

Fleet Valley National Scenic Area

As the tide recedes to reveal the expanse of the Fleet Bay and its sandy beaches, the freshwater of the Skyre Burn and the Water of Fleet meander across the shimmering flats and flow out into Wigtown Bay.

The Islands of Fleet stand guard at the mouth of the estuary, with Ardwall and Barlocco Isles reached by foot from the shore at low tide. At the head of the Bay, nestling between the estuary and the wooded valley upstream, sits the historic town of Gatehouse of Fleet.

Geology has formed this landscape, between the rocky Isles of Fleet and the granite dome of Cairnsmore of Fleet, dry stone dykes divide and pattern the landscape.

The Fleet Valley is a living, working landscape. It's been home to people and animals for many thousands of years, and farming continues to shape the landscape of today.



Knockbrex Hill Viewpoint

Panoramic views from Knockbrex Hill stretch from the open hills at the top of the Fleet Valley, down through the rich farmland and oak woodlands. The open slopes of Ben John stand guard at the head of the Bay, and look across the water towards the Isle of Man.

The Murray Isles, now home to nesting colonies of seabirds, once provided a summer residence for fisherman working tidal stake nets for salmon and flat fish. Ardwall Isle has a history of worship and occupation dating back to the 6th century, the remains of a later chapel and hall house still standing.

Sandy beaches along this rocky shore provide sheltered safe bathing and access for water sports. Trapping the sea on the ebb tide, the rockpools in the crevices and hollows, are worth checking for anenomes, crabs and other aquatic life. Periwinkles, pelican's feet and scallops are just some of the sea shells you can treasure.

Another spectacular view can be enjoyed at the upland viewpoint at Knocktinkle on the open hills between Gatehouse and Laurieston.

Please remember that the viewpoint is on private farmland and act responsibly, respect the interest of others and care for the environment.

How to get there

From the A75 take the A755 to Kirkcudbright. Follow the viewpoint signs from this road and on arriving at Carrick follow the track around the shore. Leave your car at the informal grass parking area, and take the short path up the gentle hill to enjoy the panoramic views from the viewing seat.



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Knockbrex Hill viewpoint is part of a developing network of viewpoints that are being created across the three National Scenic Areas in the region.

The natural place

Photo © Allan Devlin; Illustration © Hugh Bryden



Dumfries and Galloway

National Scenic Areas



Knockbrex Hill Viewpoint

National Scenic Areas

Enjoy the stunning scenery of the Fleet Valley, its rich history and wonderful wildlife.

From coast to cairns, from lochs to lades, and from crabs to curlews – there is so much to explore it feels like Scotland in miniature!

The area, recognised as one of the most scenic parts of Scotland, has some stunning views like this one from Knockbex Hill, a viewpoint on the Carrick shore.

The rich mix of sea, rocky coast, river and moorland hills is highly valued by locals and visitors alike, and has inspired many writers and painters. We hope it will inspire you to come and enjoy it too!

