

4. THE WELL VIA ALTON ROAD LENGTH: 5.3 km.

From the High Street turn into Well Street beside the War Memorial, and at the end of Well Street turn right into Well Road. Well Road soon broadens into a pleasant road of grand Victorian villas as it leaves the town. On the left you will pass the Well Road Centre, once Warriston School.

About 200 metres past the junction with Ballplay Road turn right into Alton Road, a narrow road between two beech hedges which soon becomes a track. This quickly takes the walker into delightful countryside as it winds its way between fields to Alton House. Pass the house on your left and follow the track between the whitewashed farm buildings. Go through the gate just past these buildings.

In about 50 metres, a kissing gate on the left gives access to a field and an ill-defined path crosses the field to a gate, uphill and slightly to the right. The path continues with no better definition through the next field and exits by another kissing gate. After that the path soon becomes a track which crosses the Birnock Water by a bridge and rises steeply to the road.

The Well is about 200 metres up the road to the right.

To return by the road cross the stream by the charming little bridge, and pass Archbank Farm and Old Mill Cottage. The road returns directly to the town, but a more pleasing and not much longer detour can be taken by turning off the road by a small building on the right 200 metres past Old Mill Cottage. A path leads up the hill to the right with a wall on one side and a fence on the other. Go through a kissing gate and follow the lower edge of the field until you reach another kissing gate which leads to a path. Follow the path past Tank Wood as it first descends slightly and then rises to a "crossroads".

Turning left here will return you to the town by Well Street whilst taking the path which goes more or less straight ahead, you will return by the old Academy at the north end of town.

5. ST. MARY'S CHURCH TO WELL ROAD LENGTH: 3 km.

From Moffat High Street walk north towards Edinburgh. Immediately past St. Mary's Church turn right into Harthope Place and follow it as it veers left to go behind the Academy. A path off to the right just beyond the bungalows is signposted to Well Road.

Turn right on to this path as it rises steadily behind the bungalows and then runs between fields on the left and a high wall on the right. The path reaches a "crossroads". You should take the path which leads more or less straight ahead. (The path to the left goes through the trees to the Gallow Hill; the path to the right descends to the town.)

On a clear day there are impressive views over the roofs of Moffat down Annandale. The path dips gently and then rises equally gently past Tank Wood on the right, access to which is through a kissing gate. Continue past the kissing gate, without going through it, to another at the end of the path. This leads into a field, and you should follow the right hand edge of the field.

At the end of the fence, by a water trough, another kissing gate leads on to a path to the right which descends to Well Road. Turning right at the road returns the walker to the town. (Turning left would take the walker up to Moffat Well, a walk of about 10 - 15 minutes. The road is usually quiet. Wild raspberries abound in the early summer to be replaced in early autumn by equally succulent blackberries.)



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TAKE 5 SLIGHTLY LONGER WALKS AROUND MOFFAT



Although following paths which may be muddy after rain, these walks could easily be completed in an hour. However, different people walk at different speeds, and to rush would be to miss so many of the sights and sounds of the countryside.

NOT ALL OF THE WALKS IN THIS SERIES ARE ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY, AND WALKERS SHOULD RESPECT THE COUNTRYSIDE AND PRACTISE THE COUNTRY CODE AT ALL TIMES. ALL DISTANCES ARE APPROXIMATE. THE SERIES IS WRITTEN BY ANDY ARMSTRONG

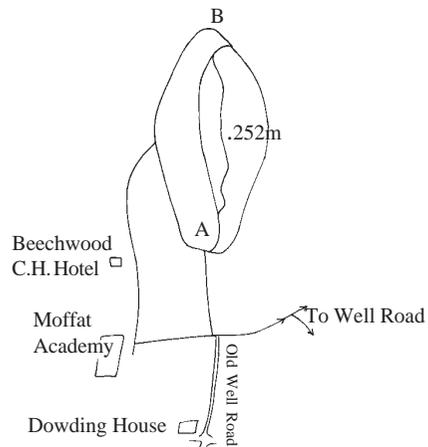
1. THE GALLOW HILL

LENGTH: Variable

Without venturing far, and with little effort and a stout pair of shoes, it is possible to escape the town very quickly.

The Gallow Hill is the wooded hill immediately to the north of the town. It has the advantage of several access points and so one can vary the length of walk to suit the time available. The two most convenient ones from the town are by walking up Harthope Place, to the left of St. Mary's church at the top end of the High Street, and following it to the path which leads up behind Beechwood House, or by going up Old Well Road. This is reached by leaving the High Street along Well Street beside the War Memorial, and going up the hill to the right of Dowding House. The map is not drawn to scale but the distance from point A to point B, as the crow flies, is about 750 metres, and not much further by any of the paths.

In winter and early spring the paths can be very wet, but in summer and autumn they are usually dry. None of the gradients is steep. There is a pleasing variety in the trees, the woods abound in wild life, and there are fine views over Annandale, the Moffat Water and the valley of the Birnock Water. It is not unusual to spot deer amongst the trees.



2. FRENCHLAND TOWER AND ALTON ROAD

LENGTH: 4.5 km.

From this walk there are splendid views of Moffat and its surrounding hills. However, there is often stock in the fields, so those who are uncomfortable in the presence of farm animals should not attempt this walk. Leave town on the A708 to Selkirk. About 200 metres past the hospital, turn left on to a broad track between two walls leading up to a bungalow. At the bungalow veer right, up the hill, keeping the largest of the farm buildings on your right. Leave all gates as you find them and keep dogs on a lead.

Beyond the farm buildings, the track makes a sharp turn to the left. (However, by going through the gate straight ahead, it is a short walk to Frenchland Tower, now sadly ruined, the top of which you can just see over the brow of the hill in the field ahead.) Continue along the track, now grassy, until you enter a field by a gate. Follow the lower edge of the field until you reach a stile into the next field.

Directly in front of you when you have crossed the stile will be two more gates. Head for the right hand one to enter the next field and cross the field to the farthest corner. Here a gate leads on to a rough track which descends to the trees surrounding Alton House. At the next gate turn left and go between the whitewashed farm buildings of Alton House to start your return to the town.

This track wanders between fields to Well Road. Turning left on to Well Road will lead you directly back to town.

However, by turning left and then right beside 1 North Park, and following the sign to Hartfell Crescent by the public footpath the journey is more interesting and not much longer. The road soon becomes a path, known locally as the Cinder Path, and leads to Hartfell Crescent, a fine crescent of Victorian villas. At the end, turn left into Old Well Road which descends to the town.

3. CIRCUIT OF THE TOWN

LENGTH: 4.5 km.

A complete circuit of the town is possible using footpaths and pavements and will give the visitor a real impression of Moffat, its architecture and its scenery.

From the High Street, head south towards Station Park. Just past the park, on the right, join the riverside path which follows the river bank all the way to the A701, the road to Edinburgh. Here turn right and walk towards the town, past the Sports Centre and the old Moffat Academy to St. Mary's Church. Turn left into Harthope Place.

Follow Harthope Place as it veers left to go behind the old Academy, but before reaching the end of the old Academy turn right on to the path which is signposted to Well Road. This path rises behind several bungalows, and joins the boundary wall, on the right, of Larchhill. When the wall turns right to go down the hill, continue along the path which goes more or less straight ahead. This path offers superb views over Moffat and lower Annandale.

At the kissing gate, turn right and follow the path down through Tank Wood. At the bottom of the wood turn left into Haywood Road which leads down to Well Road. Here you should turn right and then left over the Birnock Water into Ballplay Road. Ballplay Road forms the eastern edge of the town and along it is a pleasing mixture of modern houses and grand Victorian villas.

At the crossroads, turn right to return to the town past the Fire Station. The road crosses the Birnock Water again then you should turn left to walk on the track which leads into the caravan site. The path passes "Small and Tall", once the Drill Hall, and then goes behind the Woollen Mill to enter Station Park by the back entrance. If you follow the path past the children's play area and around the boating pond, you return to the start of the walk.