

This is a difficult walk and should be attempted by experienced ramblers. Conditions under foot can change dramatically due to rainfall levels.

This walk should not be attempted without map and compass as mist and fog can descend. The raised mires can be dangerous and the unwary could get bogged down within areas of wet peat deposits. Furthermore, this walk crosses land owned and managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and as such they have asked that walkers refrain from using this circular walk from October through to June to avoid disturbance of grazing geese and breeding waders.

Much of the Cardurnock Peninsula is covered by raised mires, or peat bogs. They began forming 8,000 years ago, after the last ice age, but once covered a far larger area. The mires have been drained around their edges to provide grazing for farm animals. This probably started in medieval times, but the process became much more common during the 1800s when huge areas of common land were fenced off for farming, after the Enclosures Acts.

Where the raised mires survive, in spite of being drained and cut, they are still growing. This growth depends on two things: a plant called Sphagnum moss, and a high rainfall. The moss will only grow in very wet places and forms a natural dome. As it dies, the dead remains form peat, while more moss grows on top. This mound of peat, holds in water like a sponge so the bog keeps swelling and growing.

The mires were a source of fuel for local people. Most deeds on the older houses near the mires had a Right of Turbary, which was a licence to cut peat to burn. Today Bowness Common and the other raised mires are protected, but you can see the hollows and shallow ditches where peat was taken.



- ① Start in **Bowness on Solway**, on the corner by the Kings Arms Inn. Before you leave the village, take a look at the information board on the wall of the Kings Arms Inn.
- ② As you walk down the road out of the village, look at the field on your right, opposite the Church. The **Roman Road** which entered the Fort of Maia passed through this field.
- ③ As you leave the road and walk down onto **Bowness Common**, look at the Gradient Profile below. This shows clearly the slight dome which gives the raised mires their name, contained by the higher ground around it. Peat bogs can be dangerous places to walk: in winter it is very wet, and the clumps of heather and grasses make an uneven surface. There are also deep, hidden ditches and a risk of fire in dry summers. **Please take care!**
- ④ The farm of **Rogersceugh** rises out of Bowness Common on a steep knoll. It is rare to find buildings in the middle of a raised mire - they simply sink - but Rogersceugh is built on boulder clay and not the dangerous peat of the mires.
- ⑤ Back on **Bowness Common** think for a moment how old the raised mires are. Peat takes a very long time to form - for each metre depth of peat, a hundred years have passed. The surface you are walking on is hundreds of years old and 80% water. The peat contains a perfect record of past plant life and scientists can study preserved pollen and seeds from the mires to find out what was growing before records began.
- ⑥ Following the track towards **North Plain Farm**, you will see ponds and wet meadows which are a haven for local birdlife. These fields are owned and managed by the RSPB.
- ⑦ If you are lucky, you might see lapwing, oystercatcher and teal on Campfield Marsh Nature Reserve.

Before your walk

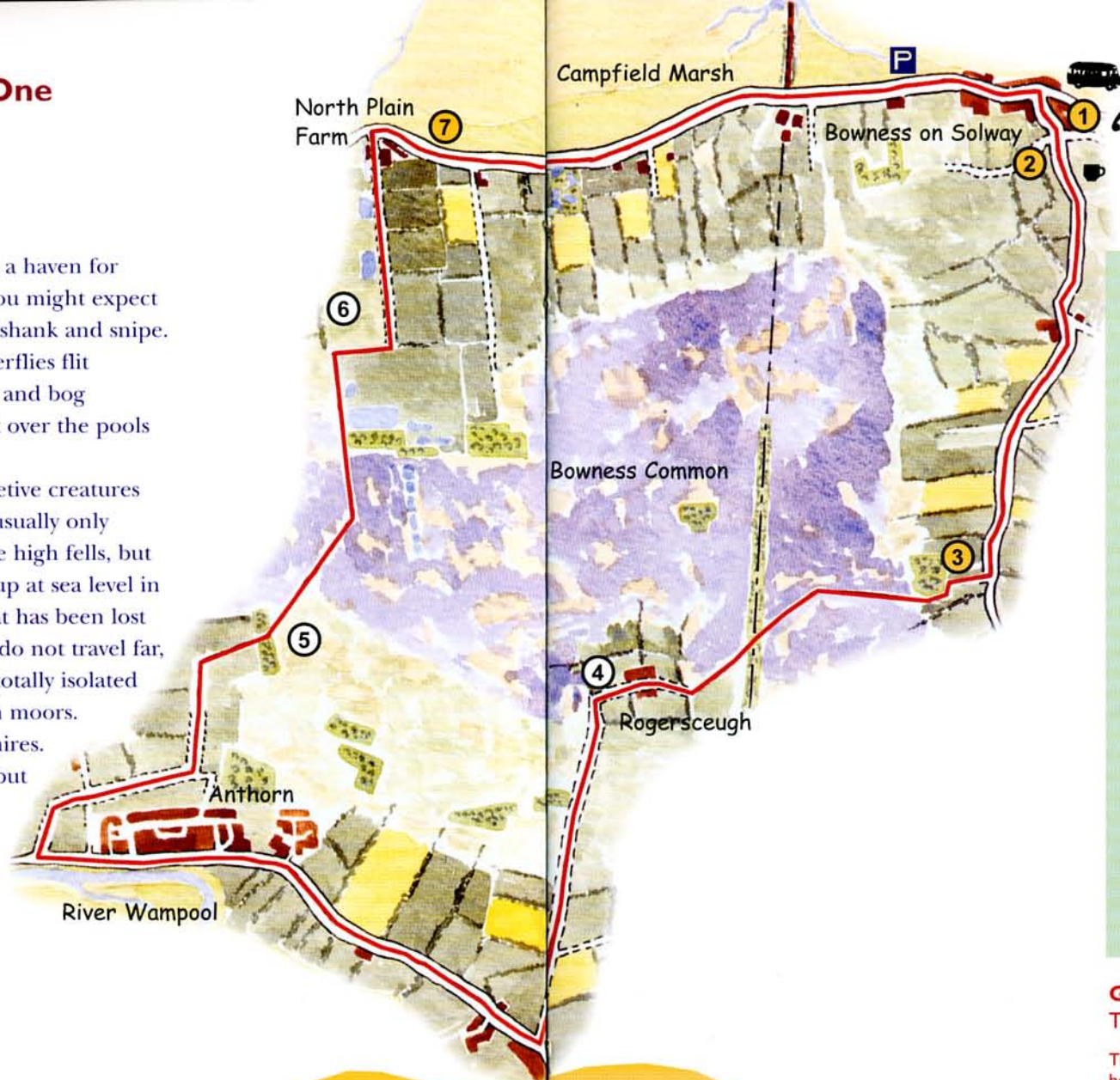
A part of this walk is closed in winter and spring to protect rare wildlife. Please phone Solway Coast AONB Unit on 016973 33055 to check the path is open.

Circular Walk One

This quiet Solway Wilderness is a haven for wildlife. On the raised mires you might expect to see birds like the curlew, redshank and snipe. On a calm day in summer butterflies flit between the flowers of heather and bog asphodel, and dragonflies hunt over the pools and ditches.

There are also some more secretive creatures on the mires. Red grouse are usually only found on heather moors on the high fells, but here you can find the only group at sea level in England. Much heather habitat has been lost over the centuries, and grouse do not travel far, so this group of birds are now totally isolated from their relatives on the high moors. Adders are also about on the mires.

This snake has poor eyesight, but can sense the smallest vibrations on the ground.



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 24m

The scale only applies to the horizontal Gradient Profile.

