**The forests of the Southern Uplands**

Clinging to the slopes of heather-clad hills and flanking the sides of tumbling streams, the forests of the Southern Uplands straddle the natural barrier between England and Scotland. Remains of hill forts and cairns are a reminder of turbulent times in the area, but today, these now peaceful lands offer a wide range of walks in some special places.

Our waymarked trails follow graded paths so you can find one that’s just right for you. All the trails in this booklet have clear signs so you can follow the route even if you’ve never visited the forest before.

If you’re into mountain biking, there’s loads to do in this area. The Dalbeattie, Maibank & Kirkpatrick area is part of the 7Stanes: [www.7stanesmountainbiking.com](http://www.7stanesmountainbiking.com).

The Forest of Ae, and the forests around Dalfrin and Loudoun, are renowned nationally for red squirrel conservation, whilst the upper edges of these forests are prime habitat for the black grouse.

As you walk, it may come as a surprise to know that you are actually on the bottom of an ocean! The rocks that form the hills beneath your feet were once mud on the bottom of an ocean between England and Scotland. As the countries collided, the mud was squeezed, hardened and pushed up forming the Southern Uplands.

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**Castle O’er**

- **Hill Fort Trail**
  - Climb up to the impressive hill fort on Castle O’er Hill for fantastic views across Eskdale.
  - Long steep climb for 0.6km on rough, narrow and grassy path. Some sections may be muddy. Includes two cairns. There are no waymarkers on the fell trail to protect the monument.
  - 1 mile / 1.6 km
  - Allow 1½ hr

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**Wauchope**

- **Johnny’s Trail**
  - Walk in the footsteps of Johnny the forester, along the Colles Burn and up through oak, ash, birch and tarrch.
  - Largely wide firm gravel track, with section of uneven earth and stone. Long slope with steep sections. Several bridges.
  - 1 mile / 1.7 km
  - Allow 1½ hr

- **The Cauldron Trail**
  - Climb up through the spruce to enjoy the solitude of Wauchope, before winding back down through the trees. A good leg stretch.
  - Mostly wide, firm gravel tracks with long moderate slopes. Includes section of narrow, uneven earth and rocky paths with short fairly steep slopes.
  - 1½ miles / 2.7 km
  - Allow 1 hr

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**Contact**

Forestry Commission Scotland
Dumfries & Galloway Forest District
Arthurs Forest, Sanquhar, Dumfries, DG4 7AL
Tel: 01385 880247
E-mail: dumfriessouth@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Web: [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)
**Bessie’s Hill**

Climb through the magnificent Norway spruce trees to emerge in an Iron Age landscape. Great views over the River Esk.

- Grass and earth paths, with some rough and potentially muddy sections. Long steep slope and one short flight of steps. There are no waymarkers on the monuments to protect them.

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**Craigieburn Forest**

- **Craigieburn Trail**
  - A wonderfully varied walk up to a great viewpoint over Moffat Dale and the dramatic hills of the Southern Uplands.
  - Mostly wide but loose gravel tracks. Some narrow and uneven earth sections, including areas that may be muddy or wet. Long slopes with some steep sections.
  - 2¼ miles / 4.5 km
  - Allow 1½ hours

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**Craig Forest**

- **Burnside Trail**
  - A short stroll along the peaceful Borthwick Water, through graceful tarch. Perfect for a picnic.

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**Forest of Ae**

- **Ae Forest**
  - The perfect place to visit, whether you want to relax with a picnic beside the river, watch woodland wildlife, stroll through the trees or burn off some serious energy on horseback or on the superb 7Stanes mountain bike trails.

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**Spruce Trail**

- A wee dauner along the burn and through mature, mass-clad Norway spruce trees, a favourite habitat of the red squirrel.

- Uneven gravel and earth paths. Some exposed tree roots and potentially muddy sections. Two short steep slopes and a pair of bridges.

- Walk through some of Craig’s oldest trees and along the lovely Ailhouse Burn. Great views over the forest.

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**Green Hill Trail**

- A long route along the Water of Ae before climbing the hill. Great views from the top, across to Queensberry Hill and Harestanes Wind Farm.

- Long slopes with steep sections on rough, narrow earthy path with exposed tree roots and muddy patches. One section of steps. Watch for vehicles on the first section.

- 5½ miles / 8.8 km
  - Allow 3½ hours

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**Water of Ae Riversides Trail**

- A delightful wander along the restful Water of Ae. As the path weaves beneath soaring Norway spruce trees, watch for wildlife in the trees and burn.

- Firm gravel surface throughout. Some loose stones and a couple of short fairly steep ramps. Two cattle grids and one wide bridge. Look out for vehicles on the first section.

- 3½ miles / 5.2 km
  - Allow 1½ hrs

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**Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors responsibility**

- Take responsibility for great care and enjoyment of the environment.
- Care for the environment.

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**Taking care when out and about**

- Please remember that the weather on the hills and mountains can change very quickly, even in summer. Conditions on the tops of the mountains are often much colder and windier than at the lower levels, despite clear skies.

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**KEY**

- South of Forest
- Craigieburn Track
- Parking
- Forest car park
- Forest
- Information
- Park
- Forest
- Woodland
- Map of the route
- South of Forest
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**Notes**

- Maps and route descriptions are subject to change without notice.
- Please note that some trails may be closed during rainy or snowy conditions.
- Consult local maps and guides for accurate and up-to-date information.

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**Map Credits**

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