



Finglandrigg Wood NNR

Welcome to the National Nature Reserve

At 97 hectares Finglandrigg Wood is one of the largest areas of semi natural woodland on the Solway Plain. The reserve includes woodland, peat bog, heathland, rough pasture and wet meadows and is carefully managed through grazing and coppicing.

An Abundance of Wildlife

Keep your eyes peeled and you may spot red squirrel, roe deer, brown hare or wood mouse. Badgers have setts in the wood. You will only see them at dawn and dusk, but their signs are all around in the form of large holes in the ground, trails and latrines (holes dug as toilets). The site has over 40 species of breeding bird including buzzard, tawny owl, willow tit and grasshopper warbler. Insect life is plentiful, with small pearl-bordered fritillary, purple hairstreak (up in the canopy of oak trees) and ringlet butterflies.

Marsh Fritillary Butterfly



(c) Natural England

A new and welcome sight is the marsh fritillary butterfly, lost from the reserve in the mid 1990's but thanks to a captive-breeding and re-introduced programme to the reserve in 2005, it is now thriving and can be seen flying between late May and the end of June. If you come to the reserve during this period a self guided trail leads you from the car park at Haverlands Green to the marsh fritillary site. Just follow the little butterfly signs.

A Natural History

The whole of the Solway Plain was sculpted by glaciers during the last ice age (just over 12,000 years ago), leaving a landscape of low hills (drumlins) made of sand, clay and boulders. These eventually became woodland, with clay lined hollows in between where peat bogs and other wetland habitats formed.

At Finglandrigg much of the peat was cut in the past for fuel and animal bedding.

The trees we see today at Finglandrigg tell the story of the site's regeneration from farmland. Birch and rowan are the first to occupy open ground with willow in the wetter areas. Oak then starts to grow and dominate. In more recent times beech and scots pine have been introduced into the site and these have slowly spread. Being secondary woodland on former farmland and peat bog, there is little understory (e.g. plants such as bluebell or dog's mercury). These would have been destroyed when the land was converted from

woodland to farmland. What we see today is an under storey of broad buckler fern, honeysuckle and clumps of holly.

The shape of the site owes a great deal to the draconian 'Enclosures Acts' of the late 1700's and early 1800's. During this time much of the common land at Finglandrigg was placed into private ownership, and by the mid 1800's the site was a mixture of small fields, scot's pine plantation and peat bog.

Immediately following Enclosures the site was used for agriculture, but the fields were gradually abandoned during the farming depression of the late 1800's. Little Bampton Common (an area of heathland) was never enclosed, and remains common land under the trustee ship of



Kirkbampton Parish Council – Natural England have the sole grazing rights and manage the common in conjunction with the reserve.

Management – the key to sustainability

The reserve is managed by Natural England to maintain the variety of habitats and species, and to extend threatened habitat such as the heathland into other parts of the reserve. The heathland is prone to invasion by birch and pine and is managed by grazing with Exmoor ponies and hardy breeds of cattle. These will eat young trees and the tough purple moorgrass, but leave the heather. The heather is also managed through rotational mowing and removal. This habitat is used by insects and birds, and by opening the heather sward the seeds of a rare plant – Petty Whin, can find bare ground to grow in, and adders find areas to bask.

In rushy and wetter areas water levels are maintained at a high level for reed bunting, and sedge and grasshopper warblers. Management of the wet grasslands by grazing and burning encourages devils-bit scabious, the food plant of the marsh fritillary butterfly

The woodlands are not managed except in some areas where beech and sycamore may be controlled if they start to dominate. More intensive management has taken place to benefit red squirrels, with selective coppicing and planting of tree species which are important as a food source.

Areas of gorse, which are an extremely important winter roost for birds, are coppiced in order to maintain suitable habitat for breeding birds such as linnet, blackcap, willow warbler and chiff chaff.

Access to Finglandrigg Wood

See the Finglandrigg Wood – Access and Nature sheet.

Walking in Finglandrigg Wood

There are two way-marked routes. See the Finglandrigg Wood – Access and Nature sheet.

Activities

Every year there is an events programme which covers both Finglandrigg Wood and some of the other 8 reserves that Natural England manages in the North West.

Education

Natural England staff run National Curriculum linked activities on the reserve for primary schools.

Facilities

Disabled toilets available at Watchtree Nature Reserve, Great Orton, 3.5 miles away by road. Watchtree also has disabled access - www.watchtree.co.uk

Contact

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Find out more at
www.naturalengland.org.uk
or by calling **016973 50005**