

Distance: 7km

Time: 4 hours at a leisurely pace

OS map: The English Lakes SE OL7 1:25,000

Meadow Life

Cumbria's hay meadow project

Bretherdale Hay Meadow Walk



After 300m go through a gate and keep following the track. Keep following the track downhill.

When the track meets the road, cross the road and take the bridleway straight ahead, signposted Greenholme. Follow this downhill and through three

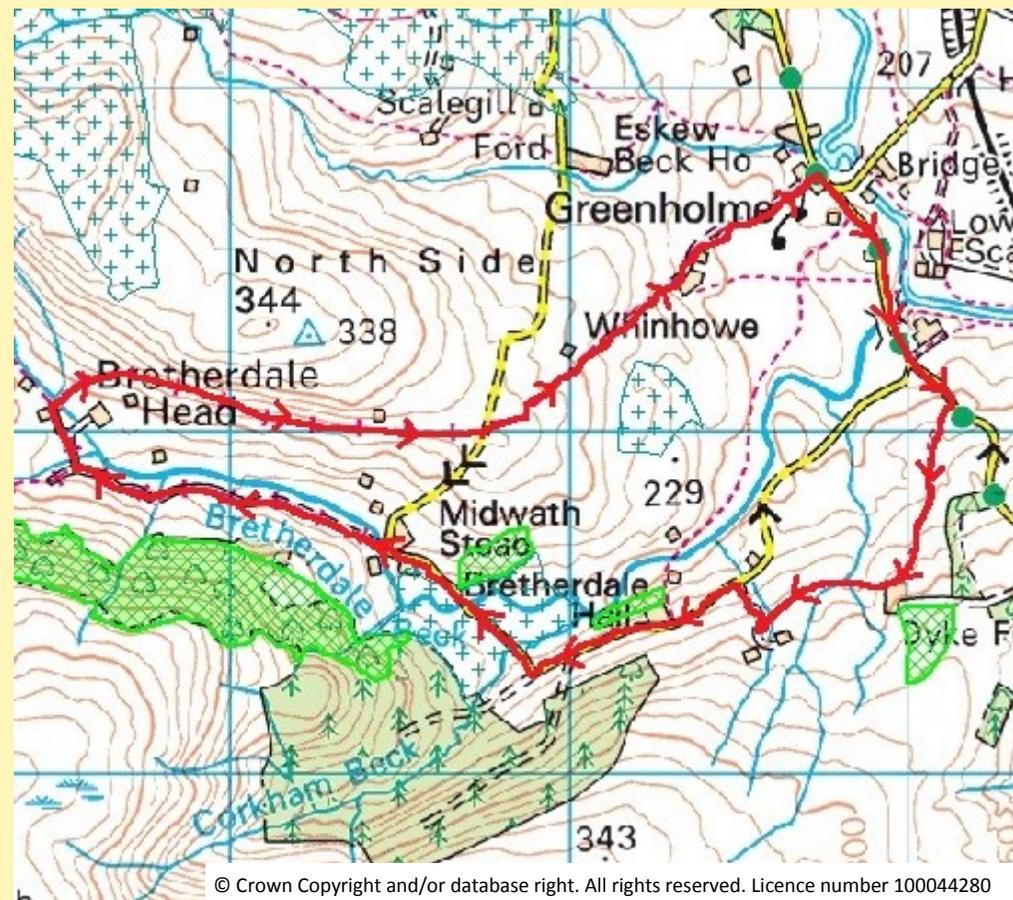
gates. You will pass a ruined barn on your right hand side. Pause here and look to your right to see Hollin Hill Grassland SSSI. Pass through a very rickety gate and head downhill to the empty farm at Low Whinghowe, keeping the fence and then ditch to your right. Go past the farm buildings and carry on down the track to the roadside back at Greenholme.

Clothing: Outdoor clothing, boots (map & compass in poor visibility)

Start OS Grid Ref: NY597057

Terrain: A lot of this route is on small country lanes. However there are some routes on footpaths with uneven terrain which may be muddy and wet in poor weather.

A beautiful walk in a little visited valley. A step back in time exploring hay meadows untouched by modern farming methods and retaining a large diversity of meadow species. Visit during the summer months if you wish to see the meadows in their full glory.



County Wildlife Sites



SSSI Sites

Park up in Greenholme outside the Old School house on the left hand side. This was founded in 1733 and used as a school and chapel for the village for over 200 years. With the school house on your right, head up the road. At the junction, carry on straight up the road towards Roundthwaite. Follow



View of Bretherdale valley

this for around 500m. Go past the turning for Bretherdale on the right hand side. A further 400m on you will see a footpath signposted to 'Dyke' on the right hand side. Take this and continue until you reach the farmyard at Dyke farm. Here turn right after the barn and go through the gate next to the farm house. Go across the field and cross the bridge and stile in the far left hand corner. Go left keeping the stream to your left and through a gate. Cross the next field and go through the gap in the far left hand corner and through the gate down to Bretherdale Foot. Turn

right down the track to the road junction. Here turn left and follow the road.

Bretherdale is commonly said to have had its name from three brothers who inhabited there some 200 years ago. But it actually had this name long before, deriving from the name Brere or Brier dale. You will see



Bretherdale Hall

Bretherdale Hall on the right hand side, now a luxury holiday cottage. Go straight on and you will see Bretherdale Hall meadow, immediately on your right hand side. Follow the road down the hill, around the right hand bend and across the stream.

Here on both sides of the road you will see Bretherdale Hall SSSI meadows. Cross a second stream. You will see a small track on the right hand side. Immediately after this on the right is Lowstead meadow. The geological formation in the valley is Silurian made up of Bannisdale Slates. Much of this is covered by calcareous rich glacial drift which enhances the botanical interest of



Bretherdale Hall Meadows- Emily Pinder

these meadows. Head through the farm buildings at Midwath Stead and follow the road around to the left at the junction, heading over the bridge. Follow this road for ½ km to

the head of the valley and around the right hand bend. On the small bridge here pause and look straight ahead to see three meadows under restoration as part of the Meadow Life project. Carry on past the derelict farm buildings.



Bridge at Bretherdale Head

Passing through a

small gate with a small ruined cottage on your right, you will see a footpath sign to Midwath Stead. Go right, over the small bridge, then turn left up and around through a second gate, with the wall to your right. Head uphill here and turn right, keeping the wall to your right, through a third gate. Follow this path uphill (beware it may be very wet on a rainy day!) You will see the valley opening up before you and you can see Bretherdale woods on the opposite side of the valley and the Howgills in the distance straight ahead. This ancient woodland birds support many species of birds, including cuckoo.



Ruins at Bretherdale Head

Distance: 10km

Time: 5-6 hours at a gentle pace with time to look around.

OS map: The English Lakes, NW Area OL4 1:25,000

Meadow Life

Cumbria's hay meadow project

Newlands Valley Hay Meadow Walk



View of Robinson from Bawd Hall

Head down the hill (not through the gate) with the stream and fence on your left, to the next gate and footbridge. You will see Keskadale Beck Grasslands to your left, an area of flushed marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland along the Keskadale Beck. 30m after the footbridge follow the zigzag path uphill, following the footpath signs, to a gap in the wall. Go left (not towards the stone barn on your right), and follow the path, keeping the stream and woodland on your left, to the footbridge.

Cross the field to the top corner and cross the footbridge. Walk up past Bawd Hall to the road and turn right. After a short distance you will pass a gate on the bend with a sign for the website for High Snab Farm; pause here to look through to the field beyond to see another example of a restored upland hay meadow. A little further on you can look back to your right to get a good view of High Snab farm and the restored meadows there.



Newlands chapel

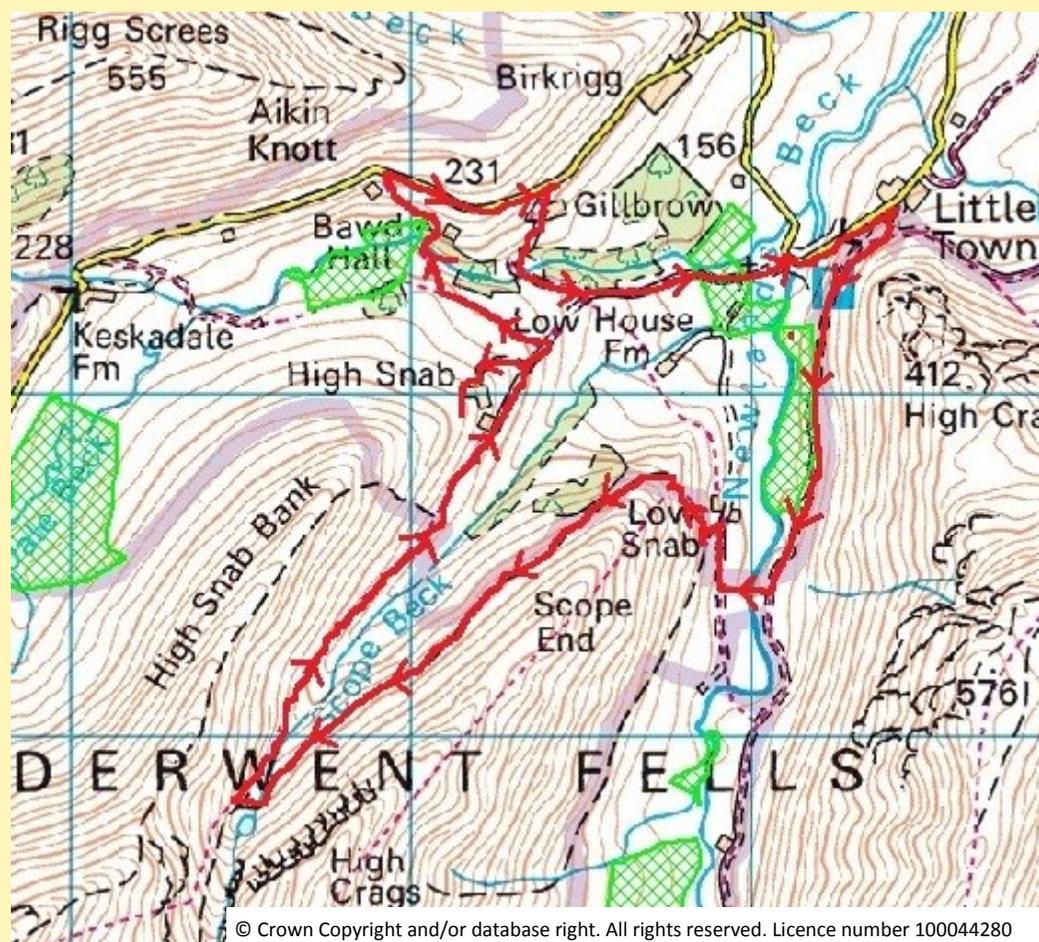
Continue on the road about 250m then follow the footpath sign and take the track to Gillbrow farm. Go through the farm buildings and bear right down a stony track to the footbridge across the river. Follow the track back to the road, turn left and head back to Little Town. You pass a small church on your left. The church was originally built in the sixteenth century, but fell into disrepair in the nineteenth century, being rebuilt and re-opened in 1885 and the restored again in 2000 as a place for quiet reflection; you are welcome to call in and look around if you wish. Little Town used to have its own school, built by the parishioners in 1877, and closed in 1967, as shown on the plaques outside the church. On either side of the chapel is Chapel Bridge

Clothing: outdoor clothing, boots (map and compass in poor visibility).

Start OS Grid Ref: NY242194

Terrain: This walk is mostly on small roads, rough farm tracks and good, signed, footpaths although the path up the dam is small and faint in places. There are short sections of the walk where it is rocky and awkward underfoot. After spells of wet weather parts of it will be muddy underfoot.

This walk takes in the three main valleys that make up the head of the Newlands valley. Isolated and unspoilt, this valley holds some of West Cumbria's most lovely hay meadows, set against the backdrop of rugged Lakeland landscape. The best time to see the meadow is from June to mid-July when the wildflowers will be out.



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County Wildlife Sites

Alfred Wainwright, whose guide books to the Lakeland Fells have become classics, loved the peacefulness and unchanging nature of this valley. Park at Chapel Bridge, Little Town, as shown on the map, where there is room for half a dozen cars (£3 charge in the honesty box).

Walk up the hill towards Little Town and just before the top take a path on the right, go over the stile and follow this path to join the track. Go right along the track, keeping the wall on your right. You will see on your right hand side Chapel Bridge Meadows SSSI, some of the best examples of northern hay meadow found in West Cumbria. A little further along the valley as Low snab Farm comes into view, you pass Low Snab Meadows, another excellent example of Cumbrian upland hay meadows.

After about 1km when the wall ends, follow the footpath signed to the right, across the footbridge. There is an old bench beside the bridge where you can sit and view the Goldscope mine workings. This mine operated from the 1500s to the 1650s, then intermittently until the end of the 19th century. The mine worked a copper ore vein, in places 3m thick, but also ran onto a lead vein, and in its time produced some silver and a few traces of gold as well. The miners were mainly German, brought over by the during the reign of Elizabeth I for their mining skills. The site probably gets its name from the German miners' description, Gottesgab or 'God's Gift'.



Bench at Goldscope mine

Cross the bridge and follow the path 30m uphill and then right onto the track to Low Snab farm. At the farm gate follow the footpath uphill, signed to Hindscarth. (There is short cut here if you follow the permitted path to Newlands church, although this will miss out a large



Newlands Dam

part of the walk.) Continue on the track to Hindscarth, with the fence on your right, past the holly tree. As you go uphill and around the knoll you will have views of the valley with Robinson on your right hand side at the far end. Keep following the track, with the woodland to your right. At the end of the woodland, don't go down towards the field and stream, but go straight on up the valley, with the wall on your right. At the end of the wall you have a choice between climbing 100m uphill to meet the larger path, or continuing on the smaller lower path, both of which lead the same way up the valley. You will

pass more evidence of mining as you walk past spoil heaps and note the shafts and levels marked on the map. Continue for 1km until at the head of the valley you reach two

footbridges and a path across the dam and small reservoir, a perfect spot for a picnic on a sunny day.

On a glorious day you may wish to follow the path you can see going from the dam steeply uphill to a ridge, where you would turn right and follow the path along High Snab Bank. If you take this route, then at the end of the marked path drop down the slope to the wall bounding some restored hay meadows and walk along it until you reach the farmhouse, coming back down the drive to meet the road.

For the easier route, cross the dam, bear right up a short slope to the track which you will follow back down the other side of the beck (about 1km). The track is wide, but can be slippery in places if the weather has been wet. There are fine views back to Keswick with Blencathra in the distance. On your left is a large area of gorse growing on the shallow soil below High Snab Bank. Go through a gate and past Low High Snab and then join the road. You will see on your left High Snab Farm, a traditional seventeenth century working fell farm, owned by the National Trust and offering Quality Holiday



View back down Newlands Valley

Accommodation. There are two meadows on this farm that are under restoration, a very exciting project which will add interest and further conservation value to this valley. If you wish here the farmer has given permission to walk up the drive and follow the path behind the house for 200m until you come to the two meadows at High Snab currently under restoration.

Continue down the road for 50m and take the footpath to Keskadale over the stile on the left. Head across the field, keeping the ditch on your left. Cross two more fields, going through two more gates. Then follow the path keeping the new fence on your left, with old hawthorn trees on your right. At the corner, look across at the views to Keskadale Farm and Birkrigg and Keskadale Woods SSSI on the steep slopes of Ard Crag above. These are remnants of an ancient oak woodland, where the trees are weirdly stunted and contorted by growing in the harsh climate here.



Tony Frankowski



Frank Chalmers



Tony Frankowski



Frank Chalmers

For further information, please contact the Meadow Life project at: Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Plumgarths, Crook Road, Kendal LA8 8LX, T 01539 816300
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Distance: 7.5km

Time: 4-4.5 hours at a gentle pace with time to look around.

OS map: Howgill Fells and Upper Eden Valley OL19 1:25,000

Meadow Life

Cumbria's hay meadow project

Potts Valley Meadow Walk



This line of poles will guide you to Little Asby, but you might instead go left up on to the higher ground via the cairn to gain panoramic views of the Lakeland Fells and the Pennines. Walk along the grassy track, keeping the poles on your right. As the electricity line crosses the wall, turn right on the grassy track and follow this around to the left down into the hamlet of Little Asby. If you wish to gain a sense of the ancient history of the area, then take the track from Mazonwath but walk under the poles towards a rough cairn or tumulus, a scheduled ancient monument speculated to be a Bronze Age burial site. Then retrace your steps to the poles and on up the hill to the modern cairn at the top.

The name Asby derives from the Norse words for 'askr' and 'by' meaning a farmstead or village where the ash trees grow. In Little Asby you will see on your right the renovated chapel of St Leonard's. A medieval chapel dedicated to St Leonard built on nearby land has been dated at 1298, but only the foundations now remain, indicating a rectangular building of about 14 x 7m. Go past the caravan park entrance on the right (there is a small shop here selling ice cream) taking you back to your starting point.

Wildlife to watch out for:

Curlew, lapwing, snipe, wheatear and skylark are common on the upland fell.

As well as the many hay meadow species to be encountered on your walk, also look out for the wonderful expanses of

birds-eye primroses alongside the road by Sunbiggin Tarn and along Potts Beck.



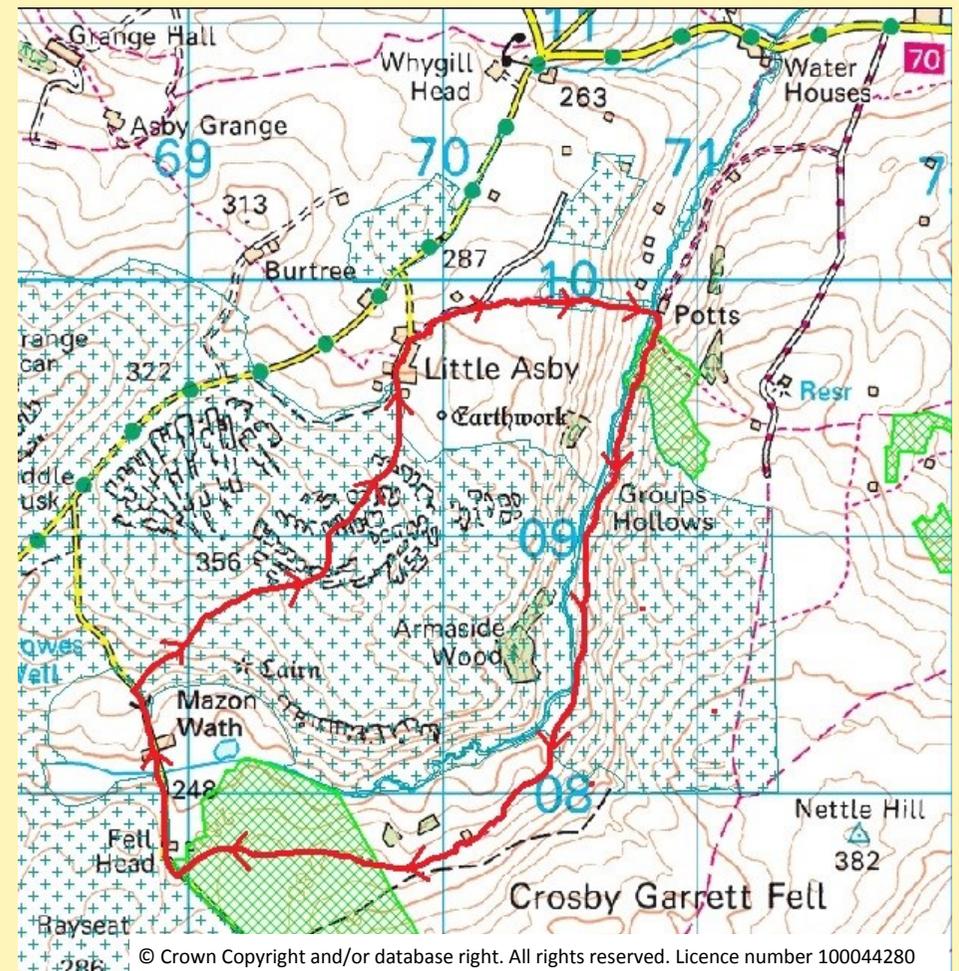
Photo: Birds Eye Primrose by Claire Gilham

Clothing: outdoor clothing, boots (map and compass in poor visibility).

Start OS Grid Ref: NY699098

Terrain: Terrain is across the fells and can be rough in places, undulating with a height gain of around 100m in total.

This is a stunning walk taking in the little visited valley of Potts and the beautiful wild landscape and views around Little Asby and Asby Scar. It is a mixture of valley, open fell and farmland, taking in some high quality hay meadows along the way.



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County Wildlife Sites



SSSI Sites

This is a fascinating walk taking in some beautiful scenery and hay meadow landscapes. The many archaeological remains in the area show how it has been intensively settled and farmed for thousands of years, for example Castle Folds on Great Asby Scar, a Romano-British defended stone-walled enclosure. Little Asby Common has a wealth of archeological remains, demonstrating the continued use of this upland area from prehistoric times onwards.

Start in Little Asby, parking on the left hand side just before the caravan park entrance. Be aware there is only parking for a couple of cars here. Take the track immediately on your right, signposted Potts.

Follow the footpath uphill, where it is bordered by a wall each side. Continue past a barn on the left hand side, stopping to look at the views over to the Pennines, to a footpath sign to Potts on the right. Go past this for now and down to the next gate on the left, where you will be able to look through to see 2 meadows under restoration with the Meadow Life project. Continue a little further down the track to the next gate on your right. From here all the way to the end of the track on the right hand side over the wall are Town End Meadows SSSI.



Photo: Potts Farm by Claire Gilham

Return back up the track and follow the footpath down Potts. Go over the stone stile, cross the field and take the next stile in the left hand corner. Cross the second field. To your left here over the wall are a further two meadows under restoration with the Meadow Life project.

Pass through a small wooden gate over a stone stile at the bottom of the field and descend through the last field to cross the stile at the bottom. Cross the small bridge and you will see the buildings of Potts Farm, abandoned over 50 years ago.

Cross the bridge and take the path to the left of the beck, following it upstream. Potts Beck is part of the River Eden and Tributaries SSSI for its wide range of species, including the native white-clawed crayfish, a species characteristic of calcareous streams with high water quality.

Up on your left up here for the next 500m or so is Potts Beck Pasture CWS.

Continue through the two gates of the sheepfold, where you enter Sunbiggin Tarn and Little Asby Scar SSSI. Continue up the valley for about 1km, past some small crags and then a small woodland on the right hand side, continuing to a metal gate. Go through this, being



Photo: Potts Beck by Claire Gilham

careful of the electric fence, and follow the track uphill towards the barn on the skyline. Down on the left you will now see the springs that are the source of Potts Beck. At the barn pause for a moment to look across to Little Asby Scar to the right and down the valley to the buildings and stables at Mazonwath. The name 'Wath' comes from the Viking word for

'ford', but only a small stream and wet valley exist now. Don't head towards these, but follow the wall around past the lone tree and keep your height to reach the track which takes you down to Fell Head House.

Turn right and follow the road past Mazonwath farm. Immediately after you go past the farm buildings, look right to see meadows under restoration with the Meadow Life project. Continue uphill over the cattle grid onto Little Asby Common, owned and managed by Friends of the Lake District.

As you climb uphill, you will see Sunbiggin Tarn down on your left hand side.

From Mazonwath, take the track 100m after the cattle grid on the right hand side, follow the wall round then head uphill to the electricity poles you can see on the skyline.



Photo: View of Sunbiggin Tarn by Claire Gilham

Distance: Red Route: 6.5 miles (10.5km) 270m height gain. The walk can be shortened by taking one of the two shortcuts back to Ravenstonedale as indicated by the blue routes.

Time: 4-4.5 hours at a gentle pace with time to look around.

OS map: Howgill Fells and Upper Eden Valley OL19 1:25,000

Meadow Life

Cumbria's hay meadow project

Ravenstonedale Hay Meadow Walk



Wildlife to watch out for...

- Snipe - between Kilnmire and Wyegarh
- Curlew - numbers seen towards Paradise
- Skylark - widespread on fell
- Fell ponies - Harter Fell
- Raven - at Thornthwaite
- Red squirrels - The Green and Artlegarth Lodges
- Wheatear - walls and fells
- Lapwing - widespread on fell
- Green plover - stream above Thornthwaite
- Coot - Paradise
- Canada goose - Crossbank.
- Heron - Crossbank



Clothing: outdoor clothing, boots (map and compass in poor visibility).

Start OS Grid Ref: NY 723 040 The Black Swan, Ravenstonedale

Parking: Beside the school as you enter the village.

Local Services: Kirkby Stephen. There is a hide at the Fat Lamb Hotel which is open to the general public, free of charge. The hotel is open all day for food and drink should you wish to take a break.

Terrain: (Ascents/descents on open fell, stiles) This walk is mostly on small roads, rough farm tracks and good, signed, footpaths although at one point it crosses the open fell (no path or markings on the ground). After spells of wet weather parts of it will be muddy underfoot.

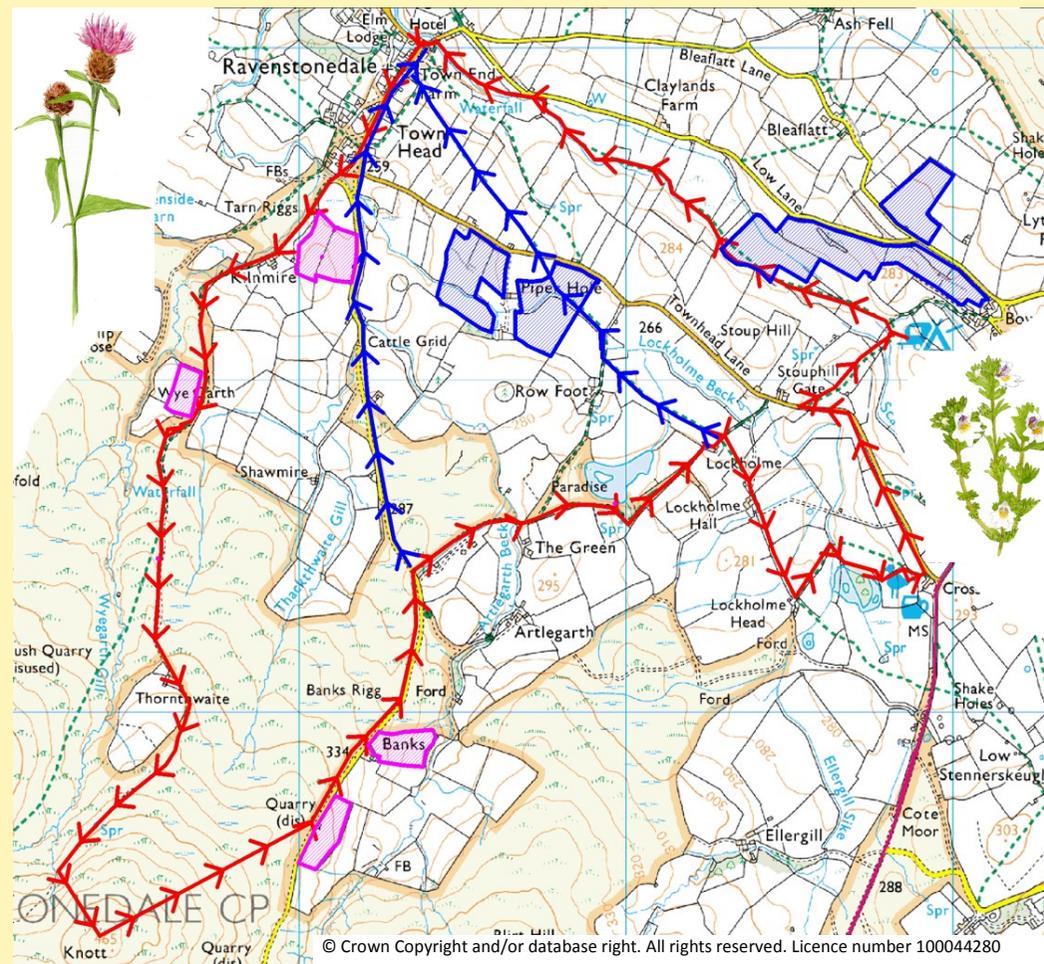
Shortcuts - There are two shortcuts available marked blue on the map

Either follow the minor road back to Ravenstonedale, or from Lockholme cross the wall on your left and

follow the public footpath through Piper Hole (an SSSI hay meadow) to the village.



This wonderful varied walk weaves its way through the meadows and fell adjacent to the village. It links a number of beautiful hay meadows, there is wildlife. Interest on this walk at all times of the year and the views are spectacular. The best time to see the meadows is from June to mid-July when the wildflowers will be out.



From the school head into the village, after about 50m you come to the Black Swan, follow the road round and continue up the hill to the end of the village.

Where the Sedbergh road bends round to the left, stay right and cross the beck on the old road (now a pedestrian bridge) and follow the footpath signed 'Green Bell'. The footpath runs alongside a small stream and there is a flower rich hay meadow on our left shortly before you reach Kiln mire farm. Walk past the farm, follow the track through the gate and up the hill to a barn and meadow on your right, the second traditional hay meadow, Wye Garth. Follow the track uphill heading towards the conspicuous Thornthwaite Barn. Once you reach the barn, which you leave to your right, the track deteriorates but continue to follow the wall to the top of the enclosure. At the end of the enclosure the path becomes more obvious again and you follow it in the same direction.

The path contours around the right of Knott until it is crossed by a deeply incised stream. Here turn to your left and head steeply up the slope (bearing 135°). The summit of Knott is quite rounded with a small stone cairn and spectacular views of the Howgills to the north and Mallerstang Edge to the east. From the summit head diagonally down to the road (bearing 80°) towards a ruined barn next to the road. This barn is in the next flowery hay meadow so you can take advantage of the aerial view as you descend down to the road. At the road turn left towards Ravenstonedale. You will pass a hay meadow with a barn on the right hand side of the road.

After the entrance to Artlegarth Country Lodges Turn right on the public footpath down the farm Track towards 'The Green', (footpath signed to Stouphill Gate). At The Green turn left and go through a gate and follow the wall towards a small tarn. Continue past the tarn and then up between two walls to a wooden gate and down the track to Lockholme farm. At the farm go through the gate into the farm yard

and turn right between the buildings. Immediately after the farm a footpath crosses the track and you can take a short cut back to Ravenstonedale. For the full route cross the wall on your right and follow the footpath across the field towards a Metal gate. Take the track with Lockholme Hall on the right and continue through the gate, across a small stream to a stile and gate. Continue into a large sloping field. You are aiming for the bottom LEFT hand corner of this field but don't go there directly as there is a large ditch to cross. Instead follow the wall on the right towards the farm and then turn left and walk along the bottom edge of the field to the gate in the far corner. Go through this gate and turn right to follow the permissive path beside the Crossbank Nature Reserve to another gate. Go through this into a hay meadow and follow the edge of the field up hill to the gate behind the hide. The hide belongs to The Fat Lamb Hotel and is open to the public free of charge and makes a good spot for lunch. Make your way through the hotel garden onto the road and turn left.

Follow this downhill for about half a mile and just after a left hand bend turn right, through a stile Signposted to Bowber Head and Ravenstonedale. Cross the field, go over the stile and keep the wall on your right to the corner. Go through the gate and down the slope to the bridge over Scandal Beck. Cross over a second footbridge and pass to the left of the barn. Cross the beck on the stone slabs and over the wall stile. Go straight ahead with the wall on your left and then turn left over a wooden footbridge and through a gated stile. Cross this field diagonally to a gated stile beneath a tree.

The remainder of the route follows Scandal Beck through the meadows. The path is well signed and crosses a number of walls and passes through a large hay meadow (SSSI) eventually reaching a tree lined lane. Turn right here across the bridge and then left on the road. After about 50m, take the Footpath through a gate on the left hand side of the wood, signposted to Ravenstonedale. Follow the stream back to the village.

The Howgill Fells

'Howgill' comes from Old Norse; 'haugr' meaning hill and 'gil' meaning valley. These distinctive hills are formed from an outcrop of Ordovician and Silurian slates and grit-stones which date back over 400 Million years. The rocks are resistant to erosion which gives rise to the smooth, rounded shape so characteristic of these fells. Alfred Wainwright summed it up beautifully when he referred to the Howgills as 'slumbering elephants'. The Howgills are largely unenclosed fell land. Dry stone walls – normally typical in Cumbria and Yorkshire – are absent here, adding to the sense of wildness and openness. The land is grazed by sheep and a handful of semi-feral fell ponies.

Wye Garth – a 'field house'

A 'field house' is a stone barn built into the wall surrounding a hay meadow – the barn at Wye Garth, Kiln mire is a lovely example. This particular barn dates back to the 18th century. Field houses were used for the storage of hay and the over-wintering of cattle. They were typically split into two floors; cattle were housed in stalls on the lower floor and were fed with hay stored above in the hay loft. The muck was spread on the hay meadows to feed the next crop of hay. The siting of the barn meant that heavy hay and muck never had to be carried very far from where they were needed.

It was the job of John Pratt Snr (the father of John Pratt who now farms Kiln mire) to look after the beasts in nine different field houses around Semer Water, North Yorkshire in the 1940s. Every day throughout the winter, in every kind of weather, he had to walk to each barn to feed, water and muck out the beasts. You will see several field houses on this walk. Some in their third century of use as storage for winter fodder.



Kiln mire and other hay meadows

A hay meadow is an area of grassland used to produce winter fodder. Meadows on land where little fertiliser is used, and the hay cut is late, are often rich in wild flowers, which can be enjoyed once the fields have been 'shut-up' for hay through the summer. The wild grasses and flowers have a chance to 'set' and drop their seed before the meadow is cut in late summer to supply hay. The field might then be used for grazing stock over the winter. There are several types of hay meadow in the UK, distinguished by their plant communities, brought about from variations in soil and climate. These include upland (or Northern) hay meadows, lowland meadows and floodplain meadows. All types of flower rich hay meadows support a diverse range of wildlife including invertebrates, birds and mammals and are now recognised as important habitats in terms of conservation. Agri-environment schemes now encourage farmers to create and manage flower filled hay meadows appropriately. Hay meadows on this walk include high quality grasslands at Bowber Head and Piper Hole SSSI, and County Wildlife Sites at Kiln mire and Banks.

Distance: Red Route: 3 miles (5km) 160m height gain.

Walk terrain: good track, woodland, rough paths, forest tracks, stiles, meadows and roads.

Time: 2 hours at a gentle pace with time to look around.

OS map The English Lakes SE OL7 1:25,000

Meadow Life

Cumbria's hay meadow project

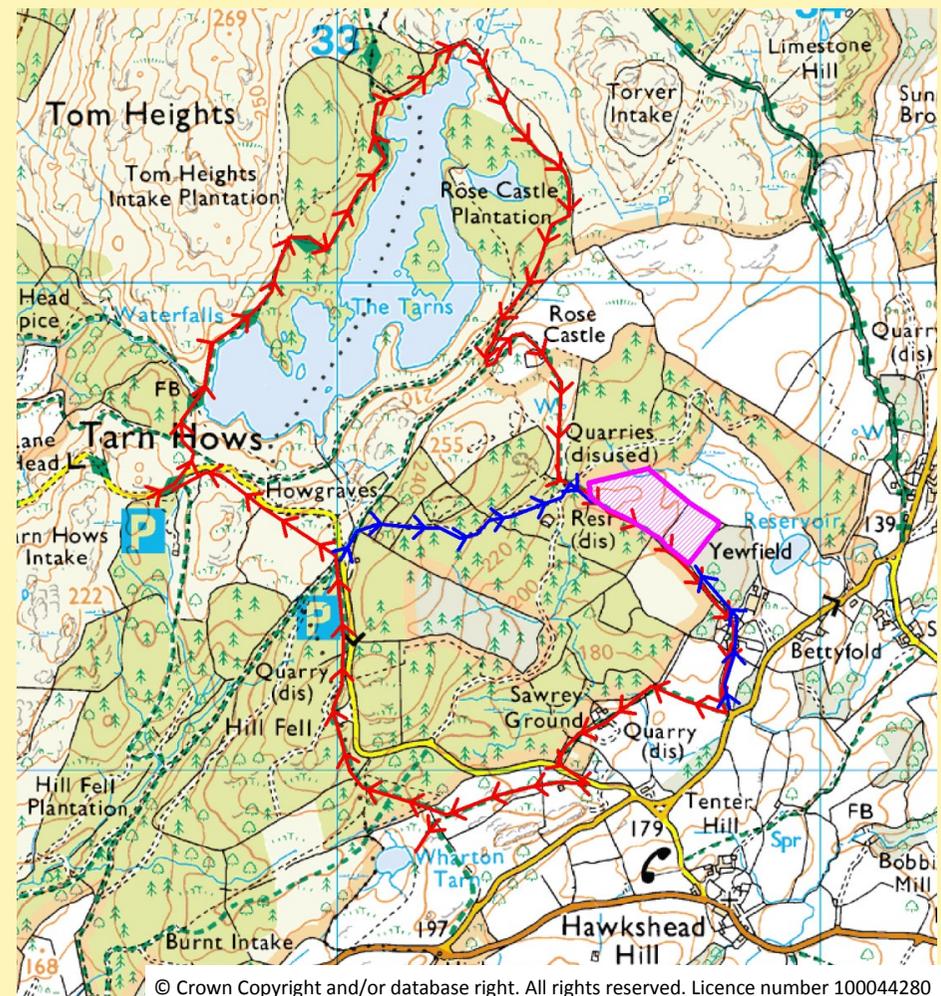
Tarn Howes and Yewfield Hay Meadow Walk



Start at the car park at Tarn Howes (SD 327 996). Leave the car park and cross the road to join a well constructed track. This track is the start of the circular walk around Tarn Howes. Follow the main track which takes you round the west side of the tarn. The track forks allowing an optional diversion to Arnside Tarn. This route, however, takes the right fork (signed Hawkshead) and continues round the north end of the Tarn. There are often a lot of waterfowl here. Just before you leave the woodland you will come to a track junction. This is the point where the route leaves the Tarn Howes circular track. Go through the kissing gate on the left, signed 'Hawkshead, old car park' and follow the track uphill to a second junction. Turn left here and walk up to Rose Castle. At the cottage the track degenerates in to a footpath which you follow round the house on the left and then across the field and eventually down a narrow strip of field to a kissing gate onto a forest road. Take the track directly opposite you heading towards a gate in the wall at the edge of the wood. Go through the gate and follow the path down the edge of the hay meadow and follow it through a gate to a track between two walls. (The second hay meadow is on your left). Follow this track to Yewfield, through The buildings and down the drive to the road. (It is possible to make a short detour here by turning left and walking the short

distance down the road to Betty Fold Gallery and Tea Shop). At the end of the driveway go through the gate on your right (before you reach the road) and cross a field (no obvious path) heading towards a pair of very tall Scots pine trees. Immediately behind the trees cross the stile and walk up between two fences towards a white house, Sawrey Ground Guest House, and a Distinctive lamp post! Cross the stile and continue up the driveway to the road. At the road turn left and walk downhill a little way to a metal gate on the left and a kissing gate on the right. Go through the kissing gate (signed Tarn Howes) and follow the main footpath up hill and away from the road. After another kissing gate you walk diagonally across a field to a crossing point into the woods, signed 'Tarn Howes' Follow this path over a stream and then uphill keeping the deer fence on your right. The rough path winds through the mixed woodland past a small quarry on your right and finally parallel to the road at a kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate onto the road and then you have a choice of routes to take you back to the car park. You can turn immediately left, through a gate, into the field and follow the path all the way to the car park or find your own route by joining one of the paths on the right side of the road closer to the Tarn.

A lovely walk with spectacular views at any time of the year. The hay meadows will be at their best in June and July - the footpath runs along the edge of one of them. Tarn Howes is an easily accessible, beautiful tarn set amongst County Wildlife Site Meadows thick woodland.



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County Wildlife Site Meadows

Tarn Hows

Yewfield hay meadows are a stone's throw away from Tarn Hows - a picturesque and accessible beauty spot at the north end of Coniston Water. The tarn is set in a spectacular landscape – a landscape that has been carved out by nature and shaped by people. The rugged Fells to the north and west of Tarn Hows (Bowfell and the Langdales) are the remains of an ancient volcano that was active 450 million years ago while the rolling hills and contours to the south and east are younger marine sedimentary rocks. Tarn Hows lies on the unctioin between these two groups and has major fault lines running close by. The beautiful tarn was created by merging three natural waterbodies in the late 1800s by James Garth Marshall, a wealthy industrialist. The estate was bought in 1930 by a Mrs Heelis (better known as Beatrix Potter), who eventually gifted it to the National Trust. The tarn is fed At its northern end by a series of valley and basin mires and is drained by Tom Gill which cascades down several small waterfalls.



What is a hay meadow?

A hay meadow is an area of grassland used to produce winter fodder. Meadows on land where little fertiliser is used, and the hay cut is late, are often rich in wild flowers, which can be enjoyed once the fields have been 'shut-up' for hay through the summer. The wild grasses and flowers have a chance to 'set' and drop their seed before the meadow is cut in late summer to supply hay. The field might then be used for grazing stock over the winter. All types of flower rich hay meadows support a diverse range of wildlife including invertebrates, birds and mammals and are now recognized as important habitats in terms of conservation.



Wildlife to watch out for...

Red squirrel	Heron
Roe deer	Hare
Great spotted woodpecker	Buzzard
Nuthatch	Raven
Dipper	



Yewfield hay meadows

The two meadows at Yewfield are privately owned and are part of a small but very diverse holding – a Lake District in miniature'. In an area of less than 10ha this incorporates a diverse wetland and beck, a small deep tarn, rocky outcrops and scrub, steep oak gorge woodland and two species-rich hay meadows. The meadows are quite unusual in that they are horse grazed (two Fell ponies), which as they are selective grazers favouring grasses, allows many wild flowers to flourish. The meadows are also shut off earlier than most in Cumbria (early April) and cut much later (early August) giving plants a chance to set and drop seed. Both meadows are species rich - the smaller southern meadow is quite damp and features short sedge lawns and lower lying areas dominated by rushes, while the larger field has rocky outcrops and a close cropped sward with very high cover of wild flowers (80-90%). Easily seen wild flowers in both include black knapweed, pignut, eyebright, common cat's ear, autumn hawkbit and yellow rattle.



View over Tarn Howes

Clothing: outdoor clothing, boots (map and compass in poor visibility).

Start OS Grid Ref: OS OL 7 1:25 000 The English Lakes (SE) SD 327 996

Parking: National Trust Car Park Tarn Hows. Toilets and Interpretive Centre.

Local Services: Betty Fold Tea Shop & Gallery en-route (open Friday – Monday), Coniston and Hawkshead

Terrain: Rough tracks and smaller footpaths with some steeper hills. Navigation is straight-forward.

It is possible to access the hay meadows directly by following either of the Blue routes.

Distance: Red Route: 7 miles (11.4km) 556m height gain.

Walk terrain: fell paths, open fell, woodland and stiles. Churchyard meadow is wheelchair accessible

Time: 5-6 hours at a gentle pace with time to look around.

OS map: The English Lakes NE OL5 1:25,000

Meadow Life

Cumbria's hay meadow project

Watermillock Hay Meadow Walk



Aira Force

The trees of the Aira Force arboretum cast a shadow over those who follow the Aira

Beck up to the Aira Force and High Force waterfalls. We are reminded of Wordsworth's poem, *The Sonambulist.*, and his description:

... how softly then

Doth Aira-force, that torrent hoarse,

Speak from the woody glen!

Fit music for a solemn vale!

This poem tells the legend of Lady Emma and the knight Sir Eglamore. Lady Emma used to live in Lyulph's Tower in Gowbarrow Park. When Sir Eglamore was away, Lady Emma would often walk in her sleep at night around the park. She would sometimes sleepwalk as far away as Aira Force.

One night, after a long absence, Sir Eglamore returned and came across Lady Emma sleeping at the top of the waterfall. He reached out to touch her. As she woke, the shock of seeing him appear in front of her so unexpectedly, made her fall backwards, down the 66 feet of the waterfall. She did not survive the fall. Unable to forgive himself, Sir Eglamore spent the rest of his days living in a small dwelling near the spot at which Lady Emma had died. There are those who believe that the ghosts of Sir Eglamore and Lady Emma still haunt this vale.

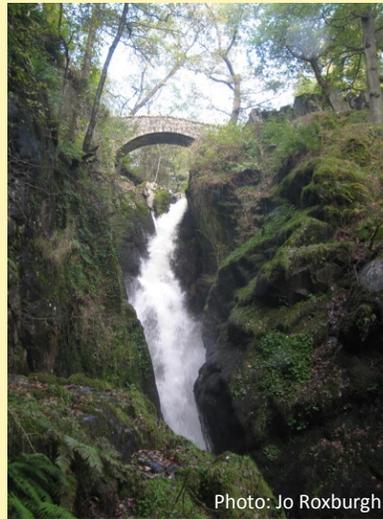


Photo: Jo Roxburgh

This is a very varied walk with spectacular views of Ullswater. The route starts at a wonderful meadow in Watermillock churchyard and then goes through a mixture of open fell and both ancient and planted woodland before descending into the Aira Force arboretum. The return via the summit of Gowbarrow Fell has 360° views of the Northern Lakes and Pennines. The best time to see the meadow is from June to mid-July when the wildflowers will be out.



Photo: Christine Davison

Clothing: outdoor clothing, boots (map and compass in poor visibility).

Start OS Grid Ref: NY 432 230 Watermillock Church

Parking: There is good parking beside the churchyard either on the main road or at the Dedicated parking at the start of the track to Kirkwall House

Local Services: Patterdale on the side of Ullswater has a small shop and several cafés. The closest town is Penrith.

Terrain: There is a significant amount of height gain on this walk and although the footpath is always easy to follow there are short sections where it is rocky and awkward underfoot. There are two obvious shorter routes, direct to the viewpoint and back 5 miles (8km) 321m height gain, or the direct route to the summit of Gowbarrow Fell 4 miles (6.6km) 320m height gain.



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The walk starts at the churchyard by Watermillock church (a wonderful example of a churchyard managed for wildlife). From the church walk north up the road for 450m. Go through the gate on the left clearly signed to Gowbarrow Fell and Aira Force. This is a good path and you follow it as it undulates round the hill on your right and then as it rises up out of the valley. Pass through a gate and over a stile trending slightly rightwards to the top of a large conifer plantation. Cross another stile and leaving the plantation on your left and the steep deciduous woodland on your right, follow the path through the wood until you reach a stile and footbridge and then almost immediately the boundary wall of Gowbarrow Fell. Go through the gate onto the open fell and take the path on the left which heads towards a little ruin and then contours round the hill to a spectacular viewpoint over Ullswater. There is a large cairn here and slightly further on a memorial stone seat (marked on the map) The path then passes behind Lyulph's Tower, a hunting lodge which was designed to look like a grand castle from the lake, and then descends towards the edge of the woodland. At the path junction take the left fork through the small wooden gate and into the wood. The path heads downhill here, beside a fence, for a short distance to the main Aira Force footpath and a beautiful very large Douglas fir tree. Turn right and follow this excellent path

upstream through the knarly old trees of the Aira Force arboretum to the waterfall itself. From the small, pretty, bridge at the Waterfall backtrack for a few metres and then climb the steps (98!) up to the higher bridge. At the second bridge you can choose which river bank you follow. Stay on the same side for a boulder strewn rocky track or cross over for easier going. Go upstream to a third bridge shortly after which the tracks converge and then the right of way continues uphill to a wall. Walk through the wall, signed to Dockray, and Then after a short distance through a small gate and back onto the open fell. Follow the Track through a couple of fields to where the path becomes a track and starts to descend to a farm. Do not descend to the farm but turn right before the wall and head up hill towards a wooden gate and a small stand of conifers. This path is currently being improved as part of the Fix The Fells Project and takes you steadily uphill, beside the wall, to the summit cairn of Gowbarrow Fell. There is a great view from the top of Place Fell to the south, the Hellvelyn range to the south west, Blencathra and Bannerdale to the North West and the Pennines to the north east. From the summit head northwest following the rather worn path down the ridge to reach flatter ground and another section of constructed path. Continue gently down hill to the gate to retrace your steps through the wood to the start.

Watermillock & other hay meadows

A hay meadow is an area of grassland used to produce winter fodder. Meadows on land where little fertiliser is used, and the hay cut is late, are often rich in wild flowers, which can be enjoyed once the fields have been 'shut-up' for hay through the summer. The wild grasses and flowers have a chance to 'set' and drop their seed before the meadow is cut in late summer to supply hay. The field might then be used for grazing stock over the winter. This walk starts in the meadowland of Watermillock churchyard which is rich in wild flowers, a testament to the careful management it has received over nearly half a century. Originally the whole churchyard was cut for hay with a small Ferguson tractor and cutter bar, yielding 30 small bales. Modern machinery is too large to use in the churchyard so other ways had to be devised to manage the area. Tommy Coulthard has managed the churchyard for 48 years, cutting paths through the sward in the oldest part of the churchyard in different routes each year. This allows grasses and wildflowers to grow and set seed before the whole area is cut in autumn with a brush cutter, and the swath removed. It is one of the nicest churchyards in Cumbria and well worth a visit in high summer to see the orchids and other wild flowers. The inscription on the tombstone of Robert Dowthaite (buried June 1740) rings true today: Walk softly by and cast an eye Holy grass on me doth grow, Be sure my friend, they time will end,

Like me thou must lie low.

Nestled between fells, woodland and majestic mountains, this lake of rich grassland echoes the lake of Ullswater which lies at the bottom of the valley.



Photo: Simon Harlow

Gowbarrow Park

Gowbarrow Fell is the highest point of Gowbarrow Park. This medieval red deer hunting park consists of heather and boggy ground interspersed with craggy rocks. At the base of the park, a woodland area lies between the fell and the lake. This provides a wonderful foreground which shows Ullswater at its best. The views from the Memorial Seat are particularly spectacular. It was as he walked through Gowbarrow Park with his sister on 15th April, 1802, that Wordsworth was inspired to write his most famous poem *Daffodils*. As you follow in Dorothy and William's footsteps, this walk will take you "Beside the lake, beneath the trees." Like them, you will find yourself looking onto the waters of Ullswater and watching the "sparkling waves" dancing in the breeze.