



Caton-with-Littledale

Four circular walks within the Parish

The Birds of Caton-with-Littledale project is an exciting project that involves the community in the special wildlife of the parish.

As part of the project, local artist, Sue Flowers was commissioned to involve the community in the design of three pieces of artwork: a new parish sign, a new gateway to Caton Community Primary School, and a parish wildlife walks booklet. Sue has worked with the children and teachers at the school, local community representatives, the Parish Council and Caton-with-Littledale footpath group to design the wonderful pieces of artwork.



The project has been funded and supported by the Local Heritage Initiative, the RSPB Birds of Bowland Project, Caton Community Primary School, Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council, Lancaster City Council Arts and Events Service, Lancashire County Council Countryside Service.

Artwork by Sue Flowers © 2004

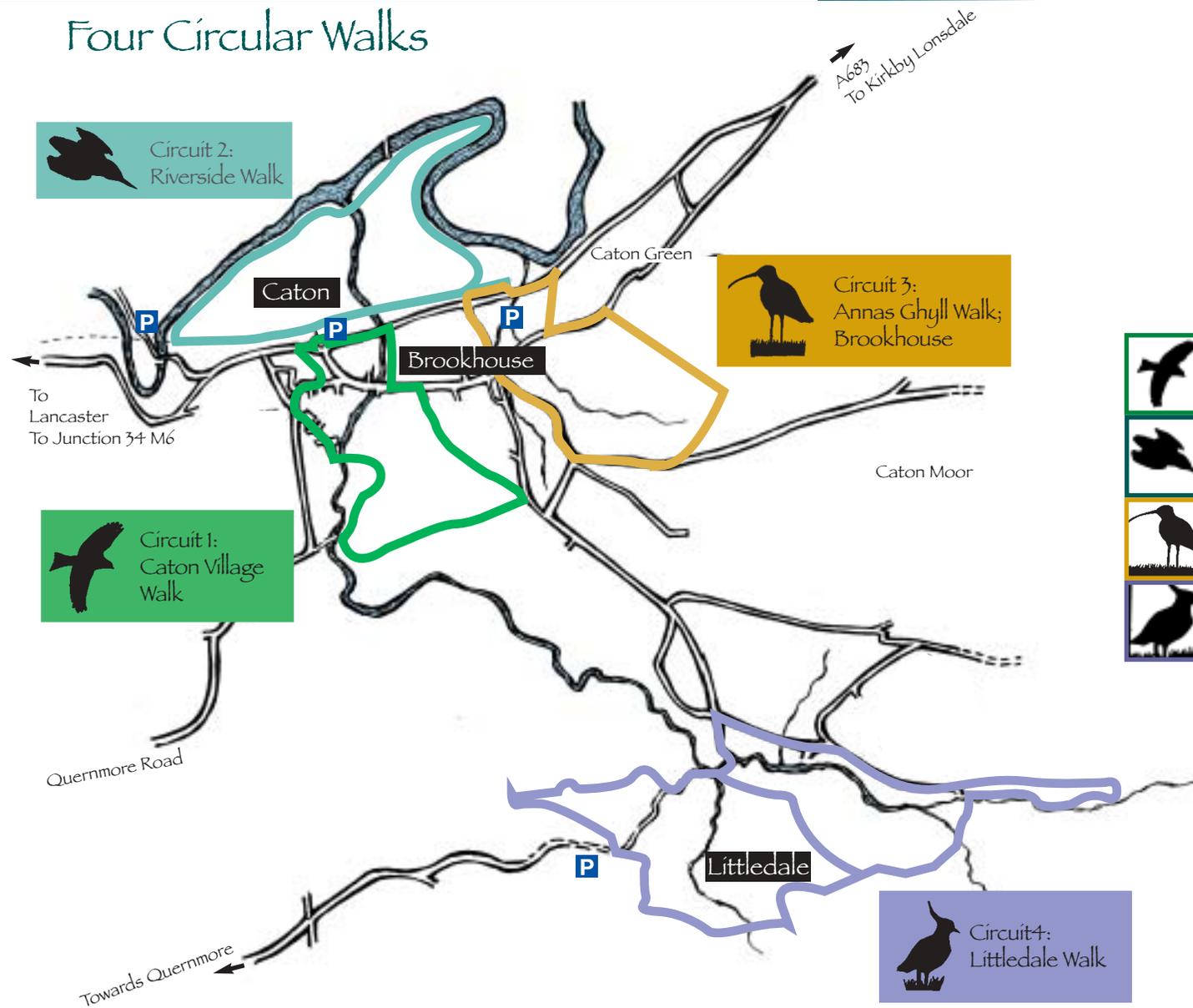
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Caton-with-Littledale Parish

Four Circular Walks



 Circuit 2:
Riverside Walk

 Circuit 3:
Annas Ghyll Walk;
Brookhouse

 Circuit 1:
Caton Village
Walk

 Circuit 4:
Littledale Walk

This booklet contains information about four circular walks within the Parish, developed by Caton-with-Littledale Footpath Group with support from Lancashire Countryside Service. These will be marked by corresponding bird silhouette markers on the footpaths: Use the bird symbols adjacent to the text to find your location on the map. We hope you will use this booklet to learn more about the wonderful wildlife and fascinating history of Caton-with-Littledale.

Please come prepared with appropriate clothing and footwear; waterproofs and walking boots are recommended. Remember also to take some refreshments with you. We hope you enjoy your walk.



1. Caton Village Walk



2. Riverside Walk



3. Annas Ghyll Walk; Brookhouse



4. Littledale Walk

P Parking

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The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally protected landscape and internationally important for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare birds. The AONB is managed by a partnership of landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, local councils and government agencies, who work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of this special area. For more information regarding the Forest of Bowland AONB, visit the website at www.forestofbowland.com or ring 01772 531473 for an information leaflet.





Caton Village Walk



Circuit 1 (2 hours approx 4 miles)
From Caton Centre on A683
(Hornby Road) - map shown on page 6

Introduction

The Birds of Caton-with-Littledale project is an exciting project that involves the community in the special wildlife of the parish.

Caton-with-Littledale parish is part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and contains a wide range of habitats, from heather moorland and rough farmland to ancient woodland and the banks of the River Lune. These habitats are home to a wide range of special birds, including the rare hen harrier, the symbol of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

As part of the project, local artist, Sue Flowers was commissioned to involve the community in the design of three pieces of artwork: a new parish sign, a new gateway to Caton Community Primary School, and a parish wildlife walks booklet developed by Caton-with-Littledale Footpath Group.

Caton and Brookhouse are situated on the north-facing slope of the Lune valley. Both settlements are raised above the flood plain of the Lune, providing the dry site typically selected by Norse settlers. The villages lie in a scenic area near the celebrated Crook O'Lune painted by Turner, praised by the poets Thomas Gray and William Wordsworth, and admired by Queen Victoria.

A large print version of this booklet is available and downloadable on www.forestofbowland.com



S Start from the Station Hotel in the centre of the village. There are two public car parks opposite and a bus stop by the side of the Station Hotel.

Before starting the route, it is worth a short diversion to the old North Western railway station, which the pub is named after, down the lane opposite the hotel. The two remaining buildings are the former Stationmaster's house on the left and the former goods warehouse on the right, now the Roman Catholic church. The modern building next to the church is the telephone exchange.

- From the hotel walk east along Hornby Road for 200 yards (towards the library).

Look for the new parish sign, designed by local artist Sue Flowers in consultation with the local community, as part of the Birds of Caton-with-Littledale project. The old oak tree was chosen, as it is a strong symbol of the village. The names around the outside refer to the different parts of the parish – Brookhouse, Littledale, Caton Green, Caton and Townend (the old name for Caton). Also shown are a lapwing, a characteristic bird of the surrounding farmland and a dipper, which can often be seen on the streams and rivers running through the area.



✦ Cross over Artle Beck and climb a stile immediately after, taking you up the side of the beck. Turn left at the road and head towards Brookhouse.

The finding of a Roman milestone in Artle Beck in 1803 points to the existence of a road along the south side of the river Lune and it is presumed that this would connect the main Preston to Lancaster route with the fort at Overburrow. Indeed, three Roman coins were found near Artle Beck bridge dated c. 139-161 AD.

Caton Village Walk



Circuit 1 (2 hours approx 4 miles)
From Caton Centre on A683
(Hornby Road) - map shown on page 6

In the meadow on the left, which separates Caton and Brookhouse there are some black access covers to the underground aqueduct, which carries water from Thirlmere in the Lake District to Manchester.

- Continue up the road and turn right into Hawthorn Ave. Straight ahead, you will see the footpath access to open country beyond.

 Climb the hill across the first meadow and through the kissing gate, then continue to climb up and slightly left, where the former hedge is now just a line of sparse trees.

This spot is the best viewpoint on this side of the River Lune over the villages of Caton and Brookhouse. The view to the North West over the tower of St Paul's church to the Lune Valley and Barbon Fells beyond make the short climb worthwhile.



 Head for the crest of the hill, then continue in the same direction climbing the stiles and out through the kissing gate to Littleedale Road. Turn right along the road, and almost immediately, take the footpath heading back right.

- Follow the wall to a stile and head straight on at the fence corner.

Turn round for a splendid view of the Lune Valley

- The next stile is beyond an old wall remnant of upright stone flags.
- In the next field, head for the corner of the wall ahead and there is a waymarker pointing along the wall.
- Continue down the hill, crossing the left field edge and over a stile into a tree-lined lane. This leads to a T-junction at a single-track road, with Artle Beck beyond.

This area is known as the Forge, though the original Forge Mill and associated buildings have all been converted into residences. In 1750, Caton had 50 forges making bar iron.

 Turn right along the lane as far as a white gate. The right of way beyond is in the field to the right of the lane, accessed by a stile.

- In the field, walk parallel with the lane to a large tree ahead and then drop down to a stile. Cross the lane and over another stile, across the short field and over a final stile into the wood by the beck. The footbridge upstream leads to some steps up to Broadacre by the entrance to the Primary school.



Caton Community Primary School stands on the former site of Rumble Row mill.



Look at the gates of the school. The gates depict the birds and wildlife of Caton- with-Littleedale parish and were designed by local artist Sue Flowers and the children of the school, as part of the Birds of Caton- with-Littleedale project. Sue led workshops with the children following on from field trips to see birds in the local area. See how many birds you can identify!

 Turn right along Broadacre, past Rumble Row cottage and keep straight on until the millrace surfaces on the right of the road. Follow the millrace then turn right with it through a small recent housing development and through a ginnel in the far corner leading to Copy Lane. Cross the road with care and turn right.

On the right is Willow mill. It was built in 1783 as a corn mill, but later produced cotton, flax, silk and finally from 1859 bobbins until its closure in 1973. It has now been restored as small business units and the millrace at the back has been incorporated into an attractive garden.

- Just after passing Willow Mill, turn left through the gate into a narrow ginnel, which soon opens out into a lane, roughly following the line of the now underground millrace, until it surfaces again at the Fish Stones on Lancaster Road.

This narrow lane is called The Croft. Where it widens out you are near the site of the former washhouse and public toilets of Victorian times.

The Fish Stones is thought to be where locally caught fish were sold. The gnarled twisted hollow oak tree at the centre with its supporting cradle is reputed to be thousands of years old.

 Turn right past the Ship Inn back to the village centre.

The Ship Inn used to be called the Ship and Castle. It derives its name from nearby Willow Mill's former product – sailcloth, which was supplied to all shipyards and docks on the north west coast.



Caton Village Walk



Circuit 1 (2 hours approx 4 miles)
From Caton Centre on A683
(Hornby Road)



Birds to look out for

This walk is identified by the chaffinch. The chaffinch is Britain's second commonest bird after the wren. It is found in open woods, parks and gardens, as well as along hedgerows. The very vocal chaffinch has a bright characteristic song.

Out on the farmland, look out for lapwings flying over. Their rounded wings make strong, slow, flappy beats, hence the name 'lap-wing'.

Look out for tits, blackbirds and robins in the village gardens. If you are lucky, there may be a flock of long tailed tits around.

Swallows, house martins and swifts are common in the skies above the village in summer. They are often seen flying high, hunting insects in the air. Dark brown swifts have very long pointed wings and spend most of their life on the wing, only landing to nest. The swallow has a bluish tinge, white underparts and a long forked tail, whilst the smaller house martin has much shorter wings and a distinctive white rump.

Watercolours by children from Caton Community Primary School



Blackbird



Robin



Blue Tit

Riverside Walk



Circuit 2 (2½ hours approx 5 miles)
Riverside Walk from Bull Beck Picnic site, A683 - map shown on page 10

The route follows the tarmac surfaced Lune Millennium Park Pathway to the Crook O'Lune picnic area, then back to Bull Beck along the bank of the River Lune over reasonably flat grazed pastures (but damp at times! and susceptible to flooding) with self closing gates and kissing gates.

S Park at Bull Beck Picnic site just north east of Caton on the A683. Toilets and refreshments available.



• Cross the A683 with care and join the Lune Millenium Park Pathway, heading left. Follow this path for 1¼ miles, crossing a bridge over Artle Beck.

The hawthorn hedges beside the track have been traditionally 'laid' to provide a durable stock barrier and an excellent habitat for many birds.

Near the bridge over Artle Beck, you will see a stone carving by Colin Wilbourn.

 Cross a private road. Taking the road to the left would take you into the centre of Caton village.

This is the site of the old North Western railway station. The two remaining buildings are the former stationmaster's house and the former goods warehouse (now the Roman catholic church). The railway was built in 1846 and closed under Dr Beeching's axe in 1966.

In summer, rosebay willow herb (the 'railway weed') and the great hairy willow herb dominate the old railway banks.

 Continue along the Lune Millennium Park towards the Crook O'Lune. Just before crossing the river take a small path down to the left.



An interesting detour here is the Crook O'Lune picnic site. Stay on the track over the old railway bridge and up the ramp to your right. Toilets and refreshments are available and the view from the picnic site is splendid. On clear days, you can see the flat-topped bill of Ingleborough in the distance.

• Go through the gate and take the smaller path down to the river. Cross over a wooden footbridge and follow the path round to your right underneath the old railway bridge, and over a second footbridge. Then follow the river upstream along the riverbank.

Low Mill can be seen on your right. Low Mill is reputed to be one of England's oldest cotton mills. The water flowing from the bank is the millrace, the water that flows past the old oak tree in Caton.

 Cross Artle Beck using the new footbridge, put in to replace the old stepping-stones.

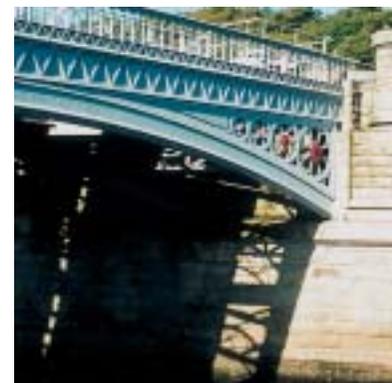
The large bridge in front of you is the British Waterways Bridge built in 1882 to carry the water supply from Thirlmere in the Lake District to Manchester. If you look at the upstream side of the bridge, you can see the levels of past floods neatly carved into the stonework.

• Don't cross the bridge, but carry on along the riverbank looking up at the windmills on Caton Moor. Continue along the riverbank footpath, round the meander.

Burton Wood is prominent on the skyline across the river. In previous times, this ancient wood provided charcoal for iron smelting. Oak bark produced tannin for the local leather tanning industry.

 On reaching a track, leave the river, pass a house on the right and turn left, rejoining the Lune Millennium Park pathway.

• Follow this tarmac path back along to the Bull Beck Picnic site.



Riverside Walk

Burton Wood



Circuit 2 (2½ hours approx 5 miles)
Riverside Walk from Bull Beck Picnic site, A683

Birds to look out for

This walk is identified by the kingfisher. Keep a look out when you are by the river for a streak of blue-green and orange. If you are very lucky, you may be able to observe the kingfisher perched, waiting motionless ready to plunge into the water if a small fish swims close.

A large colony of sand martins uses the sandy banks of the River Lune to nest in summer.

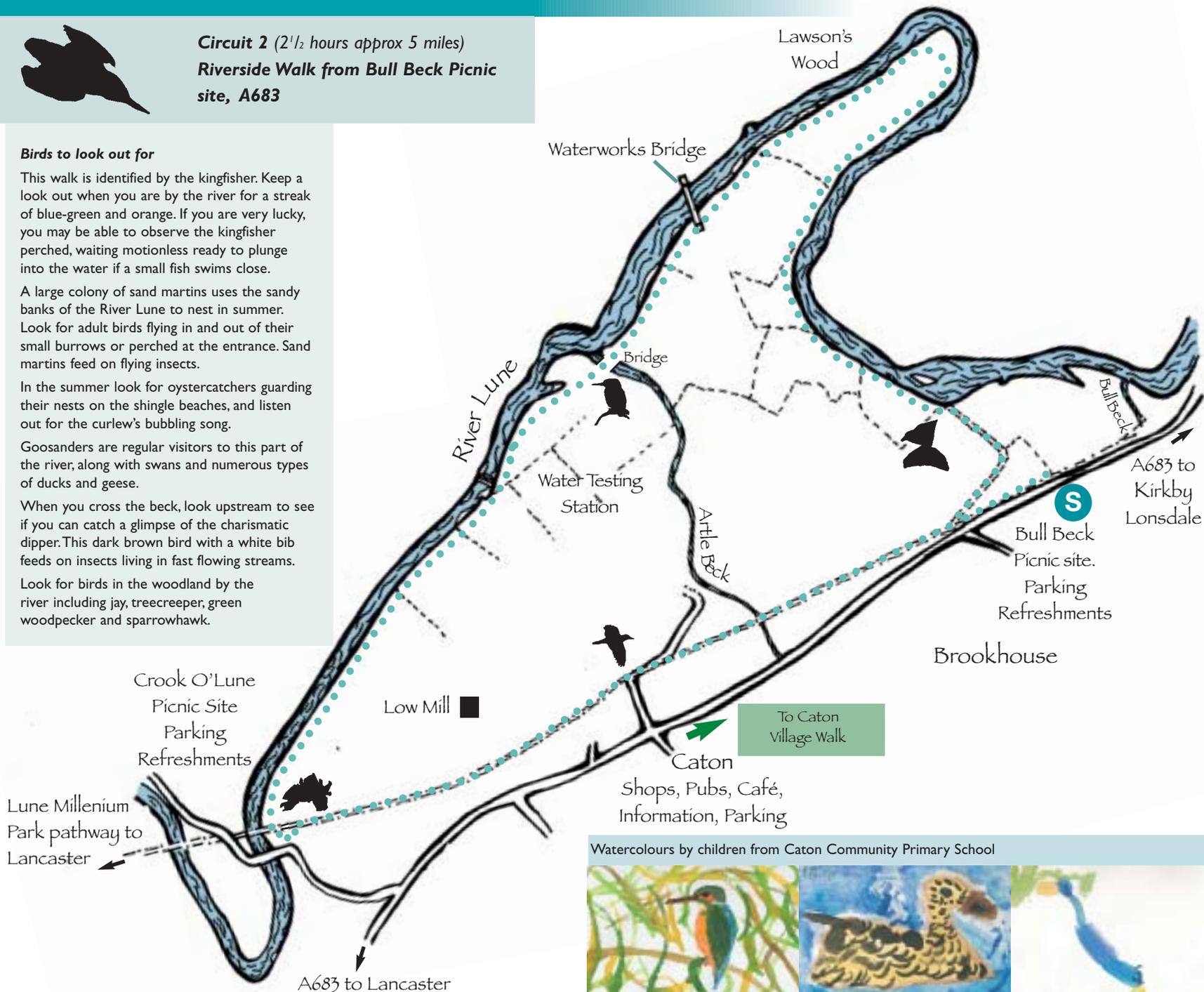
Look for adult birds flying in and out of their small burrows or perched at the entrance. Sand martins feed on flying insects.

In the summer look for oystercatchers guarding their nests on the shingle beaches, and listen out for the curlew's bubbling song.

Goosanders are regular visitors to this part of the river, along with swans and numerous types of ducks and geese.

When you cross the beck, look upstream to see if you can catch a glimpse of the charismatic dipper. This dark brown bird with a white bib feeds on insects living in fast flowing streams.

Look for birds in the woodland by the river including jay, treecreeper, green woodpecker and sparrowhawk.



Watercolours by children from Caton Community Primary School



Kingfisher



Duck



Heron

Annas Ghyll Walk; Brookhouse



Circuit 3 (1½ hours approx 3 miles)
From Bull Beck Picnic site, A683
- map shown on page 14

S Start from Bull Beck Picnic site, on the A683, just north east of Caton and turn right out of the car park along the A683. Take the footpath on the right just before the road bends left.



- Go up the hill and look for the marker post in the middle of the field. Follow the arrow up to the right-hand corner of the field. Go through the kissing gate and along a narrow path to join Kirkbeck Close. Turn left towards the main road and turn left up the hill.



The footpath leads off the road to the right, following the old

hedge line up the hill. At the top, look for a stile in a wall up ahead. Follow the hedge then cross the field to a corner and keep to the left of the wall. Follow the path on to Annas Ghyll farm.

Annas Ghyll farmhouse was built in 1664 by Thomas Wilson. A gravel pit found near Anna's Ghyll is evidence of early industrial activity in the area.



Follow the footpath signs to the right and out of the farmyard and follow the farm track until it joins the road.

Many of the fields here are examples of ancient enclosures, that is, land that was enclosed in the medieval period (before 1600). A typical distinction between these and post-medieval field systems is that the medieval fields tend to be small, irregular in shape and hedge bound, whilst post medieval are more regular in plan and layout and often wall or quick set hawthorn bound. From the track above Anna's Ghyll, look back and this field arrangement looks much the same as it did hundreds of years ago.



Now turn right to a T-junction and right again down into the village of Brookhouse. Pass St Paul's school and bear right before the bend into Chapel Square.

The square is named after the Primitive Methodist chapel, dated 1861, and now converted into a house.

- Follow the lane and at the end, enter St Paul's churchyard through an arch in the wall.

Records show that a church existed on this site in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272). The church was built in the 16th Century and although it was rebuilt again, extensively between 1865 and 1867, the tower is part of the original church. In the west wall of St Paul's is a relic of the old church: a Norman arch. Within the arch are medieval cross slabs from the last resting place of the early Lords of Caton.

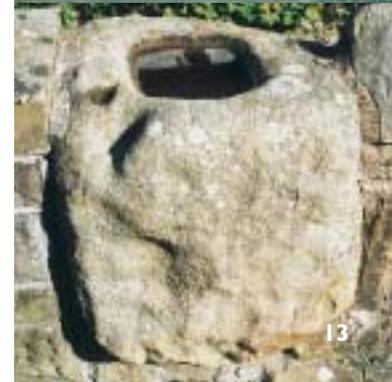
- From the church take the path from the tower down to the main double gates and steps.



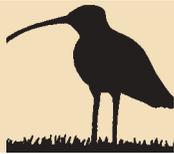
Walk down the hill past the Black Bull pub and turn right into Holme Lane.

The Black Bull pub was originally a farmhouse. It dates from the 16th Century and two wattle and daub walls were found upstairs. If you examine the bridge on the corner just outside the Black Bull, you will notice how one of the stones in the wall is scooped out like a bowl. It is said that this is a 'plague stone' used by the local people to put food or money in so that they didn't come into contact with those who had the plague.

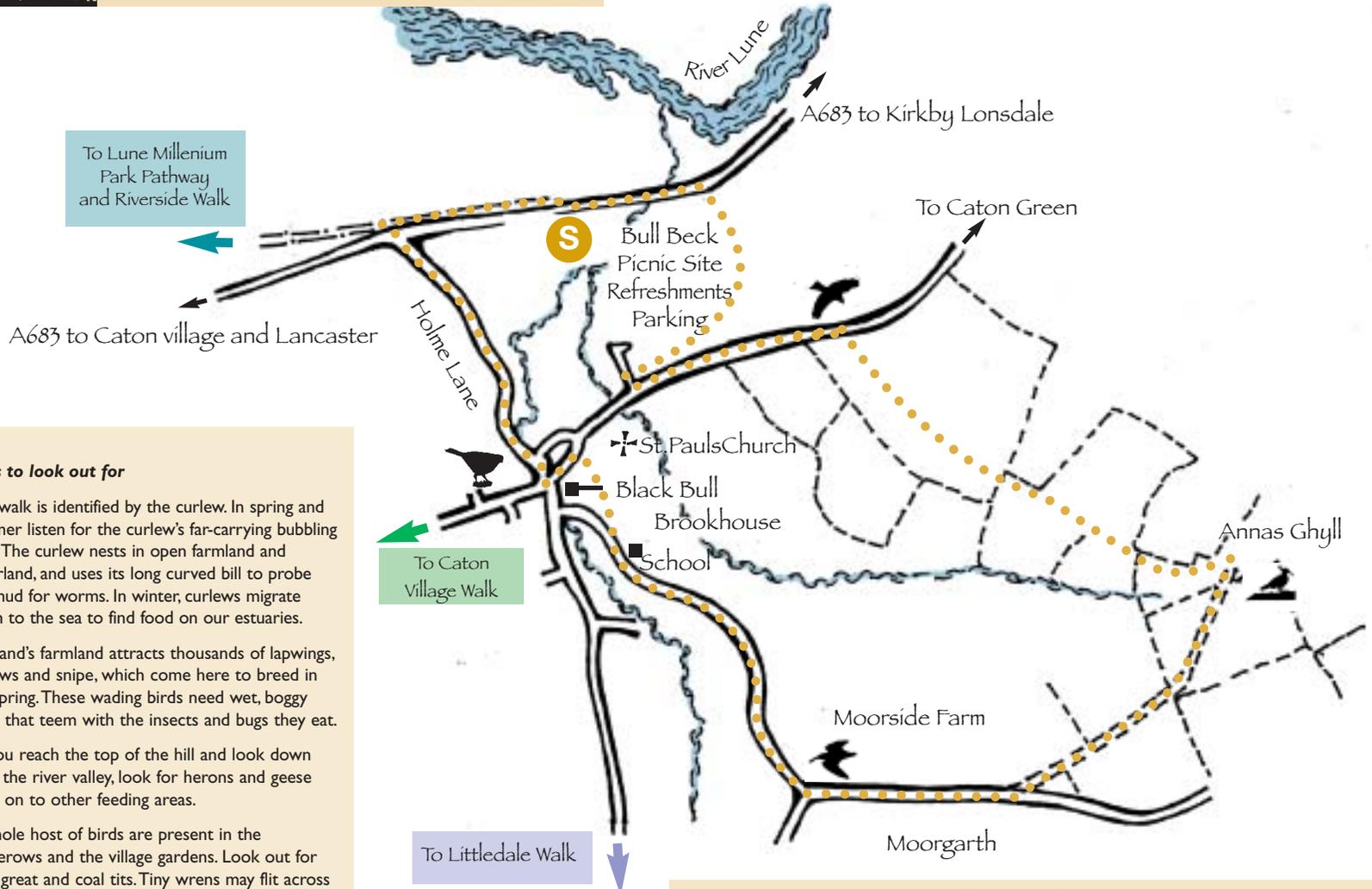
- At the end of Holme Lane, cross the main road with care and walk back along the Lune Millennium Park pathway to the right to Bull Beck Picnic site.



Annas Ghyll Walk; Brookhouse



Circuit 3 (1½ hours approx 3 miles)
From Bull Beck Picnic site, A683



Birds to look out for

This walk is identified by the curlew. In spring and summer listen for the curlew's far-carrying bubbling song. The curlew nests in open farmland and moorland, and uses its long curved bill to probe the mud for worms. In winter, curlews migrate down to the sea to find food on our estuaries.

Bowland's farmland attracts thousands of lapwings, curlews and snipe, which come here to breed in the spring. These wading birds need wet, boggy fields that teem with the insects and bugs they eat.

As you reach the top of the hill and look down onto the river valley, look for herons and geese flying on to other feeding areas.

A whole host of birds are present in the hedgerows and the village gardens. Look out for blue, great and coal tits. Tiny wrens may flit across the road in front of you. The more secretive dunnock rustles around at the bottom of hedges. Look out for siskins feeding on alder trees along the Lune Millennium Path Pathway.

As you walk along Bull Beck, have a good look for dippers and wagtails, feeding on insects by the water.

Watercolours by children from Caton Community Primary School



Curlew



Lapwing



Lapwing

Littledale Walk



Circuit 4 (2½ hours approx 5 miles)
From Little Cragg Car Park, Littledale Road
Extension to include Littledale Hall
(Additional 1¼ hours approx 2½ miles)
- map shown on page 18

- You should put on your wellingtons or walking boots as this walk can be wet under foot.
- To reach the start of this walk from the A683 in Caton, take the road to Brookhouse at the mini roundabout. In Brookhouse turn right up Littledale Rd next to the Black Bull pub. Follow this road out of Brookhouse and follow a sharp right bend by New House Farm. Pass Littledale Scout Camp on your right. Carry on up the hill until you reach Little Cragg car park at the top.

The rocky outcrop nearby is called Baines Cragg. On a clear day, there are fine views out over Morecambe Bay and up to the Lakeland fells.

- S** Walk back up the road towards Cragg Farm and at the cattle grid, take the signposted footpath to your left diagonally across the field.
- Use the stiles to cross the fence and wall and follow the path until you reach a track. Turn back right along the track and follow it until you come to the farmyard of Pott Yeats.

Ground-nesting lapwings breed in this area in spring and summer so please take care to limit disturbance.

Pott Yeats farmhouse was built in the late 17th Century and was formerly a Methodist meeting point for the parish until the new church was built in Brookhouse.

-  Go through the farmyard and take the farm track down to rejoin the road.

- [Alternative route: Stroll down the road straight from the car park and rejoin the main route where the farm track from Pott Yeats joins the road.]



Mr E Huddleston
of Pott Yeats

- Turn left and right down the hill until you reach the bridge over Udale Beck.

E Littledale Hall extension route, a longer circular route starts here (see description on page 20).

- Turn right up the private road. Follow the track for a short time until the footpath leads up to your left.
- The footpath follows on old track through woodland and up the hill into open fields. Follow the path across the fields crossing several field boundaries until you reach a track.  Cross the track and follow the raised line to your right.

This raised area was formerly a hedgerow, traditionally called a 'copp'.

[The Littledale Hall extension route rejoins here]

- Follow this path for a while before joining the track just before Belhill Farm.

Most of the woodland in Littledale survives as ancient woodland and is good habitat for upland woodland birds such as redstart and pied flycatcher.

There are a number of old quarry sites, gravel pits and coal pits in and around Littledale, indicating early industrial activity.

- When you reach the farm, don't go up to the house, but through the next gate into the old farmyard.
- On leaving the farmyard, follow the path through the field and down to your right. Keep going until you reach the footbridge over the Beck.

-  Climb up the hill following the track to a stile on your right. Cross this and follow the footpath over an old bridge and up to Skelbow Barn.

Before Skelbow Barn, a track to your left gives you access to Clougha and the moorland.

Continued on page 20



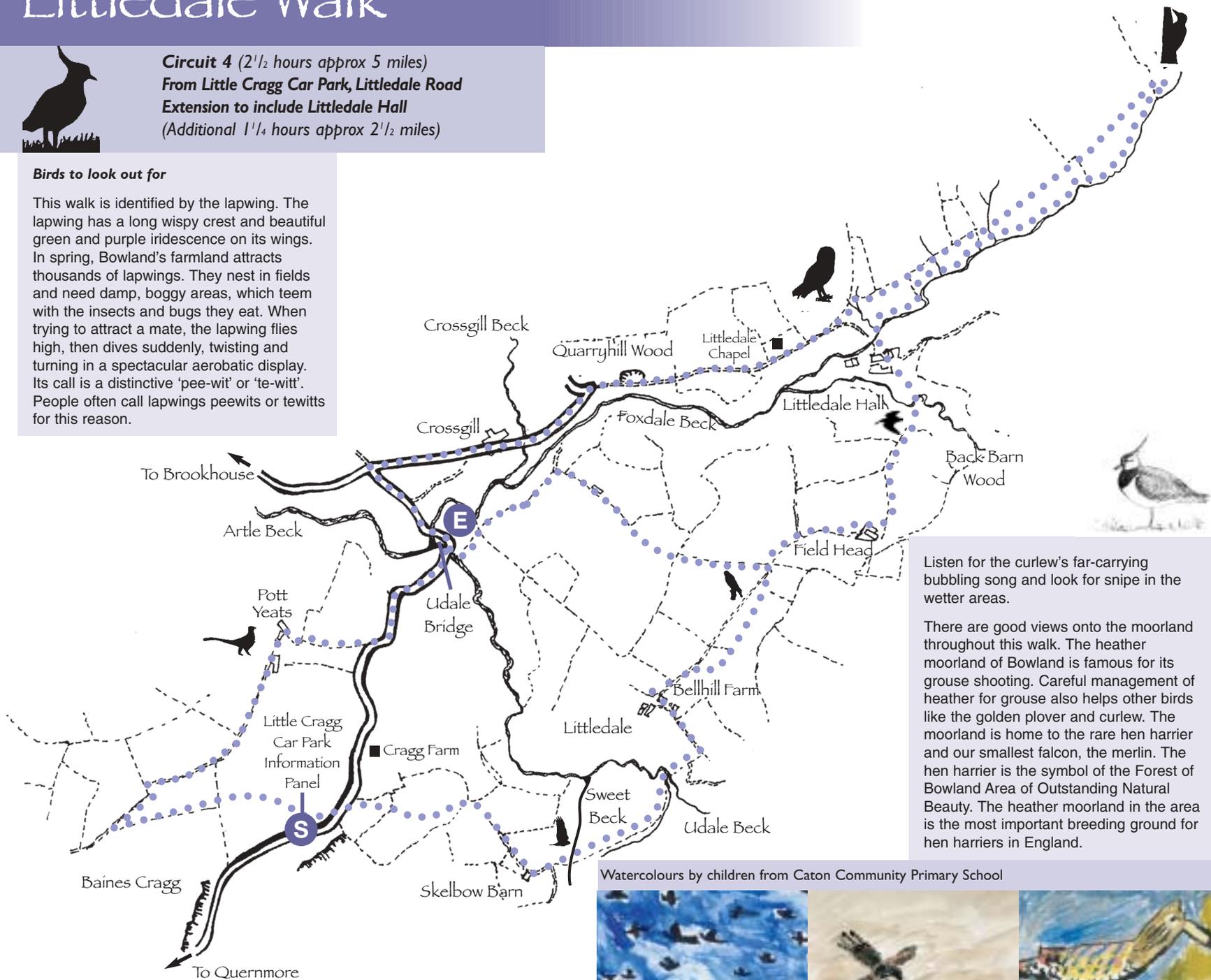
Littledale Walk



Circuit 4 (2½ hours approx 5 miles)
From Little Cragg Car Park, Littledale Road
Extension to include Littledale Hall
(Additional 1¼ hours approx 2½ miles)

Birds to look out for

This walk is identified by the lapwing. The lapwing has a long wispy crest and beautiful green and purple iridescence on its wings. In spring, Bowland's farmland attracts thousands of lapwings. They nest in fields and need damp, boggy areas, which teem with the insects and bugs they eat. When trying to attract a mate, the lapwing flies high, then dives suddenly, twisting and turning in a spectacular aerobic display. Its call is a distinctive 'pee-wit' or 'te-witt'. People often call lapwings peewits or tewitts for this reason.



Listen for the curlew's far-carrying bubbling song and look for snipe in the wetter areas.

There are good views onto the moorland throughout this walk. The heather moorland of Bowland is famous for its grouse shooting. Careful management of heather for grouse also helps other birds like the golden plover and curlew. The moorland is home to the rare hen harrier and our smallest falcon, the merlin. The hen harrier is the symbol of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The heather moorland in the area is the most important breeding ground for hen harriers in England.

Watercolours by children from Caton Community Primary School



Flock of Lapwings



Hen Harrier



Snipe

The fells of the Forest of Bowland are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its heather moorland and blanket bog habitats. The area is also a Special Protection Area for birds, principally because Bowland is the most important breeding area for hen harriers in England.

- The path leads down across the fields staying on the right hand side of the wall, then joins a track, up the hill and back to Little Cragg car park.

Littledale Extension Route

E After the bridge over Udale beck, continue along the road also crossing Foxdale Beck. At the junction turn right and continue along the road.

- Avoid the private road to Littledale Hall and continue along the road.

- When the road takes a sharp bend, follow the footpath along a track up the valley. Cross a stile and go through a gate.



On the left, pass Littledale chapel, which is now derelict and was built in 1849 as a 'Free' Church of England church for Reverend John Dodson of Littledale Hall.

 Go through another gate and when the track veers off right, the footpath climbs up the hill to a small plantation.

- Continue along the path, and then enter another wood through a gate. Keep the fence on your left and cross another stile.

 Cross the wooden plank bridge and follow the footpath rather than the track over to a gate in the wall. Follow the track up to the start of the trees and back down to a stile in the wall.

- Cross over a small footbridge and follow Closegill Beck along the valley bottom.
- Cross a small tributary beck and climb a stile to enter the wood. Follow the path out of the wood and across a field to the main track.
- Turn left up the main track, cross the main bridge and head towards the farmyard past the buildings of Littledale Hall.

Littledale Hall was built in mid 19th century in a Gothic style.

 Go through the gate and follow the track, then the path through the wood. Cross the footbridge and follow the path up the hill.

- Cross the stile to leave the wood and follow the path through the fields to Field Head. Follow the way markers to avoid the farmyard and join the track to the cattle grid.
- Rejoin the main route here.



"The 'Birds of Caton-with-Littledale' project has seen many different people and groups from the parish come together to celebrate the birds and wildlife of the area. The project has produced some wonderful pieces of artwork. It has been a pleasure to work with all concerned and special thanks must go to Caton Community Primary School, Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council, Caton footpath group, artist Sue Flowers, Arts Development Officer Pete Courtie, Countryside Officer Tarja Wilson and Parish Lengthsman Geoff Roberts, as well as the Local Heritage Initiative for making the project possible."

Lucy Barron RSPB Birds of Bowland Project Manager



"The school gate project has been one of the most exciting initiatives we've ever undertaken here at Caton Community Primary. From observing birds in their habitats with Lucy Barron of the RSPB to drawing and painting the birds back in school with artist in residence Sue Flowers and then helping in the design process, the children have made a tangible and lasting contribution to their school. From my point of view as head, it's been a real pleasure to see the children involved in such a meaningful project and to work alongside such dedicated and talented professionals."

John Rigby Headteacher, Caton Community Primary School.



"I hope you enjoy these walks as much as the *Caton-with-Littledale Footpath Group* have enjoyed selecting and checking them. We have tried to cover the wide range of different habitats in this area and to give a good range of walks for differing abilities. If you enjoy these walks we hope you will be encouraged to enjoy more of the footpaths in this beautiful part of the Lune Valley".

Joyce Pritchard Caton-with-Littledale Footpath Group.



"The village sign evolved from a collaboration between the community, the Parish Council and artist Sue Flowers. We hope the sign, which is a unique piece of art, will help bring a feeling of identity and ownership to everyone within the Parish of Caton-with-Littledale."

Dave Mason, Chairman, Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council.



"Working with the Community of Caton has been a wonderful insight into the particular relationships we develop with the land and landscape of our living and working environments. The importance of these varied landscapes as a range of habitats for birds within the Forest of Bowland has made the work even more fascinating. I hope some of this knowledge will remain within the community, through the participatory approach Lucy and I have taken. The artworks I have created have been made through the creativity of the people of Caton, drawing from ideas of children and the wider community. It has been a real pleasure to work with you all."

Sue Flowers Artist.

