

Collect the excellent **Castle Loch Booklet** from the Town Hall and take the walk round this enchanting area.

**Castle Loch** has the largest surface area of the three lochs in The Burgh. The ruins of Lochmaben Castle are found on a promontory at the south end of the loch. This castle is a former stronghold of the Bruce family and is reckoned to be the best example of an Edwardian Peel left in Scotland. Surrounding the loch is the Castle Loch Nature Reserve which attempts to reconcile the various interests which use the area: Yachting, Coarse Fishing, Wild Fowling, Bird Watching etc... The only motorised craft allowed on the loch are the Yacht Club rescue boats. Other recreational facilities on the edge of the loch are the Victory Park, the bowling green and the all-weather Tennis Courts. There is an attractive path round most of the loch, which passes Lochmaben Castle and a Bird Hide. Much development of the Castle Loch environs has been carried out by Sulwath Connections. Over 3 years they are installing new paths, new fishing piers and managing the woodland so that there are more native species such as oak, ash and rowan. Another recent feature to enhance the Loch Walk is a series of beautiful wooden sculptures by Peter Bowsher. Local residents have formed the Castle Loch Volunteer Group and are aiming to improve the area for the local population and for visitors by putting up bird and bat boxes and clearing pernicious plants such as Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron.



## **What to See**

### **Castles**

#### **Woody Castle**



Woody Castle is an Iron Age Fort sited to the north west of the Mill Loch. It is 63m (212 feet) in diameter and is surrounded by high banks of earth and stone. The ditch which lay at the base of the banks has practically disappeared with the passage of time. The entrance faces north while to the east stands a large conglomerate stone left by the retreating ice. This boulder is supposed to mark the spot where a king was slain in 880 AD. One legend connected to the stone was that a crock of gold was buried beneath it! One of the farmers of Lochbank Farm attempted to move it with a team of horses but was frightened off by the onset of a violent storm of thunder and lightning.

#### **Motte and Bailey Castle**



The Motte and Bailey was built in the 12th Century by the De Brus family from Northumberland on land granted to them by David 1st. It is claimed that King Robert I of Scotland (Bruce) was born here, which is why the town adopted the motto "From us is born the liberator king" (in Latin) on its coat of arms. The castle was probably constructed of wood although traces of stone and mortar remain around the summit of the mound. The motte, which is a prominent artificial mound surrounded by a steep-sided ditch, is best known as the site of the elevated 2nd green of the picturesque 18 hole golf course. The bailey or outer courtyard, which is less evident today, was also bounded by a ditch, and is thought to have extended to the edge of the Castle Loch. The castle changed hands many times in its 200 year history, during the Wars of Scottish Independence.