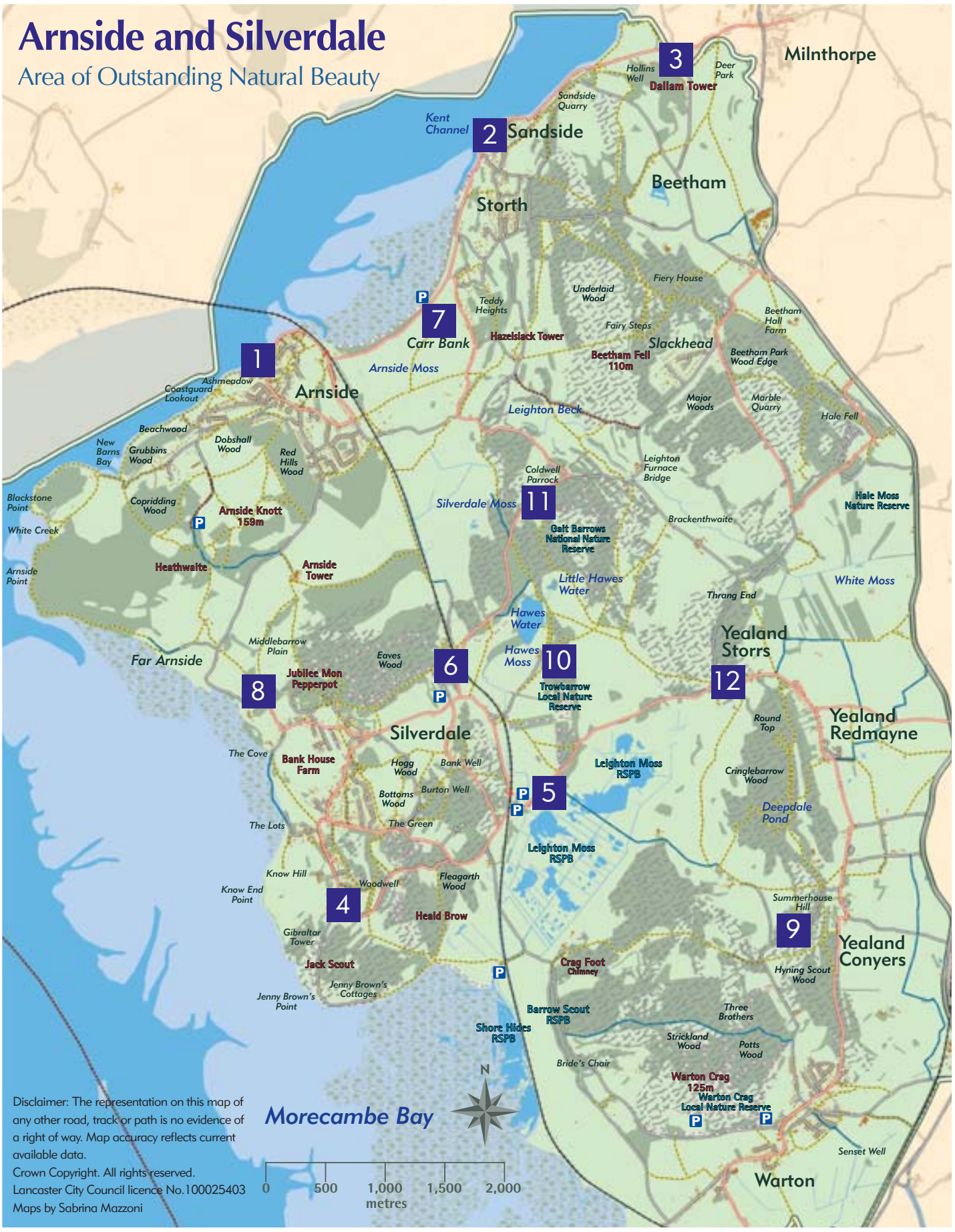
Arnside and Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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Maps by Sabrina Mazzoni

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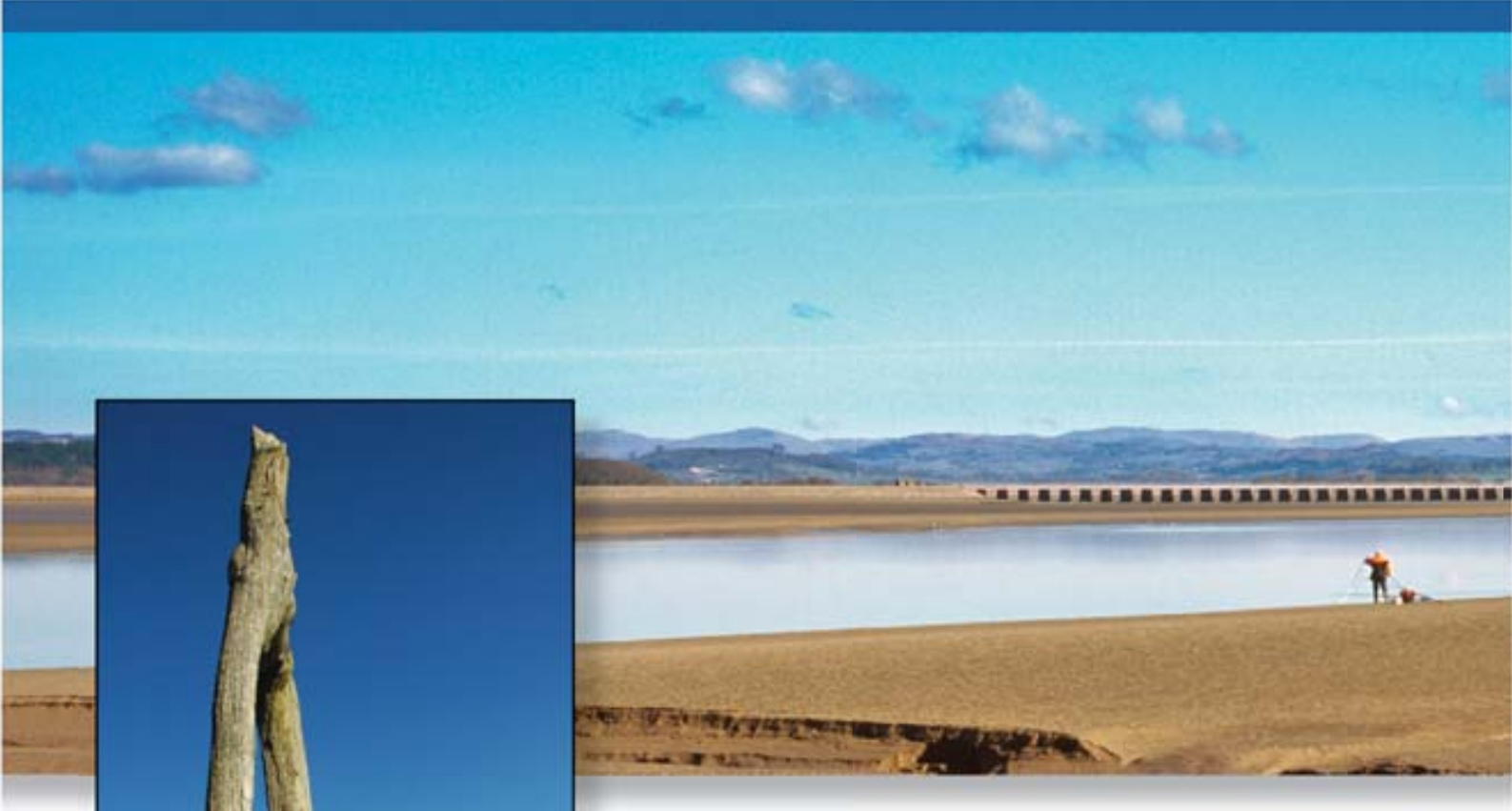
Easy Access Walks

12 easy walks in the Arnside/Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A selection of coastal and inland walks which can be enjoyed by everyone, including wheelchair users, those with walking difficulties and people with young children and pushchairs. There is generally easy parking at the start of each walk.



The Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on the shores of Morecambe Bay is a unique landscape of national importance that extends to approximately 75 square kilometres overall, including around 30 square kilometres of inter-tidal sands and mudflats. It is one of the smallest of the 40 AONBs across England and Wales.

This is an ideal location for quiet walks where you can enjoy wildlife at its best.
Enjoy the superb intimate landscape with numerous walks on the limestone hills, through ancient woods and over herb-rich grasslands. Look out for wild flowers tucked into limestone pavement and butterflies fluttering about the bracken. See if you can spot a bittern hiding in the reed beds at Leighton Moss.

Limestone Heritage Project

NATURAL ENGLAND

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Lancashire County Council

The Countryside Code
RESPECT • PROTECT • ENJOY

"If you're gonna go out for a walk, don't go out willy-nilly, be prepared..."

Be Safe - Plan ahead and follow any signs

Keep dogs under close control

"See, people don't realise their dogs could be a danger to wildlife."

Consider other people

"Treat the countryside as you would treat your home..."

Leave gates and property as you find them

Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home

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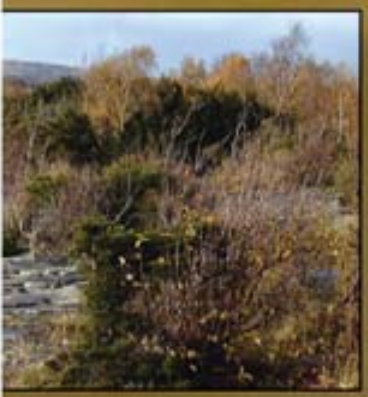
Read through the directions before setting out on any of the walks and please take care on the more strenuous sections of some of them.
This booklet should be used in conjunction with an Ordnance Survey map.



SOUTH LAKELAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cumbria COUNTY COUNCIL

THE NATIONAL TRUST

RSPB

friends OF THE LAKE DISTRICT

1 ARNSIDE SHORE

Start and finish at the car parking area on Arnside Promenade (A)

1km
return trip

Easy

RADAR Key needed

This is a flat walk on a surfaced path with excellent views over the Kent Estuary.

From the **Albion Hotel** follow the promenade in the direction away from the shops (west) past the seaward side of an elegant white building set in parkland. (B) This is **Ashmeadow**, built in the late 18th century and enlarged in 1814. It is now apartments for the elderly owned by the Crossfield (Arnside) Housing Society. The path continues along the shore to the **Coastguard Station**.

The views across the bay are extensive and include **Grange-over-Sands**, **Humphrey Head**, and further inland the impressive limestone ridge of **Whitbarrow Scar** with a backdrop of the Lake District fells. The path is negotiable by wheelchairs beyond the Coastguard Station to (C) but it should be remembered that this part of the path is subject to flooding at times of high tides. The times and heights of the tides are posted at Arnside Pier and a siren warns of the incoming tide. Birds seen in the estuary include **Heron** and **Cormorant**.

The shore itself is home to numerous wild flowers. **Sea Aster**, **Thrift** and **Sea Campion** abound. Rarer flowers include **Sea Lavender** and **Tall Melilot**. On the rock faces you can see **Spurge Laurel**.

Return to Arnside Promenade by the same route. It is worth going beyond the Albion to the Pier (D) where you can sit and enjoy an ice cream and look at the everchanging scenery.

2 SANDSIDE CUTTING

Start and finish at the car parking area along Sandside Promenade (A)

Distance
1km circular

Grade
Easy.
There is a short rough stretch of 18 metres along a footpath just after The Ship Inn.

This is a pleasant walk along a short section of a disused railway line. The line used to run between Barrow and Durham carrying iron ore and coal. This section is now used as a permissive walkway.

(A) Park on the Promenade at **Sandside**. Go along the promenade towards **The Ship Inn**. It is worth looking out across the estuary. **Heron** and **Cormorant** can be seen motionless in the channels looking for fish and eels. **Oystercatcher, Curlew** and **Redshank** are also commonly seen and if you are lucky you may see **Goosander** or **Kingfisher**.

Do not be tempted to go onto the sands. The tides are treacherous here and there is quicksand.

There is a pavement for some of the way but from Storth Road to The Ship Inn you will need to walk along the road.

(B) Just past the car park for The Ship Inn turn right along a footpath between the pumping station and the builders' yard. The surface is a little uneven but is negotiable with care. After 18 metres, turn right through a kissing gate. This can be a tight squeeze for some disability scooters.

The path is now well surfaced and leads along the bed of the old railway.

The trees on the sides are a mixture of **Birch, Hazel,** and **Oak** with some **Ash** and **Holly**. There are also some **Yew** trees. You will see some bat boxes up in the trees. The most common bat in the area is the **Pipistrelle** which can be seen towards dusk. The path continues through a cutting lined with ferns and under 2 bridges.

(C) After the second bridge the path turns right up to the road. There is a small squeeze gate here but part of the fence lifts off for wheeled access. If you have a fit helper, lift off the fence, replacing it carefully in its slots afterwards, and turn right down the road to the promenade. If not you will need to retrace your steps back to The Ship Inn.

Easy
Rough

3 DALLAM PARK & LOVERS LANE

Park on the Marsh Road just by the bridge across the River Bela. (A)

Distance
3km circular

Grade
Strenuous.
Long stretches of steep parkland roads.
Only the first 500 metres are suitable for unpowered wheelchairs

A pleasant walk amid parkland and small lanes with lovely views of the River Bela and across the Kent Estuary to the Lake District Hills.

Turn back to the main road and across the bridge. Go left into the drive leading to **Dallam Tower Estate**. The first 300 metres follows the **River Bela**. Across the parkland you may well see a herd of **Fallow deer** grazing. **Duck** and **Heron** frequent the banks of the river. The large country house on your right is **Dallam Tower**. The Dallam Estate once owned most of Beetham, Arnside and Silverdale. It is still a major landowner in the district.

(B) After the house there is a long uphill stretch and unpowered wheelchairs may wish to turn round and retrace their route. The path winds up through the parkland. Old **Beech** trees line both sides of the road. At the end of the parkland the drive passes out through the lodge gates to join a small country lane.

(C) Turn right up the lane and continue on past some houses on the left hand side and past a road closed sign. This is **Lovers Lane**, a single track road that did lead down to **Sandside** but is at present (May 07) closed at the Sandside end. Carry on along the lane until you reach a seat **(D)** on the right hand side where a footpath enters the wood over a stile. There are wonderful views here across the estuary and over the Lake District.
In Spring there is a heronry in the trees nearby and you can see the birds carrying food to their young.

Until the road is completed you must turn here and retrace your steps. Once the road is finished you will be able to continue down to reach the road at **Sandside Quarry (E)** and turn right along the pavement until you reach the bridge and your car.

Easy
Rough

4 WOODWELL TO JENNY BROWN'S POINT, SILVERDALE

Park at Woodwell (A) or at Wolf House (B)

Distance
1.5km
each way

Grade
Easy for first 750 metres. After that the road is surfaced but it has several steep stretches on the way down to the shore.

Woodwell is one of the wells of Silverdale. These used to provide the only drinking water for the village. Now it is a quiet place where you may see Hawfinch and Goldcrest or hear the drumming of a Woodpecker. Frogs can be seen in the spring.

Return to Lindeth Road and turn left towards Gibraltar Farm and **Wolf House Gallery**.

(B) At Wolf House go straight ahead past Gibraltar Farm. Of particular note are the verges which are noted for their interesting flora and include **Primrose, Cowslip, Wild Clematis, Red** and **White Campion** and **Moschatel**.

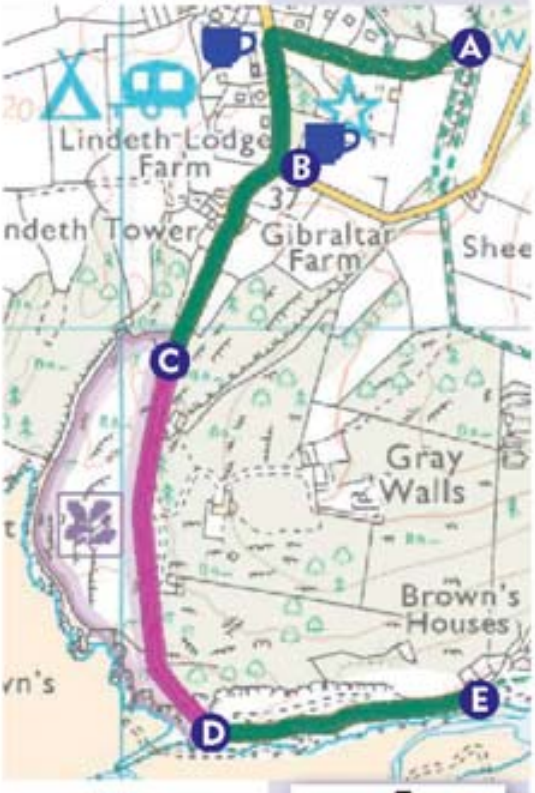
(C) 350 metres from Wolf House, a gate on the right gives access to **Jack Scout**, a limestone promontory which was acquired by the National Trust in 1982. The area is designated as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** because of the wide variety of lime loving plants on the grassland and the butterflies, such as **Fritillaries, Orange-tip** and **Common** and **Holly Blue** which feed on them. **Access to the site is through a kissing gate but the paths are not suitable for wheelchairs or electric buggies. The route itself continues on down the road but at this point it winds down steeply. Those with unpowered wheelchairs may wish to retrace their route.**

After a further 650 metres the remains of an embankment are visible extending out to sea. This was the first phase of a scheme started in the 1870s to enclose an area of Warton Sands for agricultural purposes. Within a decade the scheme was abandoned due to lack of funds. Continue down the road using the gate not the cattle grid.

(D) Just past this there is a bench on the seaward side of the road where you can sit and watch the birds. At high tide thousands of **Oyster-catchers** and other birds are to be found along the shoreline here.

After another 80 metres the lane ends at Brown's Houses.

(E) Retrace your steps to your car, calling in at one of the local cafés for a light lunch or other refreshments.



5 LEIGHTON MOSS

Start and finish at the RSPB Visitor Centre 300 metres from Silverdale Station. A

Distance
2.5km
return trip

Grade
Easy.
Apart from a 50 metres stretch of steep slope at B.

Leighton Moss now forms the most extensive area of reed beds in Northern England. It is an important habitat for many ducks, waders and migrant passage birds. Bittern, Marsh Harrier and Bearded Tit are also found on the reserve.

There is a self-operated chair lift but wheelchair users must transfer to the seat in order to ascend or descend the stairs. Staff at the information desk on the ground floor will provide assistance if required. They can also give information about the other hides on the reserve which are accessible to wheelchair users.

A Leaving the **RSPB Visitor centre**, turn right on the minor road. After 375 metres turn right at **B** on to the bridleway down to the Moss. The first section is a steep stony slope but after that the path is flat with a well compacted stone surface. There are several places to stop and observe the wildlife and information posts are located at various points along the path. Those visiting between February and the end of June should listen for the distinctive 'boom' of the male **Bittern** proclaiming its territory. Midway across the causeway the public hide is reached. **C** The hide provides access for wheelchair users and allows clear views over one of the main lagoons. At the end of the causeway a pair of stone gateposts indicates the original entrance to agricultural fields.

D This also marks the turning point of the walk and your steps should be retraced to the start.
At the RSPB centre there is a shop, toilets and interpretation centre. A cafeteria is located at first floor level.

Easy
Rough

6 MIDDLEBARROW QUARRY ROAD, SILVERDALE

Park on the old quarry road just off the Challan Hall to Waterslack road (A)

Distance
1.5km
return trip

Grade
Easy.

This is a pleasant walk along the road that leads to Silverdale Moss. The surface is good and the road is very quiet. There is a slight incline in places.

(A) The start of the walk takes one along a quiet country lane by the side of the railway line which is hidden by trees for most of the way. This was for many years the main access road to **Middlebarrow Quarry** and trucks thundered along it every day. Now the quarry has closed the lane has become a pleasant backwater. There are lots of birds in the hedgerows and the road leads gently down until you reach **Silverdale Moss**. (B)

This is a new RSPB reserve but it is not open to the public or to members. However there is an interpretation board at the gate and this is also a good vantage point to look out over the marshes.

The land is being managed to provide a satellite breeding ground for the **Bittern** for which Leighton Moss is well known. There are small streams where the **elver** come up from **Morecambe Bay**. The eels are one of the staple foods of the Bittern. **Heron** also stalk the quiet pools looking for prey. If you are lucky you might see a **Marsh Harrier** flying over the reedbeds hunting for prey.
The road leads on to Middlebarrow Quarry (C) but this is not suitable for disabled access.

Turn round at the interpretation board and retrace your steps.

You could extend the walk when you reach the car by carrying on along the main road (take extra care) and over the railway bridge to **Waterslack** (D) where there is a coffee shop and garden centre.

Do not try to cross the railway line at any of the pedestrian crossings as they are not suitable for wheelchair access.

7 ARNSIDE EMBANKMENT

Start and finish from small car park off Sandside Road (A)

Distance
Up to 2.5km.
Grade
Easy.

The existing permissive footpath along the embankment of the old railway line between Arnside and Milnthorpe has been made accessible to people with impaired mobility. Apart from the short but steep tarmac ramp which leads from the car park to the top of the embankment the surface is level and easy to use.

(A) The embankment south leads to **Arnside Station** and the **AONB office** (B). Northwards you walk towards Sandside. There is no disabled access or exit at either end however and you must retrace your steps to the car park.

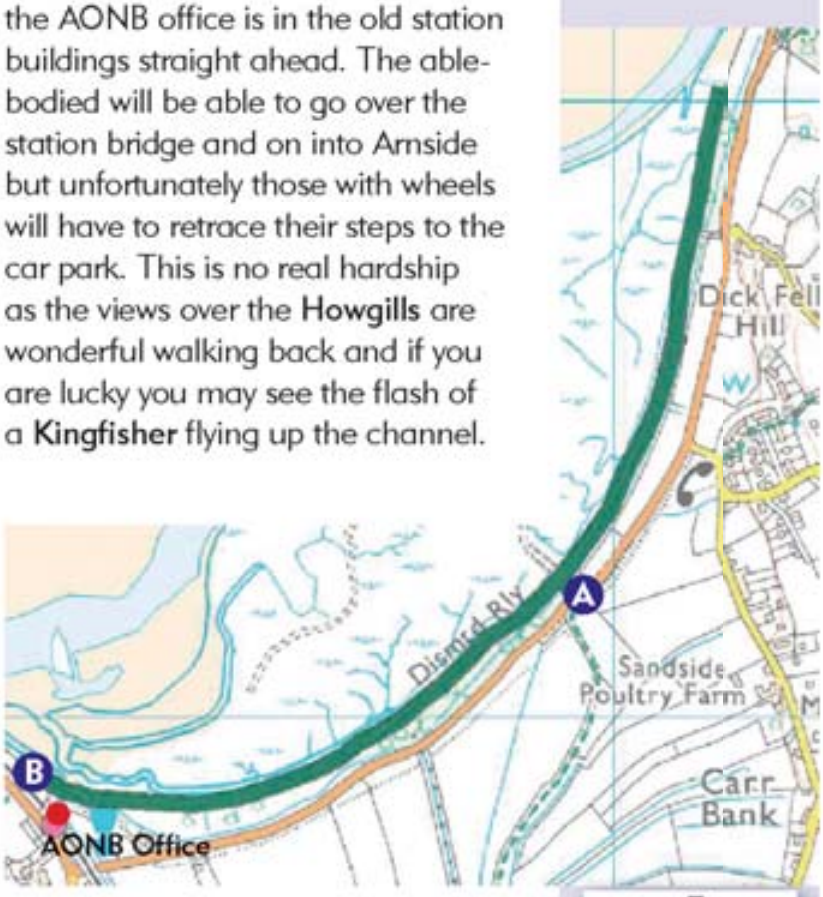
WARNING *The tide comes in very rapidly here and so you should stay on the top of the embankment at all times. At high tide the whole of the salt-marsh below the path is under water.* The sheep which graze the turf are used to retreating to the landward side of the embankment when the tide comes in.

The route follows the salt marshes of the **Kent Estuary** with extensive views of **Whitbarrow Scar** and the **Lakeland Hills**. Bird species to be seen include **Shelduck, Redshank, Oystercatcher, Heron, Lapwing** anc **Kingfisher**. The grassy banks are the home of many of our small limestone grassland plants.

Heading south you will pass many different species of trees in the shelter belt on the eastern side of the embankment. In Spring, the **Wych Elm** stands out with its clusters of bright green seeds. They look just like flowers.

A bench on the embankment makes a good place to stop and look at the hills across the bay. Whitbarrow is the nearest while behind you can see the Lakeland hills.

The embankment goes all the way to Arnside Station. Pass through the gate into an unmade road and the AONB office is in the old station buildings straight ahead. The able-bodied will be able to go over the station bridge and on into Arnside but unfortunately those with wheels will have to retrace their steps to the car park. This is no real hardship as the views over the **Howgills** are wonderful walking back and if you are lucky you may see the flash of a **Kingfisher** flying up the channel.



8 HOLGATES CARAVAN PARK TO ARNSIDE TOWER

Start and finish from site car park off Silverdale Road (A)

Distance
800metres each way.

Grade
Easy.

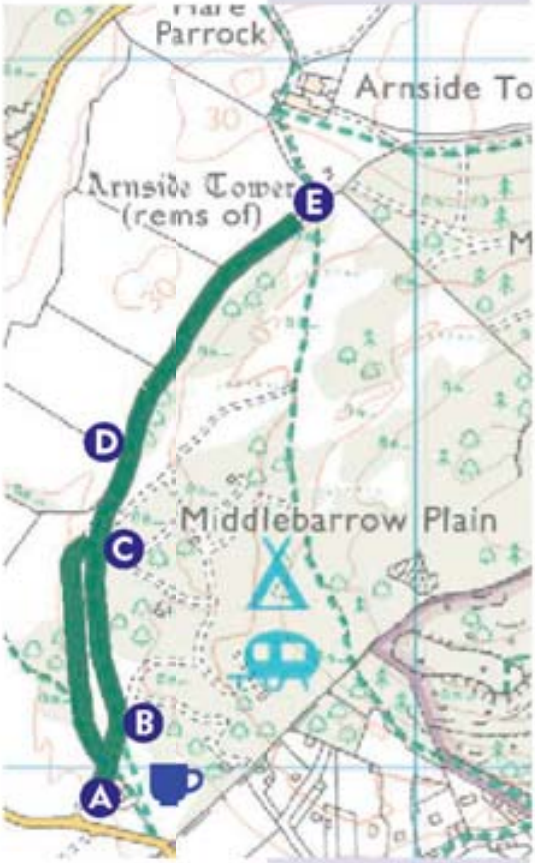
This is a lovely walk following the footpath through a beautifully landscaped Caravan Park. The views across Morecambe Bay are stunning. There is a very nice cafe with disabled access which serves lunch as well as coffee and tea just next to the car park.

(A) Park in the disabled bays using your blue badge. Go past the barriers and along the road through the site until you see the footpath arrow for **Arnside Tower**.

(B) Take the left hand turn here. Continue on through the site until you come to a T junction.

(C) Go straight across here onto a grassy area The footpath continues across the grass following the line of the power wires. It turns into a track which has a firm grassy surface.

After 50 metres you come to a gate (D). This does not open fully as it is blocked by a large boulder. If you can get through the gate the track continues for a further 300 metres until you reach the bottom of Arnside Tower. (E)



In spring you can see a large stand of **Green Hellebore**, halfway along the track. You must now retrace your steps to the road through the site.

(C) This time turn right and follow the lower road back to the car park.

Easy
Rough

9 SUMMERHOUSE HILL, YEALAND CONYERS

Approach from Yealand Conyers towards Leighton Hall and start from Peter Lane (A)

Distance
300metres each way.

Grade
Easy, level path.

This is a lovely short walk whose highlight is the viewpoint at the end of the path. Just before you get to the entrance to Leighton Hall, the footpath to Summerhouse Hill is signposted off to the right. There is limited parking at the side of the road.

(A) Go through the pair of gates by the sign post and walk along through the wood for 200 metres. Pass through another pair of gates and enter into a grassy area with very tall trees. After 100 metres you come to the viewpoint with a bench. Below and surrounded by its parkland is **Leighton Hall.** Although there has been a house on the site since 1246, little remains of the original structure as it was rebuilt in 1763. The final Gothic facade was superimposed in 1822. Wood from the Leighton Hall Estate was used to provide charcoal for the nearby Iron Furnace at Leighton Beck.

In the middle distance can be seen the scar of **Middlebarrow Quarry.** Limestone was extracted from here for over a century but the quarry has now closed.

The wetland area beyond the house is the RSPB reserve at Leighton Moss and in the far distance is the **Kent Estuary** and **Morecambe Bay.** Looking further to the right you can see the **Coniston Fells** of the Lake District beyond the summit of **Arnside Knott.**

(B) Retrace your steps back to the road along the same path.

Easy
Rough

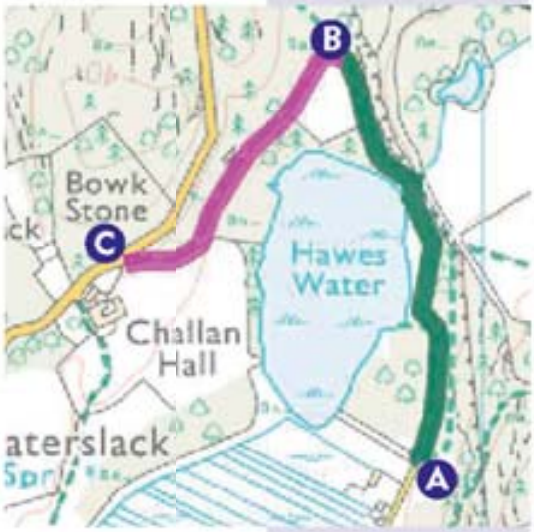
10 GAIT BARROWS, HAWES WATER

Park at the bottom of Moss Lane. You will need a RADAR key to get through the barrier to the disabled car parking area A.

Distance
300metres each way.

Grade
Easy, between A & B but a steady climb between B & C.

The path leads off along a smooth woodland track towards Haweswater. Look for primroses and bluebells in the spring.



A After 80 metres pass through the gate onto the boardwalk. This is a flower-lovers mecca in the spring and early summer. **Primula farinosa** abounds as do several species of **Orchid**. In autumn you can see the delicate white flowers of **Grass of Parnassus**, which is not a grass but a beautiful flower that is more often found in boggy places up on the moorland.

Dragonflies can be seen darting among the reeds and every year, in late spring, tiny **toadlets** leave the mere in their hundreds.

At the end of the boardwalk pass through the gate. Turn left along another woodland track. This takes you along the bottom of a small limestone outcrop. Watch out for a column of **ants** crossing the path on their way between the tree-tops where they collect their food and their nests in the woodland.
Notice the open meadow on your left. This is now being grazed for conservation and the **wild flowers** are slowly but surely returning.

Soon you reach a fork in the path B. Take the left hand fork which takes you up a fairly steep path to the road.

In spring it is worth glancing at the bases of the **hazels** on the left hand side of the path. You can see the strange purple and white flowers of the **Toothwort**, one of our few parasitic plants.

C Retrace your path to your car.

Easy
Rough

11

GAIT BARROWS (NNR), THE LIMESTONE TRAIL

Starting at the Car park off Ford Lane Ⓐ

Distance
2.5 km.

Grade
A - B Easy.
B - C Level but slightly uneven.
C - D Challenging with gradients and bumps and ruts.
D - E Level grassland.
E - B Uphill but smooth.

The reserve is a joy at all seasons. It is home to many of our most beautiful butterflies and flowers.

WARNING *Do not be tempted to leave the main tracks. The terrain can be treacherous in places for those with limited mobility and it is easy to get lost among the mass of small paths. The path narrows and heads down between the limestone pavement. There are many rough sections and rocky places but they can be navigated with care.*

Ⓐ Continue down the track. Pass through the gate at Ⓑ and turn left at the interpretation board.

In early spring look for the first flowers of the **Stinking Hellebore** and the **Primroses** and **Violets**. The tiny bright green foliage that is visible on the limestone sections of the path is **Parsley Piert**, one of our smallest flowering plants. Look for the **Wood Ant nests** at the side of the path. On a warm spring day the ants can be seen in their thousands bringing building material back to the nest. They are rebuilt each year.

Ⓒ Stay on the track until you reach the arrow pointing right along the '**Limestone Trail**'. Those wanting to avoid the rough terrain may wish to stay on the main track and continue on to the shed at Ⓕ where they should turn round and retrace their steps back to the car park.

Watch out for the **Dark Green** and **Pearl-bordered Fritillaries**. They can be seen flitting among the bracken in the sunshine.
At the bottom of the slope the path passes out through a gate into a field where you turn sharp right.

Ⓓ Carry on along the path through another gate and on into the next field. Half way along the field the path passes back through a gate on your right and you rejoin the main footpath through the reserve.

Ⓔ This leads up a gentle slope back to the car park.

PLEASE NOTE dogs are only permitted on public rights of way.

Easy
Rough

12 YEALAND HALL ALLOTMENT, YEALAND STORRS.

Park on the lay-by at the side of the road at Storrs Corner (A)

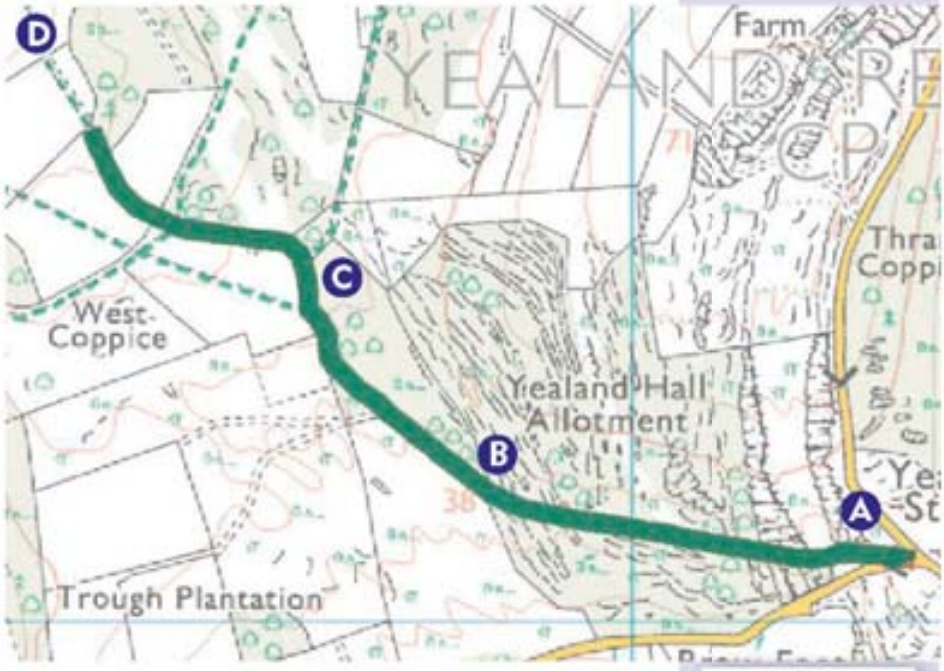
Distance
1km
each way

Grade
Easy. The track is undulating and dirt surfaced.

(A) Go back to the road junction and in through the gate. The view takes in the reedbeds of **Leighton Moss** (see walk 5). The path leads through a lovely section of limestone pavement which is wooded in part. If you look carefully at the side of the path in spring you can see the beautiful flowers of the **Early Purple Orchid** as well as **Primrose** and **Cowslip**.

(B) At the top of a short rise pass through a gate and continue along the track. The trees are stunted here both because of the winds from the bay and also the lack of soil. The limestone is only just beneath the surface.

Watch out for the birds here. As well as the more common tits and finches you may well see either of our two local **Woodpeckers**, the **Green** and the **Greater-spotted**, flying from tree to tree or hear their drumming in the Spring.

(C) Pass through another gate and continue on down the track. **Roe Deer** can sometimes be seen, as can **Stoat** playing in the grassy clearings. The path continues on for some time and eventually reaches **Gait Barrows National Nature reserve** (D) (see walk 11) but it does deteriorate and you will need to retrace your steps when you feel you have gone far enough.

Butterflies love the woodland glades. You are likely to see the **Speckled Wood** and the **Holly Blue** among many others.