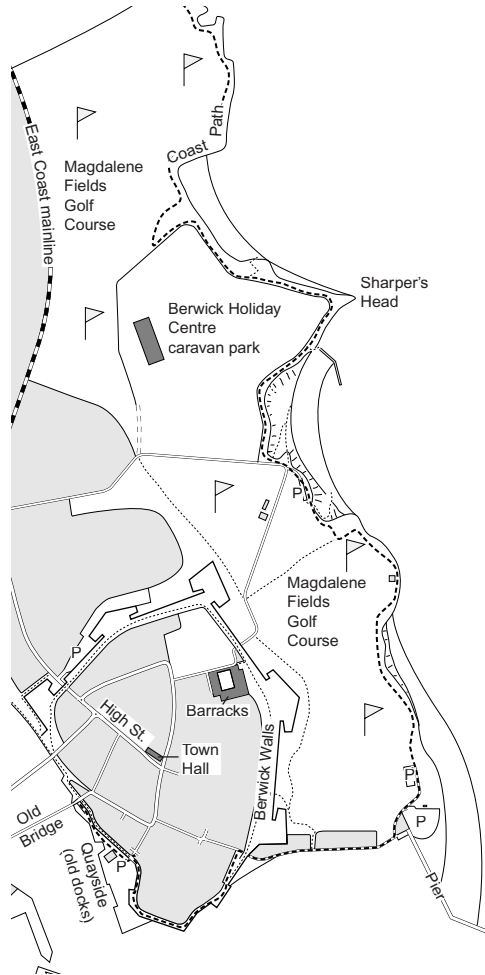


## Chapter 6: The Berwickshire coastal path

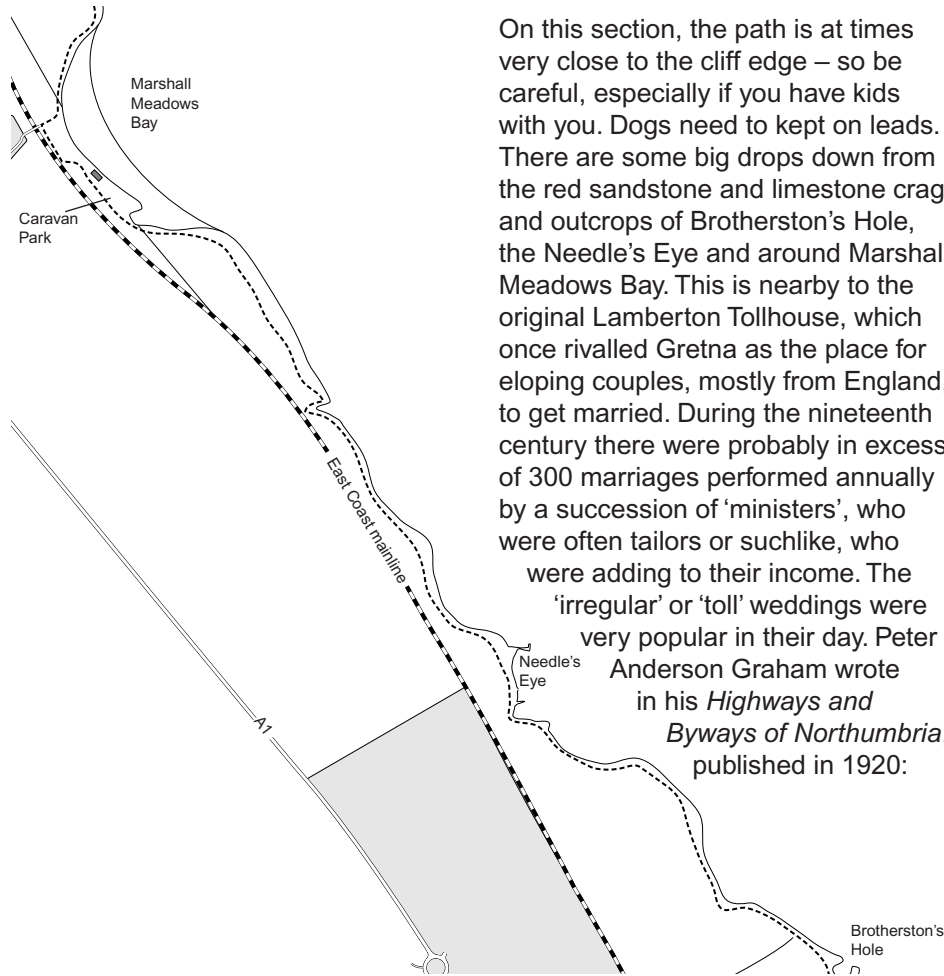
### The coast path: Berwick to Burnmouth

Obviously, a coast path can be walked in either direction! We've decided to construct our notes heading from Berwick northwards across the England/Scotland border. For this walk, you need to make sure you have enough water for your needs and possibly even something to eat. Where you start (or end) is also very

much your choice. Technically, the coastal path starts at the north side of the Old Bridge. From there you follow the lower route, wending around what is left of the old docks and then keep to the edge of the coast past the pier on your right and onto the coastal edge of the golf course and Sharper's Head. There's one burn to cross at Berwick Holiday Centre caravan park, where you come inland a little way and then go back to the path hugging the coast around the remainder of the Magdalene Fields Golf Course.



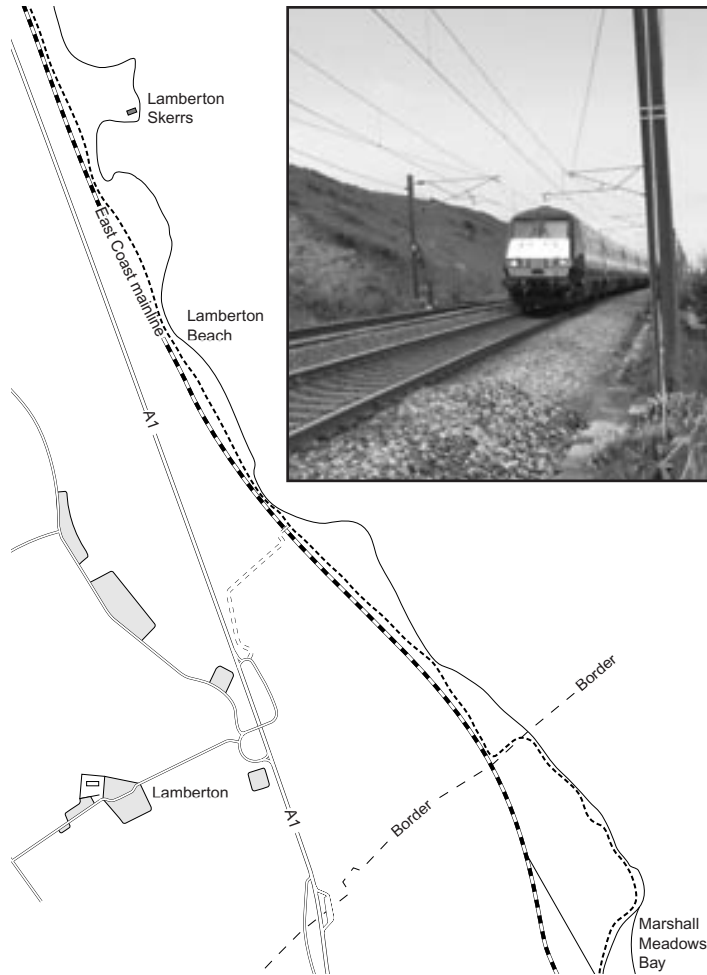
'Round Eyemouth



On this section, the path is at times very close to the cliff edge – so be careful, especially if you have kids with you. Dogs need to be kept on leads. There are some big drops down from the red sandstone and limestone crags and outcrops of Brotherston's Hole, the Needle's Eye and around Marshall Meadows Bay. This is nearby to the original Lamberton Tollhouse, which once rivalled Gretna as the place for eloping couples, mostly from England, to get married. During the nineteenth century there were probably in excess of 300 marriages performed annually by a succession of 'ministers', who were often tailors or suchlike, who were adding to their income. The 'irregular' or 'toll' weddings were very popular in their day. Peter Anderson Graham wrote in his *Highways and Byways of Northumbria*, published in 1920:

*'A jeweller who is now in a large way of business in another part of the country told the present writer that he served his time in Berwick-on-Tweed and is, indeed, a freeman. He recollected that on market days and holidays the firm for which he worked would sell from twelve to eighteen wedding rings in a morning for use at Lamberton Toll. He also remembered the famous notice stuck in the window of the toll-house: "Ginger beer sold here and marriages performed!"'*

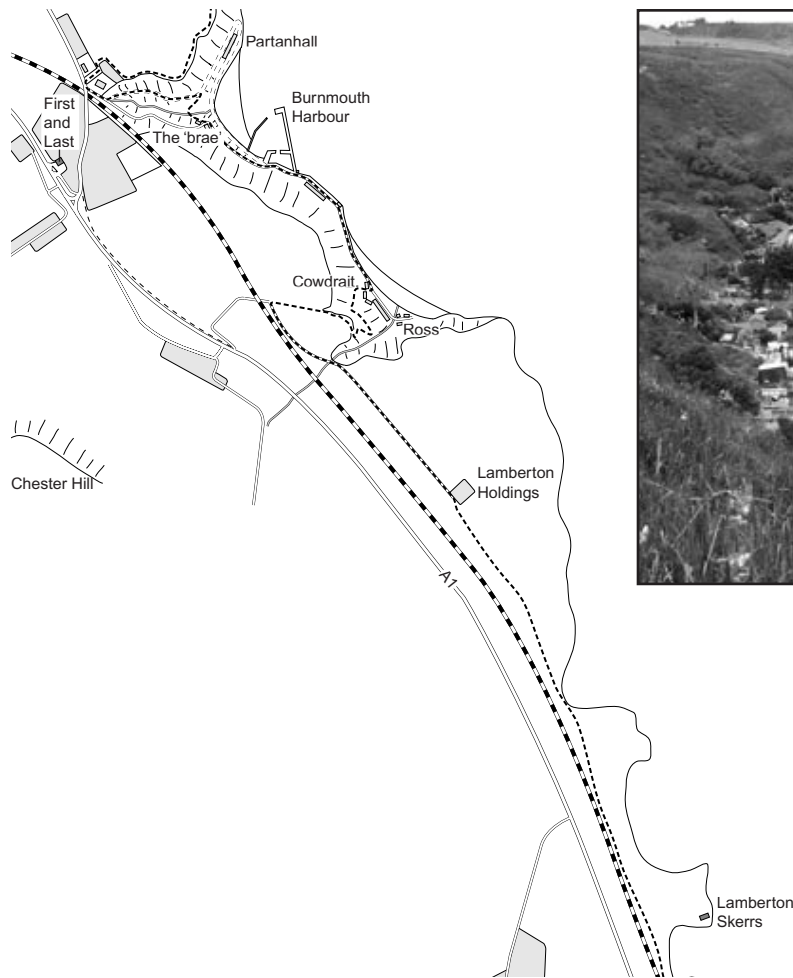
The path is pretty well waymarked. It's a fair mix of the strenuous and straightforward. Plenty of great views, lots of seabirds of all varieties, and, if it's blowing, a surfeit of fresh air! The path on this section heads north towards Marshall Meadows, another caravan park, and then to the border itself, with a distinctive stile to mark the crossing from England to Scotland. The caravan park have slightly diverted the line of the path, but it doesn't make any real difference.



The next section is quite strange, as much of it traverses the quite narrow path line between the coastal rocks above Lambertton Beach and the East Coast mainline railway. So, anticipate the 125s rushing noisily by you at some point. Alongside this path you'll get a good view down to the ruins of the old salmon fishery at Lambertton Skerres. And you'll also have lots of hardy sheep for company. Take care not to frighten them as there are big drops.



'Round Eyemouth



After the section in the railway cutting, the path exits onto a made up trackway to Lamberton Holdings and beyond. The fields open up to your right. The official path line is then along this track to just before the railway bridge where a stile takes you across the field edges and then down a zig-zag path to the fishing village of Lower Burnmouth (The view from the path is above).

Each small section of 'down the brae' has its own individual name, with Ross point at the southern end, then Cowdrait where the path comes down between residents' houses, and along the road to Burnmouth's quaint harbour, and finally to Partanhall.

There are two choices for getting up the very steep brae to Upper Burnmouth. There's the road which is the waymarked route up to the church, where the path links across to the alternative rough track up from the end of the fishing cottages of Partanhall, at the northern extreme of Burnmouth Bay. Once you've made the steep climb, sadly there's no shop anymore at Burnmouth, and only one pub, the First and Last, since the fire which demolished the Flemington Inn. Alan helped start the annual RNLi 'brae bike race' back in the late 1980s, which takes cyclists up the vertiginous brae from the harbour. There's also now a road running race. Buses are available north to Eyemouth and south to Berwick. Or, you may fancy the next stage of the coastal path to Eyemouth.



Alan in the first Burnmouth up the brae race