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Martin Goldie

Portpatrick to Dunskey Castle

 **Writers' Walks**



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Martin Goldie is a poet from the west of Scotland.

His debut collection “Unshackled” was published by Seahorse Publications in November 2022 and Clydefisher, by Drunk Muse Press, followed in 2026.





Writers' Walks



Portpatrick to Dunskey Castle

Portpatrick is located on the Irish Sea on the west coast of the Rhins of Galloway. A diamond of a town. It has lost the ferry link to Larne in Northern Ireland and the Wigtownshire railway line opened in 1877 was closed in 1950, the station building survives but is now a residential property. However, it still attracts large numbers of tourists looking to enjoy the scenic beauty of its sheltered harbour.

The day I visited the August sunshine had swelled the population and the streets were thrumming with tourist's enjoying a drink and food in the bars that look out onto the harbour.

The village is a popular destination for walkers. The Southern Upland Way starts its 214 mile journey through The South West Scotland's remote beauty here. I planned the less ambitious walk south along the cliffs to Dunskey Castle.

The walk is short and sometimes steep, and though the path can be rough in places it can be enjoyed by most. I left the car park on the south edge of the village and climbed steeply towards the castle. The path follows the line of the old rail line. It was dry, which made the going easy, and the greenery was softened by purple, orange and yellow of wild flowers that provided colour. The reward for my effort and height gained was fantastic views west, to Ireland, just visible in the haze.

The path skirts close to cliffs falling to the crashing waves of the sea. I enjoyed a stop to watch sea birds dance in the lively winds off the cliffs. Beyond a small white hulled boat incoming with fresh fish for the Port's restaurants, the quiet summer wind sent distant rain squalls south across the sky, hiding Ireland as they went.

The 16th century tower house soon came into view, built on the site of a 12th century castle. It dominates the horizon, looking out to grey. A short, (little over a mile in total), but stunning walk there on the Rhins of Galloway for everyone to enjoy.

The Guardian of the Rhins

The sentinels are gone,
only grey stone pelt
that slowly peels
remains beneath
the choking flame.

Mauve against
the grey marbled sky.
It floats with gulls'
wheeling in dancing air.

Trembles in the wind,
stares west to peril,
beyond whinnying rooks
and seagulls;
and its ghosts.

Holds
its breath to time,
watches patterns of grey
that form the nothing
of sky and sea.

Still itching
for a quarrel
Dunskey Castle
guards
the Rhins of Galloway.