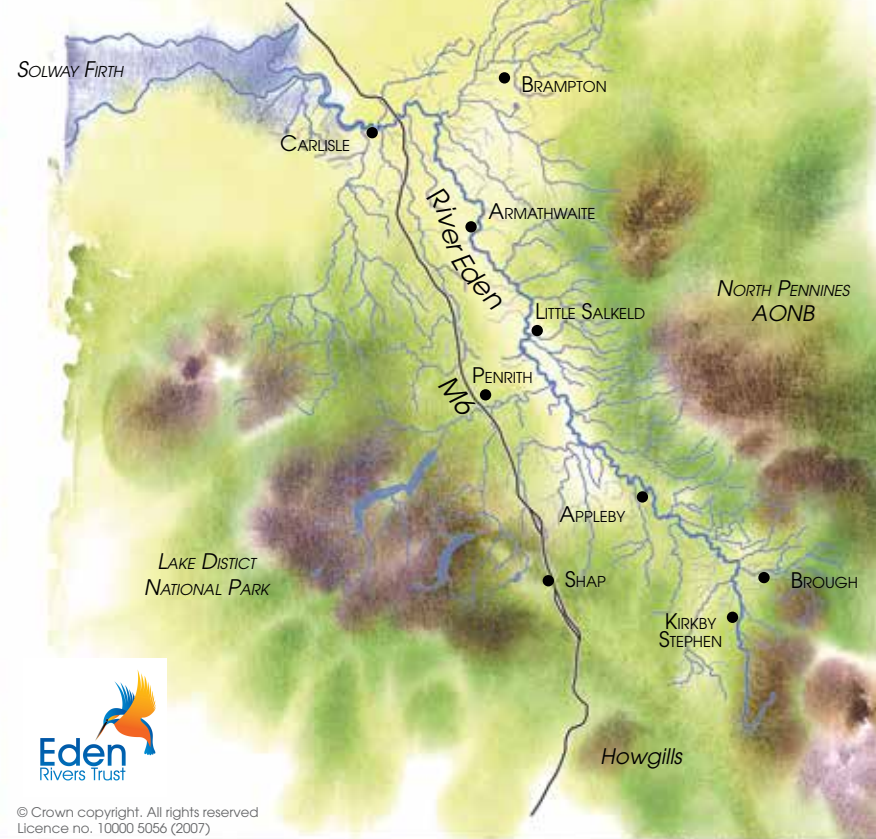




River Eden Catchment Area

Scottish Border



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Church Brough, Great Musgrave and Brough Sowerby

a walk through an ancient farmed landscape, with two churches, a Norman castle, a river, a pub, a castellated folly, and stunning views every step of the way



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Brough Castle



Brough Castle



Church Brough, Great Musgrave and Brough Sowerby

*"This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
nimble and sweetly recommends itself
unto our gentle senses."*

William Shakespeare

Church Brough is dominated by its ruined Norman castle and it is perhaps surprising that the village isn't called 'Castle Brough' - although it does have a beautiful old church as well, which was also originally built by the Normans.

Both the castle and the church are well worth a visit. The castle is open all year round and entry is free. The church is open every day between 10 am and 4 pm.

The first stone castle was built in the 11th century, on the site of a Roman fort called 'Verterae'. Destroyed by the Scots in 1174, it was rebuilt in 1203 by Robert de Vieuxpont and subsequently altered and enlarged by the Clifford family, notably in the second half of the 17th century by that great champion of castles in old Westmorland, Lady Anne Clifford.

The river meandering in the valley below the castle is Swindale Beck, which flows down from the fells through Swindale woods, north east of Market Brough.

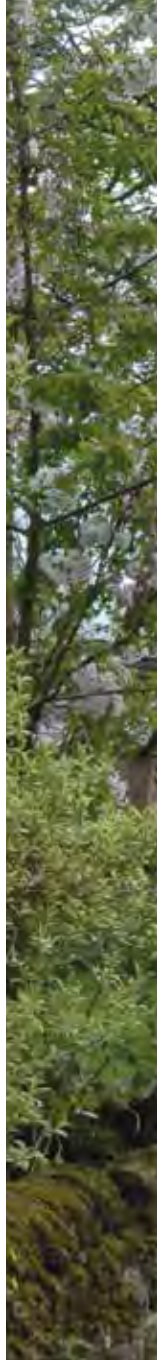
'Brough' is an early English word meaning 'fortification' and there has been a fortified settlement here since Roman times. The Roman occupation of the Eden Valley was predominately military and Brough was strategically important over many centuries for defence against enemy attack in relation to the road over Stainmore.

Market Brough, now noisily divided from Church Brough by the traffic on the A66 bypass, originally developed as a trading community in close (but separate) proximity to the castle. It expanded considerably during the 18th century, when it was an important stopping place for coaches, wagons and packhorse trains travelling east and west across the Pennines.

From the village square our route passes Wiend Cottage and goes down a narrow lane, past the entrance to St Michael's Church.

Some of the church building dates back to the 11th and 12th centuries but it has been extensively restored and enlarged at various times since then. The tower was built in 1513 and the large window in the tower is probably 17th century. Interesting features include a Roman memorial stone and a 'leper's squint'.

Continue down the lane where it cuts through an outcrop of red sandstone, past the entrance to a large house which was formally the vicarage, and through the gate, up the hedged track forking to the right.





St Michael's Church, Church Brough





Wild Boar Fell

As you ascend the track, you will see some of the earth bank remains of the Roman fort in the field just to the left of the castle.

Go through a second gate, where the track is more level.

As you proceed, the sight of the castle from the different angles is very impressive, and the surrounding 360-degree views of the wider landscape are astounding.

A large tract of the Pennines north of here is the Warcop Training Area, one of the biggest Army training areas in the UK. It is also part of the Appleby Fells Site of Special Scientific Interest and, although public access is severely restricted, the Army works closely with Natural England to manage a rich diversity of wildlife habitats for nature

conservation. The woodland on the lower slopes opposite is Hellbeck wood, which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This very important site is one of a series of internationally significant ash woods growing on carboniferous limestone along the Pennine escarpment. It is considered to be the best ash woodland on limestone left in England.

The tall, thin building in the middle of the wood is Fox Tower, an 18th century folly, allegedly built by the landowner of the day so that he could watch the local huntsmen and their hounds chasing foxes.

To the south are Nine Standards Rigg, with its nine stone cairns on the skyline, Mallerstang Edge, Wild Boar Fell and the Howgills.



Fox Tower



lynchets beside Swindale Beck

Beyond the third gate, the track emerges into a field and continues with the fence and the scrubby remains of a hedge on your left. At the stone field barn, bear right and go through the bridleway gate.

At this point, you get a wonderful view of a sequence of horizontal ridges on the hillside above Great Musgrave village. Often called 'lynchets' from an early English word meaning ridges, these were once cultivated terraces where crops were grown, possibly as far back as medieval times.

It is likely that the public bridleway we are following is also very old and might once have been the main thoroughfare between Church Brough and Great Musgrave. It was possibly hedged on both sides along

its whole length at one time, and there are short sections where the ground has evidently been hollowed out by the constant passage of horses and cattle.



Cross straight ahead through the middle of the field, just to the left of the two oak trees.

Over on the right are more lynchets. These follow the curve of the hill, which suggests that they were formed by ploughing up and down the slope. Although this seems incongruous now, it probably made sense at the time because the flatter ground in the river valley would have been marshy woodland.

Go through the next bridleway gate and follow the path as it curves right to the bottom of the slope, then continue straight ahead via a metal gate. Follow the fence on your right hand side, past a line of hawthorn bushes.



male lapwing
illustration based on © image
Bill Paton (rspb-images.com)



hawthorn blossom

The row of hawthorns may be another indication that this path was originally a hedged lonning. When in full spate, Swindale Beck regularly breaks over its banks along here, flooding and scouring the fields and depositing piles of driftwood. The wide, shingle areas attract large numbers of oystercatchers in the spring and summer. Other birds you may see include black-headed gulls, lapwing and pied wagtails.



lynchets above Great Musgrave





Swindale Beck

Briefly walk along the riverbank and then bear left where the beck bends off to the right.

Swindale Beck, which joins the main river Eden a little way further on, just south of Great Musgrave village, is a good trout fishing stream and the landowner along this stretch is a participant in the Eden Rivers Trust's 'Go Wild in Eden' scheme. This provides anglers with exclusive access to rivers not normally available to the general public for 'catch and release fly fishing with an extra challenge!' All an angler needs to do is purchase 'Go Wild' tokens from the Eden Rivers Trust. For more information telephone 01768 866788 or email office@edenriverstrust.org.uk

Keep straight on to the solitary ash tree in the hedge over on the left.

Our circular route turns sharp left on the other side of the hedge (see page 19), but you may wish to extend your walk with a detour through Great Musgrave and a visit to its church, which nestles below the village on the north bank of the river Eden (see page 14). This will add approximately 1 hour.



St. Theobald's Church

Great Musgrave loop

Instead of turning sharp left, continue straight on; go through a field gate which brings you out onto a track, where you turn right and cross Swindale Beck.

Hall Garth Farm opposite is on the site of the 12th century home of the Musgraves, the powerful Norman family who later moved to Hartley Castle, near Kirkby Stephen. The lynchets on the left, seen from a distance earlier, are evidence of much earlier occupants who probably lived at the eastern end of the village, where earthworks indicate traces of a medieval settlement.

Turn left along the lane to Great Musgrave village, walk through the village and turn left down a side road, just past Smithy House. Keep bearing right and go down a narrow, tarmac bridleway to St. Theobald's Church.



Great Musgrave's church is dedicated to St. Theobald, a hermit monk and patron saint of charcoal-burners, who died in 1066. The present building dates from 1845, but there has been a church on the site for at least eight hundred years. Very little has survived from the earlier buildings, apart from a few artefacts. These include a 13th century coffin-lid, set into the outside east wall, and two 15th century bells in the tower.

A rush-bearing ceremony takes place on the first Saturday in July. The custom derives from a time when rushes were used to cover the church floor and involves local children, carrying floral crowns and rush crosses, walking in a procession led by a band, from the village to the church. The crowns and crosses are brought to the altar during a service and afterwards hung over the west door until the following year.



To resume the circular walk, go back along the path up to the village and turn right, along the public footpath signposted to Hall Garth. Turn left through a metal pedestrian gate and cross the field at an angle, just to the left of the row of white terraced cottages. Go through a wall-stile and keep straight on down the slope to Hall Garth Farm.

This takes you down through the middle of the cultivation terraces.

Go through the field gate onto the road opposite Hall Garth Farm, turn right and right again down the farm track across Swindale Beck, and then left, along the bridleway sign-posted to Church Brough and Brough Sowerby. Cross the field to the left hand corner of the hedge and fence opposite, keep straight on with the hedge on your right, and go through the gateway to the right of the solitary ash tree.



ash



Churches

*“What is a church? – our honest sexton tells,
‘tis a tall building, with a tower and bells”*

George Crabbe

Most of the 'Discover Eden' walks feature a church or two. Along with war and agriculture, religion is one of the tangible cornerstones of our cultural heritage and churches resonate with a potent mix of architecture, art and ambience that encapsulates so much of human history.

The earliest Christian Saxon churches were timber structures and built on ground that was usually already invested with religious significance by the preceding Pagans. These were, in turn, replaced with stone churches by the Normans and then restored, modified and extended over the succeeding centuries.

They have survived because they were always at the very centre of community life, not only as places of religious worship but also for meetings and markets and as a refuge from adversity. Their bells would serve as an early warning system and the towers and thick walls provided village communities with protection against enemy attack.



ash tree below Heanings Farm



Circular walk continuation

Cross the next field, keeping just to the left of the oak tree in the middle, go through the field gate, cross the next field, bearing right to the far corner, and go through the bridleway gate. Follow the fence on your right and turn right through the field gate. Keep straight on along the lower contour, with the ground sloping up to your left and the drainage sike on your right.

This undulating, farmed landscape is typical of the Eden valley, where the rich, boulder-clay soils favour the growing of grass for grazing livestock. The combination of the scooped-out little valleys and small rounded hills are the result of the last Ice Age, 30,000 years ago. The slowly moving glaciers gouged their way through the softer ground, grinding and crushing underlying rocks and depositing them as a thick layer of clay. In places where a glacier encountered harder outcrops of rock, it rolled layers of clay over the top of them, creating the elongated mounds which are called 'drumlins'.

Continue past a row of trees and hawthorn bushes on your left, keeping the sike still on your right until it goes off at 90 degrees to the right and you bear left through a field gate. Keep straight on, with the fence alongside on your left. After a short distance, bear slightly right through another field gate, with Knocking Tofts farmhouse and outbuildings at the top of the hill up to your left, then rejoin and cross the sike over to the right.

The name 'knocking' comes from the Celtic word 'cnoccin', meaning 'little hillock' and 'toft' is a Scandinavian word for homestead.

Go through the field gate and walk diagonally across the field to a step-stile. Continue to the next field gate and along the much more distinct track curving round to the right and out onto the road at Brough Sowerby.

Along to the right, the Black Bull Inn is very conveniently situated, at the half way point on our route, for rest and refreshment.

With great care, cross the road, follow the minor road opposite sign-posted to Barras. Go through and beyond the main part of the village and follow the road across Brough Sowerby Common.

A short-cut back to Church Brough is also available along a footpath, sign-posted to Low Park, just a few metres north from here, along the main road as shown on our map.



Brough Sowerby Common

meadowsweet



The wide area of open grassland, gorse and scrub woodland on either side of the lane is Brough Sowerby Common. It is owned by Corlands Minerals Ltd. and some local residents have commoner's rights to graze their animals on it, but rarely do so these days. Consequently it is a rich oasis for wildlife and is an officially-designated Wildlife Site, managed in consultation with Cumbria Wildlife Trust to maximise its value for nature conservation. The variety of different habitats supports a diverse flora such as tufted hair grass, Yorkshire fog, meadowsweet, marsh bedstraw, ragged

robin and
birdsfoot trefoil.

The mature woodland is dominated by ash, birch, blackthorn and hawthorn with some outlying areas of grey and goat willow. Birds are also abundant and those you may see include goldfinch, long-tailed tit and the now very scarce bullfinch. If you are lucky you may also see roe deer.



ragged robin

When you get to the crossroads, turn left along the road and then take the first track on your right, along a public footpath to High Park House. As you arrive at High Park House, bear left and then go through the gate on your right. Bear left across the corner of the field to the stile just to the right of Park House and its outbuildings. Bear right along this track to the field gate, from where you will see Augill Castle ahead, poking up above the trees.

The path from here goes straight across the next long field to a stile in the fence, well to the left of the castle, but you may wish to stay close to the fence on your right, to avoid the wet ground in the middle of the field. Cross the step-stile and go across Augill Castle's garden to a field gate opposite.

Augill Castle is a folly built in 1841. In the late 1800s, Doctor Abercrombie, surgeon to Queen Victoria (and Jack the Ripper suspect), lived here. It was occupied briefly toward the end of the Second World War by French Canadian airmen, then fell into disrepair for a few years, during which time the dining room was used to house chickens. It was rescued and restored in the 1950s and purchased in 1997 by the current owners, who manage it as a hotel.



Go through the gate and bear right, through a second field gate into the next field. Proceed across this field, through another field gate to the cottage.

The public right of way here goes rather intrusively in front of the cottage and you are invited to use a permissive diversion following the wall to the left. Go over the stile, cross the farm track, over another stile and straight across the field. Another public footpath to Market Brough goes off at an angle to the right.



Augill Castle

Go through the field gate in the next fence, and straight on through another gate. Bear slightly left to a step-stile and then keep straight on, bearing slightly right, with the field barn well over to your right and a drainage channel just over to your left. Follow the drain, over another step-stile where the drain disappears into a culvert. Keep straight on and then turn right to the footbridge over the beck.

This beck is Augill Beck, which joins Swindale Beck on the north side of Brough Castle.

If the river is in flood you can return to Church Brough without crossing Augill Beck or using the underpass. Take the footpath which heads uphill across the field to your left, crosses the A685 and then a small field at the back of the houses. This brings you down a loning onto the road (see map). Otherwise, go over the bridge and continue with the beck alongside on your left, past the plant-hire and contractor's yard on the right, and through the underpass below the A685 road, along the concrete sidewalk. The path then goes off at an angle to the right, through a field gate and then over a step-stile in the corner of the next field, which brings you up a steep bank back onto the road, where you turn left and then left again, back to the village square to conclude your walk.



Brough Pinfold, one of Andy Goldsworthy's Sheepfolds

Before you go back to the village square you may like to turn right and go along to the other end of the village, to visit one of Andy Goldsworthy's sheepfolds, which is in the grounds of the primary school, at the far end of the school buildings. This is one of six village pinfolds containing an oval-shaped, stone

cairn, built by Goldsworthy as a homage to the Nine Standards cairns on Hartley Fell.

The bridge half way along the road goes over the Augill Beck, where the Environment Agency has installed a fish-pass, so that salmon and trout can traverse an old stone ford and swim further upstream to spawn.

'Discover Eden' is a countryside recreation and interpretation programme being managed by East Cumbria Countryside Project in partnership with the Eden Rivers Trust supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Fourteen circuitual routes at dispersed locations throughout East Cumbria provide an opportunity to explore the great scenic diversity associated with the Eden catchment landscape.

Each route is well way-marked with arrows and the distinctive 'Discover Eden' kingfisher logo. Watch out for a series of small bronze panels etched with motifs depicting aspects of human and natural heritage. Rubbings can be taken from these using paper and crayon.

By walking all routes you can eventually collect rubbings of eighty four images.



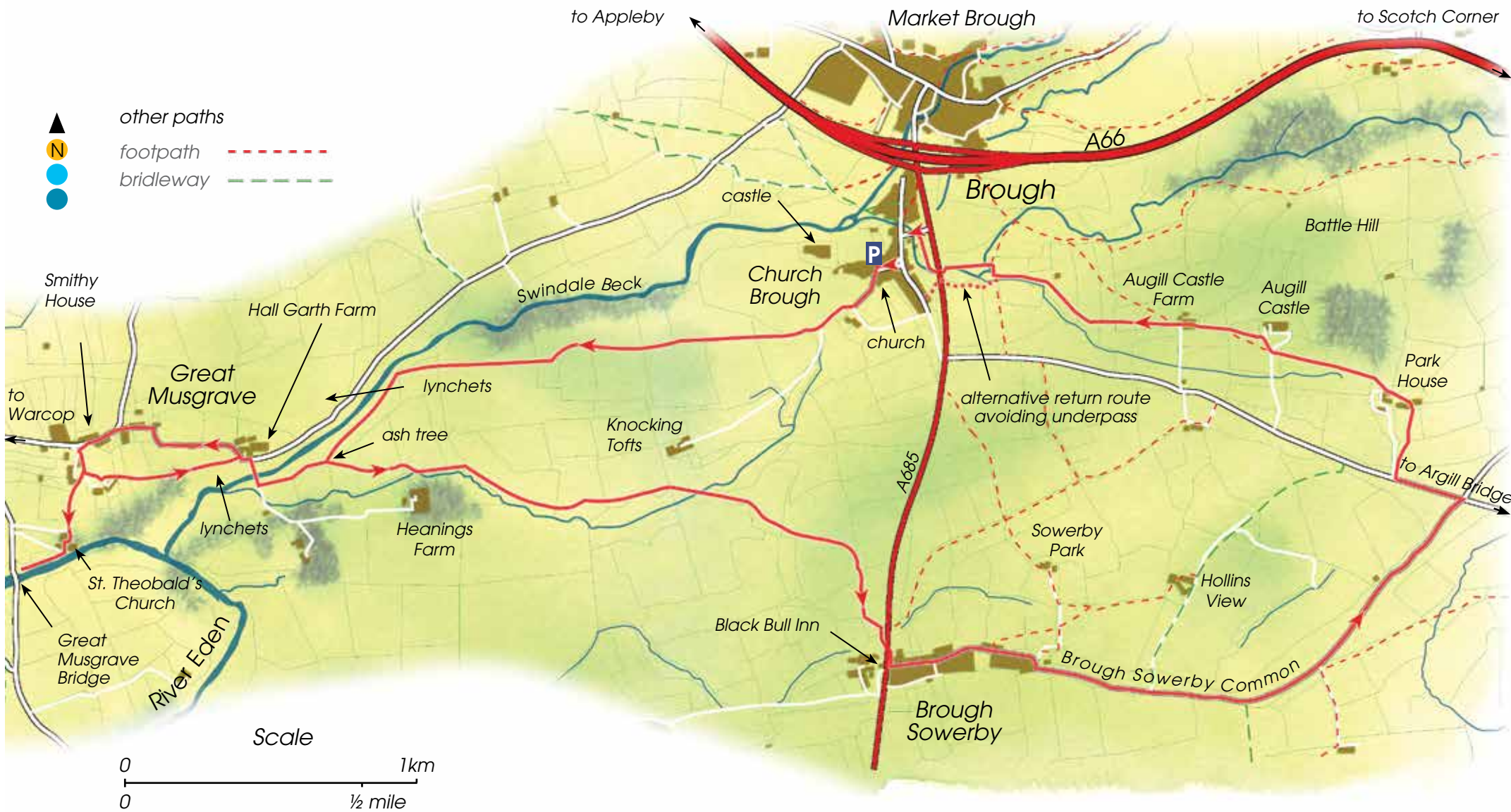
bronze motifs by Pip Hall

Brief route details:

Both the castle and the church are well worth a visit. The castle is open all year round and entry is free. The church is open every day between 10 am and 4 pm.

- Parking: Village square at Church Brough
Length: 6¼ miles 10 kilometres 3 – 4 hours
(including Great Musgrave)
Grade: moderate with stiles
Route: Church Brough – Great Musgrave – Brough
Sowerby – Augill Castle – Church Brough.
Clothing: walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing.

Please leave gates as you find them, leave no litter and keep dogs under close control.



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images by Barry Stacy, Val Corbett and ECCP
inside flap
1. River Eamont 2. Mayburgh Henge 3. Red River benchmark near Temple Sowerby
4. Mosedale near Calbeck 5. Haaf netting in Solway 6. Ravenstonedale
7. Appleby horse fair 8. River Eden near Wetheral 9. Pendragon Castle