



Point 6

You will see the ruin of an old building incorporated in the perimeter wall, which is the home of many animals. The wrens nest in the stones, mice live in the rubble on the floor, mosses have taken over the now defunct wooden lintels and the common lizard basks here as well.

Note the blackthorn that provides sloes in the autumn.

Follow the trail down beside the wall until you come to three magnificent fir trees at point 7. At least one of them is well over a hundred years old.

Point 7

The gully here contains a group of hazel, supplying nuts in the winter months. Look under the trees near the trail for nuts that have been opened.

Point 8

Here you will see a memorial stone with an evocative description that you may like to ponder about for a while. There are good examples of moss growth in this area on rocks and sycamore.

Follow the trail up the path, turn left uphill and head towards the observation hide, close to the starting point. The various seasons will affect the flora and fauna in the wood. Each season has something different to offer.

Point 9

Point 9 is the observation hide in the centre of the wood. It can be used after a walk around the trail or can be approached direct. Inside are some charts to help you identify the different wildlife to be found in the wood. The view from the hide allows you to look out onto the area where the roe deer feed. Several of the smaller trees in the wood show signs of scent marking by deer. Scratches on the bark with a dark strip show where the buck has rubbed his antlers and placed the scent secretion from the gland on his forehead. This is to mark his territory. Other important species in the vicinity here are bats, which are protected mammals.



LANGDALE

escape to the Lake District

Nature Trail

Birch Hill Wood Nature Trail

The Langdale Nature Trail, in Birch Hill Wood, behind Elterwater Hall, allows you to see the maximum wildlife with the minimum disturbance. The nine numbered points in this leaflet correspond to signs that indicate the route to be taken.

The best time to visit the Nature Trail is early morning or early evening. Just before you begin your journey. At the start of the Nature Trail you will see the storage facility for the Biomass boiler located in the hotel car park, this can hold 100 tonnes of wood fuel. Biomass is a renewable, low carbon fuel and both its production and use also brings additional environmental and social benefits.

Over the coming year we will be planting 100 broad leaf trees.

Caution! Please note that there are steep, uneven and slippery paths on the Nature Trail.

How to get to the starting point

Leave the Estate by the rear entrance into Elterwater village, turn right and cross the bridge.

Bear left, go past the Youth Hostel and turn right at the next Y junction by the Barn (part of Elterwater Hall).

Pass Elterwater Hall on your left, go up the track towards Little Langdale and the gate to Birch Hill Wood is in your left, a few metres after the Little Langdale footpath sign.

The Nature Trail is inside the gate and is well signed. Distance 1 mile. Allow one hour to cover the route; longer if you want to see and hear more.



Point 1

The Nature Trail starts inside the gate to the rear of Elterwater Hall, on the left of the track leading to Little Langdale. Following the signs, turn right, immediately inside the gate and follow the route up the hill. Before leaving you may wish to observe the yew on the left of the gate. You will see hazel, oak and beech, all within a few metres of where you are standing.

Point 2

You will see a small wet area on the right-hand side, which is the natural habitat of frogs and newts. It also provides a constant supply of water for the roe deer, badger and fox. A good example of moss taking over an old tree-stump and covering it completely is by the path side. There is considerable growth of rhododendron in this area.

Point 3

On your right is a boggy area extending almost to the perimeter wall. Several species of moss live here, and several types of lichen can be seen on the trees and on the ground. You will have from here a good view of Loughrigg Fell.

Point 4

The floor in this area gets more light than under the bushes so here you will see more plants. During the winter when the foliage is off the trees you have a good view of Wetherlam.

Following the trail you will see fallen trees have been left to rot down naturally, providing habitat for fungi and insects, and the insects will be food for birds.

As you move down the trail the open area on the left is the home of rabbits and these can generally be seen feeding in the early evening and early morning. Great views of Loughrigg Fell can be seen from here.

Point 5

Follow the trail down to the bottom of the wood. You then come to a seat provided here to enjoy the view of Elterwater Tarn. If you have binoculars, study the birds at the waters edge. If you keep quiet it will be not long before birds around you start to sing and move around again. Cross over a track, noting the old well 20 metres away (keep children away please). Pass the gateway on your right to point 6.

