

CAIRNTABLE WALK

Distance: 6 miles/10km

Further Information: Ayr Tourist Information Centre, 22
Sandgate, Ayr, KA7 1BW

OS Map Reference: Landranger Landranger 51 (Lanark and
Upper Nithsdale)

This is one of several walks around the village of Muirkirk. The paths are way marked and leaflets with descriptions are available from the Tourist Information Centre.

The Cairntable Walk is a climb rather than a walk, Cairntable being 1,944 feet above sea level. It is the chief 'mountain' in the area and takes its rise some 24 miles from the sea. The route follows what is known locally as the March fence. A progress marker is reached on ascending The Steele, which is 1,356 feet above sea level. A climb to the top is well rewarded by a magnificent view. On a clear day, the Isle of Arran and Ben Lomond can be seen on the horizon.

There are two cairns of stone rudely piled on its top underneath which, it is supposed, lie the remains of some of the Druids of early years. A cairn on the top was built in 1920 in memory of the men and women of the village who fell or served in the Great War. It was built in line with the two smaller cairns.

Cairntable has been called "the hill of a hundred springs." Down the western side is a fine spring of pure water named Cairntable Cauldron, or the boiling well. The route is also over a grouse moor, and, like other walks is a sanctuary for bird life. In season golden plover, lapwing, curlew, snipe, skylark and hen harriers can be spotted.

Cairntable dominates the skyline to the south of the village of Muirkirk, and in season takes on magnificent colours when the heathers bloom. Altogether a rewarding walk.