

THREAVE ESTATE

- **Circular farmland and woodland walk with optional detours to Lamb Island bird hide, Threave Castle and bird hides**
- **4km/2½ miles to 12.5km/7½ miles depending on detours**
- **Allow 1½ hours, or more for detours**
- **Minor roads, beaten earth, hard surfaced grass tracks and paths. Steps in places**
- **Moderate to strenuous depending on detours. Boots or stout shoes recommended**

PARKING Free parking is available at the Estate Walk car park at the rear entrance to Threave Gardens NX755608. No charges apply to the walk.

Threave Estate is managed by the National Trust for Scotland and was gifted to the Trust in 1948 by Major Gordon. It consists of around 6000ha (1500acres) of tenanted farmland, woodland and wetland. The Castle is managed by Historic Scotland.

START from the car park. The route is marked with yellow arrows. Go through the kissing gate at the end, cross the road then follow the path between the houses towards the A75 roundabout. This section was once the main drive to Kelton Mains, the principal house of the Estate prior to the construction of Threave House.

Where the route meets the road, walk along the top of the banking for about 100 metres before carefully crossing a busy road onto the farm track opposite. This leads you over the A75 and into a wood. From the path through the wood you will get good views of drumlins, small rounded hills formed during the last ice age, which are common around Castle Douglas. During the winter months you may also see geese grazing on some of these hills and in nearby fields. Roe deer are common around the Estate, but are shy and easily disturbed. Watch for their white rumps as they bound away through the undergrowth, or listen for their barking, particularly heard at dusk.

From here the route follows the line of the disused railway, which carried steam trains between Castle Douglas and Kirkcudbright from 1861 to 1965. After the first stone bridge, there is a detour to Threave Castle and bird hides. The Castle was built around 1369 by the Third Earl of Douglas 'Archibald the Grim'. This massive tower stands on an island in the River Dee, but can be reached during the summer by the small boat operated by Historic Scotland's custodian. If you wish to take this detour, follow the blue arrows then retrace your

steps and continue the estate walk at the point where you left it. The Lamb Island bird hide is a fabulous place to spot waterfowl at any time of the year. Also, large numbers of greylag and pink-footed geese can be seen grazing on fields on the Estate in winter. When these birds take off the result is truly spectacular and a classic winter sight here. Back on the estate walk, before the second stone bridge, turn right and go up some wooden steps onto the road. Turn left and continue onto the bridge over the A75. Alternatively you may wish to continue a further 0.75km (½ mile) down the railway line to visit a bird hide on an island on the River Dee, but you will need to retrace your steps to rejoin the Estate Walk.

Beyond the bridge over the A75 the route is waymarked through woodland and farmland. Take care in crossing the minor road after the first footbridge, and in following the minor road back to the Gardens after the second footbridge.



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Leave gates as you find them - Keep dogs under close control at all times - Keep to paths across farmland - Take care on country roads
Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls - Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery - Take your litter home with you
Protect wildlife, plants and trees - Guard against risk of fire - Make no unnecessary noise.