was a "new stead" or farm dating from the early medieval 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.*



*Newstead*

4. To explore Newstead turn left along Main Street through the village, but be aware that the road is narrow with no pavement. To continue the walk turn right along the road out of the village.
5. At the road junction bear left and take the waymarked path past the stables on towards Melrose. Passing through gates the path continues in front of a small row of houses to the road. Go straight ahead for about 150 metres then take the small tarmac path on the right through woodland, across a stream and then past the Abbey and graveyard to arrive back near the start.

To extend the walk from Point 4, continue on up Main Street through the village.

- 5a. At the top of the village, turn right on Hazeldean Road and then go straight on to a gravel driveway, and immediately bear left along a footpath. At the first

path junction, turn left, then left again. Go through a kissing gate and under the subway to another kissing gate. Turn left on the path going up the hill. At the path junction turn right to reach the Rhymer's Stone and viewpoint on the old 'Bogleburn Road' between Melrose and Newtown St Boswells. (see Route 6)

- 6a. Turn right down the road (now closed to through traffic), passing the crematorium and 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. Head right down Abbey Street back to the start point.



*Battery Dyke*



**Route 2**

**Darnick and Gattonside**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park.  
 Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 4½ miles / 7 kms.  
**Time:** Allow 2-2½ hours.  
**Terrain:** Roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches could be muddy after rain. Mostly flat or gently sloping. No special footwear needed.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

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-1840's by the famous architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, who also designed Liverpool Cathedral.

2. After reaching Darnick and crossing Huntly Burn, turn right at Tower Road, then right again at the junction with Aldie Crescent. Follow Tower Road until reaching the junction with Fisher's Lane, then turn left past Darnick Tower and right at the road through Darnick. Continue to the T-junction with the main road.
3. 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.

Follow the tarmac track, then go straight ahead on a grassy track and through the gate at the end. This area is the site of the Battle of Skirmish Hill (1526), the last great clan battle between King James V's supporters and many of the renowned Border families. Turn left and follow the riverbank path, which eventually meets the road. Turn right here and follow the footway down to the bridge.

**Darnick**

*Darnick is a traditional Scottish village with winding streets and narrow lanes. 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. The village was the home of the Smith family, builders and masons working in the early 1800's. They worked on a number of prominent local buildings including Melrose Parish Church, Dryburgh Abbey House and the Wallace statue above Dryburgh.*



Darnick Tower

Across the fields to the left lies Gattonside House, (now St Aidans) built by The Smiths of Darnick in 1826 in the neo-classical style of the period. It is now the administrative headquarters of The Brothers of Charity. Turn right (Bakers Road), then left at the first junction Hoebridge Road West into the village of Gattonside.

**Gattonside**

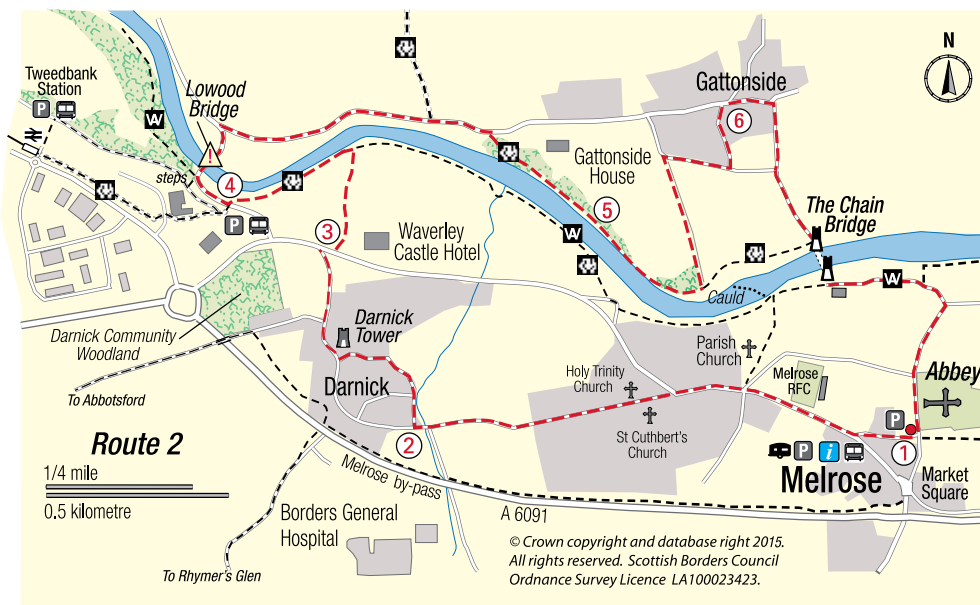
*Gattonside enjoys a well-documented history, being the site of the orchards for Melrose Abbey. The village was granted to the Abbey by King David I in 1143 and place names such as Friar's Close, Abbot's Meadow and The Orchard still remain and testify to its history. Famous former residents include Sir David Brewster, the inventor of the kaleidoscope.*

4. Cross the River Tweed at Lowood Bridge. The original bridge was built in the 16th century on a site nearby before the present bridge was built in the 1790's replacing a ferry. It is also known as 'Melrose Bridge' and 'Bottle Bridge', a name used locally as a bottle was built into the stonework at one time. At the road junction turn right towards Gattonside and walk along the pavement, eventually joining the Southern Upland Way. When the road bends to the left, take the path to the right of an entrance driveway down to the riverbank.
5. Follow the riverside path for about 800 metres, passing a small wood at the bend in the river. At the waymarker post turn left and follow the path through the trees then alongside a large beech hedge until reaching a small road.

6. 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. Cross the bridge and turn left at the old Toll House along the lane following the Borders Abbeys Way. At the road junction, cross to the pavement and go right, following the road past Melrose Abbey back to the start point.



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 go straight ahead along High Cross towards Darnick. Pass High Cross (or St. Cuthbert's) Church on



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**Route 3**

**Gattonside Circular**

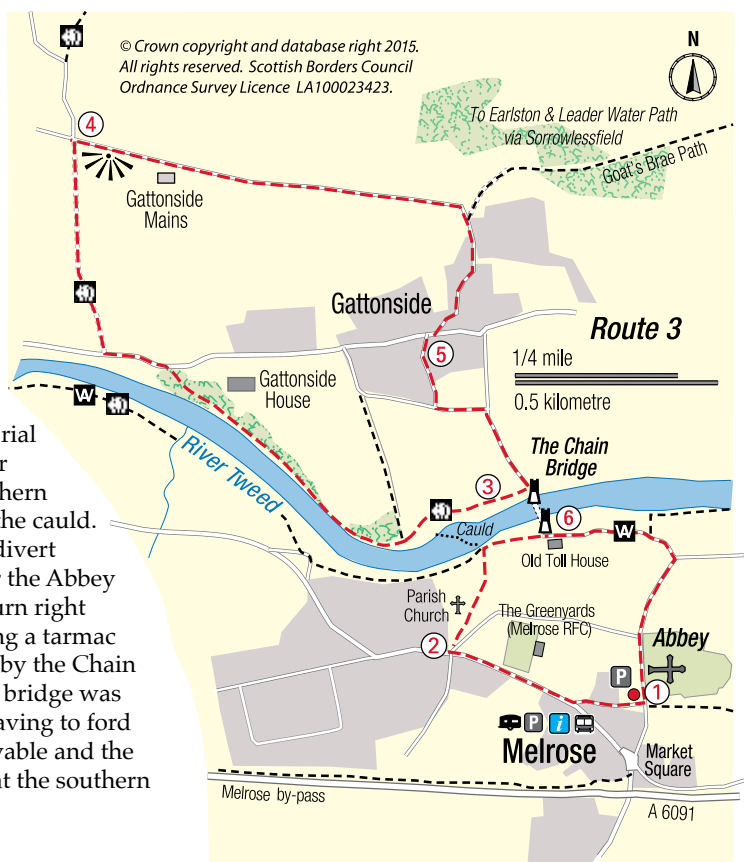
**Start and finish:** Abbey car park, Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 3½ miles / 5.5 kms.  
**Time:** Allow 1½ -2 hours  
**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches could be muddy after rain. Mostly flat, but with one moderate climb. Boots or strong shoes are recommended.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

The original notices can still be read on the bridge itself. Major repair work to strengthen the bridge was undertaken in 1991. Turn immediately left along a path on the riverbank.

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

1. From the start point, turn right onto Buccleuch Street and then continue onto High Street past The Greenyards, Melrose rugby ground, to the junction with St. Mary's Road.

2. Cross St. Mary's Road and follow the tarmac footpath to the right of Melrose Parish Church, and past the war memorial down towards the River Tweed to meet the Southern Upland Way (SUW) at the cauld. The cauld was built to divert water from the river for the Abbey Mill on Annay Road. Turn right following the SUW along a tarmac path, crossing the river by the Chain Bridge. 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.



Eildon Hills and Melrose from Gattonside Heights

4. Turn right, leaving the SUW, on a narrow road that leads up past Gattonside Mains and down towards the village of Gattonside with fine views of Melrose and the Eildon Hills. Follow the road down through 'The Loan' to reach the main road through the village. For information about Gattonside, see Route 2.
5. Cross the main road, go right then immediately left into Hoebridge Road West at Pink Cottage. Follow this road past the Orchard (now a play-park) to a

T-junction, turn left and then 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 the lane. At the road junction, cross to the footway and go right, following the road and the Borders Abbey Way back past Melrose Abbey to the start point.



Gattonside



River Tweed, Melrose

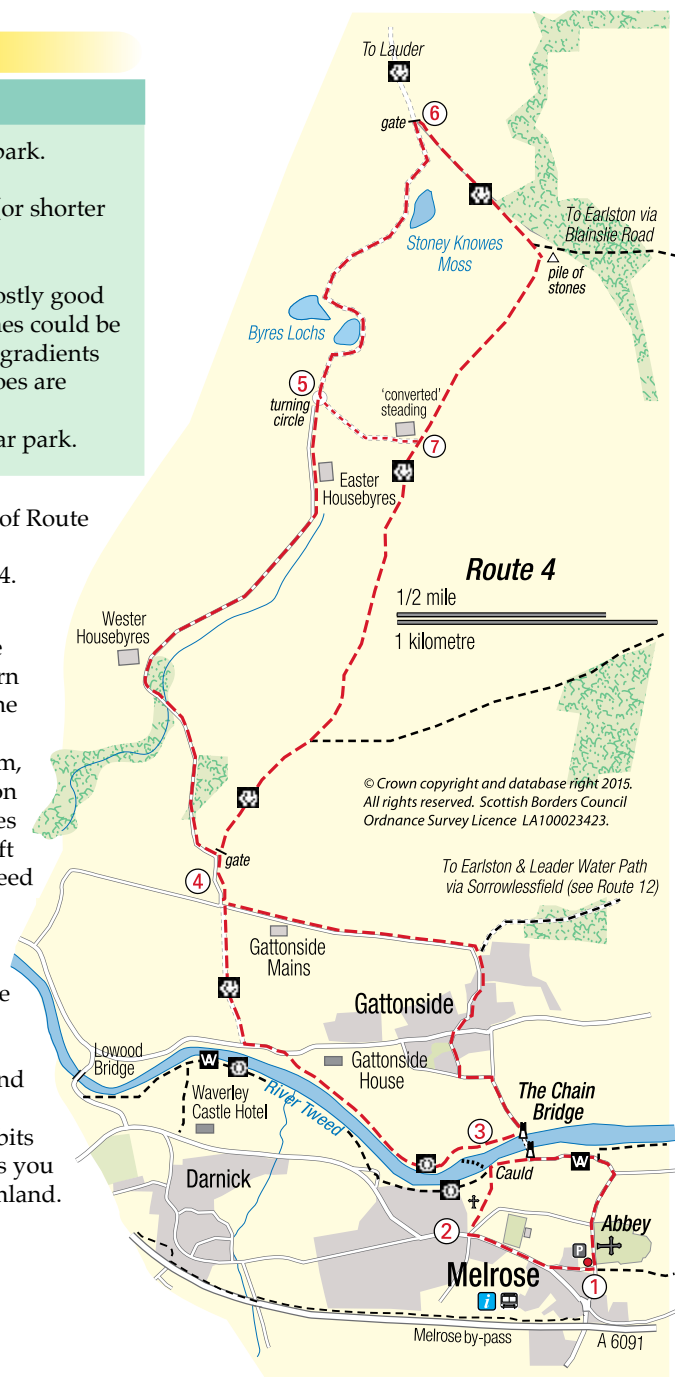


**Route 4**

**Housebyres**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park, Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 7½ miles / 12 kms (or shorter option of 6 miles / 9.5 kms).  
**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 strong shoes are recommended.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

- 1-3. This walk is an extension of Route 3, directions for which can be followed until reaching point 4.
4. At the road junction continue straight ahead on the Southern Upland Way (SUW). Leave the SUW after the first bend and follow the road for about 2 km, passing Wester Housebyres on the left and Easter Housebyres further on the right. 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 many smaller animals, as you walk through the rolling farmland.



River Tweed and chain bridge, Melrose

5. At the end of the tarmac road by a turning circle, continue on through a gate along a stone track. (For a shorter walk turn sharp right and follow the rough track up to meet the SUW at point 7). Go past the Byres Lochs which were constructed in the late 1990's to benefit wildlife, fishing and the local landscape and climb up the track 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 'mosses' 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 continues north on a fine undulating track to Lauder known in medieval times as 'Malcolm's Road' along the line of the old Roman Road Dere Street. Our route turns sharp right here and follows the SUW south to the right of the dry stone wall, passing the sign posted path to Earlston and the 'pile of stones'.
7. At the waymark post by a converted steading where the track from Point 5 joins, continue on down the SUW with excellent views of the Tweed valley 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 at a gate. Ahead at the junction, go left up the hill and follow the directions for the rest of Walk 3 from point 4.



Byres Loch



Route 5

Abbotsford and River Tweed

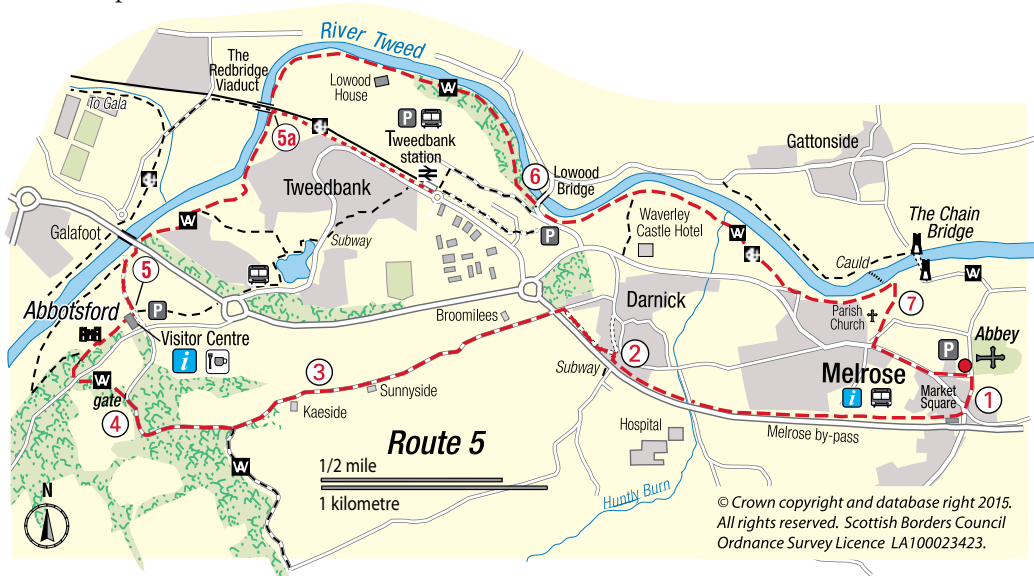
**Start and finish:** Abbey car park, Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 10kms / 6 miles  
**Time:** Allow 3 hours.  
**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, although some stretches along the river could be muddy after rain. Mostly flat or gently sloping. No special footwear needed.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park.

1. From the start point, go right up Abbey Street and into the Market Square. Cross over and opposite the Station Hotel go right, up towards the former Melrose Station. Continue up past the building on the tarmac path and out on to the old station platform, then follow the path along the former railway line. There are views across the fields to Darnick and the Waverley Castle Hotel. After 1km, cross straight over the road and continue till the path ends.

2. Turn right at the pedestrian subway then left up a narrow lane, Lye Road. On your right, you pass the 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 above the by-pass.
3. Follow the quiet, hedgerow-lined road through attractive countryside, with good views across the river towards Tweedbank, Galashiels and the hills beyond. 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 as the road starts to drop downhill.

4. At the right hand bend, go through the kissing gate on the left and head downhill on the woodland path. At the gate cross the road with care to the lodge house and follow the driveway down to the right. Continue on the path in front of the house and walled gardens towards the Visitor Centre.
5. Outside the Visitor Centre turn left (fingerpost) to join the BAW down an old lane, heading towards a former ford crossing of the Tweed. Before the river, bear right up a wide track and then pass under the modern road bridge. Follow the BAW around the edge of Tweedbank and then along the river, under the Redbridge Viaduct, now carrying the new Borders Railway, and pass the front of Lowood House to finally reach the road at the Lowood Bridge.
- 5a To get to Tweedbank station, go up a flight of steps on the right just before the viaduct, and turn right on to the path by the railway at the top. Follow this path up to the road and continue along Tweedbank Drive to the station.

6. At the bridge cross the road when safe to do so, follow the pavement uphill then take the path on the left, down to the river, and follow the riverside meadows passing behind the Waverley Castle Hotel. The path eventually leaves the river to reach a gate at the road. Go left and then take the path left climbing up The Scours above the river.
7. After passing Melrose Bowling Club and a display panel for the Southern Upland Way overlooking the cauld, turn right on the path up past Melrose Parish Church. Turn left along the main road, past Melrose RFC, and left at Buccleuch Street back to the start point.



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Sir Walter Scott and Abbotsford

Abbotsford is famous as the home of Sir Walter Scott. In 1799 Scott was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire and moved to the Borders, initially to Ashiestiel near Caddonfoot and then to Cartley Hole which he purchased in 1811 when it comprised a farmhouse, a kale yard and some 120 acres. Scott renamed it Abbotsford, pleased to own land encompassing the ford crossing of the River Tweed frequented by the monks of Melrose Abbey. The house that now exists was transformed in stages over the next 6 years and completed in 1824.

Between 1811 and 1825 Scott purchased more land, creating an estate of 1500 acres. With each new purchase, he delighted in the historical and mythological associations of the site, by using names such as Charge Law, Rhymers Glen and Roman Plantation in his newly designed woodland and its rides. Scott's library also shows purchases of books on 'improvements' and gardening.

On his death in 1832, Scott was buried beside his wife at Dryburgh Abbey and five months later the house was opened to the public. Abbotsford now contains an impressive collection of historic memorabilia, weapons and armoury and a library of over 9,000 rare books.

The house and walled gardens are open from March to the end of November, and there is a new Visitor Centre with free entry to the café and restaurant, shop, and an exhibition on Scott's life and legacy. Please check the website [www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk](http://www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk) for further details.



Abbotsford

**Route 6**



**The Eildon Hills Path**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park. Buccleuch Street

**Distance:** 4 miles / 6.5 km.

**Time:** Allow 2 – 2½ hours.

**Terrain:** Paths and tracks mainly. Some paths are narrow and can be muddy. Steep gradients 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 Abbays Way (BAW) and follow this path, turning left after a footbridge, to reach a housing estate. Go straight ahead on the pavement 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 BAW. 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 9) and return, or turn right and then left on the Eildon Hills Path (EHP) towards the Eildon Hills.
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. 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 waymarked EHP 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. These 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. At the saddle between Eildon Hill North and Mid Hill you have the opportunity to explore the paths 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 off to the right. Follow this track until you come out in an open area of heather where you now have a choice of routes to the summits.

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.

Please see map of Eildon Hills Paths on Pages 22-23.

7. Just before the gate at the bottom of the open hills 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 then down the edge of another field. Wooden steps lead you back on to Dingleton Road and down to Market Square in the town centre.



Sunset over the Eildon hills



Eildon hills



Little Hill

**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 Lammernmuir 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."*





Eildon hills from Scott's View

### 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.

### Wildlife

On the poorer acidic soils on the hilltops grow heather, mostly ling and some bell, and blaeberry. Here may be present 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, support a large variety of flowering plants 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 and willow warbler as well as cover for rabbits, hares, foxes, badgers, squirrels, moles, voles, shrews and field mice. To a minor degree, has also encouraged the re-establishment of native tree species. Butterflies, are regularly recorded, especially on the lower slopes and include orange tip, green-veined white, small tortoiseshell, red admiral, peacock, common blue, small heath, meadow brown, dark-green fritillary, small skipper ringlet, 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. In all over 200 species of ferns and flowering plants are 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 many paths over the Hills, most access routes on the southern side are used regularly 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. Every precaution should be taken to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code in all its advisory detail.

### National Scenic Area

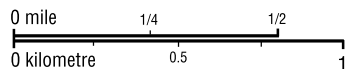
The Eildon Hills form part of the Eildon and Leader foot National Scenic Area which comprises short sections of the River Tweed and Leader Water, with the Black Hill near Earlston and the Eildon Hills rising out of the ordered farmland below. The Eildon Hills are a potent symbol of the Scottish Borders, best admired from Scott's View.



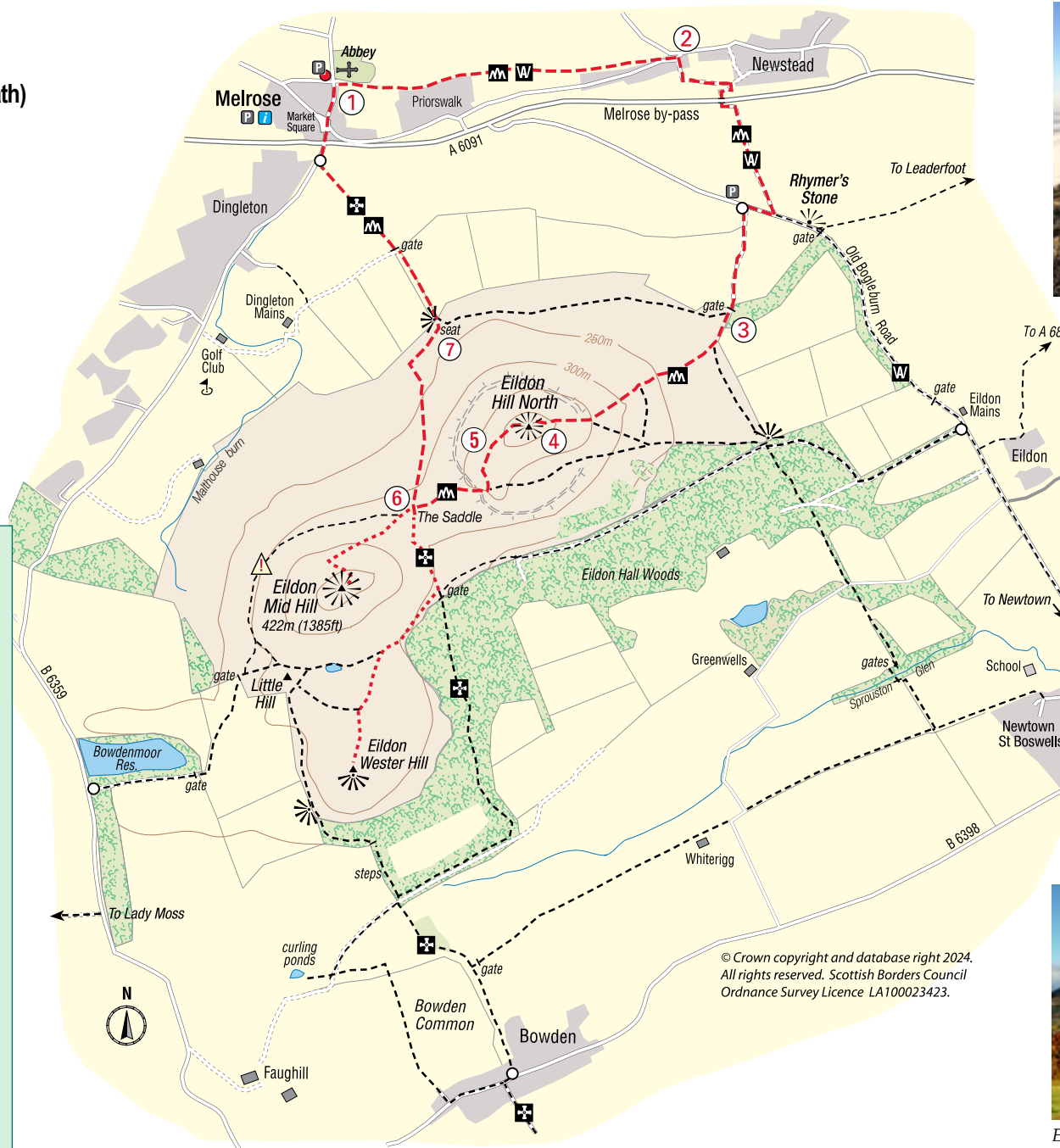
Eildon hills from Cauldshields

# Eildon Hills Paths

- - - **Route 6 (Eildon Hills Path)**
- - - Path to other summits
- W Borders Abbeys Way
- + St Cuthbert's Way
- - - Other path
- Main access point on to hills
- Viewpoint
- Open hill
- Woodland
- P Car parking



*"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" An introduction by the former Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury to a previous edition of the Eildon Hills booklet published by and available from the Scottish Wildlife Trust*



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Summit Eildon Mid Hill



Eildon hills



**Route 7**

**Tweedbank and Abbotsford**

**Start and finish:** Small parking area by Southern Upland Way off road to Lowood Bridge. Alternative start at Tweedbank Station.

**Distance:** 3 miles / 5 kms.

**Time:** Allow 2 hours (not including visit to Abbotsford)

**Terrain:** Tarmac and woodland paths though one stretch along the river could be muddy after rain. Fairly flat, but with some steps. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.

**Toilets:** Abbotsford visitor centre.

**Public Transport:** Regular bus services pass the start points and go through Tweedbank. Ask at Visit Scotland Information Centre for details. Trains from Tweedbank station to Edinburgh.

1. From the start point, follow the Southern Upland Way (SUW) 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 which not only provides a natural habitat for birds, insects and plants but absorbs local nitrates and humidifies the surrounding air. Cross over the road junction and continue on the SUW through the woodland.
2. The path comes out at the entrance to Tweedbank station. Cross the road and continue on the tarmac path alongside Tweedbank Drive; cross over at the traffic lights and turn left at the next road (Craw Wood). Follow the road through the estate to the end, then follow the tarmac path between the houses and at path junction turn right through the subway under Tweedbank Drive.



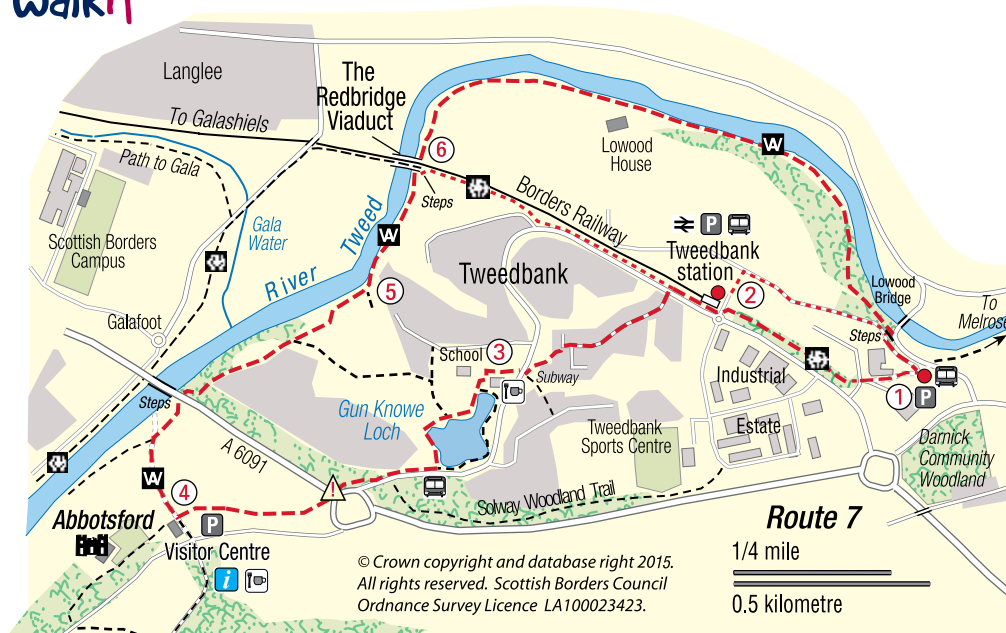
Gunknowe Loch, Tweedbank

Carlisle and known as the Waverley line. Closed to passenger traffic in 1968, it reopened in September 2015 as the Borders Railway.

(To return to Tweedbank station go up a flight of steps on the right just before the railway viaduct, and turn right onto the path at the top. Follow this up to the road and continue along Tweedbank Drive to the station).

3. Follow the path round the store and to the right of the restaurant to reach the edge of Gun Knowe Loch. Gun Knowe Loch is man-made, created in the 1970's when Tweedbank was built, and is now home to a variety of waterfowl. Take the lochside path between the houses to the road by the bus shelter. Turn right and follow the pavement to the roundabout on Melrose by-pass. Cross by the island and through the gate opposite and head up towards the Abbotsford Visitor Centre. (For information about Abbotsford, see Route 5).

6. Otherwise continue to follow the BAW beside the Tweed passing Lowood House to finally reach the road at Lowood Bridge. Along the riverside look out for heron, oystercatcher, goosander and if you are lucky otter or kingfisher. Leave the BAW and climb the wooden steps on the right to the road and go left back to the start point.



4. On leaving the Visitor Centre turn left (fingerpost) to join the Borders Abbey Way (BAW) heading down an old lane towards a former ford crossing of the Tweed. Before reaching the river, bear right up a wide track and then pass under the modern road bridge (steps). Follow the BAW around the edge of Tweedbank through woodland before taking the path left close to the river.
5. At the path junction continue on over the boardwalk along a narrow section of path by the river Tweed and under the railway viaduct now carrying the new Borders Railway. This stone built bridge, the Redbridge Viaduct, was built in the late 1840's to carry the Edinburgh to Hawick railway, later extended to



Abbotsford House

**Route 8**

**Melrose to Old Melrose**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park Buccleuch Street; alternative start from small parking area/bus stop at the top end of Newstead village.

**Distance:** 13 kms / 8 miles

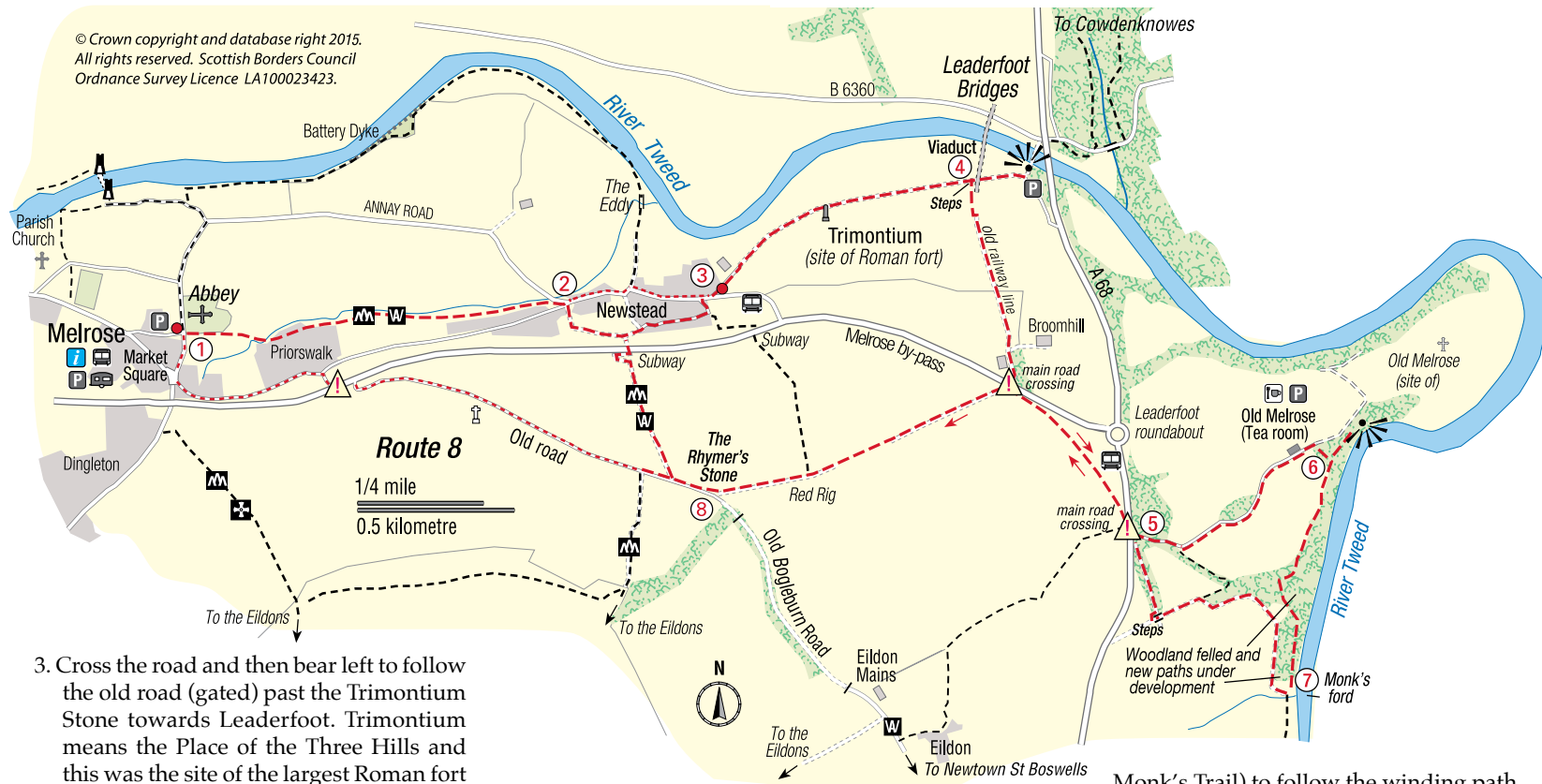
**Time:** Allow 4-5 hours.

**Terrain:** Minor roads and mostly good paths, often across open country. Some stretches could be muddy after rain.

**Boots or strong shoes** are recommended.

**Toilets:** Abbey Street near car park; Old Melrose tearoom.

**Public Transport:** Regular bus services pass through Newstead and Leaderfoot roundabout.



**walkit**

1. From the start, next to Melrose Abbey take the tarmac path to the right of the Abbey graveyard signposted as the Borders Abbeys Way (BAW) and follow this path, turning left after a footbridge, to reach a housing estate. Go straight ahead on the pavement 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 past stables to the road on the edge of Newstead.
2. Turn left, and at the road junction turn right and go up a lane on the BAW past the information board. At the tarmac path keep straight ahead into Back Road to come out on Main Street (Rushbank) at the top of the village.

3. Cross the road and then bear left to follow the old road (gated) past the Trimontium Stone towards Leaderfoot. Trimontium means the Place of the Three Hills and this was the site of the largest Roman fort in Southern Scotland. The interpretation panels and viewpoints along the road give an excellent understanding of the site, helping to discover what life was like in Roman times. Head down the road under the viaduct to the viewpoint where the three Leaderfoot bridges span the river Tweed. Crossing the old bridge and turning right will lead to the Earlston Paths network and walks up the Leader Water (see Route 12).
4. Return back up the road to the steps on the left leading up the field edge beside the viaduct. Cross the stile by the Trimontium fort viewpoint and turn right following the old railway line. Continue on the track following the slope down and through Broomhill farm buildings to the main

road. Take care crossing the road and at the signpost bear half left up a small slope by the fence. Go through the fence to be back on to the old railway line curving towards the A 68 road.

5. At the lay-by cross the road with care and follow the road into Old Melrose but after 100m at the gate take the path into the field and follow the field hedge left to the cottages and tearoom. From here it is possible to see interpretation boards and panels explaining the history of the area. There are monthly guided walks around the site. (see for [www.walkmelrose.org](http://www.walkmelrose.org) for details).
6. To continue the walk from the tea room go left and turn right off the road (signed

Monk's Trail) to follow the winding path down through woodland. Turn right on to a track high above, but with occasional views of, the river below. Continue straight on the track which eventually becomes a path down through a mature plantation of Douglas Fir trees reaching the river at the original 'Monk's ford' which led on to Dryburgh Abbey.

7. View the river here but then turn right heading up a track overlooking a steep sided glen. Keep following the track up and round to the left and after crossing over the old railway bridge go immediately right down the steps to join the old railway line heading back to the A68 at the road entrance (Point 5). Cross back over the A68 and retrace the route back along the path towards the by-pass.



Here don't cross the road but turn sharp left up the track towards the Rhymer's Stone. There are fine open views along this track (the Red Rig) looking towards the Eildon Hills and back over the Black Hill by Earlston. Ignore a path to the right and join a rough stone track enclosed by beech hedges to the Rhymer's Stone where Thomas the Rhymer is reputed to have met the Queen of the Fairies. (see Route 9 for details)

8. To return to Melrose head down the road and turn right on the track following the Eildon Hills Path down under the bypass to Newstead and back along Priors Walk. Alternatively continue on down the old road (access traffic only) past the Crematorium and Wairds cemetery to cross the by-pass and enter Melrose by the East Port.

### Old Melrose

*Old Melrose, or 'Mailros' meaning 'bare headland,' is a natural promontory formed by a looping meander of the river Tweed cutting into Bemersyde Hill about 2.5 kilometres east of Newstead. It is a site of great archaeological potential that could have been used as a centre of ritual and religious ceremony from pre-Roman times.*

*It is most famously associated with St. Cuthbert as the probable site of the Anglo-Saxon monastery where he began his monastic life in the 7th century AD and is as significant to our understanding of early Christianity as Whithorn, Iona and Portmahomack. This small monastery on the Tweed was the initial link in the chain of sites associated with St Cuthbert connecting Coldingham, Holy Island, Inner Farne and finally Durham Cathedral where his bones rest.*

*The monastery was burned down around 849AD and remained in a broken down*

*condition until The Archbishopric of Durham built a pilgrimage chapel at Old Melrose dedicated to St. Cuthbert as part of the cult that made him, arguably, one of the most celebrated of the Northern British saints in the Middle Ages.*

*In 1136 King David I granted this chapel to the new Cistercian abbey and monastery of Melrose that he founded at the hamlet of Little Fordell (modern Melrose).*

*The final destruction of Old Melrose chapel by the English is recorded during the reign of Robert I (the Bruce) and the chapel struggled on throughout the C15th in a ruinous state until the Reformation in the C16th finally ended the long religious history of the site. Subsequently, it fell into private ownership and in 1575 it became the site of the Border Pele Tower of Baron Ormiston, a later country house and the current farmhouse and steading of 18th and 19th century date.*



Old Melrose

Copyright: John Reid



Eildon hills and Leaderfoot



Seat at Old Melrose



Leaderfoot Viaduct

Route 9

Rhymer's Route

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park  
Buckleuch Street

**Distance:** 14.5 km 9 miles

**Time:** Allow 5+ hours

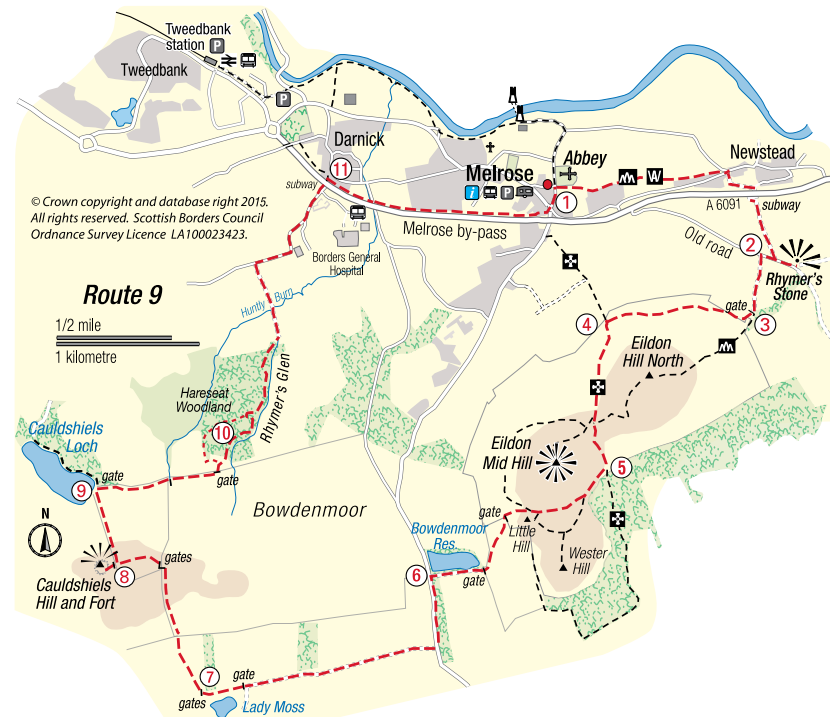
**Terrain:** Paths, tracks and stretches of open country. Some stretches can be muddy. Steep gradients in places. Boots or walking shoes are recommended.

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

1. From the start point, take the tarmac footpath to the right of the Abbey graveyard, the Borders Abbeys Way (BAW) and follow the directions as for Route 6 along Priors Walk to Newstead, under the by-pass and up the track to the old main road.
2. Here turn left up the road to visit the Rhymer's Stone. Thomas the Rhymer or Thomas of Ercildoune (Earlston) lived in the c13th. He was said to have the gift of prophecy and many of his predictions came true over the years. The stone marks the reputed (fictional) site of the Eildon Tree where Thomas met the Queen of the Fairies. A display board back down the road relates the story of their tryst. Return down the road and turn left up the Eildon Hills Path towards the hills.
3. At the top of the track that emerges onto open ground and the hills, go through the gate and bear right, through banks of gorse, a shrub that is both beautiful and aromatic when in flower. This path traverses the slopes of Eildon Hill North and 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). Follow sign posted 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 SCW down the other side.

5. Shortly before reaching the woodland, turn right on a track up the slope, around the foot of Eildon Mid Hill, then go to the right of Little Hill. Although tiny in comparison to the three main Eildons, Little Hill is the only one of true volcanic origin. Through the gate, follow the path down and then along the track to the left of Bowdenmoor Reservoir.
6. At the road, turn left. Take care walking along the side of the road for 500m, and then turn right on to a stone track. Follow the track almost to Lady Moss but where the track bends left go straight ahead through a farm gate into the field and continue straight on to another gate. Lady Moss, originally a marshy area or moss but now permanently water, is home to a variety of birds, including mute and whooper swans, and coots. Rejoin the track but then go through a gate on your right into a field.
7. Head uphill diagonally to the far corner of a dry stone wall, crossing old earthworks. These earthworks runs for several miles through this part of the Borders, probably built as a land boundary dating back to the Iron Age. There are often cattle in this field so be aware and if necessary give them a wide berth. At the wall corner continue uphill and go through a small gate on to Bowdenmoor. Follow the path up for nearly 500m with the wall on your left. Near the top of the hill, go through two gates and head across the field towards a waymarker post, then bear left heading towards a small summit (Cauldshiels Hill). Other earthworks can be seen to your right.



8. At the wall go through the two gates and on to the hill. From the top, admire the view of the loch, the Abbotsford landscape and Tweed valley below that so inspired Sir Walter Scott in many of his writings. Cauldshiels Hill holds the remains of a fort and considerable earthworks. Leave the hill by returning through the gates and go left steeply down the field edge with the wall on your left, towards Cauldshiels Loch below.
9. At the bottom of the hill at the kissing gate turn right along the track. Go through one gate and follow the path across boardwalks along the edge of Bowdenmoor with the wall on your left. At a small field gate turn left and head towards the wood, crossing further earthworks.

(For information on Rhymer's Glen please see Route 11.)

10. The dense conifer plantation here was felled and replanted in 2017, with some mixed broadleaf tree adjoining the Glen itself. Follow the track steadily downhill with Rhymer's Glen now visible below on the right. At the bottom where the Glen flattens out, join a track coming from the right and follow it over the burn (muddy here) and up past the cottages to the road. Turn right down the narrow lane past Borders General Hospital. Just before the by-pass take the signposted path left down through the underpass.
11. Immediately turn right and take the tarmac path close to the by-pass, for about 1.5 km. This path known as 'Daffodil Walk' is ablaze with yellow in early Spring and is celebrated annually. At 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**

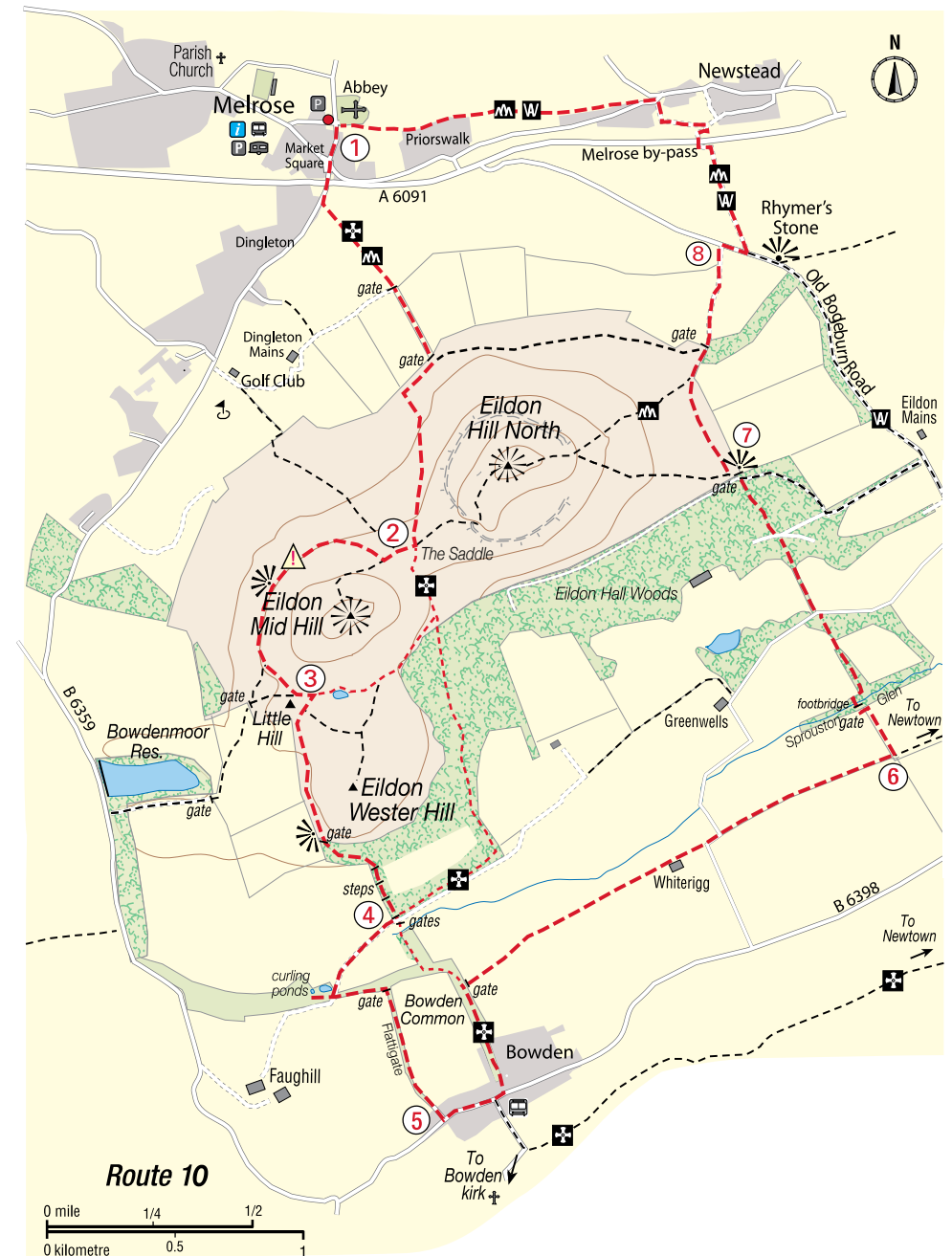
**Bowden Circular**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park, Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 8 miles / 13 kms  
**Time:** Allow 4 – 5 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 (under the bypass) for about 200 metres until reaching a cut through between houses on your left. This path is signposted as the Eildon Walk and St Cuthbert's Way (SCW). Climb the steps and follow the well-waymarked SCW towards the Eildons and 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 go right again 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 on some steep slopes. An alternative path to Little Hill is shown on the map.



Eildon Mid Hill



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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 around the side of Eildon Wester Hill close to the field edge. At the woodland go through the hunt gate and follow the path as it curves down through the trees. Cross the track and continue on down the steps steeply through the woodland strip.

4. At the gate at the bottom, 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 path 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 250m turn right through a gate and head down a hedge line path to main road.

5. Turn left and head into Bowden village. At the pant well (see panel) turn left, back now on the SCW, through a gate, to come out onto Bowden Common. At the top of the rise go through a gate on the right (sign posted to Newtown St Boswells) 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.

### Bowden

*The small octagonal building is known as the 'pant well' This was the village well - supplying the village with both a domestic water supply and refreshment for horses. In the shelter next to it display boards illustrate the history of the village. Bowden Kirk 400m south of the village just off SCW is well worth a visit.*

6. At the far corner turn left at the signpost along the field edge heading back towards the Eildons. Go down through the wooded glen over a footbridge and follow the path round and up through woodland and across the road. Continue on the same line into Eildon Hall Woods, across a track, till 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.

7. 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 (Eildon Hill Path Route 6). Follow this down to the gate and down the track to the road close to Rhymer's Stone.

8. To return to Melrose follow the signed Eildon Hills Path/BAW down the track towards Newstead, then along the Middle Walk (Priors Walk) and past the Abbey to the start point. Alternatively turn left and walk down the Old Bogleburn road and cross the by-pass to enter the market square through the East Port.



View from the Eildon Hills



Bowden Village



**Route 11**

**Cauldshiels and River Tweed**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park Buccleuch Street, Melrose. Alternative start from Tweedbank Station.

**Distance:** 14.5 kms / 9 miles

**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 strong shoes are recommended.

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

1. Follow the directions for Route 5 until point 2. If starting from Tweedbank Station, take the tarmac path (Southern Upland Way) towards Melrose. Pass the modern office building to reach the road near Lowood Bridge. Cross over and take the riverside path (Point 8) to Melrose and follow directions from Point 1.
2. Turn left through the subway and walk up beside the road past the entrance to Borders General Hospital. When the road forks, bear right uphill before turning left (fingerpost) at a track heading down towards Rhymer's Glen.
3. Go past the cottages, cross the burn and then bear right up a small track

into an open area of newly planted woodland above Rhymer's Glen, once one of the most popular walks from Melrose and a favourite excursion of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford (see panel). Follow the track up as it climbs steadily eventually passing an old earthwork before reaching a field gate.

4. Go through the gate out onto Bowdenmoor turning right to walk with the wall on your right, through another gate to reach the edge of Cauldshiels Loch at a kissing gate. Go through the gate and follow the winding path through the woodland along the water's edge. Near the end of the loch, bear right on a path away from the water to join the Borders Abbeys Way (BAW). Follow the BAW along a track to meet a road. Here go left (leaving the BAW) for 200 metres then bear right on a track, just before a cottage.

**Cauldshiels Loch**

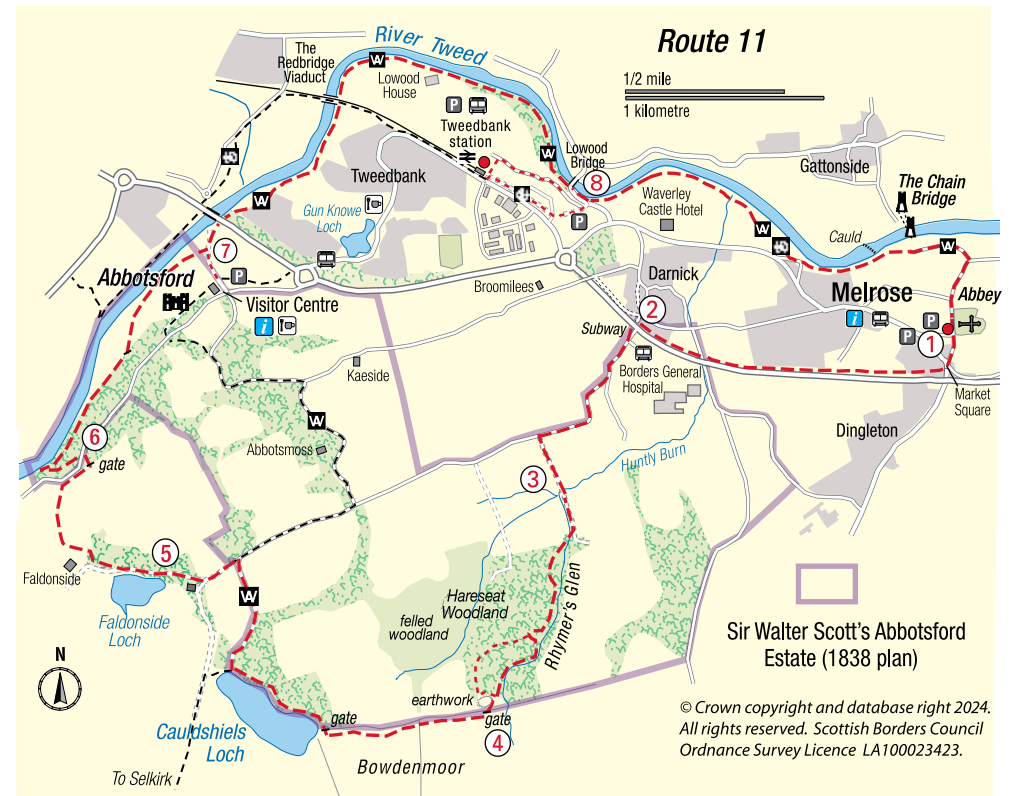
*Reputed to be bottomless, the loch was supposed to be the abode of a water kelpie (a spirit in the form of a horse that drowned its riders). During the winter months, birds such as tufted duck, mallard and goosander can be seen on the water and, in the spring, coot and great crested grebe breed here. The mature coniferous woodland is home to roe deer, badger, great spotted woodpecker and the occasional red squirrel.*



View from Rhymer's Glen



Cauldshiels Loch



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**Abbotsford Estate and Rhymer's Glen**

*At Abbotsford Scott assembled an extensive woodland estate (some 1400 acres) adapted to its setting beside the River Tweed and it is among the most significant designed landscapes in Scotland*

*Rhymer's Glen was an invented name for the glen (Huntly Burn) given by Scott when he bought the land here in 1817. Inspired by tales of Thomas the Rhymer, Scott transformed the glen with waterfalls, oak and ash tree planting and a path with wooden bridges which became one of the most popular walks for people living in Melrose. Over time the actual glen became overgrown and unrecognisable as the estate land was sold off and subsequently replanted with conifers replacing Scott's original planting. However in 2017 a large section of the plantation was felled and has been replanted with conifers, and some mixed deciduous trees beside the glen itself. It is still hoped to open up some of Scott's original paths and rides.*

5. Follow the track through woodland with Faldonside Loch seen below through the trees on your left, then bear right up a track leading 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 left-hand edge of the field for 300 metres, then bear right down to the bottom of the field close to a gated entrance by the road. Walk right a short way up beside the wall till you reach a gate and follow the path through woodland to the road.
6. Cross the road carefully and join a path entering Abbotsford Trust Estate woodlands. Today the Abbotsford Trust looks after 120 acres of land beside the Tweed made up of meadow and natural woodland planted by Scott and his factotum Tom Purdie. (For details please see adjacent map and panel information). Bear left on the path heading down towards the River Tweed. At the seat by small flight of steps turn right to follow the estate track beside the river. At the second path junction follow the waymarked signs and bear left into the field to take the raised bank path across the haugh beside the river. Soon across the field to the right there is a fine view of Abbotsford House. Continue straight on (or bear right for a path to the Visitor Centre), to reach the far end of the field. Go right as the path emerges on to a track and rejoin the BAW.
7. From here either go up the lane to the Abbotsford Visitor Centre or go left to continue on the BAW (Route 5) along the River Tweed. At the Redbridge Viaduct if returning to Tweedbank station, climb the steps to join the SUW and follow the path right alongside the railway. Otherwise continue along beside the Tweed to Lowood Bridge.
8. Cross the road by the bridge and take the riverside path to Melrose (as Route 5).

**River Tweed**

*As the fourth longest river in Scotland, the Tweed is 97 miles (156 km) long from its source at Tweed's Well high in the Lowther Hills north of Moffat to the sea at Berwick upon Tweed. Its catchment area drains much of the Scottish Borders and north Northumberland, the second largest in Scotland. The name of the river comes from the Gaelic word for north, 'thuaidh' which was later anglicized into 'Tweed'*

*The river has been at the very heart of the Borders, having provided power for its textile and flour mills. It flows past many famous localities such as Scott's View, Scott's home at Abbotsford, together with several other country seats and the ancient abbeys of Dryburgh, Kelso and Melrose. Over the years Roman invaders, monks, travellers and Victorian road and railway builders have all had to either ford, be ferried across or bridge the Tweed at various points. Many fine bridges remain particularly at Leaderfoot a few miles downstream of Melrose. Today the Tweed is probably best known for its excellent fishing beats as it boasts one of the best wild stocks of Atlantic Salmon in Europe.*



Abbotsford Woodland Paths



**Woodland Paths around Abbotsford**

*Over the course of 2017-18 significant restoration of the woodland and paths was carried out; this included the eradication of rhododendron, thinning, and the removal of dangerous trees or limbs to create spaces for new plantings of oak and scots pine to thrive and support greater ecological diversity. Scott's original path network has been re-instated, new signage & benches put in place made out of Abbotsford's own oak, and old views restored. Look out for red squirrels, otters, badgers, kingfishers and other birdlife..*

*The new paths are now open and waiting to be discovered. Further information on access to the woodland paths is available from the Visitor Centre including a map of the walks around the Estate.*

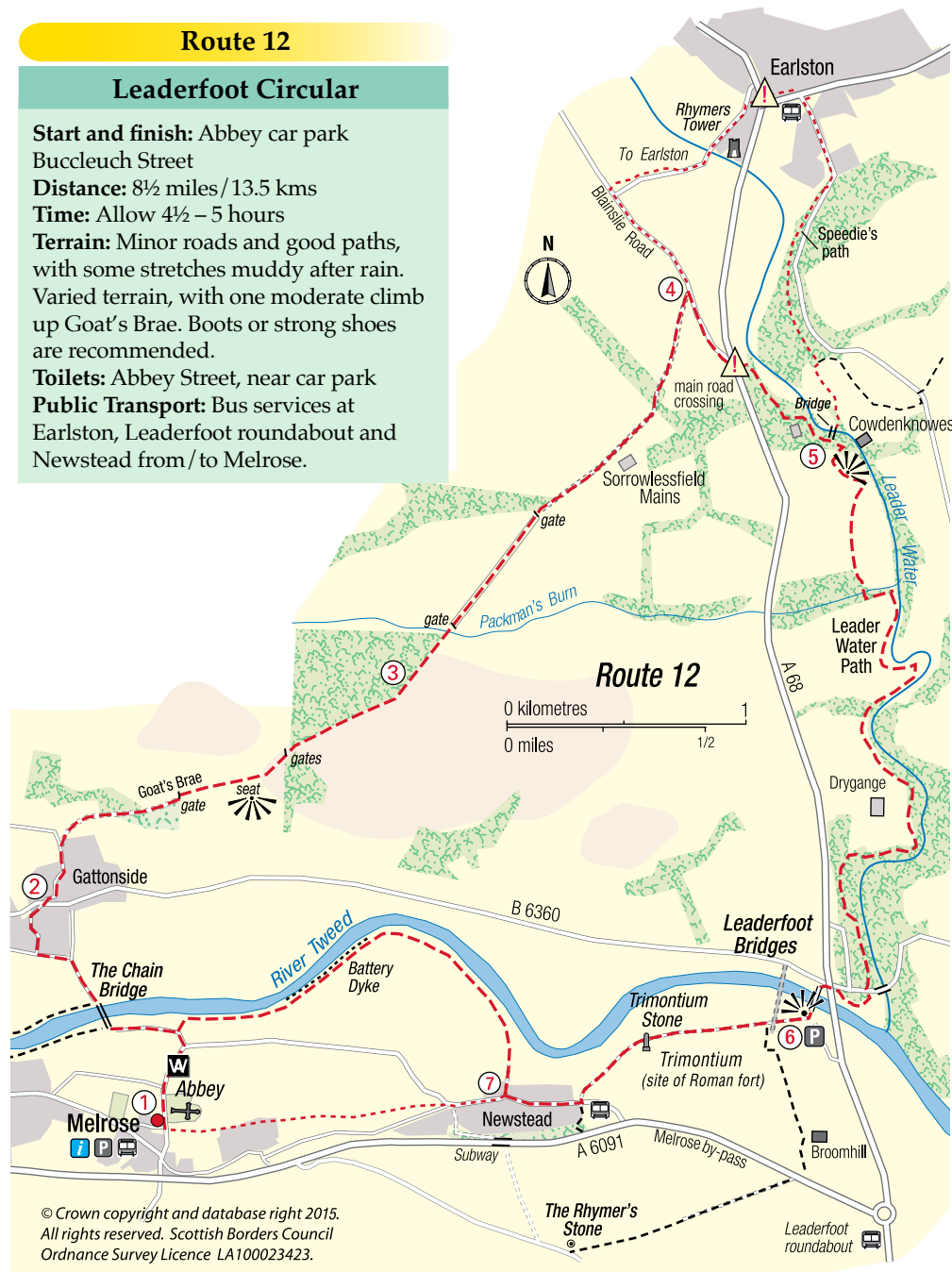




**Route 12**

**Leaderfoot Circular**

**Start and finish:** Abbey car park  
Buccleuch Street  
**Distance:** 8½ miles / 13.5 kms  
**Time:** Allow 4½ – 5 hours  
**Terrain:** Minor roads and good paths,  
with some stretches muddy after rain.  
Varied terrain, with one moderate climb  
up Goat's Brae. Boots or strong shoes  
are recommended.  
**Toilets:** Abbey Street, near car park  
**Public Transport:** Bus services at  
Earlston, Leaderfoot roundabout and  
Newstead from /to Melrose.



1. From the start, turn left down Abbey Street passing the Abbey buildings on the right. Continue onto Annay Road and at the right hand bend, bear left into Chain Bridge Road. Cross the Tweed by the Chain Bridge and continue on the road towards Gattonside. At the junction turn left then first right past the Orchard to the main road (at the pink cottage).
2. Cross over the main road and go up The Loan winding through the village. Near the top but before the road bends sharp left, bear right up the track signposted to Earlston. Follow the track up through the woodland and continue through the gate on the uphill path (Goat's Brae) with views of Melrose, the River Tweed and the Eildons opening up.
3. Follow the track past woodland and across the Packman's Burn (can be muddy). Continue through the gate on a fenced off path to Sorrowlessfield Mains and continue on the track to the Blainslie Road.
4. Turn right down the road and cross over the A68 main road carefully, looking out for a sign at the top of the lay-by for the path heading into the woodland past Sorrowlessfield to the Leader Water at Cowdenknowes.
5. At the bridge, first take a look at the view over the Leader Water before following the fingerpost to Leaderfoot by the Leader Water Path. Snake upwards via some steps to a gate into open countryside with a view of Cowdenknowes House. Follow the path by Packman's Wood, along the riverside skirting the bottom of Drygrange Community Woodland and Orchard. The path then gradually climbs above the river skirting around the back of Drygrange before dropping down
6. Cross the Tweed to the viewpoint of the three Leaderfoot bridges. From the viewpoint turn right up the old road to Newstead past the Trimontium interpretation panels and viewpoints. Follow the narrow Main Street through the village (no pavement) which claims to be the oldest inhabited village in Scotland, till you reach Eddy Road on the right.
7. Turn right down the track and over the footbridge to the river at the sluice. Continue across the boardwalk and along the wide grassy riverbank for about 1km to the stile over the dyke. Carry on to the kissing gate and take the small woodland path behind the dyke. The path eventually reaches a gate, turn left to the Chain Bridge road and then go left and retrace the walk back to Melrose past the Abbey buildings.



Leaderfoot bridge and viaduct

through woodland to reach the Smailholm road. Cross the road and join a woodland path to the Old Bridge at Leaderfoot.

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## Contact Information

### Visit Scotland Information Centre

Open All Year  
Jedburgh, tel no. 01835 863170

Information on paths in the Scottish Borders is available from the Scottish Borders Council website.  
[www.scotborders.gov.uk/walking](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/walking)

### NatureScot

Tel: 01463 725000.  
Web: [www.nature.scot](http://www.nature.scot)

### Public Travel Information

Traveline: [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com)  
Trains: [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)

### Scottish Borders Council

[www.scotborders.gov.uk](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk)  
**Outdoor Access & Countryside Team**  
Council Headquarters,  
Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA  
Tel: 01835 825070  
Email: [outdooraccess@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:outdooraccess@scotborders.gov.uk)

### Other websites

For more information about Melrose and local walks etc go to  
[www.walkmelrose.org.uk](http://www.walkmelrose.org.uk)  
[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)  
[www.trimontium.org.uk](http://www.trimontium.org.uk)  
[www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

For further information on walking in Scotland visit [www.walkhighlands.co.uk](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk)

For information on other local paths:

### Southern Upland Way

Web: <https://www.scotlandsgreattrails.com/trail/southern-upland-way/>

### St Cuthbert's Way

Web: [www.stcuthbertsway.info](http://www.stcuthbertsway.info)

### Borders Abbeys Way and Paths around Border towns booklets

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

### Earlston paths group re Leaderfoot path and other routes

Web: [www.earlstonpathsgroup.co.uk](http://www.earlstonpathsgroup.co.uk)



*Eildon hills from Cauldshiels Hill on Route 9*

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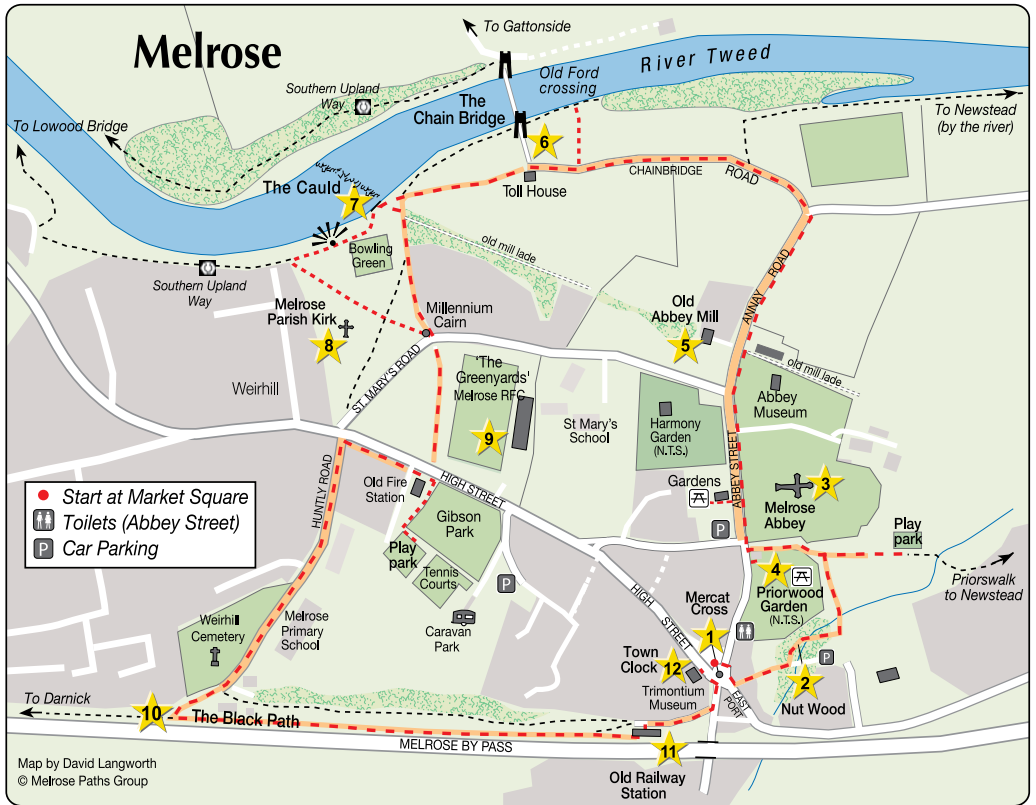
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## Acknowledgements

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Today the routes are managed by Scottish Borders Council Countryside Access Team with voluntary assistance from the paths group.





A short and easy walk you may like to try is the Explore Melrose trail devised by the Melrose Paths Group. The trail takes about 1.5 – 2 hours to complete and is an excellent way to discover the town of Melrose. It provides an added dimension of the town's local history and development through time. For more information regarding the highlighted locations visit: [www.walkmelrose.org.uk](http://www.walkmelrose.org.uk)



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