

Cark Coastal Path to Flookburgh Circular

Length 5 1/2 miles

Duration: 2 hours 30 mins

Map: OS Landranger Map, Sheet 96, Barrow-in-Furness & South Lakeland

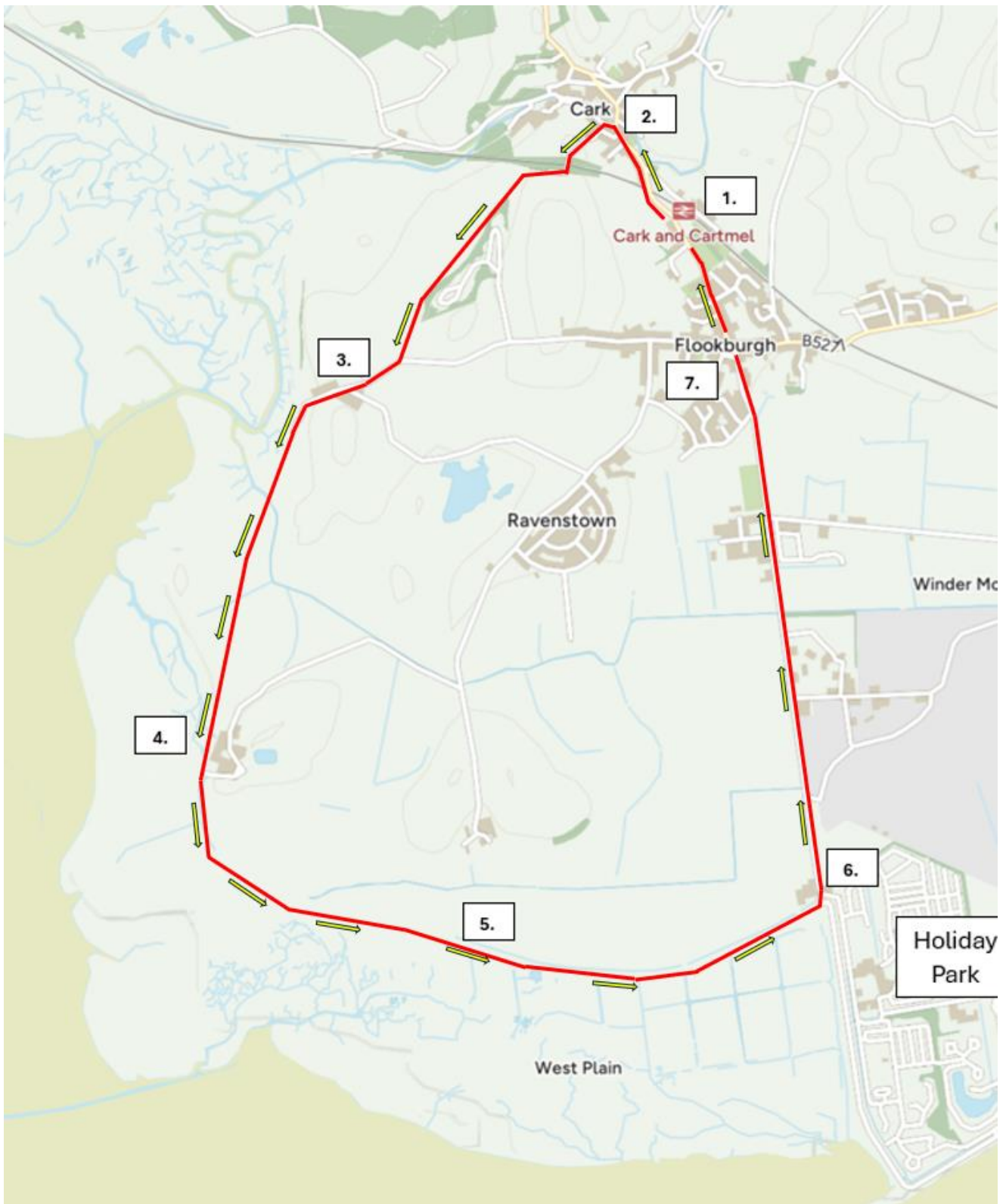
Difficulty: Moderate. Most of this walk involves well marked bridleways and coastal paths which can be at times stoney and muddy. Suitable walking footwear is recommended.

Note: a large section of this walk follows a footpath/bridleway that runs along the edge of the Morecambe Bay estuary between Flookburgh and Cark. I have walked the route many times at both low and high tides and have never come close to getting wet feet. This is because the footpath follows a line well above the normal high-water mark. That said, evidence of deposited driftwood can be seen in places above the footpath line. This suggests that during the highest of tides, sections of the route may sometimes get partially covered by seawater. As previously stated, I have never seen this, but perhaps it may be prudent before setting out on the walk to check the local tide states. This can be done online at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast-and-sea/tide-tables/5/434> .

Also, caution must always be taken when visiting any areas of the Morecambe Bay estuary. Tides can rise very quickly and areas of dangerous quicksand exist. This walk stays well away from any areas of danger, however venturing off the route and onto the adjoining coastal sands and mudflats should be avoided.

However, other than the above points of caution, this is an excellent circular walk with lot of variation and points of interest as well as stunning views out over the beautiful Morecambe Bay area.

Route Map:





The route as described starts and finishes at Cark Railway Station (postcode LA11 7PT). Regular trains run along this line from Carnforth towards Barrow and beyond. The rail journey from Carnforth to Cark is quite stunning and only takes about 20 minutes.

For those wishing to drive to Cark, there is a small carpark in Cark village centre next to the public toilets (adjacent to the village shop). There is also a carpark at the train station, however signs here indicate that this is only for rail users.

Cockling Trolleys near Flookburgh

An alternative for car users would be to park in the larger village centre carpark in Flookburgh (marked as Point 7 on the above map) postcode LA11 7JX, and then simply start and finish the route from there.

Directions:

1. Assuming you are starting from the Cark railway station, walk out of the station carpark onto the road and turn right, cross over the railway bridge and into Cark village centre. Walk past the small carpark and public toilets then the convenience store towards the Engine Inn Public House.
2. Cross over the main road in front of the Engine Inn and then walk a short distance up the road directly to the left of the pub. After a few meters you will see Laurel Bank cottage and then Caton Lane House on your left. Turn left off the road along the narrow lane between these two properties.



Continue straight ahead and the lane quickly becomes a well-defined bridleway that climbs out of the village before crossing a bridge over the railway lines.

Continue along the bridleway for about half a mile passing a small holiday lodge site to your left.

3. After the lodge site, the bridleway soon joins a tarmac farm access road. Turn right along this road towards the obvious farm buildings (Sand Gate Farm). Walk past the farm and the road quickly drops down to the estuary where it curves round to the left and becomes more of a farm track.

Follow this track that takes a line close to the fence/wall on your left and the open Morecambe Bay estuary to your right. The track soon becomes more of a footpath, however as long as you keep close to the fence/wall line to your left, you can't go wrong.

There is a large wind turbine in the fields to your left, after that you will see that the path heads towards some farm buildings in the distance. Continue along the same line, i.e. fence/wall line to your left and open bay to your right, and eventually you will pass directly to the right of this farm (Cannon Winder Farm) with its impressive chimneys.



Approach to Cannon Winder Farm

4. Pass through the gate by the side of the farm (usually open) and then continue as before with wall/fence line to your left and the open bay to your right.
5. The path soon begins to follow the top of a manmade embankment built to protect the adjoining fields from encroaching tides. This embankment is now followed for the remainder of the coastal section of the walk.
6. Eventually, the path ends by a WW2 pillbox (lookout building) and a concrete block tidal defence bank built to protect the adjoining large holiday park site (a 'Haven' site at the time of writing).

Turn left in front of the pillbox and through the style to the right of the cattle grid. This leads you out onto the start of Moor Lane, a mile long stretch of straight road leading to Flookburgh village.

Walk along Moor Lane passing the entrance to the holiday park and the bay rescue training centre.

As you walk along the road footpath, you will see some orange airfield windsocks in the fields to your right. This is the site of the former RAF Cark fighter training centre built during the second world war. The site closed as an RAF base in 1945 and is now the home of the North West Parachute Centre. On fine, weekend days there are often planes taking off, and parachutist coming down to watch as you walk along the road.



Part way down the road and before you arrive at Flookburgh village you will pass a small industrial complex to your left. One of the buildings here is where the world-famous Cartmel Sticky Puddings are now made.

7. Eventually, the road rises up and enters the village of Flookburgh.



Flookburgh Village Centre

Flookburgh is an ancient Lancashire village (it's now part of Cumbria) with a history built up around the cockle and shrimp fishing industries. It is now a popular holiday location with its own village store, bakery, post office, chemist, fish and chip shop and public house (Hope and Anchor) all very close to the village centre carpark.

Walk onto and directly across the village carpark and then take the road by the side of the chemist shop. The signpost in the middle of the carpark points to this being the way to 'Cark, Holker, Ulverston'.

Walk along the road soon passing the large and impressive St John the Baptist church to your left.

Cark Train Station and the end of the walk is just a short distance further on to the right of the road.