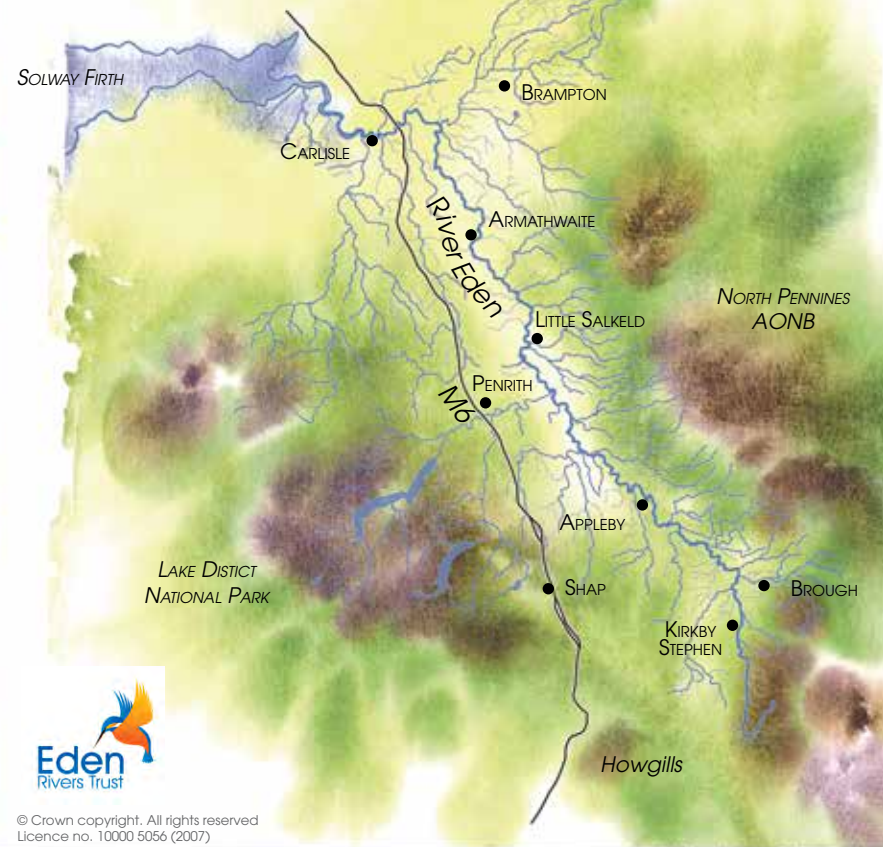




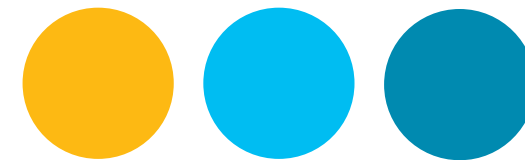
River Eden Catchment Area

Scottish Border



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written and designed by ECCP tel: 01228 561601



Carlisle to Rockcliffe following the River Eden

a linear walk with Roman and railway history, a salmon
fishery, a smuggling village, and marshland rich with birdlife



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*"Take the place of the heron
stand small at the rim of the world's plate
in the stripe of light under a flat sky
where driftwood is stranded like seals."*

from "Casson Dyke" by Annie Foster

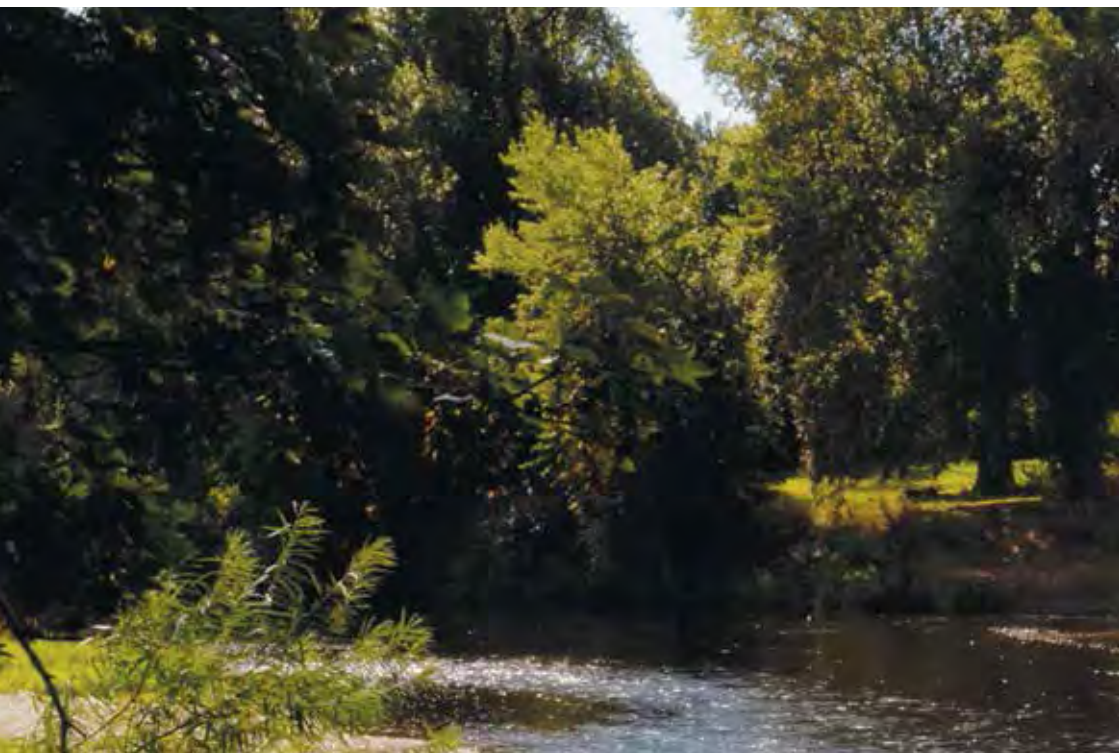


estuary near Rockcliffe

Carlisle to Rockcliffe following the River Eden

With your back to the walls of the 12th century Carlisle Castle, leave the car park and walk into Bitts Park.

The building of embankments in the 19th century marked the beginning of what we now call Bitts Park. The height of the area was raised using domestic rubbish, and Victoria Park was then laid out in 1902.



confluence of the rivers Eden and Caldew

Passing the tennis courts on your left and keeping straight ahead at a crossing of paths, you soon get your first sight of the River Eden. Using the pedestrian tunnel, walk under the road bridge and then turn right, up the slope beside the Sands Centre.

Although there was probably a bridge across the Eden here at least as early as Roman times, the present bridge was built in 1815 and widened in the early 1930s. The Sands was formerly an island between the two channels of the river. It was used as a cattle-market.



Turn right when you reach the pavement alongside the busy road. After crossing the river, go through the gap in the bridge wall on your right and down the steps. Veer right at the bottom to follow the path that skirts the edge of the ornamental garden.

Immediately after going through the metal gate, look to your right; you will see a number of grassy trods heading down the embankment towards the river. Take the right-hand option – it passes to the right of the solitary horse chestnut tree and then goes through a kissing-gate, under one of the bridge arches.

You now walk round the edge of the Edenside cricket ground onto a narrow path along the top of the embankment, and then into an area of woodland. The river Caldew joins the river Eden over to your left.



Etterby

cricket players, lino print for bronze panel



The source of the river Caldew lies on the eastern slopes of Skiddaw, England's fourth highest mountain. It winds its way for almost 30 miles through Hesketh Newmarket and Dalston, before entering Carlisle at Denton Holme. By the 1840s, the power derived from the river had helped make Carlisle and its surrounding villages into the fourth most important textile-producing area in the country.

Turn left on reaching an asphalt walkway, past a row of homes and up to the road. Continue along the pavement in the same direction, heading gently uphill and soon passing the entrance to Austin Friars St Monica's School.



The building now occupied by Austin Friars was originally constructed as a girls' school in 1892. It became an orphanage run by the Poor Sisters of Nazareth in 1925. Austin Friars School was established in 1951 by the hermit friars of the Order of St Augustine; St Monica's was established in 1985; and the two were amalgamated in 2003.

Take the first road turning on your left – Etterby Road – and follow it for just over a third of a mile, crossing the main line railway as you go.

Just to the north is what remains of the huge Kingmoor railway marshalling yard, the construction of which started in 1959 at the cost of almost £5 million. At the time, 30,000 freight wagons were passing through Carlisle each week. Ironically, it was brought into use in 1963 - the year of the Beeching Report, which resulted in the closure of many lines.

The road bears left and then swings round to the right to become Stainton Road, where you bear left onto a wide, stony track through the green gate, where there is a signpost to the river Eden.

At a kissing-gate, you re-emerge on the river bank opposite the Willowholme electricity substation, which was famously put out of action by the January 2005 flood. This is farmland, so dogs should be kept under close control on a lead.

The route of Hadrian's Wall is known to have hugged the south bank of the river here, having crossed from the north somewhere near Bitts Park. The Emperor

Hadrian ordered the construction of the defensive wall while on a visit to Britain in AD122. It stretched for 80 Roman miles (73 modern miles), from Wallsend in the east, to Bowness-on-Solway in the west.

The path soon splits. Keep left here to stay on top of the embankment. When you reach the old Waverley railway bridge, head down to the left to go under one of the arches and through an old metal kissing-gate.

The Waverley Route railway from Carlisle to Edinburgh via Hawick opened in 1862, taking its name from Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley" novels, which were set in the border area. It was closed in 1969.



Waverley Route railway bridge



riverside path



The path is faint on the ground here; keep close to the river and remember that this is farmland, so dogs should be kept under close control..

This path forms part of the Cumbria Coastal Way, a 150-mile walking route, from Silverdale on the Lancashire border, to Gretna in Scotland.

Having crossed a low metal ladder-stile, you will be able to see the village of Grinsdale up ahead. Beyond the next stile, the ground can often be rather soggy. As you draw level with Grinsdale, the public right of way keeps to the river bank; do not be tempted to cut the corner, as the river performs a sharp bend to the right. It is only just after drawing level with St Kentigern's Church on the opposite bank that you head away from the river and towards the man-made embankment a few yards to your right.

St Kentigern's Church was built in 1740 on the site of a 12th century church.

Continuing on your downstream journey, follow the embankment until you reach a fence with another low metal ladder-stile in it. Once across, turn left along the edge of the field. Cross a wooden step-stile and keep close to the fence on your left as you climb up the steep slope ahead. At the top, cross the wooden stile and bear left, continuing with the fence on your left and the river now some distance below. As you reach the crest of the hill, you can see the village of Cargo and, in the distance, the hills of southern Scotland.

Cross a wooden step-stile at the bottom of the slope. After crossing another two wooden stiles, drop down to a narrow footbridge. Having crossed, bear left to regain the water's edge.

The debris scattered almost as far back as the line of trees on your right gives you an indication of how far the river can flood.

Looking to your left now, you can see the northern Lake District, Skiddaw (3,053ft) forming the highest point on the western edge of this group of fells.


There are a number of footpaths heading off to the right along this stretch of the walk, leading to Cargo, where there is a pub, but our route sticks to the river-bank path. After crossing the next stile, head along a potentially muddy, narrow strip of land between the river and a woody slope.

This stretch of the river is good for fishing – and not only for those sporting rods and nets. While humans fish for salmon, sea trout and brown trout in these waters, they compete with diving ducks, such as goosander, and, of course, the shy otter. When searching for a meal, otters can swim at speeds of almost 8mph under water and can travel for up to 400 yards before surfacing for air.



otter

*illustration based on © image Heather Angel
(naturalvisions.co.uk)*



*"Let her take you
meandering
the long way round
as she lowers her banks
and spreads her green
fringed skirts....."*

*from "Casson Dyke"
by Annie Foster*



river Eden



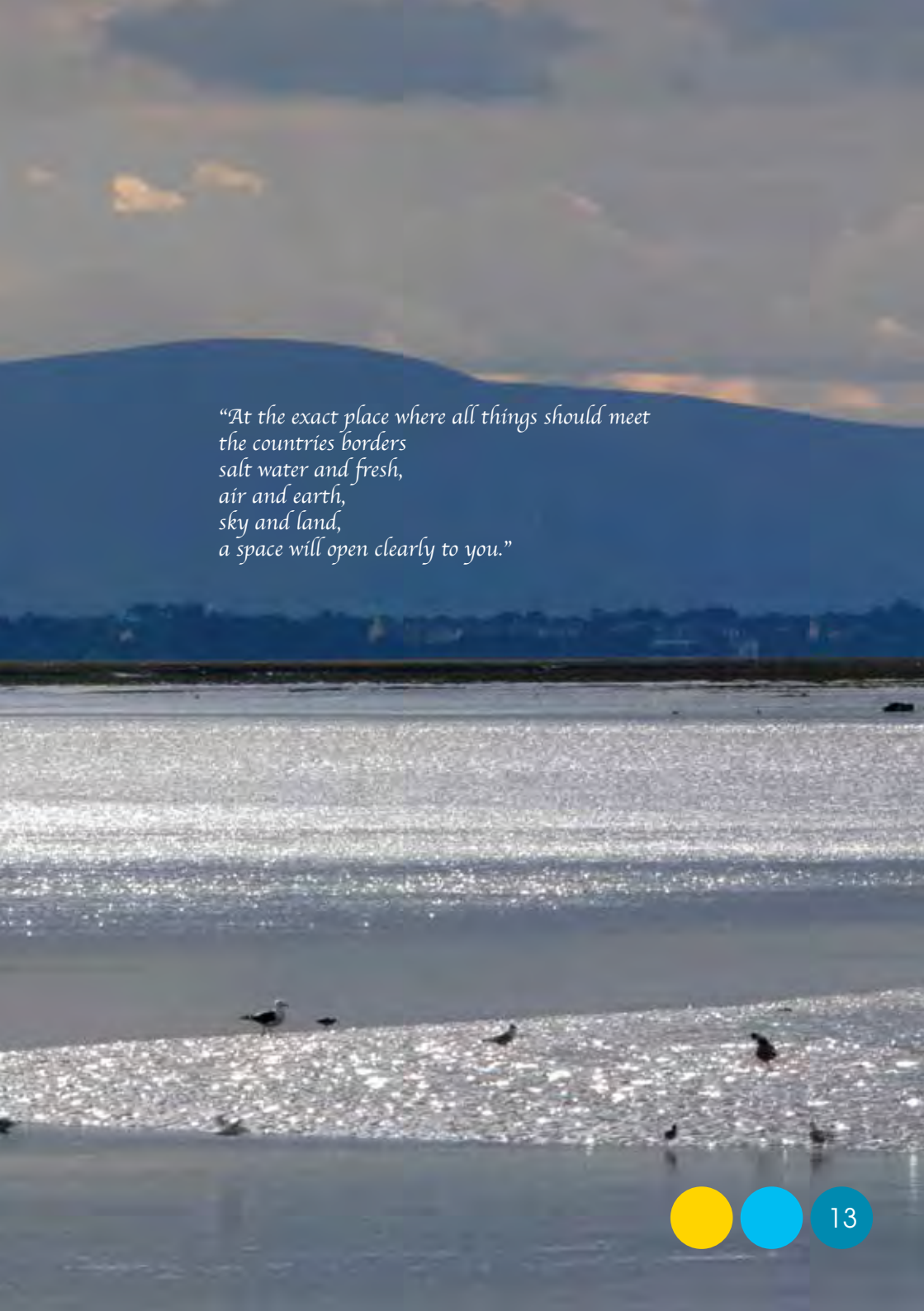
Where the river meets the sea

The river Eden forms part of Cumbria's largest estuary, the Solway Firth. Other major estuaries include the Duddon and Kent in the south of the county.

With a variety of habitats, including peat mires, mud flats, sand dunes and salt marshes, the estuaries are home to an important array of wildlife. Apart from the birdlife already mentioned, the rare natterjack toad is found in significant numbers on Cumbrian estuaries. The brackish water also forms a staging post during the migration of salmon. The progression from marine to freshwater ecosystem gives them time to adjust to the changes in salinity before they head upstream to spawn.

The rivers Eden and Kent are two of only a handful of rivers that exhibit a tidal bore. This occurs in areas with a large tidal range, when the incoming tide forms a wave of water that is funnelled upriver in sometimes dramatic fashion.

estuary near Rockcliffe



*“At the exact place where all things should meet
the countries borders
salt water and fresh,
air and earth,
sky and land,
a space will open clearly to you.”*



Cross a series of step-stiles, then the land to your right levels off and becomes more open. The buildings just ahead and on the other side of the river belong to Beaumont.

fish house, lino print for bronze panel



The area around Grinsdale and Beaumont, on the other side of the river, is dotted with Roman marching camps, probably associated with the nearby fort at Burgh by Sands (Aballava). There was a permanent presence here to guard the waths (or fords) across the Eden and the Solway.

The river swings round to the right now. Cross a plank bridge over a shallow ditch, followed by a step-stile near a wooden finger-post. Once over the next stile, keep to the narrow, grassy strip along the edge of the cultivated area. Having crossed several stiles along the way, you reach the ruins of the 'fish house' at King Garth.

The river Eden is an important salmon fishery and the king granted part of the fishery near Cargo to the City of Carlisle in the 12th century. The 'fish house' was built in 1733 to house bailiffs and boats. Mayoral dinners were also held here until 1892, when the fishery was abandoned.

Just after passing the end of a public byroad to Cargo – with Rockcliffe in sight now – you enter an area of commons known as Carr Bed. There are three channels feeding into the Eden here, all of which are crossed via footbridges that you will find a little way back from the river itself. There is also a small, grassy island in the middle of the main channel.

*willow carr invaded
by Himalayan balsam*



flowering rush
Illustration based on
© image by
Margaret
Holland

*Himalayan
balsam*



Beyond the third bridge, the path veers left and follows the channel back to the river. You are no longer on the commons, so you must stick to the footpath.

If you're moving quietly, you may catch sight of a stoat in the driftwood and other debris on the banks here. A weasel-like creature, it has chestnut brown upper fur with a white belly. Although it hunts mainly at night, it can be seen during the day. But you will need sharp eyesight to spot one – its acute senses of smell and hearing will quickly alert this fast-mover to your presence.



stoat

*illustration based on © image
Heather Angel
(naturalvisions.co.uk)*





river Eden





'Global Warming' by Anthony Turner

Cross another footbridge as you draw level with the northern tip of the island, then bear left at the waymarker, ignoring the stile up to the right. Once over the next stile, which is located among some gorse bushes, continue with the fence on your left until the next stile, which leads into the riverside strip. If this is impossible due to flooding or debris, continue along the field edge. Closer to Rockcliffe, a stile leads you back from the riverside into the field.

You soon see the red sandstone cliffs from which Rockcliffe gets its name. It is from the Old Norse, rau_r (red) and the Old English, clif (cliff).



As you approach the village, another fence, the cricket pitch, appears just a few yards to the right. When this makes a sharp turn to the right – and as you draw level with the church – bear half-right to cross to a gate. Beyond the gate, bear left to cross a footbridge.

To continue along the main route, bear right and head for the quiet lane on the other side of this open area. But before you do so, you may wish to continue along the river bank to the sculpture at the base of the cliffs.

“Global Warming” by Anthony Turner is one of 10 carved stone sculptures that also function as seats, along the length of the river Eden from Mallerstang to Rockcliffe.



*smugglers,
lino print for bronze panel*



looking towards Demesne



St Mary's Church

When you reach the lane, you have a choice; you can either finish the walk here in Rockcliffe – and get the bus back to Carlisle – or you can continue following the Eden to complete a 3.2-mile round walk on Demesne Marsh. If you choose the former, turn right along the lane, cross the footbridge and head up the track beside the church, or take refreshments at the Crown and Thistle, the name symbolising the union of the crowns in 1603.

It may seem like a sleepy village now, but Rockcliffe has a colourful past. Located close to Scotland, it often played a role in border skirmishes. In the 18th century, it was a commercial port and ship-building centre. Little evidence of it remains now, although there is a ship weathervane on top of St Mary's Church. Later, Rockcliffe became an important staging post along the route used to smuggle whisky and brandy from Scotland to England. Due to differential duties on spirits, alcohol bought north of the border could be sold for five times as much in England. Several excise men were based in the village, but it is said that most Rockcliffe homes were storehouses for smuggled whisky.

The churchyard of St Mary's contains the remains of a 1,000-year-old Norse cross.

Turn left at the road and follow it as it swings left towards Rockcliffe Cross and Floriston. The bus shelter – located in front of the school – is a few yards ahead on your right.

Loop extension:

The marsh is subject to tidal flooding and should be avoided at periods of high tides.

Having crossed the open area that is home to Anthony Turner's sculpture, turn left along the lane.

When road works were carried out here in 1901, cobbles thought to be the courtyard of Rockcliffe's 17th century castle were found. There are no visible remains of the building today.

When it bends sharply to the right, take the signposted path to the left of the road (towards Demesne Marsh). This wide track soon becomes a narrow path with a wooden fence on your left. Cross the wooden step-stile at the bottom of the slope to regain the river bank along Demesne Marsh.

Castletown House, up to your right, was built at the beginning of the 19th century by Robert Mounsey. During World War One, it served as an auxiliary hospital for troops injured on the western front.

Keep close to the river's edge. As you draw level with Demesne, the white building up to your right, you cross a deep, steep-sided channel. There is no bridge here, so you have to splash across the shallow water near to the mouth but, if the tide is high, then walkers may deviate up-channel to leap across.

Once over the next wooden step-stile, you will see a lot of flood debris washed up against the man-made embankment to your right. Continue along the river bank, until you draw level with Old Sandsfield on the other side of the channel.



saltmarsh with thrift in flower



Old Sandsfield was once an inn for those trading with Scotland across the wath. It appears in Sir Walter Scott's "Red Gauntlet" as the inn called the Lady Lowther. Close to Old Sandsfield is the King Edward I Monument, built to mark the site where the king died, on the 7th of July, 1307. Edward had been at war with the Scots since 1295, leading his army into battle on several occasions - hence his nickname, 'Hammer of the Scots'. He died of dysentery while camped on Burgh Marsh, close to where his army was hoping to cross to Scotland at low tide.

Keep right at the wire fence ahead and, keeping the fence to your left, head for the embankment.

There is no public access onto the adjacent Rockcliffe Marsh, one of the largest salt marshes in Cumbria. This marsh is notable for its breeding and wintering birds. In summer, lapwing, oystercatcher and redshank breed in significant numbers. In winter, the entire population of barnacle geese from the Svalbard archipelago, in northern Norway, descend on the Solway marshes to graze. Wigeon and goosander can also be seen.

Do not climb the slope; instead, turn right to walk along its base. When your further progress is stopped by a fence, bear left, up what is left of the embankment, then bear right along a wide track. When the track turns sharp left into Demesne's yard, keep straight ahead signposted to Rockcliffe on the muddy path, sticking to the high ground above the marsh for a few yards.

The path soon drops back down to marsh, where you rejoin the riverside path and return to Rockcliffe.

'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:

Demense Marsh is subject to tidal flooding and should be avoided at periods of high tides.

Parking: Bitts Park pay and display car park, Carlisle.
Length: 8 miles 12.9 kilometres 4 – 5 hours
allow an additional 90 minutes for the marsh extension
11¼ miles 18 kilometres (total)

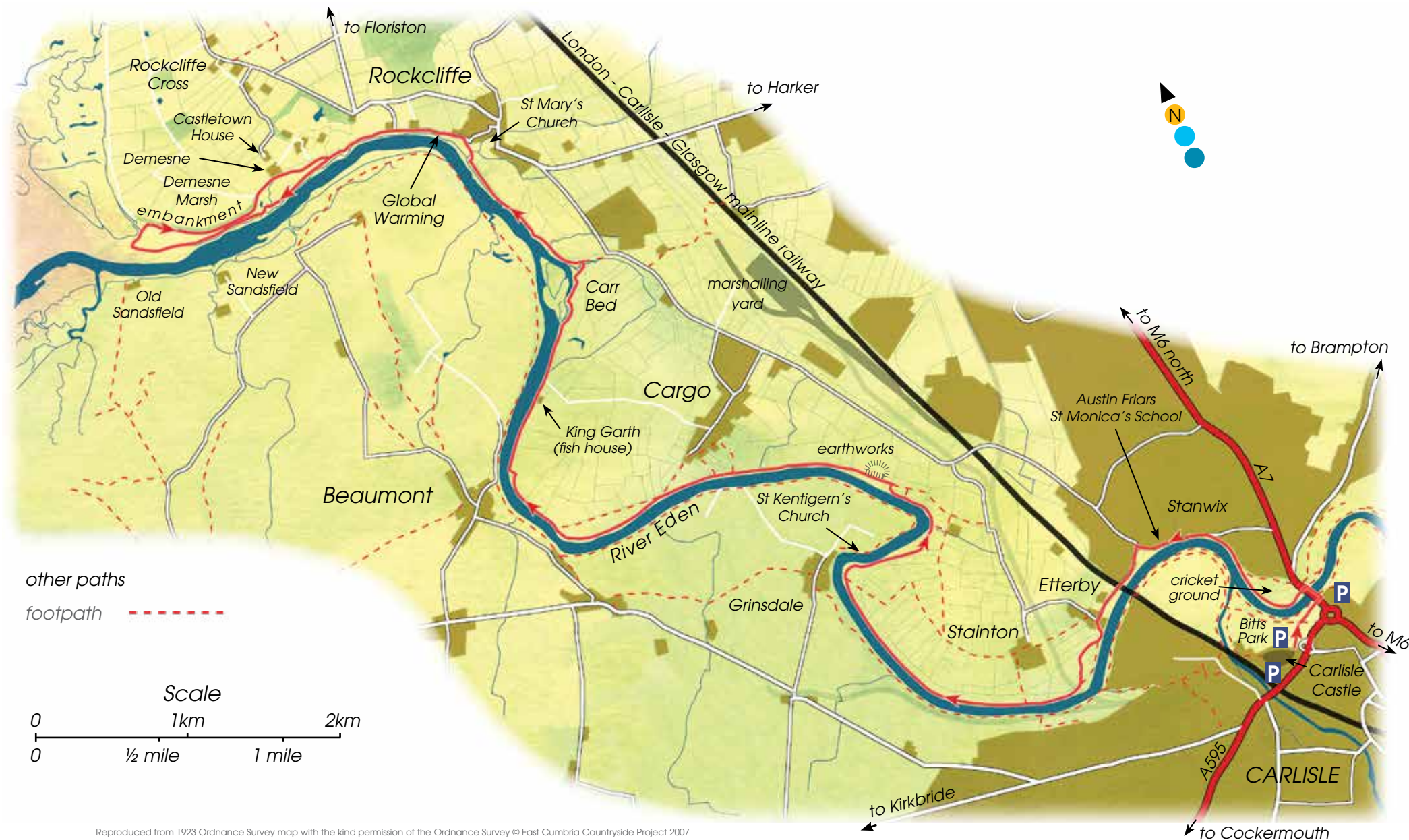
Grade: easy with stiles

Route: Bitts Park – Etterby – Rockcliffe
(with option of Demesne Marsh extension)

Return: bus 101 from Rockcliffe to Carlisle
(via Cargo and Stanwix)

Clothing: boots and outdoor clothing; paths can be wet

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



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4. Mosedale near Calbeck
5. Haaf netting in Solway
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8. River Eden near Wetheral
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