

# CIRCULAR St. Bees 4 WALK

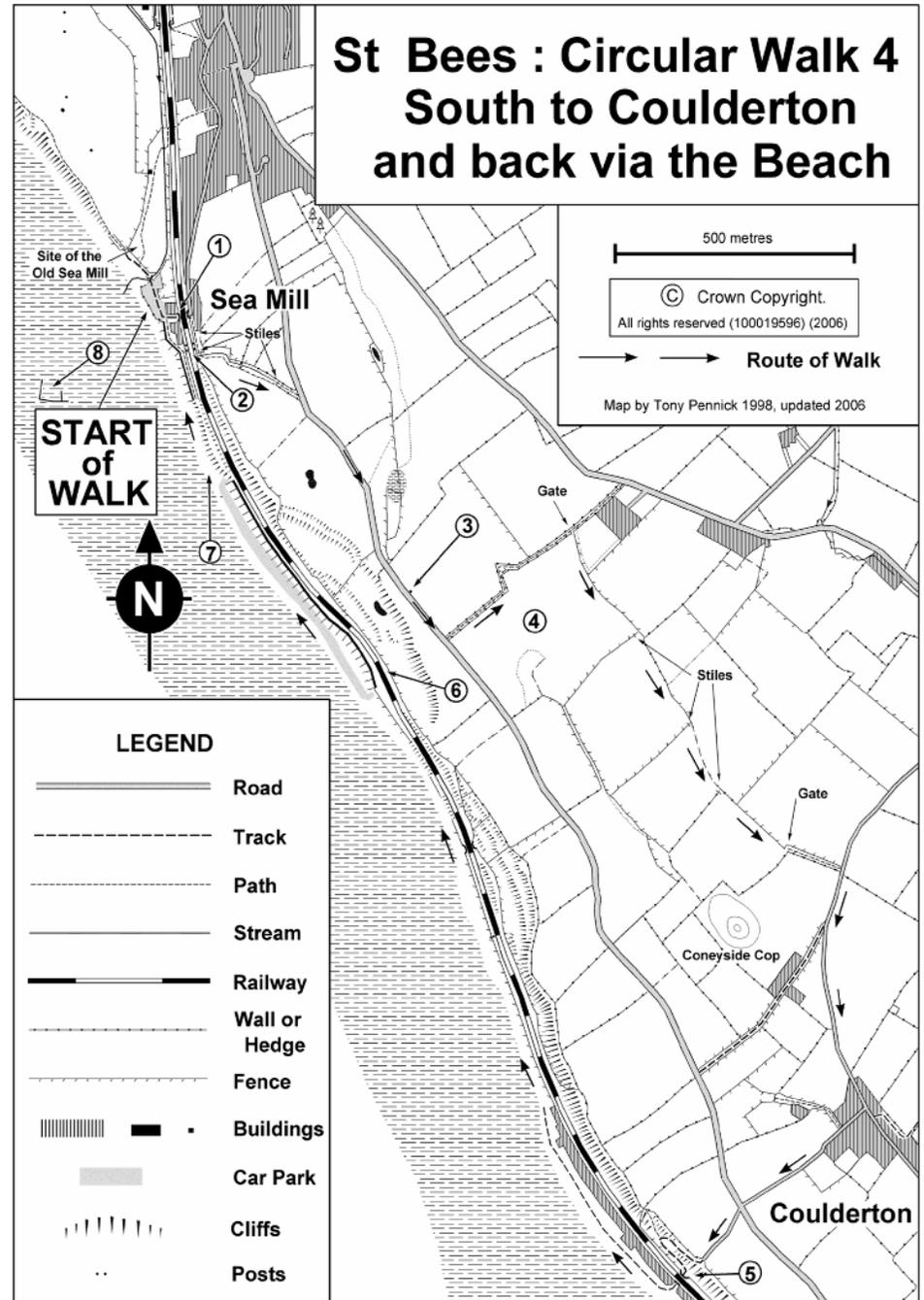
A medium walk  
4 miles : 6 km  
about 2 hours

From Seamill to  
Coulderton and  
back up the beach



The Old Sea Mill

Funded by the Parish Paths  
Initiative



## St. Bees Circular Walk 4 : Lovers Lonnin & Coulderton

(Time : approx. 2 hours Distance : 6 km ; 4 miles)

This is a circular walk to the south of the Village, taking in both pastoral and coastal scenery. It includes tracks and field paths which can be quite muddy after wet weather, as can the areas around some of the gates and stiles. Suitable footwear is advisable. Some of the stiles may be difficult to negotiate for the less agile, both human and canine.

The walk starts from the Seamill car park, reached via Seamill Lane (*originally known as the "Went"*), which turns off the Main Street at the southern end of the Village. From the car park, go under the railway bridge and turn immediately right.

*The area south of Pow Beck was landscaped by Rail Track in 1997. Information points here give details of the area and the Sea Mill, which was demolished in the early 1960's.*

The public footpath passes through Stoneycroft yard and onto an old track.

*The angled section of metal pipe on the left of the road (1) just under the bridge was placed there to help kick the wheels of the carts around the sharp corner on their return to the village loaded with sand and shingle from the beach. On either side of the railway by the bridge there are two pairs of sandstone gate posts (2) which allowed access for these horses and carts. Owners had to pay 3d a load to remove gravel from the shore by Sea Mill.*

Follow the track which leads up hill, crossing two stiles and a kissing gate on the way.

*The route follows the original cart track access to the Sea Mill from the south. After wet weather it is often muddy and it may be better to walk alongside the actual path.*

Turn right onto the Nethertown road and walk approximately 800m to a path on the left. Locally, these enclosed lanes, where the path passes between two old stone dykes is known as a "lonnin". This particular lane is "Lovers Lonnin", or "Golf Links Lonnin".

*On the way are the remains of a stone plinth built into the left bank (3). This was a coffin rest used by bearers bringing bodies to St. Bees for burial and has recently been restored. In the field to the right of the lonnin (4) was the clubhouse of the first St. Bees golf course - nine holes and 2810 yards long. The club was formed in February 1906 and built the club house the following year. The course was closed during the 1914-18 War and the present links opened in 1928.*

*At the right time of the year, the bluebells on either side of the lonnin are a sight to behold.*

Follow the lonnin past the zigzag section until a gate on the right is reached just before a line of trees. Pass through this gate and follow a footpath that joins the road at Coulderton. The path is indistinct underfoot but it follows the field boundaries in a direct line south across four fields and three step-over stiles. Make for the gate in the top corner of the last field which gives access to a short section of lane before the road.

*The single strands of barbed wire running on either side of the field boundaries are called "breast wires" and are used in modern farming to ensure that animals cannot get into adjacent fields and to protect the field boundaries from damage. In earlier times, the farmers just left the gorse to grow.*



*The Clubhouse on the Old St. Bees Golf Course : 1907*

*In the final field, the hillock to the right is called "Coneyside Cop", a glacial feature, fortunately not flattened by sand and gravel extraction for the construction of the Sellafield Nuclear plant in the 1950s. Its name may originate from "Coney", the old word for rabbits which would find burrowing into the sand easier than the surrounding ground.*

Turn right towards the coast and follow the road to the hamlet of Coulderton. At the road junction turn right, signposted "Shore" and walk down to the Nethertown Road.

At this point, those wishing to have a slightly shorter, easier walk can turn right (north) and walk back along the Nethertown Road, past Lovers Lonnin to the Seamill car park.

For the more intrepid, the alternative route crosses the road and follows the lane down the hill and under the railway to the shore (5).



Coal Train on the line south of St. Bees

*There are several bungalows built on the beach which can be threatened by the high tides.*

Turn right (north) along the track in front of the bungalows and then along the beach which is followed back to the Car Park at Seamill. **This can be hard work** because it is mostly over the stones, with little flat sand exposed, even at low tide. At high tide, the return route via the Nethertown Road is recommended.

*About 1500m up the beach the railway embankment has been strengthened against the ravages of the sea by thousands of tons of rock armour and a revetment, after sections of it were washed away by storms and high tides during the winter of 1996/97. At the southern end of this embankment was once a small halt (6) where the golfers could get off the train and walk up the hill to the old golf course.*

The route up the beach is a section of the Cumbrian Coastal Way.

*The section of cliff (7) to the south of Seamill has been declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The exposed rock is the Triassic St. Bees Sandstone, dominantly red in colour with occasional layers of mudstone, deposited about 240 million years ago by a complex series of shallow rivers and flood plains when the climate was dry and arid. In much more recent geological time, when the climate of northern England was similar to the present day Arctic, the advancing and retreating ice sheets removed vast quantities of the underlying rock and sediments. This became ground up between the sheets and was left behind as a series of hummocky deposits in a succession of interbedded tilts, sands and gravels, the debris of a retreating glacier about 15,000 years ago.*

Walk under the cliffs, past an earlier attempt to strengthen the railway embankment and back to the car park.

*At low tides in the sea opposite the Car Park, ancient peat beds with the remains of petrified trees can be seen. There are also the remains of old fish garths (8) which were used to catch fish by trapping them in a vee-shaped pond when the tide receded.*

We hope you have enjoyed the circuit.

To find out more about St Bees, you may like to visit the Village Web Site on [www.stbees.org.uk](http://www.stbees.org.uk)

Bob Mayow and Tony Pennick

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Photograph of the Sea Mill courtesy of Mrs E Haile

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