The Archbishop and the King

The ebb and flow of the tide and constantly shifting sands make a crossing of the Solway on foot a dangerous journey. It’s a rare skill knowing where the wath (taken from the Norse word ‘vath’ meaning ford or crossing) is at any one time. In 1300, Robert of Winchelsea, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was sent to stop the war that Edward 1 was waging on lowland Scotland (determined to incorporate Scotland into the English crown) with a letter from the Pope to be delivered in person. But Robert was to have a wasted journey. After crossing the four channels of the Bowness Wath in fear of his life, he found that Edward’s army was already turning for home.

Hadrian’s Wall
Burgh-by-Sands lies on the course of Hadrian’s Wall and the 12th century church of St Michael sits within the boundaries of the Roman fort. Army units originally raised in Germany, Holland and North Africa were stationed here.

Following the route
The route is highlighted on its own Ordnance Survey map (1:50,000 scale = 1 1/4 inches to 1 mile / 2 cm to 1 km). Where the route uses part of Hadrian’s Cycleway just follow the distinctive blue signs (with the number 72 and Roman helmet on), but otherwise you’ll need to read the map and numbered route directions. The ‘Key to map’ explains the symbols on the map and the abbreviations in the route directions. The general rule is to keep to the road you’re on unless otherwise directed. Please note all distances are approximate.

Key to route instructions
R Right
L Left
Jct Junction
SA Straight ahead/ across
X roads Crossroads
NCN 72 National Cycle Network route number
m Metres
km Kilometers
Scale 1:50,000

Finglandrigg Wood
& King Edward I monument
A 22 mile (35km) ride from Carlisle
Cycling from Carlisle

1. From the industrial estate turn R towards Burgh-by-Sands following blue Hadrian’s Cycleway signs.
2. Continue SA through Kirkandrews-on-Eden and then turn L at the X roads in Monkhill to pass the former windmill.
3. Turn L at the T-jct in the village then first R (signed Gt Orton). Bonnie Prince Charlie, a would-be King, stayed in Moorhouse on his first night in England en-route to Carlisle.
4. Turn R at the T-jct (or L to have a look at Great Orton with its pub).
5. Turn L (signed Flat) and then R at the next T-jct. Alternatively turn R for the shortcut via Thurstonfield and Longburgh to Burgh-by-Sands shown on the map.
6. Turn L into the village and L again of the main road (signed Easton).
7. Go past the Oughterby turn to soon turn R (Signed Easton) along a narrow lane. Turn L at the end and follow the road to a lay-by and the entrance to Finglandrigg Wood (cycle stands and picnic benches are near the entrance). Follow the waymarked paths to explore the wood.
8. Head L from the lay-by and take the first R turn (signed Easton).
9. Turn R after Easton to rejoin Hadrian’s Cycleway and head for Burgh-by-Sands on the dead straight road (and a section of Hadrian’s Wall Path National Trail). The raised ground on your R is the remains of the North British Railway that ran between Carlisle and the Victorian seaside resort of Silloth.
10. At the far end of the village, turn L at the X roads onto the ‘HCW Loop’.
11. After 0.75 miles (1.2km) turn off the road for the track leading down to the King Edward 1 monument. Cycle down the track (giving way to walkers) to the first stile, then walk across to the monument. Back at the road turn L and follow it all the way round to Beaumont and Kirkandrews-on-Eden.
12. Bear L and retrace your route back to Carlisle. Consider turning L at the next X roads for a short detour into Grinsdale village: push your bike along the footpath at the far end to find the tiny church of St Kentigern.

Finglandrigg Wood National Nature Reserve
This wood is vital to an impressive array of well known wildlife, as well as many less common species. At 97 hectares, it’s one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland on the Solway Plain, with woodland, peat bog, heath land and rough pasture all carefully managed though grazing, planting and coppicing. Red squirrel and the rare marsh fritillary butterfly can both be found.