

The Ring of the Loch

1 From the Hogg Monument the walk heads east (signposted), over the bridge, and joins the Southern Upland Way through Tibbie Shiels' Inn car park, past St Mary's Loch Sailing Club, and then along the shores of the loch. At March Wood, you will find stones carved with poetry associated with the area. Further on you will pass contemporary shoreline sculptures at Shinglehook, and Bowerhope Farm.



2 Continue along the lochside path to the car park at the eastern end of the loch. After crossing the bridge over the Yarrow Water the Ring of the Loch walk turns left, back towards the loch.

From this point there is also an optional diversion, continuing on the Southern Upland Way, to Dryhope Tower where a spiral staircase has been installed to allow visitors to enjoy the stunning view from the top of the Tower



4 Continue past the sluice gates and onto the waymarked path on the shoreline – enjoying the wonderful views along the loch - until it reaches a stone wall and turns towards the A708. Cross the road (carefully!) and then go over a stile at the Kirkstead Farm road end to join an ancient Drove Road which runs above the A708, towards Cappercleuch via St Mary's Kirkyard.

Please note that this stretch is open grazing, so please take care not to disturb any livestock.



7 From the Megget Road end, the walk continues on the road verge until it descends to the loch shore south of the Megget Water bridge. It then follows the shoreline, briefly returning to the verge at the Fishing Club and Rodono House, and then continuing on the shoreline to Summerhope. At Summerhope the walk follows the verge before returning to the shoreline back to the Hogg Monument.

Please note that this stretch of shore is popular with anglers – both fly fishing and using fixed rods. Please don't disturb them or their equipment, and pass them on the landward side to avoid their rods and lines. In particular, take care when they are casting.

A word of warning about this section: if the loch level is exceptionally high the shoreline stretches may become flooded, in which case you should keep to the road verge.



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6 At the junction with the minor road to Megget there is another optional diversion to Cockburn's Grave and the waterfalls of the Dow Linn.



After visiting St Mary's Kirkyard, return to the Drove Road and continue to the small settlement of Cappercleuch. The walk crosses the A708 again at this point (take care in crossing the road) to a footbridge over the burn and past the Village Hall before returning to the road verge just beyond Cappercleuch



5 About halfway along the Drove Road you will see sign posts directing you up the hill to St Mary's Kirkyard. As well as enjoying breath-taking views, this is one of the most atmospheric and evocative locations in the Yarrow Valley – a peaceful and ancient place of worship, and a place where history and legend meet.

The Ring of the Loch

This 11 kilometre (7 mile) circular walk explores some of the history of this wild and little-known part of Scotland, and rewards the walker with a succession of the views and experiences that have inspired painters and poets for centuries.

This is an off-road walk keeping mainly to rough, but mostly level, tracks. The walk takes in a peaceful ancient woodland at March Wood, lochside walking along the south and west shores, reminders of the Border Reivers' turbulent past in the ruins of Dryhope Tower and the lonely Cockburn's Grave, an ancient Drove Road across the moors, and a chance for quiet reflection at the tranquil St Mary's Kirkyard, high on the moorland above the loch.

This description of the walk proceeds in an anti-clockwise direction, but the opposite direction is just as enjoyable. Suggested starting points are the Hogg Monument, at the southern end the loch (where there is car parking, a café, an hotel and camping site, and public toilets), or at a car park at the eastern end of the loch, near to the loch outflow.

Remember the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, and enjoy your walk.

- Please act responsibly
- Please respect people's privacy
- Please help farmers and landowners and leave gates as you find them
- Please care for the environment - take your litter home
- Please keep your dog under control

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

About St Mary's Loch

Lying at the head of the spectacularly beautiful Yarrow Valley, St Mary's Loch is the largest natural loch in the Scottish Borders. It is a place of beauty, history and legend, famed in paintings, poetry and prose.

The Loch lies on the A708 Selkirk to Moffat road, roughly 15 miles from each town, and about 35 miles south of Edinburgh.

St Mary's Loch and the nearby Loch of the Lowes would originally have been a single loch but, over time, they have been separated by debris flowing down the cleuchs to form the isthmus on which the Tibbie Shiels Inn now sits.

Although a natural loch, St Mary's Loch now forms a critical part of the Selkirk flood management scheme by providing controlled storage in times of heavy rainfall.

Contrary to popular legend, St Mary's Loch is not bottomless but, at over 50 metres deep, it is probably the deepest in southern Scotland.

St Mary's Loch is reputed to be the coldest loch in Scotland. It was certainly one of the few lochs to be home to the Artic Charr. Nowadays it is pike and trout that test the skills of anglers. Ospreys have recently returned to the loch and, if you are lucky, you may catch sight of one soaring over the loch in search of fish as well.

The Ring of the Loch Walk has been developed by Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company with the financial support of SSE. info@ettrickandyarrow.org.uk

The Development Company is grateful to all the Landowners and Residents around the Loch for their co-operation and support in the creation of this walk.



The Ring of the Loch



**A spectacular walk
around St Mary's Loch
in the Scottish Borders**