

Miles Without Stiles



Cumbria
County Council

Finglandrigg Woods

Route Information

Distance 2 kilometres (1.25 miles)

Time needed 1 hours (approx)

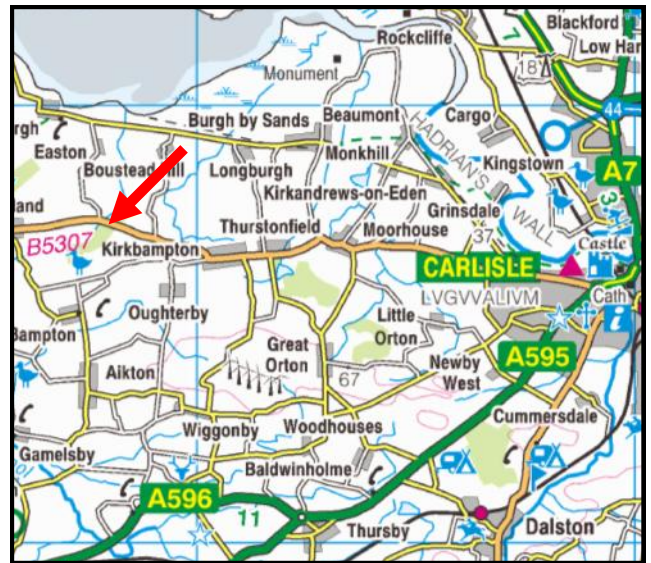
Terrain

Mostly level on compacted crushed stone surface with short sections of fine gravel and boardwalk.

Start point.

Small lay-by/car park on the B5307 between Kirkbampton and Kirkbride. Approx 7.5 miles to the east of Carlisle. Cycle racks are available. **OS Grid Ref:** NY 272 570.

Public Transport. The site is served by bus route 71 (limited service). It is not a low floor vehicle.



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Finglandrigg Wood is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) managed by Natural England. It is one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland on the Solway Plain and includes woodland, lowland peat bog, heathland and rough pasture: all of which provide habitat vital to an wide array of plants and animals.

The woodland is a designated habitat in its own right and is managed for a wide range of plant and animal species which includes Purple Hairstreak Butterfly (fly in the canopy of oak trees) and Red Squirrel. However many other species of wildlife can be seen across the site throughout the year.

From the car park, you can access the route by taking the informal path between a pair of large boulders, which passes by the picnic area, accessible over rough grass.

However, the recommended access point for wheelchair users is to pass to the side of the vehicle barrier, located at the eastern end of the layby.

Once past the barrier, the path takes you down a $2\frac{1}{4}^\circ$ slope (gradient 1:25) and then onto a 2° incline (gradient 1:33) over approx 70 metres and into the woodland. The track on this first section is occasionally used by farm vehicles but is in generally very good condition, with grassed central strip.

Red squirrel, roe deer, brown hare and wood mouse can all be seen here, as well as the more elusive badger and otter.



First section of the route, as it enters the site

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 and uncommon plants on site include the warf gorse, petty whin (both found on Bampton Common), bell heather and sphagnum mosses.

After about 500m, and just past a waymark post, you will see a faint path leading off to your right. This woodchip surfaced path is approx 30m long and leads, over rougher ground, to a large carved interactive wooden sculpture, tucked away from sight.



'Hidden' Woodland Sculpture

If you have been to visit the sculpture, retrace your steps and continue along the main woodland track, ignoring any side paths leading off to the right, until you reach a carved wooden bench, accompanied by a memorial dedicated to Derek Ratcliffe.

Derek Ratcliffe was an outstanding ecologist and nature conservationist who gained an international reputation in ornithology and botany. Finglandrigg Wood was one of his favourite places, and his research into the effects of pesticides led to the preservation of the Peregrine Falcon: which explains the theme of the beautifully carved bench nearby.



Ratcliffe Memorial Stone

Return to the main path, turn left and continue deeper into the woodland. From here the route slopes down a 3° decline (gradient 1:20) for a short distance to arrive at a boardwalked section which makes for easy passage across a very wet part of the woodland. It is approximately 30m long, and 1.2m wide and constructed of recycled plastic.

At the end of boardwalk, the path reverts to the familiar crushed stone surface before arriving at path junction, which marks the start of the loop through the woodland. Our route continues on the right hand path. After another short section of recycled plastic boardwalk is crossed (10m long and 1.2m wide), we arrive at another junction.



Boardwalk section

The path to the right, through the easy access gate, provides an extension of the route and is suitable for all-terrain scooters and pushchairs and passes over a mix of grass surface and wooden boardwalk (1.0m wide).

Turn left and continue through the reserve. The surface changes to deeper, less compacted gravel for about 30m. After you have passed a bench on your left, just past 'Chealbeate Well', you will reach the familiar crushed stone surface again and the start of the loop. Turn right here, and retrace your steps back to the car park.










Chalybeate Well

'Chalybeate' means 'containing salts of iron' or 'tasting of iron' and in the early 17th century, such water was promoted for its healing and health giving properties.



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Route Map Key

-  Car parking
-  Site interpretation point
-  Picnic Area
-  Rest points
-  Width restriction feature
-  Recommended Route
-  Optional Route Extension

Useful Number and Points of Information

- Carlisle Tourist Information Centre - 01228 625600
- A downloadable leaflet is available on the NNR website at www.naturalengland.org.uk
- Traveline 0875 2002233
- Finglandrigg Wood is on Ordnance Explorer Map 314
- Natural England site management - 01697 350005
- Natural England (Site owners) - www.naturalengland.org.uk
- Refreshments (Pub and Post Office) can be found nearby in Kirkbride, 5.6km (3.5 miles) away by road
- Disabled toilets available at Watchtree Nature Reserve, Great Orton, 5.6km (3.5 miles) away by road. Watchtree also has disabled access, including cycling - www.watchtree.co.uk