

MAP Key

- Fishy Trail
- Points of Interest
- TIC Start
- Barracks Start



Slow Food®
Berwick-upon-Tweed

The Fishy Trail

Fishing for salmon, sea trout, herring, crabs, lobsters and even whales has played an important part in Berwick's economy for thousands of years.

This walking trail has been created to help you explore Berwick's "fishy" heritage.

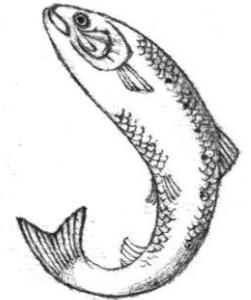
The whole route can be walked within one and a half hours. This can be reduced to less than one hour by omitting the Tweedmouth section.

You can start the trail either at the Barracks or at the Tourist Information Centre in Marygate.

In the Middle Ages the Tweed was divided into fisheries, or 'stells'. There were 36 salmon fisheries between Spittal and Norham.

Before the 1850s, catches on the Tweed often totalled 100,000 salmon and 60,000 sea trout each year. By the end of the 19th century pollution and over-fishing had reduced the annual catch to around 25,000 salmon and 20,000 sea trout.

Most of the fisheries closed in the 1980s and Berwick's centuries-old tradition of salmon fishing continues now only at Gardo's Batt.



This leaflet has been designed as part of the Food Heritage of Berwick-upon-Tweed project, led by Slow Food Berwick-upon-Tweed

www.slowfoodberwick.org.uk

① **Start** at the Tourist Information Centre in Marygate. Walk down Marygate past the Town Hall, cross Church Street and continue ahead along Woolmarket to Ravensdowne.

② **Alternative Start** from the Barracks walk down the right hand side of Ravensdowne to the junction with Woolmarket

Cross the road and stand by the finger-signpost.

① **Ravensdowne Ice Houses.** Look across the road to three entrances in the stone wall. Behind the doors are stone-lined chambers where ice was stored to pack round the salmon. Until Berwick's first ice-houses were built c. 1787, the salmon were pickled for the voyage to London. 7,500 cart-loads of ice were brought from local rivers each winter, and later by ship from Norway. Some ice-houses were still in use in 1939.

Cross Ravensdowne, walk up the steps to the Walls then turn right along the Ramparts and down the hill.

② **Kipper Hill** takes its name from the method of smoking herring that is said to have been invented at nearby Seahouses by John Woodger in about 1843. At the bottom of the hill is an old herring smoke-house, now turned into comfortable apartments.

Go through the iron gate and continue along the Walls until you come to Coxons Tower.

③ **Coxons Tower** is an excellent viewpoint for the estuary. Directly opposite is Berwick Shellfish Co. a major exporter of langoustines, lobsters, crabs and other shellfish landed from local boats. Around to the left past the lifeboat station is the sandy shore of Hallowstell. The 'holy man's fishery' was granted to the Holy Island monks by Ralph Flambard, Bishop of Durham, sometime before 1122. Until the mid-19th century catches of 16,000 salmon a year were common. By 2000, when fishing ended here, catches had dropped to about 1,000. Further to the left you can just make out the small brick building with a chimney that was one of two fishing shiels at Sandstell.

Continue past Wellington Terrace on your right.

④ **No. 1 Wellington Terrace** was once the home of John Miller Dickson who owned one of the two whaling ships that operated out of Berwick in the early 19th century. The doorway is decorated with harpoon heads. The whalers anchored at Carr Rock, where the lifeboat station now stands. The blubber was landed and boiled in Spittal to produce whale-oil for lighting and various industrial purposes.

Continue onto the Quay Walls and look down.

⑤ **Site of Byram's Shipyard.** A shipyard was established here in 1751 by Arthur Byram to build Berwick smacks - fast sailing boats for the salmon trade. Fishing boats were also built here until the yard closed in the 1990s.

Continue along the Quay Walls to stand on Shoregate.

⑥ **The Quayside** was once crowded during the herring season when as many as 400 boats visited Berwick from all over the UK. 700,000 barrels of herring were packed each year, mostly for export to the Baltic states. On one day in 1896, 1,273 barrels were packed at the Bostons' Yard in Spittal. Herring fishing declined after the First World War.

At Bridge End turn left and stand on the viewpoint, looking towards the Docks.

⑦ **Gardo's Batt** is the last fishery in Berwick operated by the traditional method of net and rowing boat, or coble. A 'batt' is a place where salmon nets are pulled ashore. In the summer you may see the blue-painted cobbles working or lying moored beside the bridge.

You may shorten the trail here by walking along Bridge Terrace to point **11 - Bankhill Ice House.** Otherwise cross the Old Bridge, turn left along Main Street in Tweedmouth and bear left into Dock Road

⑧ **Tweed Dock** is still used by a number of small craft that catch crabs and lobsters.

Continue along Dock Road and turn right into Church Street. Turn left into the churchyard.

⑨ **Church of St. Bartholomew and St. Boisil.** Note the weather vane in the form of a fish. Every July the Tweedmouth Salmon Queen is crowned. This ceremony has its origins in the medieval Feast of St Boisil when the salmon fisheries were blessed.

Continue out of the churchyard, turn left and bear left into Well Square. Turn left down Lees Lane.

⑩ **Bailiff's Shiel.** The shiel is the old stone building ahead of you. The bailiffs policed the salmon fisheries. They were hated by locals, who often threw stones as they passed by. From 1861 until 1885 naval gunboats patrolled the Tweed in support of the bailiffs.

Continue down Lees Lane into Dock Road.

Option 1 – If you have plenty of time to spare turn right and continue along Dock Road towards Spittal to explore the sites seen from Coxons Tower.

Option 2 - Turn left and return across the Old Bridge. Turn left along Bridge Terrace, bear right at the junction and walk up Bankhill

⑪ **Bankhill Ice-house** is in the care of Berwick Preservation Society. During World War II it was used as an air-raid shelter.

At the top of Bankhill bear right then turn left through Scotsgate. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing. Turn into Scott's Place. Continue ahead, between the Infirmary and car park. Turn left into Low Greens.

⑫ **The Greenses.** An old coble and an information panel in the street at the end of Low Greens are reminders that this was once Berwick's main sea-fishing community. As many as 45 boats worked out of the nearby Greenses Harbour in the 19th century.

You may finish the trail in The Pilot Inn where there are displayed a number of interesting old photographs of the fishing community. Afterwards, retrace your steps to the Town Centre. Alternatively you may wish to make for the Greenses harbour and walk along the cliff top to the pier. Shellfish is still gathered by hand on the shore beneath the cliffs at low tide.