

Walk - Scree Hill and Bengairn 6 - 7 miles

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When travelling almost anywhere in the Stewartry, two of the best known landmarks are nearly always visible. These are the hills of Scree and Bengairn, situated north of Auchencairn. These hills may be walked separately or taken as one project depending on the time at your disposal. Walking boots are strongly recommended.

Bengairn 7 miles Bengairn at 1283 feet is the highest hill in the range. The views from the top make the effort well worthwhile but it is important that you close all the gates behind you and that dogs are kept on a lead. Starting from Auchencairn head down hill on the Dalbeattie Road crossing the bridge over the Auchencairn Burn (1). Follow the main road for about three quarters of a mile until you come to a signpost on the left to Bengairn House (2). Follow this route up the hill until you reach a newly planted area where you follow the track to the right into the wood. At the top of this track there is a gate leading out onto the hillside where you have a choice of routes. To the left is the steeper climb and means walking over tussocky grass. The better route is to follow the path to the right and after a short distance bear left. This path eventually reaches an old cottage called Foresthill (3), keep going through a couple of gates and you will soon find yourself on the open hillside with Bengairn (4) before you. There is no clear path to the summit. Although the walk is not too strenuous it is better to keep to the gentler slope on the right to avoid the rocky parts. At the summit cairn you will get a lovely view over the village and the Solway, while behind you are the Galloway Hills waiting to be explored. The return can be made by the same route or you can go down the other flank of the hill and make your own way back to your starting place.

Scree 6 miles Whilst Scree is not quite as high (1126 feet) as Bengairn it does look much more spectacular when viewed from Auchencairn. Leave the village by car heading towards Dalbeattie - in about 2 miles you come to a left hand junction signed Gelston. A short way along this road is a car park (5) where you can leave your car. This is Forestry Commission land and a trail leading to the summit of Scree (6) has been set out by the Commission. An alternative to this trail would be to follow the forestry road which is quite straight forward with reasonably gentle gradients. There is a slight scramble as you approach the summit but this is not off-putting. On a clear day the views are superb - north east to the Queensberry Range and to the north west Cairnsmore of Carsphairn and the Rhinns of Kells. The views over the Solway are quite magnificent and it is very easy, viewing from left to right, to pick out the towns of Silloth, Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven with the steep cliffs of St. Bees Head bringing the English coastal view to an end. Can you identify the high tops of Skiddaw, Grasmooor, Great Gable and Scafell Pike! You can descend by the steeper slope and join the forestry trail to make a very enjoyable circular tour. Should you wish to include Bengairn in the single trip it will be noted that Mid Hill (7) rises between Scree and Bengairn, it is best to bypass this altogether by following the dyke westwards down the Linkins Glen. It may appear that you are going in the wrong direction, however, little distance is lost and once you pass the forest there is a short straight forward climb to the summit. The return can be made by going south east and doing the Bengairn walk as described, in reverse. Total 7 miles.