

An excerpt from Walking in Clydesdale by Paul Lamarra

The Covenanter's Grave

Distance: 11 miles

Grade: moderate

Starting point: Former railway station, Dolphinton by A702.

Finishing point: Former railway station, Dolphinton by A702.

Maps: OS Landranger 72; OS Explorer 344; compass essential.

Terrain: Mainly on a good surface however towards the end of the walk it is exposed, featureless and very boggy moor in parts.

BY THE WAY

There is a touching story associated with this route across the moor and in following it you'll be retracing the footsteps of local shepherd Adam Sanderson who tried to fulfil the dying wish of a Covenanter wounded at the battle of Rullion Green.

On 28th November 1666 Sanderson encountered the Covenanter desperately trying to get to a point from where he could see the Ayrshire hills just one last time. Sanderson offered his assistance but it was refused. The next day Sanderson found his body at Oaken Bush.

At great personal risk, as government troops would have been scouring the area for fugitives, Sanderson transported the body high onto the moors a little way short of the summit of Black Law as it is from this point that you can look west between Darlees Rig and Bleak Law to the Ayrshire Hills.

Archaeologists excavated the grave and found the Covenanter's well-preserved body wrapped in a red cloak with two Dutch coins sewn into his collar. The original marker stone with its coded inscription now sits on the windowsill of Dunsyre Kirk.

The moor is utterly empty of landmarks and the hills lack a distinctive character so this is not a walk to attempt in misty weather.

The Route

	Grid ref.	Distance
1.	111 478	0
	Start: Former Dolphinton Station, by the A702. Follow minor road away from A702 for 200 yards.	
2.	111 479	200 yards
	Turn right off minor road at right of way sign for West Linto 4 miles. Continue through gate and round to the right and follow track uphill towards white cottage.	
3.	112 482	¼ mile
	Continue through gate at White Cottage and follow track round to the left (look out for Tweed Trail signs). Continue towards stand of pine trees. Follow track past Ingraston Farm.	
4.	135 513	2 ¾ miles
	Eventually you encounter a crossroads. Go straight on passing South Slipperfield cottage to the left, signed West Linton. Continue through gate and follow grassy track over old bridge. Follow track to junction with golf course road.	
5.	139 517	3 ½ miles
	Turn left onto golf course road, signed Garvald 3 miles, Dunsyre 5 mile and follow through gate at North Slipperfield. Ignore track on left at sheepfold and continue to small grey building.	
6.	123 517	4 ½ miles
	Continue uphill and turn left signed for Covenanter's Grave. Follow rough track for 2 miles to four-way signpost.	
7.	083 515	6 ½ miles
	Leave track for open hillside and follow grouse butts aiming just west of summit of Black Law. Look out for large sandstone gravestone just short of summit on west side.	
8.	077 523	7 miles
	Retrace steps from grave to four-way signpost and continue straight over track onto open moor once again. There is a line of posts marking out the line on the path but this will be difficult to detect in misty weather when a compass will be required.	
9.	096 493	8 ½ miles
	At the far side of the moor follow fence south-east to gate. Turn left onto prominent track and go through second gate. After a short distance go off to the right and descend to footbridge.	
10.	098 492	8 ¾ miles
	Cross footbridge and enter field. Go towards barns on left and go through gates to narrow track that runs up the side of the barn. Follow track to join farm road. Go straight to leave farm on tarmac road and follow all the way to a T-junction.	
11.	102 483	10 miles
	Turn left at T-junction and follow road to starting point.	
12.	118 478	11 miles
	End: Former Dolphinton Station, by the A702	