

THE GLORY OF GLASSON

This small corner of coastal Lancashire turned out to be an unexpected gem. John Lenehan reports

I HAVE never walked from Glasson before so the route I designed was completely new to me. I have got to admit that I did not expect it to have been such an outstandingly beautiful part of Lancashire. This walk easily fits the bill as one of the best I have ever done. Pick a lovely day and take a camera and some binoculars to look at the wildlife and birds.

Although this was my first walk there, I have cycled to Glasson many times. The first was when I was about 14 and that was 52 years ago but, apart from minor details, nothing much seems to have changed. There was once a concrete boat in the marina turned into the Café Babagee. I still expect to see it whenever I get there even though it was demolished years ago. In a way, it is still there - it was crushed to make the surface for the car park!

1 Leave the car park and turn left towards the village then turn left and cross the swing bridge and go straight up the road, Tithebarn Hill. At the T Junction turn left and follow the road.

Note: The swingbridge and lock below separates the Marina from the actual working dock of Glasson. The dock was built in 1787 and was an extremely busy port, so much so that a canal branch to the Preston-Kendal Canal was built to carry goods north and south. Later still, a railway was built to join the port to Lancaster and beyond. It closed in 1930 but the route is now a very popular cycle and walk way.

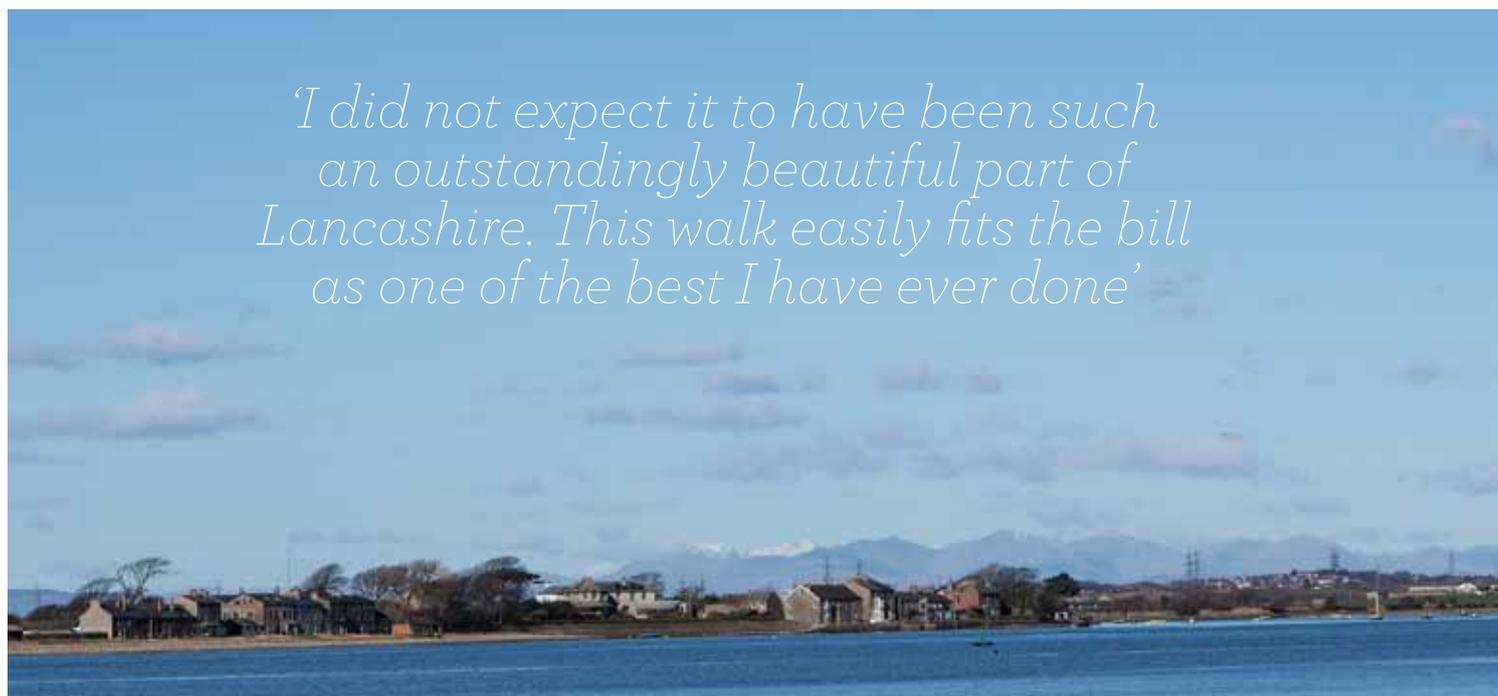
2 The road bends left and on the right is Marsh Lane, turn down the lane and follow it until it turns left past a caravan park. At this point a track leads straight on to a wooden gate. Go through this and then further on a metal gate. Once through this go straight on keeping the hedgerow on the right head towards a distant farm.

About two thirds across the field bear diagonally left towards a metal gate over a stream. As a guide, beyond the gate there is a wire mesh affair with concrete posts that you can't miss. Go through the gate and keep to the left of the hedgerow and keep straight on to a gate leading towards the farm, then go through a gate at the farm and bear slightly left and up to the coast.



above The Marina is still busy but Glasson was once a busy trading port
below Sunderland Point with the Lakes in the background

'I did not expect it to have been such an outstandingly beautiful part of Lancashire. This walk easily fits the bill as one of the best I have ever done'





3 After you have taken in the fantastic view over to Sunderland and Sunderland Point and the distant Lake District (The power station doesn't detract too much) turn left and follow the tarmac road along the coastline. The impressive Plover Scar Lighthouse out to sea, a photographer's dream, is the obvious attraction but look inland as well because the views are splendid.

Note: The lighthouse was one of two, the other now demolished. It was built in 1847. It is sometimes called the Abbey Lighthouse the reason becomes obvious further along the coast.

The road eventually turns sharp left away from the coast. Leave the road and keep straight on the coastal path until reaching a metal stile. Go through this and keep following the coastline along a path above the sea wall.

Reach a second stile that leads into an open field. The path follows the coast but it is worth the slight detour to the building and ruins of Cockersands Abbey.

A plaque on the door provides more interesting information than I have space but, briefly, it was founded sometime before 1184 as the Hospital of St Mary on the Marsh before leter

becoming a priory.

Return to the path and follow this to another stile, cross this and follow this past an old WW2 Observation Tower on the left and just opposite this there is a concrete ramp on the right leading down from the sea wall. Follow this to a steel stile and go through this.

4 There is a narrow lane to the left almost immediately after the stile. Follow this. It bends sharp right then bends left. Look for a footpath sign and a stile by a gate on the right as you follow the lane.

5 The stile isn't obvious and in poor condition, so take care crossing it. Once over walk straight ahead towards a footbridge but don't cross it, turn left once you reach it and follow the fence line to another footbridge and cross this. Then keep straight on to another footbridge and cross that. Keep straight on and exit the field by a gate with a ruined stile at the side.

6 Turn right along the road and follow this passing a cottage, then a farm and then a refurbished farmhouse. Once past this look out for a footbridge on the right hand side of the road. ▶



Cockersands Abbey started life as a hospital



Plover Scar lighthouse was once one of a pair

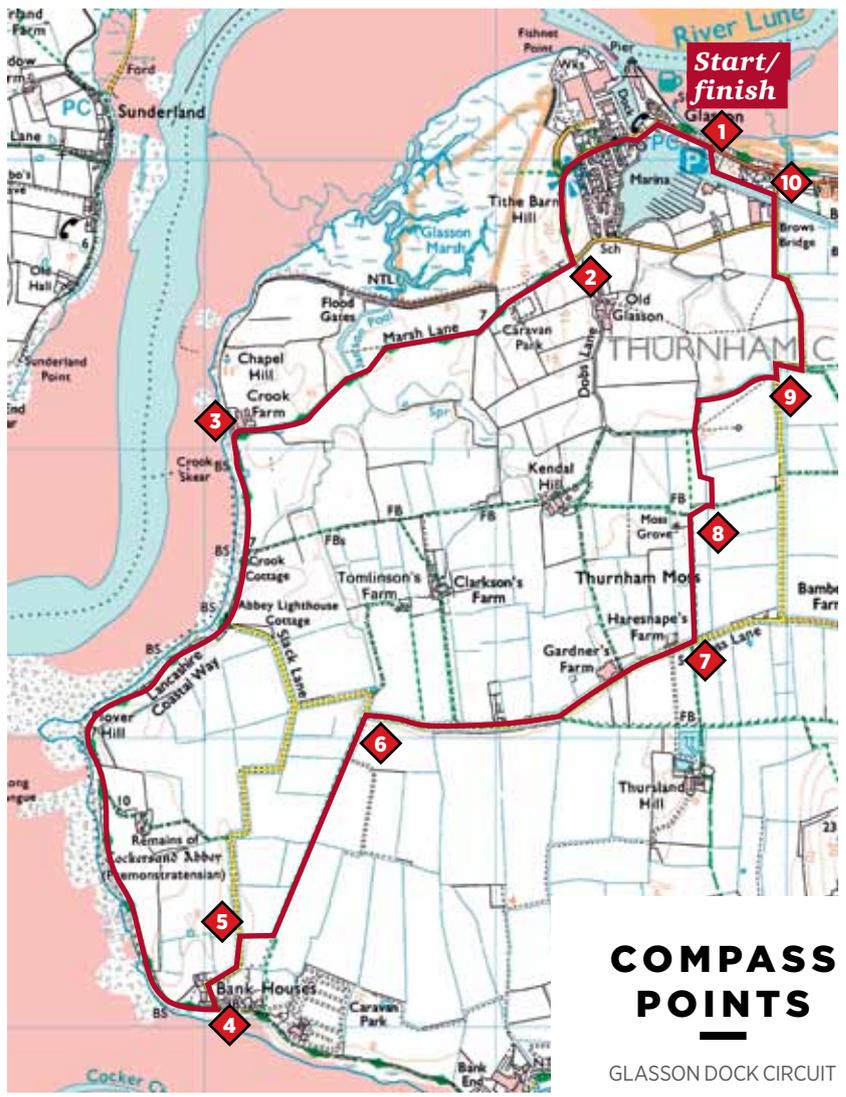
7 Immediately opposite the footbridge on the left is a footpath sign. Follow this going through two gates then keeping the hedgerow on the left carry straight on and cross a stile by a metal gate and carry straight on to a metal gate by a ruined farmhouse.

8 Here things get a bit complicated as the OS map shows the path carrying straight on through the metal gate. It doesn't. When you reach the gate turn right to a footbridge and cross this then turn left and keep the stream to the left. After about 100 metres turn left and re-cross the stream then turn right and with the stream on the right and a wire fence on the left keep straight on. Carry on until the fence turns left and on the right there is a gate with a stile, cross this and of course the stream again then turn left to the corner of the field then right and follow the hedgerow to a footpath sign and a stile.

9 Cross the stile onto a tarmac road and turn left then follow the road until it reaches a bridge over the canal. Cross the bridge.

10 Once over the bridge turn left down to the canal towpath and follow this back to the Marina and the car park.

NEXT MONTH: Brinscall and Great Hill



COMPASS POINTS

GLASSON DOCK CIRCUIT

START AND FINISH: The car park by the Marina at Glasson Dock, £1.00 all day.

DISTANCE: 5.8 Miles/ 9.3 Km

MAP: OS Explorer 296. Lancaster, Morecambe and Fleetwood

TERRAIN: In dry weather it is easy walking on fields, tracks, and minor roads. Light shoes or boots are fine.

FACILITIES: There are public toilets across from the car park with a 20p charge.

Watering Hole

The Lantern O'er Lune (www.lanternoerlune.co.uk) holds a lot of surprises. It's a stopping point for cyclists and walkers and readers of my walks know that cyclists in a café means good food. The sign outside says it was voted as Lancashire Life best breakfast and its easy to see why although a full English would have led to a sleep rather than a walk, it's pretty big undertaking. The surprise is that at 11.45 it turns from an excellent breakfast café



Jonathon and Melonie Wagstaff at the Lantern O'er Lune cafe and bistro

(They do a veggie version) into a traditional café. Out goes the frying pan and in comes a completely different

menu complete with my favorite, homemade steak and ale pie. However there is yet another surprise, as on Friday nights the café becomes a bistro with yet another completely different menu. Booking is recommended. It is really popular and with a starters of warm avocado, prawn and mango on a bed of baby leaves it's easy to see why it gets so busy. There are also a couple of pubs in the village and a shop. If you like kippers, the Port of Lancaster Smokehouse is a must. It's behind the Dalton Arms.,

EXPLORE LANCASHIRE...



OS Explorer maps are perfect for finding new routes, planning a walk or just getting to know your local area better. With over 400 OS Explorer Maps covering the country, there's one which can help you explore wherever you are.

