

Ollie's walk of the week



Continue along the path until reaching more trees. The sound of the river can be heard in the gorge far below.

The path continues through more woodland until just before the next set of stairs there is a viewing platform on the left. This leads to a view over the Nethan towards the Clyde Valley in one direction, and towards the ramparts of Cragneithan Castle in the other direction.

Continue down the steps, leading to a bridge over a small burn. Follow the path round the hill, ascending to a gate leading to Cragneithan Castle.

The castle is open from April to September and is well worth a visit. Members of Historic Scotland get free entry.

Cragneithan Castle sits in a beautiful setting with rugged surroundings providing magnificent views. In a picturesque setting overlooking the River Nethan, the oldest part of the castle is a tower house built by Sir James Hamilton of Finnart in the 16th century. The castle's extensive defences include a caponier - a stone vaulted artillery chamber which is unique in Britain.

Climb up to the car park for a view over the castle and the surrounding countryside before heading back to Crossford along the same path.

Crossford was also the starting point for an earlier walk of the week, to Kirkfieldbank.

A walk along Nethan Gorge

Distance: 4km

Time: 1 hour

Terrain: Forest tracks, steep in part and occasionally muddy

Overview: This walk takes you from the Clyde Valley village of Crossford on a woodland walk along the River Nethan to Cragneithan Castle. It is a fairly short, but rewarding walk, with the option of a visit to the Castle. Lower Nethan Gorge reserve is one of the best examples of semi-natural woodland still surviving in the Clyde Valley. Rich ash and elm woodland grows on the steep slopes, supporting a wide variety of plants and animals, including green woodpeckers, otters and badgers. Highlights include woodland walks, gorge views and birdwatching

Starting Point: Park at the public car park on Smuggler's Brig Road.

Head north on the A72 until reaching the bridge over the River Nethan. Cross over and go through the gate leading to the sign showing the entrance to Nethan Gorge. The path leads along the banks of the river before starting to rise steeply on a series of steps.

Continue through the woodland as the path rises and falls, before reaching the highest point on the route. Emerging from the trees the view opens out and to the right there is sight of the Clyde Valley.

