

- 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.

- 16 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.

- 13 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.
- 15 Turn right at the bottom of the hill and head back along the original coffin path.

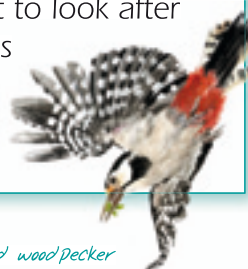


Answers
19: oak, ash, holly, beech, Scots pine, silver birch, hawthorn, noble fir, Norway spruce, rowan, lodgepole pine, sycamore, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, larch
20: walnut

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.



great spotted woodpecker

- 17 The dead silver birch on your right provides a wonderful, rich habitat for a wide variety of insects. Woodpeckers nest here in the spring. You can often hear them shouting. Look up! These are among the largest silver birch trees in the county.

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



ferns

primrose



Scots pine

larch

- 19 Continue through the wood. There are 16 different varieties of tree. Can you spot and name them all?

- 20 What is this tree? It has been known to produce the odd nut, (answer below).

TEA TIME!



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



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



beech

oak

larch

Scots pine

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Starting from LEGBURTHWAITE

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



- 1 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.

- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.

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?



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:



To A66
KESWICK - PENRITH



witch's broom



silver birch



- 7 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.

- 9 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.



Hogg Hole

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.



Salmon

- 8 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.

- 11 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