Berwickshire COASTAL PATH
Cockburnspath to Berwick
30mls/48km

THE TRIP
Can I undertake the route in one trip?  Do I walk north or south?  Dependent on your location either may be preferable.  You may wish to plan your trip around your accommodation location and undertake the walk on individual days.  A frequent bus service allows flexibility for planning a day out.  Dowlaw has no bus service but a taxi may be an option.

Two days
Strong walkers might manage the route in two days, but there is so much to see we recommend these relaxing days.

Three days
Take time to enjoy all that the towns and villages along the way have to offer.  This option entails tackling the longest day, between Cockburnspath and St Abbs in one go, to avoid leaving transport at Dowlaw.

Four days
Four day trips will require leaving transport at Dowlaw – this is not practical.  This option allows plenty of time to explore Cove; Cockburnspath; Fast Castle at Dowlaw (entry not recommended for unattended cliffs); St Abb’s; Coldingham and Eyemouth.

Accommodation
www.visitberwickshire.com

Travel - Leave the Car behind!
A bus is available between Berwick, Burnmouth, Eyemouth, Coldingham, St Abb’s and Cockburnspath.
Borders Buses – Routes 235 and 253
www.bordersbuses.co.uk
01289 308719 or 01896 754350

Travelsure – Route 236
www.travelsure.co.uk
01665 720955

Public Travel Information
www.travelinescotland.com
0871 0022235

Boats lost

The 125 Memorial Association
Raisd funds for the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science.  If you are moved by the event, donations can be made to the ‘125 Memorial Association’ at Linton Mill, Eyemouth.

Bronze Trail Markers
Twelve Bronze Trail Markers, by artist John Behm, link the four memorial sculptures along the route.
1.  Find these markers using your navigation skills or a GPS (co-ordinates on map);
2.  Take rubbings on good stout loose paper with crayons or coloured pencils.  The main (Eyemouth) rubbing needs a piece of paper of roughly A3 size, for the others are smaller.
3.  Together they form a patchwork picture or collage, within the framework found on Eyemouth Harbour entrance wall.  The collage illustrates aspects of fishing life in 1881; ‘hard-working fisher lads and fisher lasses; the baying of times, flies under sail, the gear and the craft of it all.’

You don’t have to walk the Coastal Path to collect these gifts.  Undertake this challenge by car, by foot or by bike.  To promote a sense of unexpected gift we have left the location deliberately weak.  Good luck and remember to take care near the cliffs!

Facilities and refreshments
● Burnmouth – The Gulls Nest.  The First & Last pub.
● Eyemouth – Choice of many shops, restaurants, cafes and bars.
● Aylots – Shop, bank, Post Office and pub.
● Goldingsham – Shops, toilets, Post Office, garage, pubs
● St Abb’s Harbour – Shop, cafes, visitor’s centre, toilets.
● Goldingsham Sands – Hotel, toilets, (Beach Café and Lifeguards – summer only)
● Renton Barns on A1 at Branshope – Toilets and café.
● Cockburnspath – Toilets, shop Post Office and garage.

Birdlife and Butterflies
From spring to summer thousands of birds will be nesting and rearing away.  Look out for, kittiwake; guillemot; razorbill; fulmar; shag, puffin and peregrine, waders include turnstone, oystercatcher, sandpiper and curlew.

The area is good for butterflies, especially at St Abb’s Head.  The rare Northern Brown Argus can often be seen near rock rise.  Other butterflies you may see include, common blue, wall brown, grayling and the painted lady.

The six-spot burnet moth is present in July.

Plants
Thrift is particularly noticeable in May and June, growing in dense mats and giving a wonderful blaze of pink.  Gerse adds its bright yellow in the early spring period.  The rich variety of flora includes:

Spring – primrose, cowslip, meadow saxifrage, scurvy grass, early purple orchid;
early Summer – thrift, purple milk vetch, birdsfoot trefoil, and northern marsh orchids in wetter areas;
Summer – ragged robin, meadow sweet, willow herb.

Coastal Geology
The oldest rocks here are Silurian greywacke which formed on the sea bed some 440 million years ago.  Through plate movement these have become intensely folded and faulted, visible no more so than on Gunsgreen in Eyemouth.  The Devonian Old Red Sandstone (345 million years old) can be seen around Limk Shore, Eyemouth Fort and Siccar Point.  The whole of the Berwickshire coast is noted for its geological interest, especially Siccar point where these two rock forms visibly meet.

EAST COAST FISHING DISASTER
Black Friday, October 16th 1881 commemorates the worst fishing disaster in Scotland’s history.  A ferocious hurricane devastated the fishing fleet of the east coast taking 189 lives.

“Widows and Barins of the Disaster”
By Jill Watson.

These poignant sculptures have been placed in Eyemouth, Burnmouth, St Abb’s and Cove to depict the exact numbers of women widowed and their children looking out to sea for their loved ones that never returned.  The deadly storm left 93 women as widows and 267 children without their fathers.  Of 45 boats that had gone to sea, only 26 returned.  The loss of so many husbands, fathers and sons led to many survivors leaving Eyemouth.  The population level did not recover until 1971.

The whole of the Berwickshire coast is

The Devil’s Thumb rock adds a dramatic backdrop...
**Berwickshire Coastal Path**

**Cockburnspath to Berwick upon Tweed**

**Cockburnspath** is the terminus of the Southern Upland Way which leads walkers to, or from, Portpatrick, 212 miles (340km) away in Dumfries and Galloway. The village also connects to the John Muir Way, at Dunbar, some 11 miles (17km) away, via Dunglass.

**Pease Bay**

This Site of Special Scientific Interest is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust as a Nature Reserve. Look out for woodpeckers, treecreepers, dippers and various tits and finches. Roe deer and red squirrels have also been known to make this reserve their home.

**St Abbs Head National Nature Reserve**

A favourite venue for divers, the cove of Pettico Wick and St Abbs Head which are represented by defensive banks and ditches within 80 million years earlier on the beach before the harbour was constructed. They carried their creels (lobster pots) down the Creel Path.

**Dowlaw to St Abbs**

**Fast Castle**

Fast Castle occupies a dramatic, sheer-sided rock jutting out into the sea. Stumps of masonry represent the final stage of a castle which was visited by Mary Queen of Scots in 1564 and captured by an English force in 1570. Entry is not recommended due to the unguarded cliffs and the site is best viewed from the higher ground on the landward side. Sir Walter Scott later set part of his novel, Bride of Lammermuir here, calling it ‘Wolf’s Crag’.

**Admiralty Distance Poles**

Two sets of poles over a measured mile enabled shipping companies to test the speed of ocean going vessels. The Cunard liner RMS Mauretania was the largest and fastest ship in the world and securing vessels. The Cunard liner RMS Mauretania was the fastest ship in the world and securing the mail contract with America for over twenty years. The Cunard liner RMS Mauretania was the largest ship in the world in 1914 and its speed made it the fastest ship in the world.

**Siccar Point and St Helen’s Church**

A revolutionary moment in the history of geology came in 1788, when James Hutton, James Hall and John Playfair took a boat to Siccar Point where they found horizontal layers of red sandstone overlying older, steeply pitched sedimentary rocks known as greywacke. The site confirmed Hutton’s theory that the Earth was much older than six thousand years, the age (4004 BC) computed from the Bible by Bishop Usher in 1654. We now know that the Devonian red sandstones were laid down some 345 million years earlier on the bottom of a long-vanished ocean.

Dedicated to the mother of Emperor Constantine, St Helen’s Church served the former parish of Aldcambus which was united with Cockburnspath after the Reformation of 1560.

**Deymouth to Berwick upon Tweed**

The small harbour at Burrnemouth (6½mls) was improved in 1879 and 1959 to serve the shoreline fishing communities of Partanhead, Cockdral and Ross who shipped out their catches through Upper Burnmouth, which is on the Great North Road and main line railway. Partan is the local name for a crab.

**Berwick upon Tweed**

Berwick has changed hands no fewer than fourteen times and although English since 1482, its football team still plays in the Scottish League! Berwick upon Tweed was lost to England. In the wars of the mid 16th century Fort Point was fortified twice; by the English in the 1540s and by the French several years later. Created a Burgh of Barony in 1597, Eyemouth is the largest town in Berwickshire and the River Eye’s deep water is still ideal for landing boats. The town was once more popular than Gretna Green because of the marriage house on the Great North Road at Lamberton, where eloping English couples could cross into Scotland to wed. Gunsgreen House was built by local smuggler and merchant John Nisbet in the 1750s from the profits of his trade and has recently undergone a major refurbishment.