

## The Archbishop and the King 5.75 miles (9.5 km)

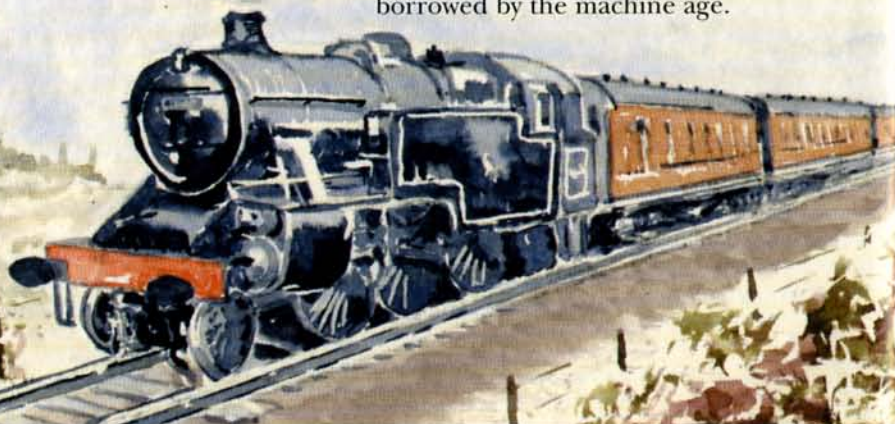
It is hard to believe when the tide is in that there are ways to cross the Solway Firth on foot. The journey is dangerous and many have tried and failed. Even those who know the Solway ebb and flow would not attempt the journey without a guide. And yet in 1300, an Archbishop of Canterbury made the trip across the four channels of the Bowness Wath, on a quest laid on him by the Pope himself.

The term wath is taken from the Norse word 'vath', meaning ford or crossing. The reason why it is so difficult to cross the Solway on foot is that the exact location of the waths changes over the years. Part of the skill in crossing the estuary lies in being able to read the Solway's shifting sands to see where the wath is today.

Robert of Winchelsea, Archbishop of Canterbury was sent to stop the war Edward I was waging on Scotland. The Pope gave him a letter, which he was to deliver in person to the King. As things turned out, Robert was to have a wasted journey. After crossing the Solway in fear of his life, he found that Edward's army was already turning for home.

The countryside looked much the same for centuries after Robert's visit. It was only 150 years ago that things began to change when new transport links opened up the wild Solway. The North British Railway ran from Carlisle to Silloth, crossing the raised mires where butterflies, dragonflies and adders still thrive.

The railway closed in the middle of the last century, and now the natural world is laying claim to ground that was only borrowed by the machine age.

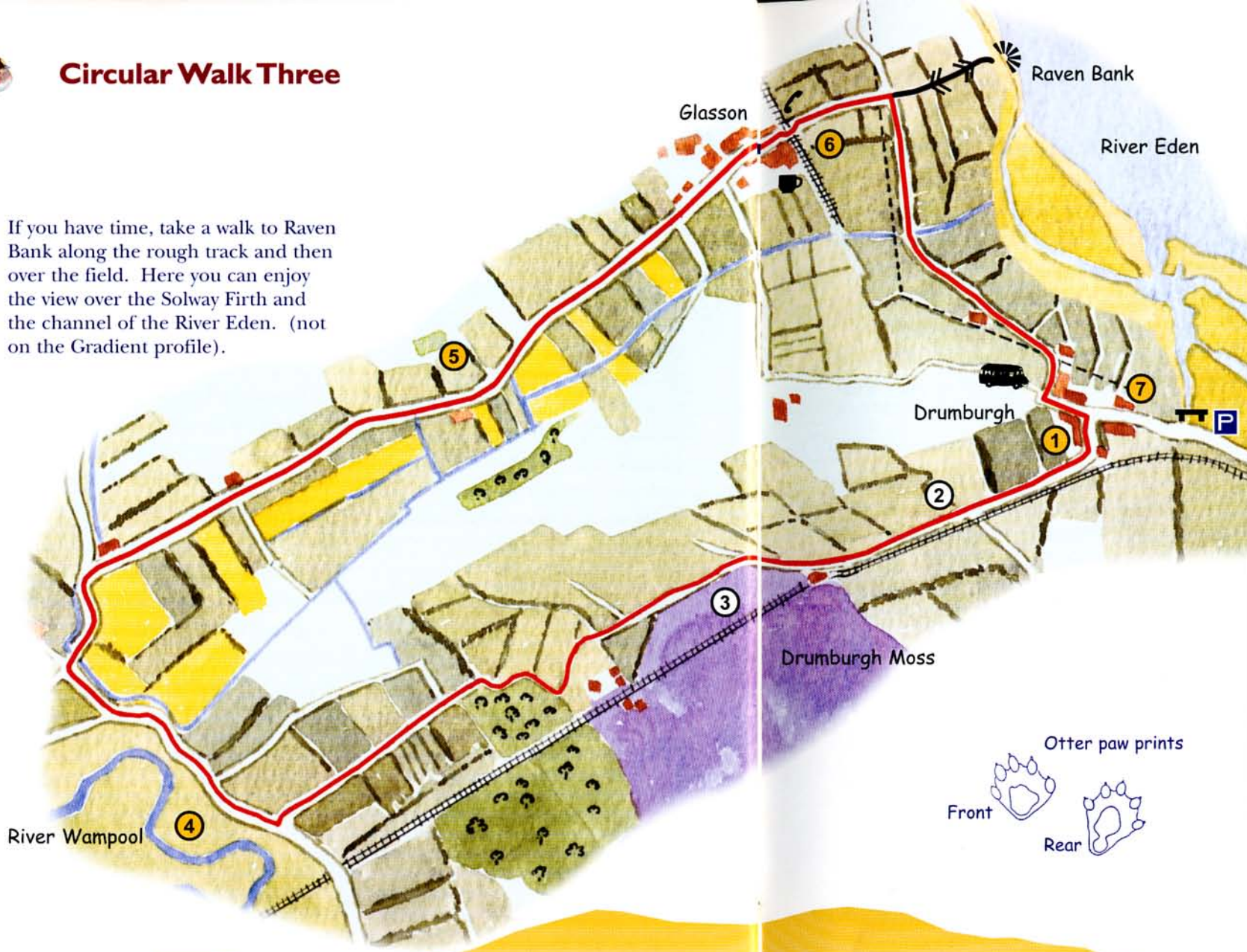


## Circular Walk Three

- ① Start your walk from the centre of **Drumburgh**.
- ② The walk now follows the bed of a **Steam Railway** which ran between Drumburgh and the Victorian seaside resort of Silloth. The builders of this line had many problems because of the boggy ground. The foundations of the line sank several times before the engineers finally managed to lay a firm bed for the track.
- ③ You are now skirting the edge of **Drumburgh Moss National Nature Reserve**. Rare plants thrive in the special conditions this habitat provides. Insect eating plants such as the sundew and butterwort can be found here lying in wait for unsuspecting flies and bugs.
- ④ The **River Wampool** is one of two small rivers that empty into Moricambe Bay. It has a healthy population of otter, although you would have to be very lucky to see one. Otters are quiet, nocturnal creatures that live on a diet of fish, frogs and other river dwellers. Look out for otter paw prints under foot.
- ⑤ As you travel along the **road to Glasson** imagine how it must have looked when Robert of Winchelsea was crossing the Solway. The road would have been little more than a drovers track sitting on top of the Moss laid on bundles of wood which provided a foundation in the soft peat. The mires had not been drained for farming then, and covered a much larger area.
- ⑥ **Glasson** is an old farming settlement which formed on higher ground overlooking the mires and marshes.
- ⑦ Back in Drumburgh, take a moment to admire **Drumburgh Bastle**. A Bastle is a fortified manor house, or a mini-castle. This one was built around 1307, in the year Edward I died. Like many of the buildings along Hadrian's Wall, it was built with good, dressed Roman stone from both the Wall and local forts. Look out for the Roman Altar by the steps.

# Circular Walk Three

If you have time, take a walk to Raven Bank along the rough track and then over the field. Here you can enjoy the view over the Solway Firth and the channel of the River Eden. (not on the Gradient profile).



### Map Key

- Route
- Gradient moderate steep
- Road Bus
- Point of Interest
- Access to Road
- Telephone Toilets
- Parking Refreshments
- Signpost Bridge
- Perch/Seat Step Stile
- Gate Narrow Gate
- Kissing Gate View Point

### Path Surface

Grass	Firm/Even
Soft	Rough/Uneven

### Gradient Profile

The highest point on this walk is 20m

The scale only applies to the horizontal Gradient Profile.

