

ANNAN, WATERFOOT AND SUMMERGATE LANE

- Circular town and shore walk**
- 5km/3 miles**
- Allow 1 1/2 -2 hours**
- Pavements, tracks, boggy merse and grass track**
- Moderate**
- Boots or stout shoes recommended**

A walk exploring Annan's maritime past and the Solway Firth – taking you from the centre of Annan to the wide-open spaces of the Solway Firth.

START from the Town Hall at the western end of the High Street. The Town Hall is a fine Victorian building built in 1878 from local sandstone and it reflects the pride and prosperity of Annan.

Turn right, and cross the High Street.

The large Georgian building on the corner opposite the Town Hall was built in 1780 and is known as Bridge House. This was the first Annan Academy. The writer Thomas Carlyle was educated here and eventually taught at the Academy. There are plans to turn this elegant building into a community resource, housing a museum and an information centre.

Proceed down the street to the left of Bridge House. This is Port Street, curving round to the right and passing the fine houses that belonged to wealthy traders in bygone days. Some of the windows were blocked up to avoid paying Window Tax imposed in 1701 and remain so to this day!

Continue along the street, passing under the railway bridge, then walk on past various old buildings until you reach the renovated Burgh Quay. This part of Annan was once a prosperous bustling area, with the warehouses of the local merchants full of timber, cement, and grain. Now the once busy warehouses stand empty.

The ship building yards here once built fine ships which sailed all over the world, many with local names such as the "Annandale" and "Queensberry". The largest and last clipper ship built was the 934 ton "Sarah Nicholson" which was launched in 1865. At the end of the 19th century, a fleet of fifty one shrimp trawlers, thirty whammel boats designed for salmon drift netting and thirteen herring boats worked out of Annan. These sturdy sailing boats fished the Solway from Annan to Maryport, Southernness and beyond.

Turning your back on the quay, walk up the lane beside the site of the shipyard and turn right. This road leads past the last houses and becomes a country lane, running across the tidal river meadows or "merse" towards the mouth of the River Annan at Waterfoot.

The river estuary at Waterfoot now has little to show of its historical importance. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many people embarked

from the jetty when emigrating to Canada, New Zealand and Australia. A cairn on the remains of the jetty commemorates Robert Burns, who worked in this area as an exciseman in the 1790s.

Looking out across the sands of the Solway Firth, the stake and poke nets of the salmon fishermen are dwarfed by the scale of the landscape.

In the fishing season, you may see the haaf-net fishermen standing chest deep in the fast flowing waters hoping to catch a trout or salmon.

From Waterfoot, walk across the tidal salt marsh, the "Annan Merse", eastwards, winding your way around the tidal streams and creeks. Aim for the back of the Merse near the fence, this way you should pick up a fairly well-worn path. Keep a sharp lookout for the white post at the gate to Summergate Lane, which joins the side of the Merse after about half a mile.

This green lane takes you back to the outskirts of Annan. Soon after you reach the modern bungalows, take the lane on your left – called "Lovers Lane." This narrow little lane is a riot of wildflowers in the summer – a different world to the wide horizons of the Solway Firth. Proceed straight down Lovers Lane passing a road to the left. When you reach the crossroads at the end of the lane, turn right and walk back into Annan along Elm Road. This takes you past the railway station and the present-day Annan Academy and back onto the High Street where you started.



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Leave gates as you find them - Keep dogs under close control at all times - Keep to paths across farmland - Take care on country roads
Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls - Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery - Take your litter home with you
Protect wildlife, plants and trees - Guard against risk of fire - Make no unnecessary noise.