

NORTHUMBERLAND

Outstanding Circular Walks

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Alnmouth

walk 5

This undemanding short walk focuses on the attractive coastal village of Alnmouth, exploring the riverbank and estuary as well as the beach and dunes that lie to the north. There is wildlife aplenty; sea trout and salmon are to be found in the river, while a wide variety of birds come to feed along the strands, dunes and mudflats.

 If the tide is out, you can drop onto the beach for the first 1/2 mile (800m) of the walk to the River Aln's estuary. Otherwise, continue to the far end of the car park, from which a path leads through the dunes to the village. Wind out at the far end through a private car park onto a street opposite the Village Golf Club. Follow it left, going left again at the top. Round the point of the estuary and continue past a boat storage compound. Those still on the beach should join the street at this point.

At a bend beyond a children's play area **A**, look for a path leaving left from the corner, signed as Lovers Walk and the England Coast Path. It angles away above riverside marsh, eventually leading to the main road at the edge of Alnmouth. Cross the river (a pedestrian walkway is tagged onto the upstream side of the bridge) then, soon after, join a parallel path beside the carriageway that borders wetlands reclaimed



 Start

Alnmouth

 Distance

4 miles (6.3km)

 Height gain

280 feet (85m)

 Approximate time

2 hours

 Route terrain

Clear paths and lane

 Parking

Alnmouth Beach
car park

 OS maps

Landranger 81
(Alnwick & Morpeth),
Explorer 332 (Alnwick
& Amble)

 GPS waypoints

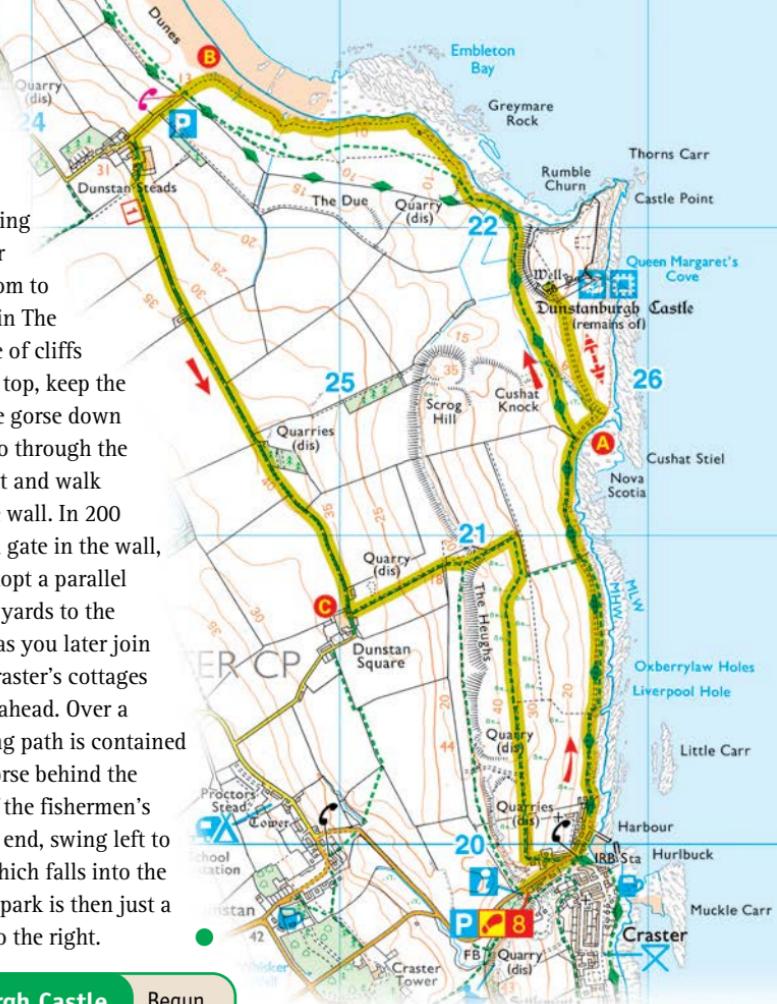
-  NU 250 106
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-  NU 239 110
-  NU 238 116
-  NU 249 116
-  NU 256 118

of a field ridged with medieval ox ploughing, passing through another gate at the bottom to climb to a nick in The Heughs, the line of cliffs ahead. Over the top, keep the same line beside gorse down to the corner. Go through the gate on the right and walk away beside the wall. In 200 yards, passing a gate in the wall, drift away to adopt a parallel course some 50 yards to the right. Carry on as you later join another wall, Craster's cottages now appearing ahead. Over a stile, the ongoing path is contained by clumps of gorse behind the long gardens of the fishermen's cottages. At the end, swing left to meet a street, which falls into the village. The car park is then just a short distance to the right.

Dunstanburgh Castle

Begun around

1313 by Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, Dunstanburgh sits imposingly upon an outcrop of whinstone, part of the Great Whin Sill volcanic intrusion. The formation curves through the north Pennines, underlies part of Hadrian's Wall and makes a final appearance off the coast as the Farne Islands. The castle's curtain walls enclose some nine acres, heightening the natural defences of the sea cliffs and steep inland bank that protect it on three sides. The entrance lies through an impressive gatehouse flanked by twin towers. The fortification remained impregnable until the Wars of the Roses, when it succumbed to the Earl of Warwick's pounding cannon. Abandoned, it crumbled into the romantic ruin we see today.



0 200 400 600 800 METRES 1 KILOMETRES
0 200 400 600 800 YARDS $\frac{1}{2}$ MILES

SCALE 1:25000 or 2½ INCHES to 1 MILE 4CM to 1KM



Passing beneath the Lilburn Tower

Lindisfarne Castle

The impressive fort, built around 1540 to protect the harbour, was used by troops sent to quell border uprisings. It was bought by the publisher Edward Hudson in 1901 who commissioned his friend Edwin Lutyens to transform it into a comfortable house. Hudson sold it on 20 years later and, in 1944, the merchant banker Sir Edward de Stein gave it to the National Trust.

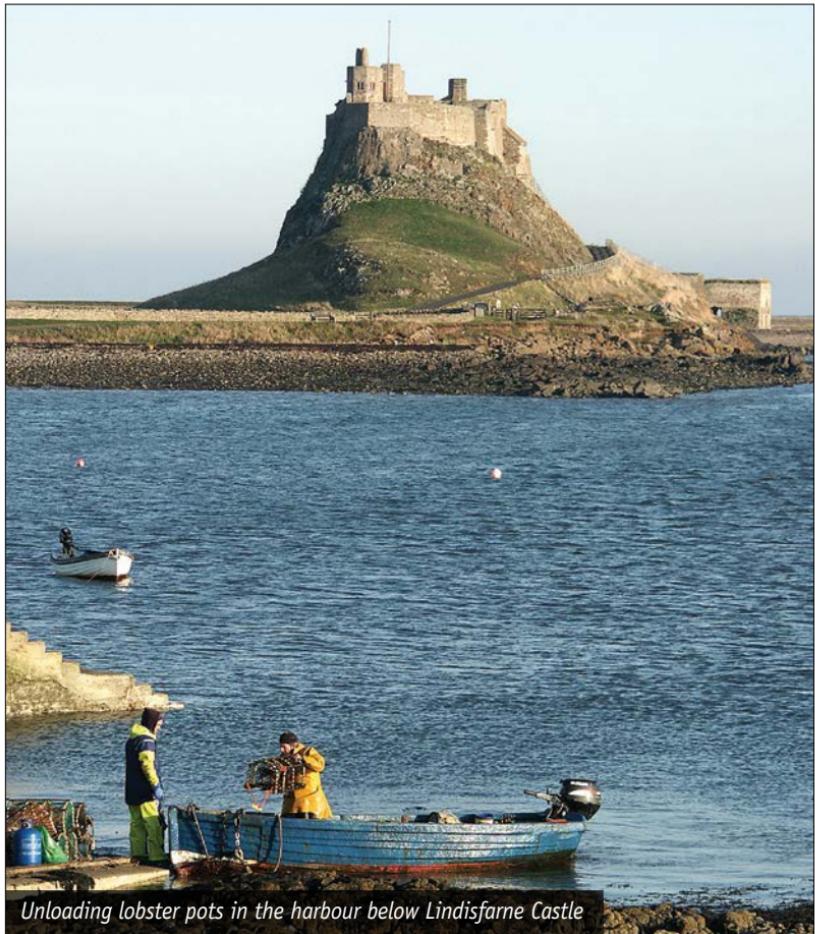
passing a collection of upturned boats that serve as fishermen's sheds.

Approaching the jetty area, bear right in front of a large hut to find a path climbing onto the Heugh behind, which overlooks the priory and offshore island

to which St Cuthbert retreated before withdrawing to Inner Farne.

The path drops steeply from the far end, where a track curves up right past St Mary's Church. Turn in through the churchyard and leave by the northern gate past the Priory Museum. The present ruins date from its refoundation as a Benedictine house in the 11th century, when monks returned from Durham. The small community briefly prospered, but the surrounding area was repeatedly harried during border unrest before its dissolution in 1537.

Now carry on and walk into the village centre keeping ahead at the crossroads **D** in order to return to the car park.



Unloading lobster pots in the harbour below Lindisfarne Castle

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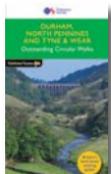
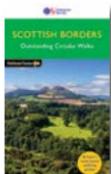
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