

QUINTINSHILL AND THE RIVER SARK

- Circular village and country route**
- 10km/6 miles**
- Allow 2½ hours**
- Hard surfaced farm tracks, public roads and fields with gates**
- Moderate**
- Boots or stout shoes recommended**

PARKING is available behind the Old Blacksmith's Shop and Visitor Centre in Gretna Green.

START Leave the car park by the exit and turn right along the quiet public road. Cross Blacksike Bridge over the main west coast railway line. At the poultry houses (signposted public path Springfield 1½) turn right. After passing Errolston the road swings left around the perimeter of 'Corner Wood'. At the apex of this small wood take the wide farm track to the right. Follow this pleasant Beech lined route that takes you close to the course of the 'Black Sark' river and then on past some livestock pens. After a gentle climb, pass under the railway at Quintinshill Bridge.

This was the scene of Britain's worst rail disaster. During the First World War 220 passengers were killed and 246 injured when three trains collided. A troop train crashed into a stationary local train and the wreckage blocked both lines. Moments later the Carlisle Express ploughed into the tangled mass of carriages and a fire raged for 24 hours, seriously damaging two trains standing on the loop line.

(For a short walk you can turn right on meeting the road to return to the Old Blacksmith's Shop and Visitors Centre.)

At the public road turn left and you will soon cross the railway for a third time. Turn right through the kissing gate at the 'Springfield' footpath sign. Follow the field boundary to the next kissing gate and pass under the rail bridge to the gate at the end of the farm track. Cross the public road and continue straight ahead to connect with a farm track running between hedges.

(Turning right at the Queens Head will return you to The Old Blacksmith's Shop, passing Springfield Post Office.)

Cross the bridges over the road and railway and after 200m the track terminates at a field entrance. Keep to the edge of the field following the hedge. Pass through the kissing gate at the side of the field gate and continue in the same direction along the other side of the hedge. Use the step-through gate to the right of the field corner to reach the top of Hustle Bank. Turn right and follow the fence down to the River Sark and the boundary with England.

Pass through the kissing gate to the subway under the A74(M) and climb the steps over the floodbank. Follow the path between the strip of woodland and the field boundary. Cross the road and turn left along the pavement. You will pass the Old Toll Bar Marriage Room on the opposite side. At the Scottish end of the Sark Bridge bear right (to the bench and plaque). Pass through the kissing gate to the riverside path.

After approximately 50m climb the metal stile and the flood bank. Follow the flood bank round to the boundary fence of the Garden House Hotel.

Stay outside the grounds of the hotel and follow the boundary to a kissing gate. Cross the concreted area by the water treatment plant and pass through the final gate to reach Sarkfoot Road. Cross Sarkfoot Road and turn left. Sarkfoot Road joins Loanwath Road at the right hand corner. Follow Loanwath Road until you meet Central Avenue at the heart of Gretna.

Turn right, passing the shops and library. Cross at the traffic lights and continue to the top of Central Avenue. Follow the public path sign and at the end of the estate you will join a path between the fields that leads to a subway under the A75. Pass through the subway and the kissing gate and follow the path along the fence line to the next kissing gate. Cross the road in front of the Gretna Hall Hotel and follow the cycle/pedestrian Route 7 to return to the Tourist Information Centre, The Old Blacksmith's Shop and Visitor Centre and the car park.



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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.