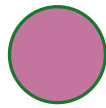


The Yew Trail

(continued from sheet overleaf)



3 Is this abstract art?

These large slabs of limestone pavement look just like some abstract sculpture, but were ripped up in the early 20th century to provide decorative stone for buildings and gardens. These monoliths remain here as a testament to the folly of Man and as a reminder that when limestone pavement is lost, it is lost forever...

4 Nature's restoration

This area was quarried of its pavement in the mid-19th Century, and the passage of time has allowed Nature to soften the damage and allow a form of recovery. Here the

blue moor grass

sward is rich in wild flowers like **common rock-rose** and **bird's-foot trefoil**, and insects are abundant. Look

for the rock-coloured **grayling**

butterfly and the small metallic-coloured moth **Pyrausta purpuralis**, whose caterpillars feed on the wild thyme carpets.



Common rock-rose. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature



Guelder rose. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature



5 The Duke's Estate

These sunny glades are the stately home of the **Duke of Burgundy**! This lovely little spring butterfly thrives in the sheltered conditions here, where its caterpillar feeds on **primroses** and **cowslips**. **Pearl-bordered fritillary** and **high brown fritillary** butterflies also enjoy the sunshine of the Duke's formal gardens!



A mating pair of Duke of Burgundy butterflies. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature



6 The Wildwood

You are about to cross into **Thrang Wood**, a seemingly ageless heart of the woodland, and a place with a strong aura of wild spirit. This enthralling ancient yew forest was added to Gait Barrows NNR in 2002, and you are welcome to enjoy its magic and serenity on the circular walk through this special place.

*'There is a yew a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay...'*

*As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With alters undisturbed with mossy stone..'*

Wordsworth, *Yew Trees*



7 The Silver Jubilee cairn

In 1977 Gait Barrows was declared as a National Nature Reserve to mark the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. From here you can view a magnificent stretch of limestone pavement with its characteristic dwarf woodland cover. Beyond these you can see the rest of the National Nature Reserve – the traditionally grazed pastures with their organic cattle and Exmoor ponies, and the bird-rich reedbeds and flower rich fens that surround Hawes Water, 'the Gem of Silverdale'

Gait Barrows lies at the heart of the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Arnside Knott provides a magnificent backdrop to this wonderful view.

The two trails rejoin at

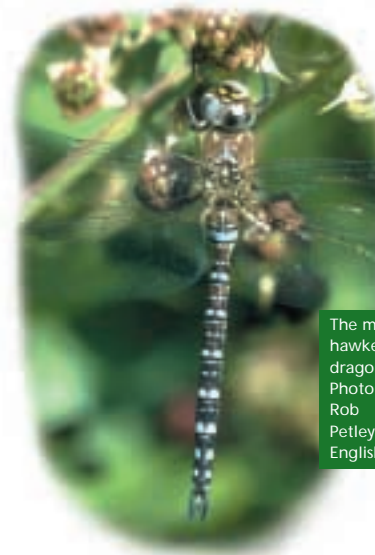


8 The Pastures

From late summer until late winter, organic cattle and Exmoor ponies share the task of grazing these flower-rich pastures. Some of these are quite wet and here you will see **northern marsh orchid** and the delicate pink flowers of **ragged robin**. In spring the beautiful **orange tip** butterfly patrols the

borders of the fields, while **brown hawker** and **migrant hawker**

dragonflies hunt for insects from mid summer until early autumn.



The migrant hawker dragonfly. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature



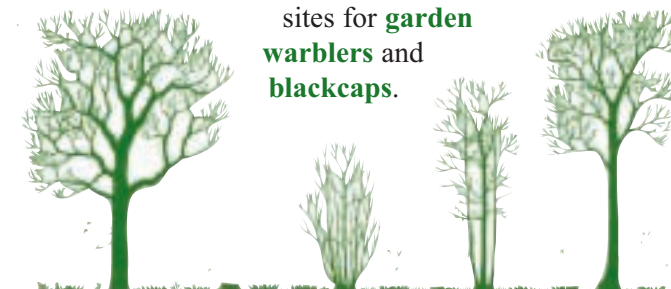
9 A Freshwater Spring

The waters from the surrounding limestone hills bursts from the ground here as a freshwater spring. The water flows into the ancient glacial lake basin where Hawes Water now lies. The lake is surrounded by damp fens and reedbeds that support a wide variety of animals and plants. Look for the **bird's-eye primrose** by the lake, and watch for passing **marsh harriers**. In the reeds you may hear **reed warblers** in summer, and the squealing calls of the **water rail**, while you may be very lucky to hear the booming call of the rare and secretive **bittern**.



10 Coppice woodland

This area of woodland is being managed as a rotational coppice with a cycle of 25-30 years. The newly opened areas provide valuable breeding ground for the rare **high brown fritillary**, while the regrowing thicket provides safe nesting



sites for **garden warblers** and **blackcaps**.

Information: If you have enjoyed your walk and would like a permit to visit other parts of the National Nature Reserve or other NNRs that are managed by English Nature in this area, please write to the Site Manager, c/o English Nature, Juniper House, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 9AU, enclosing an SAE, or telephone 015395 31604 (Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR office).

Front cover photograph: Can you spot the wood nymph hidden in this yew tree in Thrang Wood? Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature



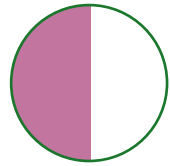
Limestone and Yew Trails

Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve



working today
for nature tomorrow

The Limestone and Yew Trails



Both trails start and end at the same spot. Follow the **white** arrows for the Limestone Trail or the **purple** arrows for the Yew Trail. Points of interest are waymarked and the Trails share interest points 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10.

On the way from the Start to Point 1, look out for **wood ant nests** on the left side of the track. These mounds are home to up to 30,000 ants in the summer, which 'farm' aphids and 'harvest' insect prey in the surrounding woodland. These nests attract **green woodpeckers**, which eat the ants and their larvae.

1 Hazel Pollards

Although coppicing is a traditional way of managing trees, these **hazel bushes** have been experimentally 'pollarded' with their stems being cut high, out of the way of browsing deer.

2 Hazel coppice

A lot of the woodland is dominated by **hazel coppice**, which is managed to provide materials for traditional woodland produce like hurdles and charcoal. This area was cut in 2002 and is part of a 15-year rotation, where small areas are cut each year.

Stay on this sheet and follow the **white** arrows for the Limestone Trail

Turn over the sheet and follow the **purple** arrows for the Yew Trail.

The Limestone Trail

(continued)

3 Limestone pavements

The limestone was shaped by glaciers some 15,000 years ago and since then rainwater has slowly eroded these broad flat blocks (**clints**) to form a variety of solution features including the deep fissures (**grikes**), shallow **runnels**, and pan-like **solution cups**. Low



Rosechafers on rowan. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature

yew woodland, rich in **juniper** and **rowan**, partially covers the pavements, which host a rich variety of plants. Gait Barrows has the most diverse flora of any

4 The world of grikes

You are standing on a broad clint, and if you look into the nearby grikes you will see some of the rich plant life that thrives in the sheltered conditions at their bottom. These grikes provide a place to grow for rare plants like the **rigid buckler fern**, the **dark-red helleborine**, and the **limestone fern**. Here is home for the very rare and tiny snail *Vertigo angustior* as well as the rare woodlouse *Armadillidium pictum*.

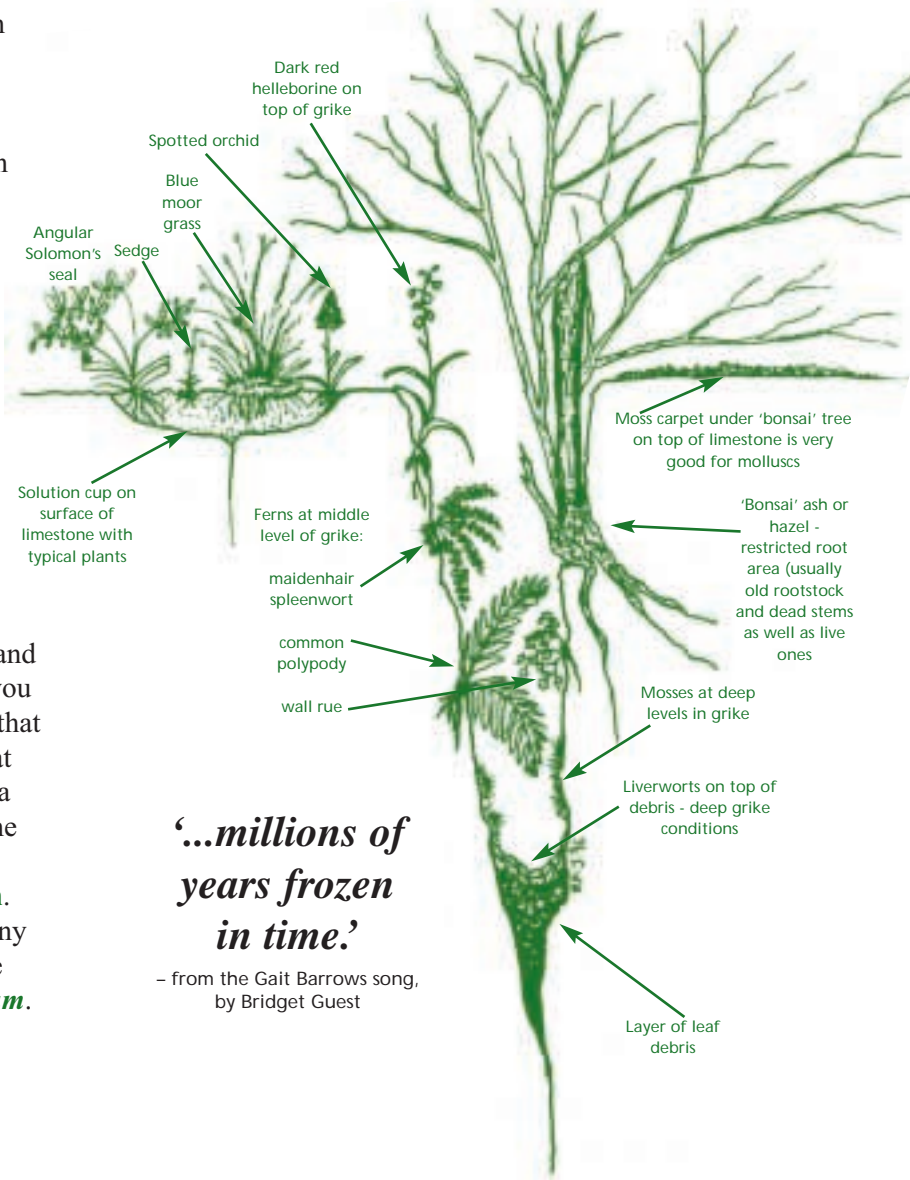


Dark-red helleborine. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature

5 Dwarf woodland

The dry conditions that operate on the pavements mean that trees grow very slowly and are naturally dwarfed. This **ash** tree may grow only a few millimetres a year, and may be several hundreds of years old.

The world of grikes



'...millions of years frozen in time.'

- from the Gait Barrows song, by Bridget Guest

6 Damaged pavements

Here in the 1960s the top layers of limestone were ripped up and taken away for garden rockery stone. This action destroyed the unique biological and geological interest of the rocks. Time is slowly healing these scars, and **blue moor grass** is gradually covering these areas. When Gait Barrows was bought and made a National Nature Reserve in 1977 this destruction was stopped and the pavements that remain are now safe for the future - until the next Ice Age, when the whole process of pavement formation will begin again.

7 Open rides

Open rides like this are maintained to encourage many plants to flower and so provide nectar and caterpillar food for the abundant insects that live in the woodland.

Cowslips provide food for the caterpillars of the **Duke of Burgundy** butterfly, while **betony** provides nectar for **high brown fritillary** and **brimstone** butterflies in summer. **Stinking hellebore** grows on the low crag and its pungent green and violet flowers can be seen early in the spring.

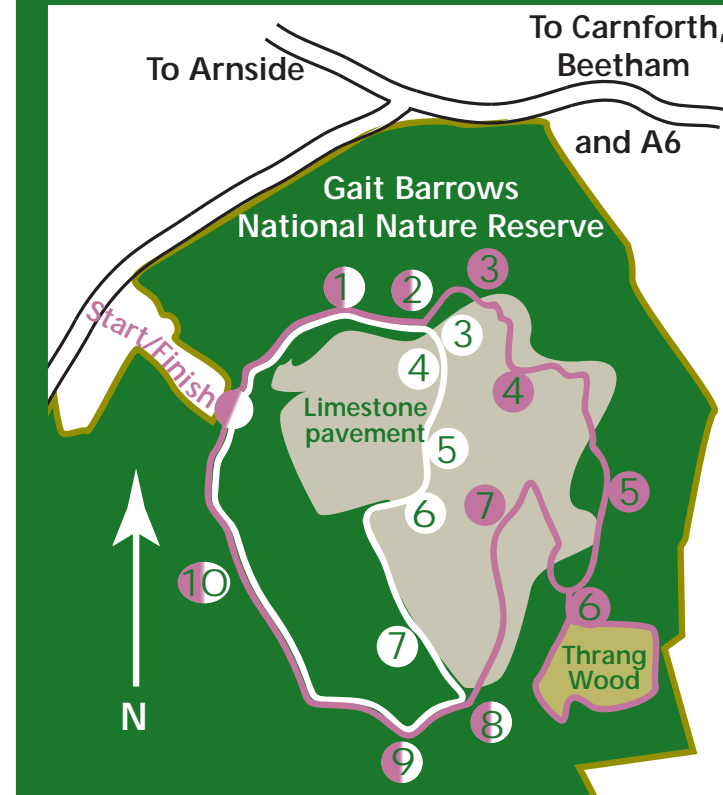


High brown fritillary. Photo by Rob Petley-Jones / English Nature

(Turn over to carry on the trail from Point 8)



Juniper



English Nature is the Government agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and geology throughout England.

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SAFETY

- Limestone pavement is slippery when wet. Take great care at all times when walking the trails.
- Please keep to the marked trails.
- Do not let children wander.
- Dogs are not allowed on the trails.