

WALKS IN AND AROUND BRAMPTON

Brampton Parish Council has a Footpaths and Rights of Way working group. Below are walks taken from a leaflet produced several years ago from members of the group at that time, called 'Ramblings around Brampton'. Some details have been updated as necessary.

Brampton is a lovely area to walk in at any time of year and of course most people do so in the summer months, but if you venture out here in the quiet winter months you can experience a special kind of magic when the low watery sun hangs over twisted oaks; when dense hedgerows and woodland bare their secrets and views appear through skeletal branches; your walking companions may be the lone piping robin and the chattering flocks of fieldfare; the optimistic warbling of the mistle thrush promises spring days ahead.

All the walks listed (except number 1) begin from the Moot Hall in the centre of town.

WALK ONE: 6½ miles – Railway, Woodland and Water

This is a longer walk of 6½ miles with considerable variety. It will take you down the old Dandy railway line, through Brampton town, the lovely Gelt Woods and Talkin Tarn Country Park.

The main route consists of two sections – LEG "A" and LEG "B".

If you arrived by rail start at LEG "A" and proceed to LEG "B". If you arrive by bus/car or are staying in Brampton start at LEG "B" and proceed to LEG "A".

LEG "C" is an escape route for railway walkers running out of time or energy who need to make a short cut back to the station but do be aware that you will miss Gelt Woods which is a highlight of the walk.

LEG "A" – starting at Brampton Station

Follow the footpath sign heading west alongside the platform. *This track is called the "Dandy" and was only part of a network of mineral lines to the south and east which connected with Brampton down this line.* At the end of the platform the track curves away to the right into Row Bank Wood. The track enters a cutting where tall sycamores line the track. The concrete underpass leads under the Brampton by-pass then away from the wood. As you travel down the gentle slope it is easy to visualise the line as it operated up to 1924. At the far end there is a series of steps (a ramp will be in place in the near future) to bring you down to street level in Station Road. Turn left for Brampton. Follow this road past some red sandstone weaver cottages on your left and on the right is the Moat with its mature trees dominates the scene. Take the left turn at the Co-op and down the lane you will pass a block of flats. Take a right turn and you are in the Market Place where you will see the Moot Hall.

LEG "B" – starting at The Moot Hall

From the Moot Hall head along Front Street towards St. Martin's Church, keep left at the junction and continue until you reach Greenhill. *On your right you will see Oulton House which is one of the oldest if not the oldest building in Brampton dating from the seventeenth century.* Bear left, and at the top of the rise on the left is a signpost marked "Capon Tree" which leads through what is known locally as the "Five Pun

(pound) Fields". Follow the path up the rise keeping the field edge on your right. Pass through the kissing gate into the next field. The path drops down the bank as a hollow track. Pass through the kissing gate. The hollow way of the footpath leads up to the bank before you and the view begins to open out. Standing on the top of the rise on a clear day, the Lake District fells can be seen towards the south west, the Solway Firth, and beyond to Criffel and Dumfries to the west. Continue through the kissing gate into the enclosed strip. At the end of the path bear right across the road taking the old road towards Gelt Bridge. Soon the Capon Tree Monument is seen on the left in a copse. If you are a rail traveller running short of time or energy turn to LEG "C".

The main route follows the road. Take care when crossing the bypass which is three lanes wide at this point. Traffic is moving fast here on the hill. Follow the old road down towards Low Gelt Bridge. Turn left here at the footpath sign and through the Low Gelt car park.

You are now entering Gelt Woods. Follow the woodland walk along the River Gelt, sometimes referred to as "The mad, mad river" because of its forceful journey through the rocks and also its sudden rises and falls (from the Irish geilt-mad; or the Norse gwyllt-rapid). Take the right fork down the bank and at the foot of the bank where the path turns left make a short detour to the right and see the potholes which have been worn away with swirling action of pebbles through the soft rock. Continue on till you come to a stone causeway. *On the rock face above here is the Written Rock of Gelt with a Latin inscription. It is believed by experts to have been cared by Roman legionaries when they hewed the stone.* Climb up the bank. *Pause at the next path junction and look towards the cliff on the opposite side of the Gelt. Towards the left hand side of the cliff are steps which lead to Abraham's Cave which consists of a room twelve feet by nine with a door and window.* Turn sharp left up the bank passing a large quarry face on your right. *This is known as Brampton Freestone Quarry from which most of the material was used to build the local housing.* Continue forwards at the marker post. Follow a path known as the 'Black Path'. Turn right at the electricity substation at the end of the path. After a quarter of a mile pass by Wreay Farm. Follow the track past Wreay Farm till you reach the Castle Carrock road. When reaching the Castle Carrock road turn right for the main route but walkers may short cut to the station by continuing straight across the crossroads (1280m) or if you wish to make a short cut to Brampton turn left and follow the road down into town (1 mile).

Cross the Carlisle-Newcastle railway line at the level crossing, shortly after turn left into Talkin Tarn Country Park. Follow the access road to the Tarn. *At the Tarn there are facilities for fishing, sailing, rowing and wind-surfing, there is a rowing club and a Regatta is held here annually in early July. The tea-rooms and gift shop are open daily 10.30am-4.00pm (summer) and Thurs - Sun 10.30am - 4pm (winter) take-away service only on Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays during winter months.* When you leave, head away from the Tarn on the right hand side of the boathouse. Swing right by a row of tall beech trees by the edge of the wood and at the end of this row you will see a footpath sign at a wicket gate. Pass through this and then along the edge of the field to the Brampton Fell road. Turn right along the road and in less than half a mile you will reach the station.

If you are travelling towards Carlisle stay on this side, but cross the iron footbridge for trains to Newcastle. Or if you are continuing on to Brampton on foot follow LEG "A".

LEG "C" – This is the escape route back to the station if time and energy are running out. (1¾ miles)

Turn left at the monument along Sandy Lonning. Turn right at the end of this track through the underpass, then immediately left onto Wreay Lonning. Follow the track past Wreay Farm till you meet the Castle Carrock road and cross straight over on to the Brampton Fell road. Pass Brampton Fell Farm and over the

railway bridge. Half a mile beyond this you will reach the station. If you are travelling towards Carlisle stay on this side, but cross the iron footbridge for trains to Newcastle.

WALK TWO: 2¼ miles – Sandy Lonning.

This is a fairly easy town and country walk.

Leaving the Moot Hall head down the street towards St. Martin's Church but before you reach it take the left turning up Gelt Road. Walk on up the hill. On reaching the T-junction at the top, turn right on to the Capon Tree Road and continue until the end of the houses. On the left hand side is a copse where the Capon Tree monument stands. Turn left past the monument on to Sandy Lonning which continues until it terminates at a tarmac road. Turn left up the hill along Quarry Bank road which returns you to Capon Tree road. Turn right and follow the road down to Paving Brow. Continue until you reach a crossroads where you will see our local War Memorial in the form of a hospital opened on the 6th September 1923.

Turn left down Craw Hall into town. After a while you will see on the right the Old Brewery. *The Old Brewery has existed at least since 1790 as Ramshay Gray and Company had it in that year. Trading continued until the 1940's.* A little way further brings you to your starting point.

WALK THREE: 3¼ miles – Black Path Walk.

A gentle walk through woodland and farmland. Keep your dogs under control especially when you are in fields where there are farm animals when it may be necessary to put your dogs on leads.

Keep to the recognised paths across farmland.

From the Moot Hall head down the street towards St. Martin's Church but before you reach it take the left turning up Gelt Road. Walk on up the hill. Turn right at the junction at the top (south end) of Gelt Road then left within a few yards. This is called Quarrybank road. Follow this road down to the bypass at the foot of the bank, through the underpass and turn right. Turn left at the electricity substation where the Black Path is indicated by a finger post "To Gelt Woods".

At the end of the Black path where it enters Gelt Woods a signpost to the left points you through a kissing gate through wood and pasture to Unity Farm. There is a farm cottage on your left as you turn left from the gate on to the road. Follow this road to the junction with Wreay Lonning and turn right. Walk for 180m to a stile on your left at Wreay Farm signed for Aaronstown and Brampton. There are three kissing gates at intervals and some delightful views if the weather is clear. The third gate leads on to the Brampton bypass. Carefully cross the bypass as the traffic at this point usually travels at some considerable speed. Take particular care with dogs and children.

After crossing you will find another gate and a little further on brings you to Aaronstown – a pleasant little enclave reached by stepping through a sandstone stile. Walk on to the crossroads at the top of Gelt Road and down that road into town.

WALK FOUR: 4 miles – Crooked Holme.

An easy walk but it is advisable to wear heavier footwear and keep dogs on a lead where farm animals are present.

Keep to the recognised paths across farmland.

Head towards St. Martin's Church at the bottom end of town. Cross the road at the police station and walk along the A6071 Longtown Road – keeping the police station on your left. Just after Beckriggs on the left take the path signposted to Old Church Lane that follows Brampton Beck most of the way. After a few hundred metres the path opens out on to a green, continue forward and the footpath continues behind the houses directly in front of you.

Once on the Old Church Lane, next to a caravan site, turn left and walk the road until reaching a sign to Crooked Holme on the right. Cross the stile at the sign. The path is waymarked through the fields. At the bottom of the bank there are two stiles. Take the one on your left. Bear diagonally left across the field, aiming towards the buildings of Old Church Farm on the rise. Pass through the field gate in the far corner and as the farm track curves to the right, head straight towards the stile at the top of the bank. From there follow the waymarked stiles to the Old Church Lane.

Turn right to visit the Old Church. *This was once Brampton's Parish church until 1788. If you wish to see the inside of the Old Church, call at the farmhouse and collect the key. The building dates at least back to the twelfth century. Remember to return the key!*

Return to Old Church Lane and follow the lane back to Brampton. When you reach the junction with Longtown Road turn right and follow the road down the hill back into Brampton.

WALK FIVE: 2¾ miles – Moat, Ridge and Cotehill Park.

Keep your dogs under control especially when you are in fields where there are farm animals when it may be necessary to put your dogs on leads.

Keep to the recognised paths across farmland.

Leave the Market Place behind the Moot Hall and to the left. Cross the main road, turn right and take the first left turn up a cobbled lane. *Ahead of you is what is now called the Drying Green, not used as such now, but in previous years it was a scene of great activity – particularly on Monday mornings.* Take the path to the left and up the steps along the side of the Moat. *This moat is a natural mound but has been modified by the construction of early earthworks. At the top is a bronze statue of the seventh Earl of Carlisle who died in 1864.* Leave the monument by the left hand path moving towards Moat Cottages. Follow the sign 'TO THE RIDGE WALK' along the sunken path through a kissing gate to the Ridge. After passing through the kissing gate you will come across an open panorama which will be difficult to match. *The imposing row of mature beeches is in reality an overgrown hedge. On the afternoon of Monday 2nd September 1982 a freak storm blew down quite a number and the combination of the funnelling effect of the wind, and the interlocking root systems made them vulnerable so they keeled over like a set of dominoes. The Parish Council planted in the gaps to conserve the landscape feature.* The walk continues along the line of the Ridge via a kissing gate into the Ridge Wood. There is general access within Ridge Wood on your right for you to explore at your leisure but further on, on your left, the pine woods are private so please keep to the signed way that leads through the plantation at the far end by the waymarked path.

Continue along and pass through two squeeze stiles beside the gates. By following the markers, the path leads eventually to the Riggside Plantation and downhill through a private conifer wood. Turn right at the kissing gate and walk along the field edge on the bridle path into Tin Barn Lonning. On reaching Easby Lonning, for a quick and dry return to Brampton, turn right up the hill. At the junction turn right and follow the road back into Brampton.

Turn left on to Easby Lonning for the main route. Walk along for approximately 30m and leave the Easby Lonning where the wooden finger post points left to Brampton and after crossing the stile, walk along the side of the field until another stile leads you onto a well defined path. Proceed via a five barred gate along a farm track until a tall marker post is visible leading the way down a slight dip to another gate. Once through the gate follow the fence through one kissing gate to another where the marker post shows a parting of the ways: one path to Cotehill Farm, another to Cotehill Lonning (both of which lead eventually to Brampton).

From here it will be necessary to cross the fields diagonally left, heading each time for the distinctive marker post, until the final kissing gate at Stanley Road is reached. Cross the road and continue straight ahead past the new houses on Stanley Road and down Sawmill Lane until it meets Union Lane. Follow Union Lane until it meets the main road. Turn right over the pedestrian crossing. Turn left into High Cross Street and down into the Market Place and the end of your journey.

WALK SIX: 2¼ miles – Four Gables.

This walk is a road walk. Except for a quarter of a mile it runs on footways alongside roads. However in most cases the path is well back from the road. It is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

Leave the Moot Hall by going round the back and at the top left hand corner of the Market Place follow the sign to Murray Park along the path. Proceed up the lane, turn right at the end of the block of flats before the main road and follow the way through an arch into Murray Park. *There is a children's play area here and a stone seat. The seat is a memorial to Agnes Elizabeth Murray (1891-1921) sister of Stephen Murray of Hallbankgate erected by Mary Murray. The park was also gifted to the town by Mary Murray.* As you come out of the park turn left and then right past the Sands cottages. Go up past the arch of the Wilson Homes and head away over the expanse of grass known as the Sands. Make towards the unusual stone structure which is mentioned in a book of English follies. *It's correct name is the Howard Memorial Shelter but it is more commonly known in Brampton as 'the witch's hat'.*

Continue on from the shelter and cross Lanercost Road, turning to the right, passing various houses and a row of Victorian Villas and on along a piece of road called the Swarthel (or Swartle). About a quarter of a mile further on there is a post box followed by a road sign pointing to Hallbankgate. Turn right up this road. *The house on the left is known as The Keep. It was built for the gamekeeper of the Naworth Estate during the last century when the Earls of Carlisle kept considerable estate.* Proceed on up the road called Turning Course Lonning keeping to the right hand side to face the oncoming traffic. This short path is the only piece of the walk with no path. When you reach the old main road turn right again, the footpath then carries you back into Brampton.