



Finglandrigg Wood

National Nature Reserve



working today
for nature tomorrow

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Female (left) and male blackcaps with young. George Higgenbottom



Small pearl-bordered fritillary. Peter Wakely / English Nature

A fascinating mosaic of different habitats, Finglandrigg Wood is vital to an impressive array of well-known wildlife, as well as many less-common species. At 97 hectares, it is one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland on the Solway Plain. The single-site includes woodland, peat bog, heathland and rough pasture, and is carefully managed through grazing, planting and coppicing.

An abundance of wildlife

Keep your eyes peeled and you may spot a red squirrel, as well as roe deer, brown hare and wood mouse. Badger and otter are likely to keep well hidden! The site has over 40 species of breeding birds including buzzard, tawny owl, willow tit, grasshopper warbler, reed bunting, garden warbler and long-tailed tit.

Insect life is plentiful, with small pearl-bordered fritillary, purple hairstreak and ringlet butterflies often seen in summer. You may also find the notable forester and silver hook moths. The rare marsh fritillary was present until recently and there are plans to reintroduce it. Uncommon plants include the small gorse, petty whin, bell heather and *Sphagnum* mosses.

There are a number of interpretive panels around the site explaining the wildlife, history and management.

A natural history

The whole of the Solway Plain area was carved out during the ice-age, leaving a landscape distinguished by low hills, made up from clays, sands and boulders, called Drumlins. These unique blunt



Exmoor ponies. Frank Mawby / English Nature

features are characterised by being steep at the eastern end and tapering off to the west.

The higher ground consists of impervious glacial clay and rock with little soil, lower down are the more arable regions, with a peat bog occupying the lowest areas. Although once drained and cut for peat, the bog still has a 2m deposit.

The trees here tell the story of the site's regeneration following its initial role as farmland. Birch and rowan are pioneers, and the first to occupy open ground. The rowan here is already dying back rather than compete with the birch, and willow is also making inroads. Oak and beech may well contend the second, more mature, stage of recolonisation. Scots pines have been here a while, and a healthy population of second generation trees is already established.

The shape of the site owes a great deal to the draconian 'Enclosure Acts' of the late 1700s and early 1800s. During this time much of the common land at Finglandrigg was placed into private ownership, and by the mid 1800s the site was a mixture of small fields, Scots pine plantations and peat bog, with the heath the only remaining common grazing.

Immediately following Enclosure, the site was used for agriculture, but the fields were gradually abandoned during the depression that swept the farming communities in the latter part of the 1800s.

Little Bampton Common was never enclosed, and remains common land under the trusteeship of Kirkbampton Parish Council - English Nature have the sole grazing rights.

Management - the key to sustainability

The reserve is carefully managed to maintain the variety of wildlife habitats.

Heather-clad heathland is prone to invasion from trees, but controlled grazing



Petty whin. Laurie Campbell



Red squirrel. Kevin Cook



Scots pine cone. Laurie Campbell





Little Bampton Common. Alasdair Brock / English Nature
Below left: Devil's-bit scabious. Laurie Campbell

with rare Hebridean sheep on the Common keeps this in check. This breed thrives on coarse grasses, tree leaves and a little heather. There is a small fenced area that shows you what happens if grazing doesn't take place.



Heather is managed by rotational burning - to allow light down to other plants, while the Hebridean sheep along with Exmoor ponies and cattle, graze areas of rough grassland and scrub.

In the rushy areas, the high water tables are maintained for reed bunting, sedge warbler and grasshopper warbler. More intensive management of the fields encourages devil's-bit scabious, the food plant of the marsh fritillary butterfly.

The woodland is primarily managed for the red squirrel, keeping their food source of Scots pine, birch and rowan healthy. Areas of gorse scrub which are coppiced to maintain suitable habitat for breeding birds such as linnet, blackcap willow warbler and chiffchaff.



Common buzzard. Laurie Campbell

Keeping track of your dogs

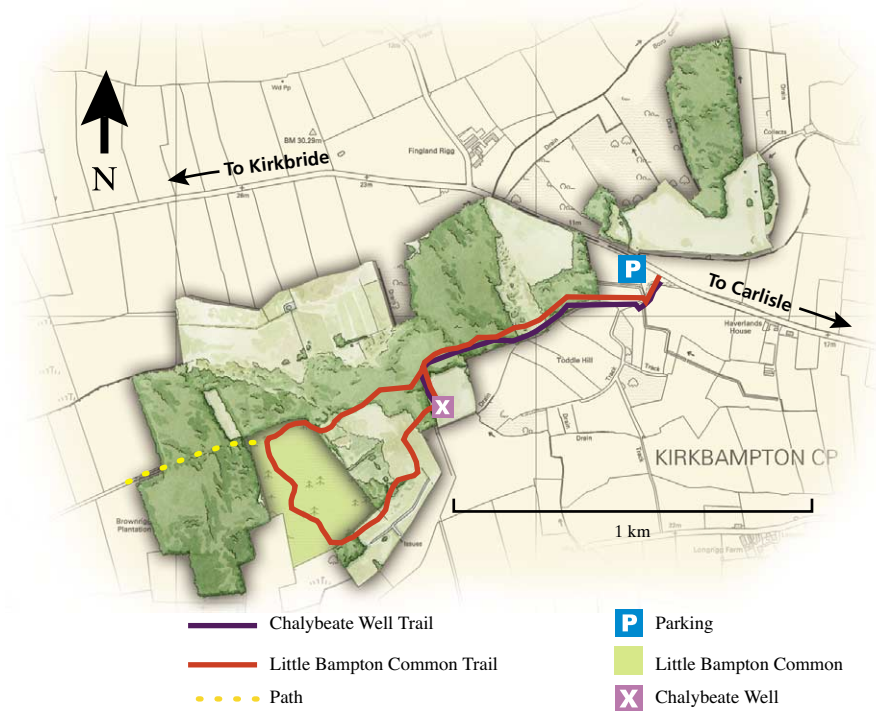
Please keep dogs under control at all times – dogs can frighten sheep and wildlife especially red squirrels, roe deer and ground nesting birds.

Further Information

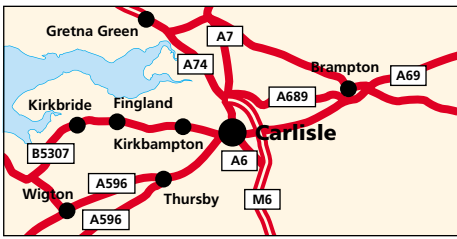
For more details, please contact English Nature's North Cumbria Reserves office at:

Unit 2, Kirkbride Airfield, Kirkbride,
Wigton, Cumbria CA7 5HP

Tel 01697 350005



- Chalybeate Well Trail
- Little Bampton Common Trail
- Path
- P Parking
- Little Bampton Common
- X Chalybeate Well



Finding the reserve

The reserve is about eight miles from Carlisle. Follow the B5307 Kirkbride road, go through Kirkbampton village and after about one mile you will see Haverlands lay-by on the left. From Wighton, the reserve is about eight miles. Follow the B5307 from the Wighton by-pass. Go through Kirkbride and Fingland and about two miles further on is the Haverlands lay-by on the right. You can park here by the English Nature sign and continue on foot along waymarked paths onto the reserve.

Waymarked walks

There are two waymarked walks that take you around the reserve and include the main features of interest.

Chalybeate Well Trail

Discover the many aspects of the woodland and rough pasture, as well as the Chalybeate Well, a stone structure marking the presence of a sulphate-rich spring. This 2 km walk will take you around 45 minutes to one hour, with easy going on a firm gravel surface for all but the final 70 m.

Little Bampton Common Trail

A woodland walk that also includes open rough pasture and heathland as well as Scots pine plantations. This 3 km round trip takes about one-and-a-half to two hours. The going is relatively easy as the first 0.8 km is on firm gravel – but the remainder continues on mown grass which can be wet and muddy after rain.



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Take a closer look

Finglandrigg Wood National Nature Reserve is open for people to explore, enjoy and discover the extraordinary variety of plant and animal life here. There is a good network of marked paths, boardwalks, stiles and a footbridge, making the going relatively easy. Generally the paths are dry in summer but can get a little muddy and uneven in the winter.

Finglandrigg Wood is one of many National Nature Reserves managed by English Nature. Although Little Bampton Common is not owned by English Nature, they help manage it through controlled grazing.

A bus service passes the site. For further information call Travel line: 0870 6082608

Cycle racks are available at Finglandrigg Wood.

Tourist Information Centres: Carlisle 01228 625600
Silloth: 016973 31944

Front cover photographs:
Main: Finglandrigg Wood.
Peter Wakely / English Nature
Top left: Red squirrel.
Tom Graham
Bottom left: Sessile oak seedling.
Laurie Campbell



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