



Ways Around The Bay

Route description Three Nature Reserves Trail

Discover the natural beauty of
Leighton Moss, Gait Barrows and
Trowbarrow Nature Reserves

Route Details

Length: 9.6 km / 6 miles
Time: Approx 3.5 hours
Grade: Moderate/Hard

Instructions

- a. From the RSPB Visitor Centre (#1) head straight through the sensory garden and turn left at the Skytower. Continue along the footpath, following it parallel to the road and across the wooden boardwalk until you reach a wide track (the Causeway). Turn left and head uphill towards the road.
- b. Take care as cars can travel very quickly (National Speed Limit). Cross over the road and turn right towards the wooden fingerpost (#2). Go through the gate into Trowbarrow Quarry. Continue straight on then take a right at the crossroads (#3) and follow the woodland footpath past a wooden gate (#4) and uphill to where the quarry opens out (#5).
- c. Take the wide footpath on the right-hand side then take a left (#6) and go past the big boulder known as the Shelter Stone onto a narrower path (#7). Follow this woodland path and continue straight ahead at the crossroads (#8) until you come to a wooden gate at the narrow road (#9). Turn right and follow the road until it becomes a footpath and enters Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve (#10).
- d. Stay on this path before turning right at the crossroads (at the oak waymarker, #11). Continue along the path as it follows the hedge across the field and goes through a gate on the left (#12) and diagonally across the next field to the corner (#13). Ignore the wooden gate and round the corner to the left passing through two more gates (#14 & #15).

Way marked route

Follow the numbered and arrowed purple waymarkers around route. Please use alongside the map provided.



- e. Stay on the track as it passes through the woodland (#16) and take the left-hand fork (#17) to pass through a small car park (#18) and reach the main road.
- f. Take care as cars travel very quickly (National Speed Limit). Turn left and go a short distance on the road until you reach a wooden fingerpost on the right (#19). Cross the road and go through the gate to continue straight through the field (#20), following the stone wall on your right, to the wooden gate at the far end (#21) where the path narrows into a woodland path. Follow this path as it winds its way through (#22) and where it joins another path, turn left. Pass the remains of an old lime kiln on your left and follow the path to a wooden gate (#23).
- g. The path skirts alongside the woods on the left before it cuts right, across the field (#24), narrows and runs next to a drystone wall before it opens out again at a gate (#25). Continue straight on this path before you cross over the road (#26). Take care to cross the road safely. Follow the path downhill to a wooden fingerpost (#27) and turn left to continue and cross over a narrow stream (#28).
- h. Continue straight on the path until you return to #11. At this point, make your return journey back to Leighton Moss on the path you have already followed. Purple way marker arrows mark the route back to the RSPB visitor centre.

Route developed by





Ways Around The Bay

Points of Interest

Three Nature Reserves Trail

Discovering and enjoying
Leighton Moss, Gait Barrows and
Trowbarrow Nature Reserves

Leighton Moss (#1)

The largest area of reedbed in North West England, since 1964 it has been owned and managed by the RSPB. It is home to many species including bitterns, marsh harriers and bearded tits.

Trowbarrow Quarry (#5 - #7)

The name originates from Saxon times, Trow for trough and Barrow for hill. Originally a small wooded hill, it became a quarry in 1857. It remained open for 100 years then became a Local Nature Reserve in 1997. It is run by Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape on behalf of Lancaster City Council.

Shelter Stone (#6)

This is a huge block of limestone left over from when Trowbarrow was a working quarry. Quarrymen used this stone for shelter when blasting the rock face.

Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve (NNR) (#10 - #18)

This NNR focuses on conserving limestone pavements and their flora. Fairly rare plants including angular Solomon's Seal and dark red helleborine can be found. Quarrying stopped here in 1977 and the NNR was created in 1981 when Limestone Pavement Orders were introduced to ensure their legal protection.

Haweswater (#11 & #28)

This is one of Britain's finest examples of a lowland post-glacial marl lake. 14,000 years ago in the last ice age, glaciers covered this part of the country. Moving ice scoured out the basin which then filled with groundwater to become a lake.

Dormice boxes (#18)

In 2021, 30 hazel dormice were released into the National Landscape as part of a reintroduction programme. Multiple organisations worked together to make this happen.

Coldwell Meadow (#19 - #21)

This area of land was purchased in 2018 by the Landscape Trust. 2026 marks 40 years of the Landscape Trust, a charity supporting the management of the Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape.

Carved bench in Coldwell Meadow (#20)

Coppice Co-op, a workers co-operative specialising in traditional woodland management and crafts alongside Stations of Welcome, 'the first Muslim women's Station Adoption group' from Accrington, collaborated together to carve this lovely bench.

Limestone pavement at Back Wood (#22)

Limestone pavement is comprised of clints, solid rocky platforms and grikes, narrow fissures which run in between them.

Limekiln (#23)

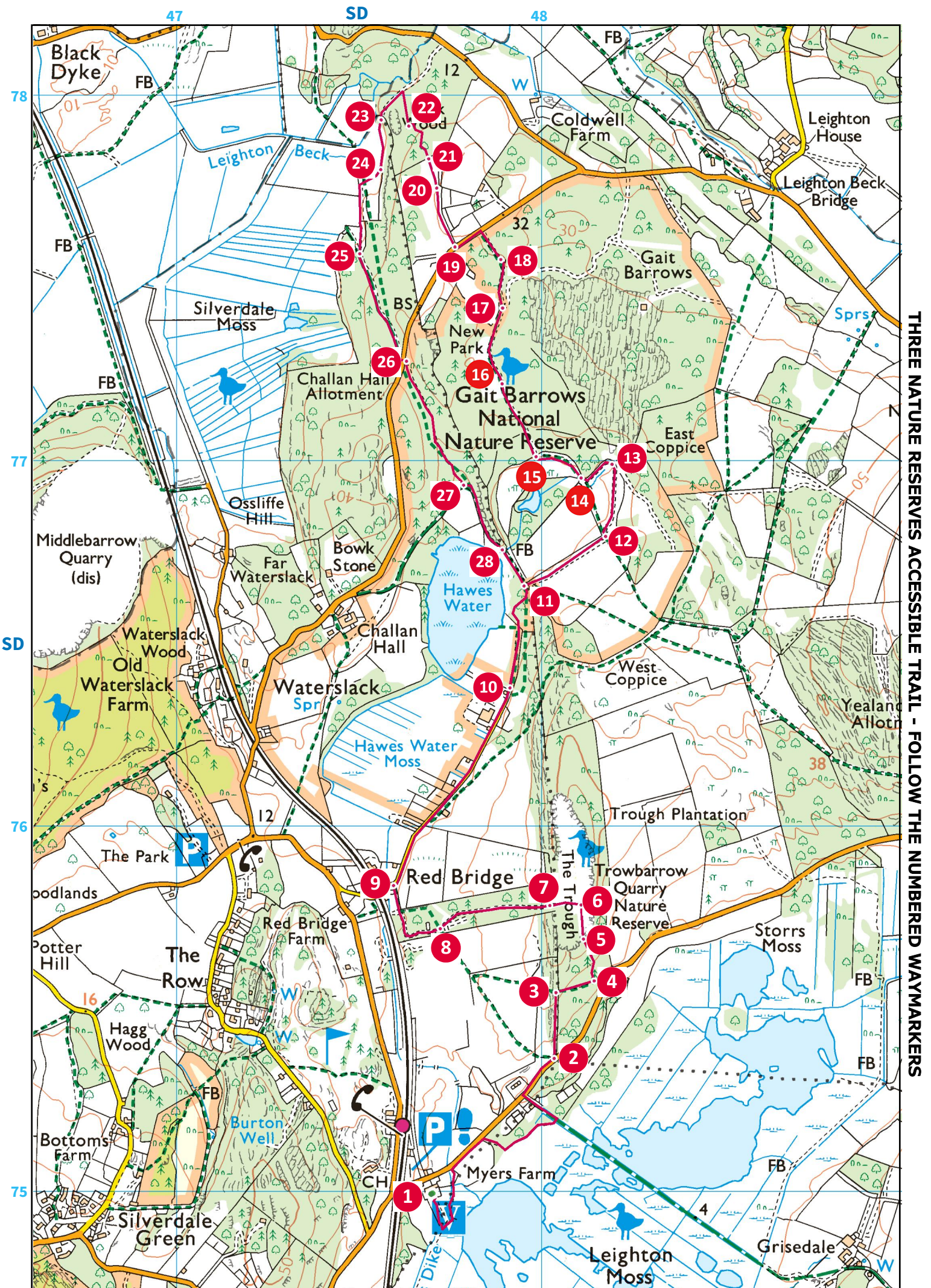
Many were built between 1750 and 1850 for lime production. Limestone was alternated with charcoal and wood and left to burn for several days, producing lime which could be spread on fields or for making mortar.

Good rest stops

- Several benches at Leighton Moss around the reserve.
- Benches next to # 11 and # 28 for views over Haweswater.
- Restored cowshed sheltered seating area across field from # 11.
- Bench at # 20 overlooking Arnside Knott & the mosses.
- Bench at # 25 overlooking Silverdale Mosses to Arnside.
- Bench just before # 28.

Key

[#no.] refers to numbered purple waymarkers along the route.



THREE NATURE RESERVES ACCESSIBLE TRAIL - FOLLOW THE NUMBERED WAYMARKERS