Ardwell Bay Circular Walk

Walk 3

Distance
3 km / 2 miles

Moderate with sand, shingle and grass sections

Doon Castle Broch

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Ardwell Bay

From a car park at the end of rough track there are two walks to explore this remote coastline. A circular walk along a sandy bay and cliff backed shingle beach is accessible at low tide. A short walk along a rugged shore in the other direction takes you to the remains of an ancient broch.

The first walk starts on the sandy beach in front of the car park where you can walk along the shore towards a building at the far end of the bay. Take care because on very high tides the route along the beach can get cut off although you can always retrace your steps.

At the northern end of the sand a series of folds can be seen in the greywacke rocks. 440 million years ago tectonic activity has pushed the once horizontal sedimentary beds into an anticline - a convex fold shaped like an 'n'.

The low cliffs have caves and the people who made them their home are usually long forgotten. A niche in the rocks located midway between the larger Red Cave and Black Cave is remembered as the residence of William Purves. In the late 1800s the former clown and strongman retired to his seaside home where he undertook odd jobs and sold picture postcards of himself.

The cottage at the end of the bay is named Saltpans and identifies one of several salt works on the Rhins coast. Salt was made from seawater from medieval times until the early 1800s when reduced import taxes meant better quality salt could be imported cheaply from other countries.

Follow the steep track up past the cottage until you reach a finger post where there is access onto the fields

Folded rocks

Will Purves' cave

above the bay. Follow the edge of the field and then cross to the other side of the boundary and follow the drystone dyke to the ruined cottage on the track that leads down to the car park.

For a short walk to Castle Point, a headland to the south of the bay, continue along the track beyond the car park. Cross the fence and walk over the grassland along the coast for a short distance until you find a headland where the remains of an ancient castle lie. Doon Castle was a broch like structure and that has recently been consolidated to show the circular defensive walls with two entranceways. The name Doon is derived from the Gaelic for word for castle.

Retrace your steps to return to the car park.

Follow the Outdoor Access Code; take care of the environment, keep dogs under control especially near farm livestock and wildlife. Do not leave litter.

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