

The area is teeming with wildlife, historical attractions and some of the most magnificent scenery in south-west Scotland. This guide gives you details of many places to eat, shop and stay while you are here. If you're visiting with children look out for the special **Kids' Kite Quest** and see how many of the six wood carving rubbings your young companions can find! Have a wonderful time and come back soon!

Come on an adventure along the Galloway Kite Trail as red kites glide and soar overhead. The 24-mile trail circles beautiful Loch Ken with viewing points along the way, with an extra 14-mile route through Galloway Forest Park in summer. If you're after a closer encounter with these spectacular birds, a stop at the feeding station is an experience not to be missed.

# Welcome



Red kites are social birds of prey and make an awesome spectacle. Tens of thousands of people travel to sites like this every year to see them. It's incredible to think that in the 20th century they were almost extinct in the UK.



## The kite's story

In the Middle Ages, kites were a common sight in towns and countryside, mainly feeding on scraps and carrion. However, in the 16th century, laws were passed encouraging people to kill red kites and other birds of prey. By 1880, only a few kites were left in remote Welsh valleys.

### The kite's return

With the spread of more enlightened attitudes, and the huge growth of public interest in wildlife, things turned around for red kites in the UK. In 1989, the RSPB and government agencies, working in partnership with landowners, raptor workers and farmers, launched a reintroduction programme.

Between 2001 and 2005, 104 young kites were released into Galloway from elsewhere in the UK and Germany. They have bred since 2003 and continue to spread across the region.

For more information, contact RSPB Dumfries & Galloway Office, The Old School, Crossmichael, Castle Douglas DG7 3AP  
Tel: 01556 670464  
[gallowaykitetrail.com](http://gallowaykitetrail.com)

Please note that the Galloway Kite Trail Partnership cannot be held responsible for any changes in the quality or nature of facilities listed around the trail.

The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

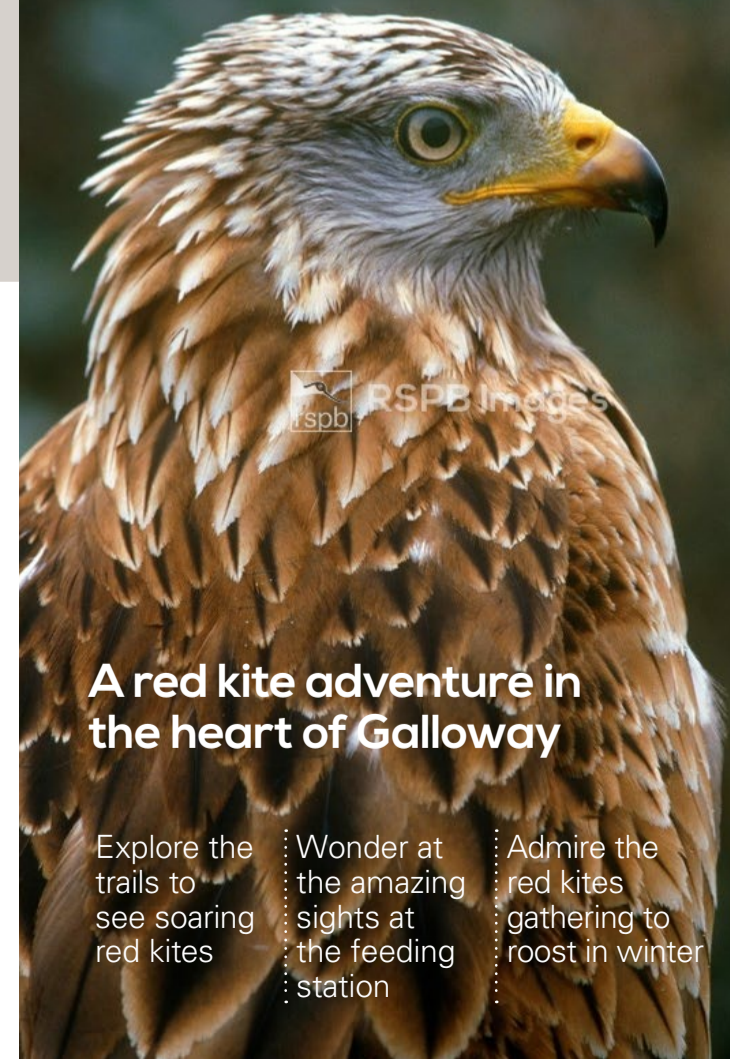
### Working together to give nature a home



The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.  
Front cover by Chris Gomersall, red kites by Ben Hall, red kite by Ben Andrew (all images rspb-images.com) 740-0462-16-17



# The Galloway Kite Trail



## A red kite adventure in the heart of Galloway

Explore the trails to see soaring red kites  
Wonder at the amazing sights at the feeding station  
Admire the red kites gathering to roost in winter

## Other things to do

### Spring/summer

A busy time for nature and a great time for you to explore.

- 1 Rest at Bruce's Stone, near Clatteringshaws Visitor Centre and stop to admire the view to the hills seen by a fugitive king after battle.
- 2 Catch the scolding calls of rare willow tits or spot woodpeckers and nuthatches in the damp woods at RSPB Ken-Dee Marshes Reserve.
- 3 Stroll amongst colourful wildflower meadows, as grasshoppers sing and butterflies flutter to and fro on the Mossdale Walk.
- 4 Discover wildlife on the forest drive along Raiders' Road, stopping at the Otter Pool or Loch Stroan for a picnic with a view.

### Autumn/winter

Things not to miss during the chillier months.

- 1 In October, pop up to the Red Deer Range in Galloway Forest Park, for a close view of the largest land mammals in the UK, during the rut.
- 2 Take a drive around the largest freshwater loch in Dumfries & Galloway, while nearby woodland colours change with autumn.
- 3 Discover red squirrels chasing each other, as they visit feeding areas near viewing hides at RSPB Ken-Dee Marshes Reserve.
- 4 Search for Icelandic greylags and scarce Greenland white-fronted geese, as they feed in fields by Loch Ken and the River Dee.

### Autumn/winter

- 1 Take a close look at kites flying overhead, as they may be carrying all sorts of things back to their nests.
- 2 Search for kites gathering when farmers cut silage or hay, as they will scavenge or hunt small creatures found in the fields.
- 3 Explore the Secret Cages, where red kites were first released into the Galloway Forest Park.

A busy time for red kites, with nesting and raising young.

### Red Kites spotters' guide

- 1 Be amazed at the feeding frenzy of over a hundred red kites at Bellymack Hill Farm, during afternoon feeds at 2 pm.
  - 2 Watch kites riding the sky as you walk to viewpoints overlooking Loch Ken and the River Dee, on the Parton Heritage Trail.
  - 3 Admire red kites circling over woods on the trail, when they gather (sometimes in a flying circus) to roost at dusk.
- For more information about the kites look out for Galloway Kite Trail information boards along the trail on walks, viewpoints and in local businesses.

# The Galloway Kite Trail



The following businesses provide support and information on the red kite project as well as offering a variety of services in the area.

**Bellymack Hill Farm Kite Feeding Station**  
Laurieston, Castle Douglas DG7 2PJ  
01644 450202 Open 1–4 pm  
(kites fed at 2 pm)  
[bellymackhillfarm.co.uk](http://bellymackhillfarm.co.uk)

**1 Benge Tree Shop**  
141 King Street,  
Castle Douglas DG7 1DX  
01556 504443  
[themagicbroomstick.com](http://themagicbroomstick.com)

**2 The Thistle Inn**  
Main Street, Crossmichael,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3AU  
01556 670203  
[nd.thistleinn@gmail.com](mailto:nd.thistleinn@gmail.com)

**3 Airds Farmhouse B&B**  
Crossmichael,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3BG  
01556 670418  
[airds.com](http://airds.com)

**4 Loch Ken Holiday Park**  
Parton, Castle Douglas DG7 3NE  
01644 470282  
[lochkenholidaypark.co.uk](http://lochkenholidaypark.co.uk)

**5 Galloway Activity Centre**  
Loch Ken, Castle Douglas DG7 3NQ  
01556 502011  
[lochken.co.uk](http://lochken.co.uk)

**6 The Ken Bridge Hotel, Campsite & Holiday Cottage**  
New Galloway,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3PR  
01644 420211  
[kenbridgehotel.co.uk](http://kenbridgehotel.co.uk)

**7 The CatStrand Arts and Visitor Centre**  
High Street, New Galloway,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3RN  
01644 420374  
[catstrand.com](http://catstrand.com)

**8 The Smithy Tearoom & Craft Shop**  
High Street, New Galloway,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3RN  
01644 420269 Open Mar–Oct  
[thesmithy-newgalloway.co.uk](http://thesmithy-newgalloway.co.uk)

**9 The Clachan Inn**  
8–10 Main Street, St John's Town of Dalry,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3UW  
01644 430241  
[theclachaninn.co.uk](http://theclachaninn.co.uk)

**10 Clatteringshaws Visitor Centre**  
Clatteringshaws, New Galloway,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3SQ  
01644 420221  
Open Mar–Oct (weekends Nov–Dec)

**11 Mossdale Shop**  
Mossdale,  
Castle Douglas DG7 2NF  
01644 450281

**12 The Gallery at Laurieston**  
Woodbank House, Laurieston,  
Castle Douglas DG7 2PW  
01644 450235  
[pmcphotography.co.uk](http://pmcphotography.co.uk)

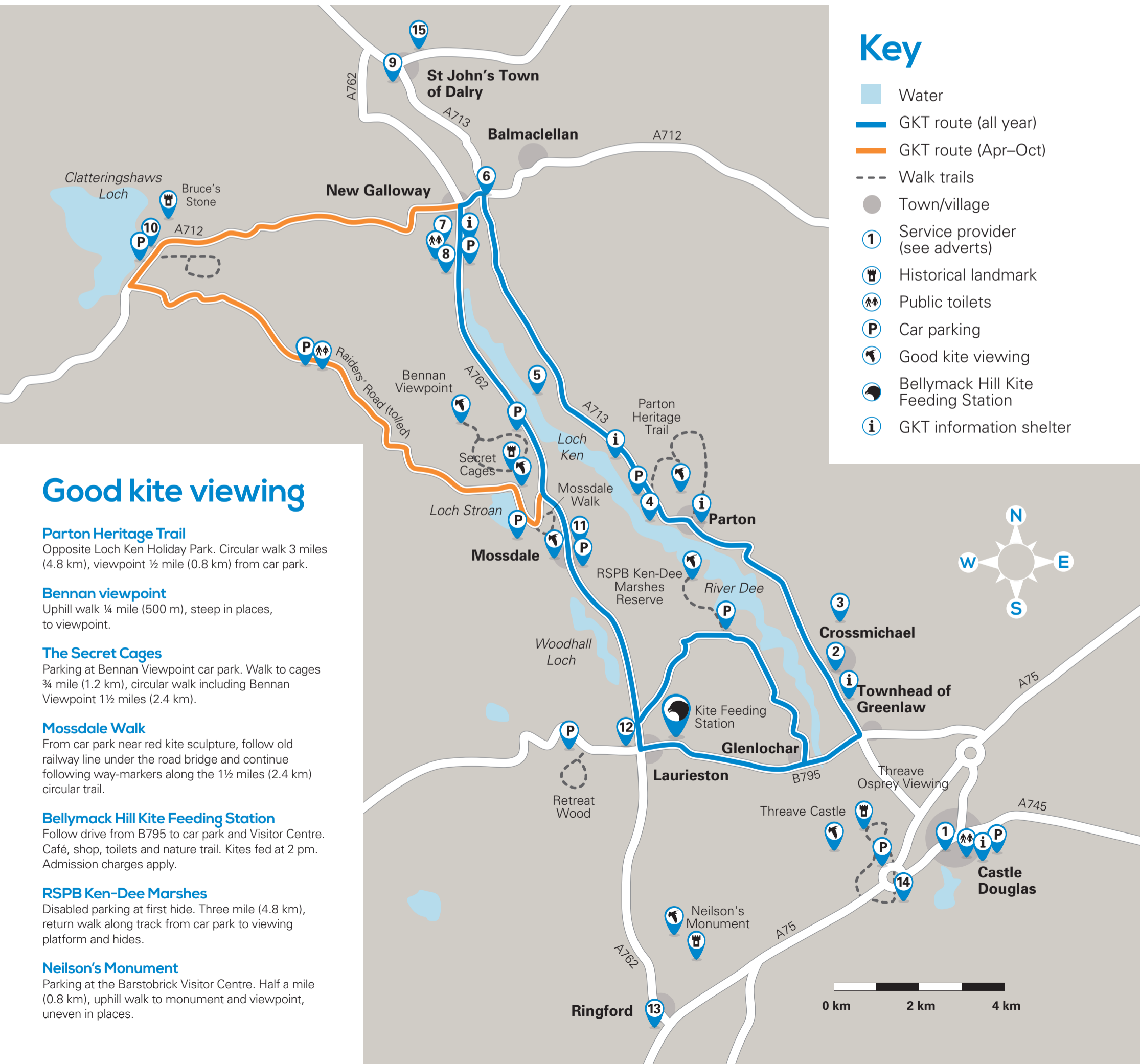
**13 The Schoolhouse Restaurant**  
The Schoolhouse, Ringford,  
Castle Douglas DG7 2AL  
01557 820250

**14 NTS Countryside Centre**  
Rangers Office,  
Threave House and Gardens,  
Castle Douglas DG7 1RX  
01556 503702  
[nts.org.uk/threave](http://nts.org.uk/threave)

**15 Brookford B&B**  
4 St John's Way,  
St John's Town of Dalry DG7 3UQ  
01644 430512  
[brookfordbandb.co.uk](http://brookfordbandb.co.uk)

**Longshot Holiday Cottage**  
c/o Craig Farm, Balmaclellan,  
Castle Douglas DG7 3QS  
01644 420636  
[craigfarm.co.uk](http://craigfarm.co.uk)

**The Selkirk Arms Hotel**  
High Street,  
Kirkcudbright DG6 4JG  
01557 330402  
[selkirkarmshotel.co.uk](http://selkirkarmshotel.co.uk)



## Key

- Water
- GKT route (all year)
- GKT route (Apr–Oct)
- Walk trails
- Town/village
- Service provider (see adverts)
- Historical landmark
- Public toilets
- Car parking
- Good kite viewing
- Bellymack Hill Kite Feeding Station
- GKT information shelter

## Good kite viewing

**Parton Heritage Trail**  
Opposite Loch Ken Holiday Park. Circular walk 3 miles (4.8 km), viewpoint ½ mile (0.8 km) from car park.

**Bennan viewpoint**  
Uphill walk ¼ mile (500 m), steep in places, to viewpoint.

**The Secret Cages**  
Parking at Bennan Viewpoint car park. Walk to cages ¾ mile (1.2 km), circular walk including Bennan Viewpoint 1½ miles (2.4 km).

**Mossdale Walk**  
From car park near red kite sculpture, follow old railway line under the road bridge and continue following way-markers along the 1½ miles (2.4 km) circular trail.

**Bellymack Hill Kite Feeding Station**  
Follow drive from B795 to car park and Visitor Centre. Café, shop, toilets and nature trail. Kites fed at 2 pm. Admission charges apply.

**RSPB Ken-Dee Marshes**  
Disabled parking at first hide. Three mile (4.8 km), return walk along track from car park to viewing platform and hides.

**Neilson's Monument**  
Parking at the Barstobrick Visitor Centre. Half a mile (0.8 km), uphill walk to monument and viewpoint, uneven in places.