12 You will come to a more open area with smaller trees growing among larger ones. This area demonstrates 'continuous cover' management. These are some of our current stock of Norway, Noble and Lodgepole Christmas trees. This area has many springs and after periods of heavy rain it will be very soggy underfoot. Look out for bubbling springs that really do bubble.

Over to your left are recently pollarded ash trees, cut to allow regrowth above the reach of browsing animals. This follows a centuries old farming tradition.



### **FARM MANAGEMENT**

Low Bridge End Farm has a very cherished habitat and this has been recognised by being accepted as part of the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. In this we agree to manage the fields and surrounding environment in certain ways, for example some fields we have to mow and where possible make small bales of hay. We have livestock exclusion pockets of woodland to allow for natural regeneration and we do not over graze the fields.

- Look for the silver birch trees. There is a lot of natural regeneration in this area. Continue through the gate.
- 14 Look up to the open fell; the bracken colours can be stunning.
- Turn right at the bottom of the hill and head back along the original coffin path.

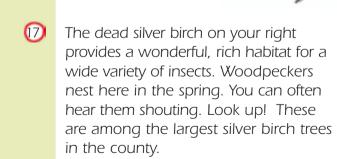


Sitka spruce, larch rowan, lodgepole pine, sycamore, western hemlock, silver birch, hawthorn, noble fir, Norway spruce, 19: osk, ssh, hazel, holly, beech, Scots pine,

### WOODLANDS

The farm is managed in an environmentally friendly way, reflecting the responsibilities and rewards of Stewardship. This benefits both wildlife and visitors. You can see this in action as you walk through Sosgill Wood.

The wood is managed using a technique called Continous Cover Forestry. This is a natural system where some trees are retained at all times, even during thinning and timber harvesting. This means there is no drastic change in the landscape so wildlife still has a home and the fellside is protected from erosion. The quality of the timber grown is also improved - hopefully large diameter logs for the saw mill. It's more difficult to look after the wood in this fashion but it is a better way.



This area has a more open aspect and has abundant bryophytes and ferns. Note the colonies of dog tooth lichen.





- Continue through the wood. There are 16 different varieties of tree. Can you spot and name them all?
- What is this tree? It has been known to produce the odd nut, (answer below).

#### TEA TIME!



Follow the path back towards Legburthwaite. Climb over the stile.



Look for patterns in the dry stone wall to your left. There are flowers and





Spot the traditional farm gate with 2 stone stoups and 6 wooden poles (gap rails): why are the holes in one stoup square and in the other round? Note also enormous boulders in the stone wall to the side of the path.

**Leisure** by William Henry Davies

What is this life, if full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs

And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,

No time to see, in broad daylight,

No time to turn at Beauty's glance, And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can

Enrich the smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,

Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

Tel: 017687 79242 is appreciated. advanced warning If you are bringing a party

operates during quieter moments Self service and honesty box Open daily

Traveline 0871 200 22 33 OS Explorer OL5. OS Landranger Map 90 or

Tea Garden NY317205 Wap reference for the the A591 north of Thirlmere. St. John's-in-the-Vale; or leave along the B5322 for Leave the A66 near Threlkeld



### SO AMIY OF WOH

moo.nradpniqmao.www **Telephone:** 017687 79242 **KESWICK CA12 4TS** 5t. John's-in-the-Vale Low Bridge End Farm Sarah & Graham Chaplin-Brice

🕸 Star filled skies with no light pollution

9 An abundance of wildlife Educational visits

səitivitəA than 🔹 Christmas Trees

\$ Woodland and Farm Trail 🌼 Self Catering Accommodation (sleeping 2 - 4)

🕸 A Camping Barn (sleeping 8)

TOM PRIDGE END FARM also offers

### **LIVESTOCK**

As you follow the trail you are likely to come across many of our farm animals. We have several varieties ' of sheep including Lleyn (big and white) Hebridean (small, black and with horns), Manx (small, brown and with horns) and Gotland (grey with black legs and face). We keep these for a variety of reasons. They are small hoofed and therefore do not damage wet ground and their fleeces are sought by people wanting to hand spin and weave. They are very soft and produce a fine quality product.

# Things to look for in SOSGILL WOOD

The woods are full of interest no matter what season. Keep your eyes and ears open and you might see:



great spotted wood peckers

Suitable footwear and weatherproof clothing are required along with the OS Landranger Map 90 or OS Explorer OL5.

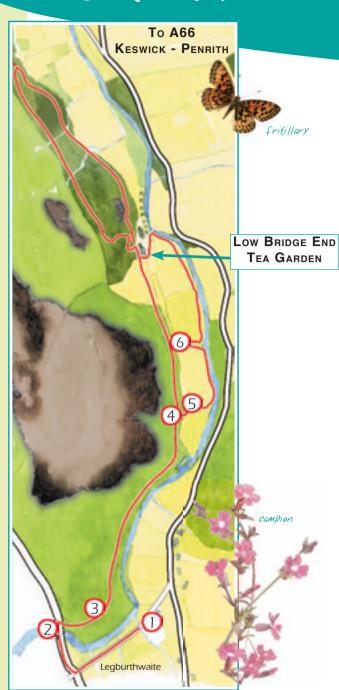
# St. John's-in-the-vale **Woodland Walk** TEA BARDEN



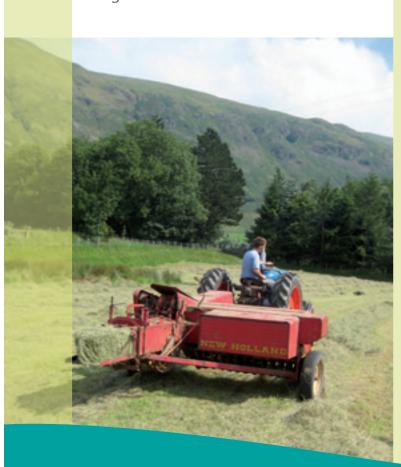
**Beckside and Woodland Trail**  $(1\frac{1}{2} \text{ miles}) 2\frac{1}{2} - 3 \text{ hours with}$ views to Helvellyn and Blencathra



# Starting from LEGBURTHWAITE



- Leave the car park at Legburthwaite (toilets available here) by the gate at the far end and turn left along a tarmac lane until you reach the A591. Turn right and cross St. John's Beck.
- (2) Walk a few yards along the road until you come to a ladder stile on your right. Take the footpath signposted to St John's -in-the-Vale Church and Bridge House.



Suitable footwear and weatherproof clothing are required along with the OS Landranger Map 90 or OS Explorer OL5.

- 20 yards along the path fork left. After a short distance there is another fork to the left. This time carry straight on. The path passes through some mature trees and there is a steep drop down to the beck.
- Pass through the gate into the fields. (please make sure you shut it behind you or livestock may stray onto the open fell). Head towards the gate in the wall.
- Turn right through the gate and follow the wall over the mound (is this natural or man made? Ask us at the farm) towards the beck. Please resist the temptation to head for the gateway in the next field wall. Why not? Because during the summer we shut these fields off for hay and we don't want our valuable winter feed crop being trodden down. Also you would miss some of the beauty of the beck.

Follow the water to the bridge. Along the way note how shallow the river bed is and how much gravel has been deposited. Notice the "Witch's broom", this is a disease or deformity, where the natural structure of the plant is changed. A dense mass grows from a single point, with the resulting structure resembling a broom or a bird's nest.

② Can you see the Hogg Hole? These gaps were built into the walls to allow the easy movement of sheep from one area of land to another.



# **BECK MANAGEMENT**

Over many years we have seen management changes as the National Rivers Authority became the Environment Agency and as more emphasis was put on the Environment rather than maintenance and management. In years gone by this particular stretch of water was regularly dredged to give a depth of river bed and the banks were man made, using boarding, gabions, stone walls or placing huge rocks in the river bank to prevent 'erosion. Today, the practice is to allow the river to revert to nature and take its natural course.

In some cases this is fine; however, on this stretch of water it is impossible as Thirlmere provides an unnatural source of water because it is man made.

Pass through the gate and head through the farm yard and the Tea Garden. From the Tea Garden, climb diagonally following the steps up the hill.

10 Follow the sign to Castle Rock viewpoint. Look towards Helvellyn and the southerly aspect of the valley.

Find a second sign for another viewpoint, this time looking towards Blencathra and the northerly aspect of the valley. Look for the packhorse bridge that crosses the beck at Sosgill.

### ST JOHN'S BECK

St John's Beck is an important salmon spawning site, with the young fry and parr (young fish) thriving in its shallow runs and riffles. This is good news for the otters who patrol up and down the beck.

In addition to rainfall and groundwater, the beck is fed by water released from Thirlmere. This maintains stream levels even in a dry summer. It enables many kinds of insects and invertebrates to flourish, including stoneflies, mayfly and caddisflies. It's also the ideal habitat for water loving plants such as watercress, monkey flower and water forget-me-not.





otters salmon dippers kingfishers waterforget-me-not monkey flower fritillary butterfly

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

For much of the year St John's Beck meanders through the fields, quite harmlessly, keeping within its bed. However, in times of heavy rain the story can be quite different. We have seen extreme weather in 1985, 1995, 2005 and again in the much publicised flood of 2009. Although there have been extreme weather episodes at other times, for example August 1967, the valley did not flood because Thirlmere, the reservoir about a mile south of the farm, was not full and was therefore able to help by holding the rainfall.

Should Thirlmere be used as part of a flood prevention and attenuation plan or should it be used solely for Manchester's drinking water and share holders' profits?

Having reached the beck follow the fence towards the next wall and back to the gateway. This gate way was severely damaged in the floods of 2009. We lost lengths of wall, the gate and the gate posts. A huge hole was gouged out to the depth of 6 feet in the gateway itself. It makes you realise how powerful water is.



Things to look for beside ST. JOHN'S BECK

On a warm summer's day enjoy a leisurely stroll beside the beck and you might be fortunate enough to see:

water forget-me-no

To A66

Keswick - Penrith