Out and about in Midlothian

Introduction
Walk from near Dalhousie Castle passing old Cockpen Church (founded c.1148) then up the secluded valley of the South Esk and Arniston Estate to Temple. The return passes Arniston House with fine views of Midlothian’s farming landscape.

Route Details
Start on the side road on the bend of the road between Dalhousie Castle bridge and Buttlefield Industrial estate. Walk up the side road and through a gate (50 metres). Pass old Cockpen Church hidden in trees on left and along an old road.

Further on, the road has areas of old subsidence. Beware the cracks and changes in level. Further on the track reaches a large expanse of open grassland, site of long demolished Prestonholm House and jute mill. Follow the track then faint path gradually up to the left until on high ground. Continue up between fence and wall to reach the farm track, Povert Road. Turn right. At the public road, turn right then down under a low bridge then ahead through gate into Gore Glen Woodland Park.

In 50 metres, turn right over stone bridge. From here, it is 3 miles to Temple following the river South Esk. Walk through woodland following the river, right over another bridge then gently right and up. Continue high above the river before descending to a large meadow. Continue upstream over a bridge, then on up river avoiding the vehicle track steeply up to left. At a grass track T-junction, turn right, back down towards the river.

At a Y-fork cross small stone bridge (right) to follow the river. After the high road bridge turn left up steps. Turn right before additional smaller steps ahead. Continue down then up through conifer woodland eventually climbing to a wall and door opposite Temple church. Visit the church cemetery and its interpretation board (history of the area and the Knights Templar).

Return by the same route until the small stone bridge and Y-fork. Turn right then in 50 metres turn left uphill. At the top after a small wooden gate, turn right on mown grass path. At the centre of the meadow turn left to Arniston House. Walk round the right side of the house then left to its front. Continue past the house then diagonally right towards a field and avenue between tall lime trees. After the trees, a track descends right to the river. Continue downstream by your outward route.

Key Points of Interest
Views across the Lothians then tranquil valley of Arniston estate
Temple Church and its connections to the Knights Templar
Arniston House — An imposing William Adam, Palladian style mansion house, completed in 1750

Walk
Old Cockpen Church to Temple and Arniston
Distance: 9¼ miles / 15 km
Ascent: 500/150m
Time: 4 hours
Terrain – Open grassland • Estate vehicle track • Some marked paths • moderate ascent • muddy in places
Map: No 66 Edinburgh
Start point: Small side road on bend of road (B704) between Dalhousie Castle and Buttlefield Industrial Estate.
Gr: NT 327 634
Public transport: No
Car Parking: Yes
Refreshments: No
Route: Ian Brown
Photo: Ian Brown

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