

A Leisurely Amble Along The Banks Of The Coquet

From Amble, following the South bank of the River Coquet and visiting Warkworth.

Distance: 6 miles

Time required : 3 hours for the walk.

Visiting the many attractions, however, can easily occupy a full day.

Leave the Tourist Information Centre in Amble and walk up Queen Street, the main shopping street, turning at the top to follow the road towards Warkworth.

There is a footpath to the right of the road and part of the walk follows the river, with its abundance of wildlife. Many birds are seasonal visitors and others, like the Cormorants, are residents.

As you approach **Warkworth**, the road leaves the river and climbs a short hill to a road junction. Turn right and walk towards the village and the entrance to **Warkworth Castle**.

Cross the road and enter the castle grounds. The castle can be visited now or later as the walk returns to the entrance by a circular route.

Leave the castle entrance, turning right and then right again, to join the short footpath to the top of Castle Street. Walk downhill towards the **Market Place**. Turn right at the Market Cross and walk along Bridge Street to the two bridges across the river. The new road bridge was opened in 1965, to relieve the burden of traffic on the **Norman Bridge**, which now serves pedestrians.

Turn left at the gatehouse and the south side of the bridge to follow a footpath by the river. The path soon passes the **Church of St. Lawrence**, turn left into a road leading to the church entrance and the Market Place. After visiting the church, return to the river bank, and turn left to follow the river upstream. The footpath passes a landing stage where there are rowing boats for hire, a good way to explore this beautiful part of the river.

Continue to follow the river, the footpath, through a gate to a footpath sign, there is also a small landing for the ferry to the **Hermitage**. *Please note that pleasure boats are not allowed to land at the Hermitage and only the official ferry can be used.*

Turn left to follow the footpath uphill away from the river, through some trees to a gate. Go through the gate and turn left to follow the road for 250 yards, look for a footpath sign on the left to Warkworth Castle. Go through a gate and follow a path behind some houses towards the castle. After passing through a further gate, cross the field diagonally to enter the Castle grounds. Leave the castle to return to Amble by the same footpath alongside the river that you used at the start of the walk.

Notes

Warkworth

The older parts of Warkworth are enclosed in a horseshoe bend in the River Coquet, with the castle built on high ground at the open end of the horseshoe.

The river crossing from the North could be defended from the bridge.

Warkworth Castle

The only level approach to the Castle is from the south, the entrance was protected by a moat and flanking towers on the main gate. The earliest parts of the Castle were constructed in the 12th century and building continued up the 15th Century.

The castle was granted to Henry, Lord Percy of Alnwick in 1332, and its history has been linked with the Percy family ever since. The Castle is now in the care of English Heritage.

The Market Place

The original market cross was built in 1706 and replaced in 1830 by the one that can be seen today. In 1714 James “the Pretender” was proclaimed as King of England, in Warkworth Market Place, at the start of the Jacobite rebellion.

Warkworth Bridge

The bridge dates back to Norman times, the fortified gatehouse with its arch, is unique, as only a very few fortified bridges remain in the country. For 600 years, until the new bridge was opened in 1965, this was the only crossing point.

St. Lawrence Church

The earliest records of the church are 8th Century, although the building was destroyed in the 9th Century by raiders from Northern Europe.

A stone church was built early in the 12th Century but was burnt to the ground in 1174 by raiders from Scotland.

300 people taking refuge in the church died in the flames. The church was rebuilt and the West tower added in 1200. In the 15th Century, the Percy family extended the church.

The Hermitage

The Hermitage can only be visited when the English Heritage warden is on duty, but a guide book is available. It is built in the stone cliff and its origins are not fully known.

The first reliable mention of the Hermitage was in 1487.

Times

Walk times are based on an easy pace to allow time to take in the scenery, the flora and fauna. Wear sensible footwear and take a waterproof with you.