

Kirk to Castle via Grobust

Easy circular walks from Pierowall to explore a medieval church, a broch, a castle and the finest sandy beach in Westray. Longest route approx. 6km (3.7m)



While still in Pierowall visit Lady Kirk an attractive ruin dating back to the thirteenth century and still in use until late nineteenth century when Pierowall was a busy fishing port. Opposite the Höfn centre, view Pierowall Quarry where in 1981 the beautifully decorated Westray Stone was found. It is 4,900 years old and part of a chambered cairn of the Maes Howe type. The stone can be viewed in the Orkney Museum in Kirkwall.

The walks take you over a large area of wind blown sand covered in short turf called links or machair, colourful with wild flowers in the summer. It extends from Pierowall to the beach at Grobust.

After the first stretch of sand a sloping slab of blue-grey rock has a fine collection of fossil fish fragments.

Rocks with ripple marks and mud cracks provide further evidence of the past, dating back 380 million years to a time when Orkney was covered in a freshwater lake.



Noltland Castle

For more recent history look for the Knowe of Queena Howe, a green mound on the shore, which contains the foundation of an Iron Age broch. Scattered at the western end of Grobust Sands are several low walls, covered in golden lichen. These tangle dykes are where the kelp stalks were dried after being harvested in the winter.

The impressive Noltland Castle is well worth a visit on the way back to Pierowall. (Key available from the farm opposite.)

Otter Shell

