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## 35 Glasson Moss

**Theme:** Climate and landscape change

### Location

35 Glasson Moss. Take the road into the caravan park and then the track to the viewing tower [NY 236 609].

### Description

Surrounding the Solway coast are some of the largest lowland raised bogs in England. Glasson Moss is one of these bogs.

Raised bogs, mosses or mires are areas of peat that started to develop after the last ice sheet melted away around 11,000 years ago. The bogs occupy poorly drained depressions and flat surfaces and are sustained by rainwater. Plants like sphagnum grow in these acid conditions. The vegetation progressively builds up to form raised mounds of peat which can reach several metres high. Bogs require permanently waterlogged conditions for their plants to thrive and accumulate and it is that lack of oxygen that inhibits the work of microscopic organisms, so the vegetation only partially decomposes.

At Glasson Moss the peat reaches thicknesses of over ten metres. It was once the site of extensive peat extraction, most of which went for horticulture. In recent years restoration projects are encouraging its recovery. It is now a nature reserve and boardwalks and a viewing tower mean you can appreciate the extent of the Moss and see the rich wildlife too.

Nearby are other mires, Wedholme Flow, Bowness, Drumburgh and Finglandrigg, and towards the border with Scotland, Solway Moss. In 1771, after a night of torrential rain, Solway Moss burst and covered 400 acres with 30 feet of peat and mud. It destroyed homes and left 35 families destitute. Bogs are fragile places and face many threats. Changes to water levels through agriculture, tree planting and worst, peat extraction, have had disastrous effects. But even activities such as grazing, burning, or our leisure pursuits, can damage them. Peat bogs are places where huge volumes of carbon are stored naturally; maintaining and restoring them helps in the fight against our overheating planet.

### Photographs

(Photo 35-1) 35 Looking south over Glasson Moss from the viewing tower.

(Photo 35-2) 35 Glasson Moss.



*(Photo 35-1) Looking south over Glasson Moss from the viewing tower.*



*(Photo 35-2) Glasson Moss.*