

REISKIN MUSEUM



BRANTWOOD

*This booklet is intended as a guide to possibilities of experience, and you are advised to check the published timetables for the Coniston Launch*

*and use the booklet along with an ordnance survey map of the area. There are also other walks around Coniston, some of which link up with those in this book, and with experience you might also explore these.*

*Look out for this sign to indicate things to do at home. These can be found at the back of the book.*



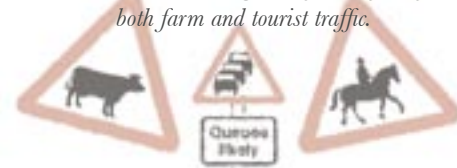
*Take a notebook of your own along, and make your own notes about things you experience.*

*Always remember:*

*Watch and listen*

*much more is visible when moving quietly.*

*This is particularly important when crossing our roads which are narrow, winding and often very busy with both farm and tourist traffic.*



*Leave nothing but your footprints  
or perhaps a natural sculpture created from things you  
have found on your way...  
and look for tracks and footprints other than  
those of fellow humans*



Conistone Water and its surroundings are associated with some of the most fascinating characters, geology and stories of the English Lake District



Here are sites inhabited by ancient people - some say GIANTS - a last resting place of a modern day hero who died pursuing the world water speed record.



The haunts of authors who have inspired children and fed the imagination with stories



of adventures on the Lake, and the homes of characters who have influenced some of the most influential thinkers and artists of recent times.



Legend tells that the first people to settle in the valley were Vikings, led by one ROLF, who sailed into Rusland pool, and that the first miners dug in fact not for the copper that they eventually discovered, but for GOLD.



## BEGIN THE WALK



1

We begin our walk at the **RUSKIN MUSEUM**, walking out of the gate to the right and following the road to the **GATEHOUSE** at Holywath. (It was here, **Kate RAVEN**, Ruskin's favourite housemaid lived after her marriage to the local Tailor.



How many people with **BIRD SURNAMES:**

- F. Sparrow
- Mr Crow
- J. Byrd
- E.A. Swallow
- J. Swift

and these are **BIRD CHRISTIAN NAMES:**

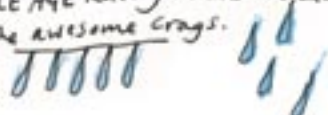
- Mavis...
- Martin...
- Robin...
- Jay...
- Merlin...



RUSKIN reminds us that without traditional British weather there would be no LAKE district ~

without our frequent rain, there would be no magnificent waterfalls, without SNOW, and ice - no erosion of the rocks which create the mountain landscape.

without HISTORY (which is also geography, which is also history...) - no ICE AGE leaving behind the lakes and the awesome crags.



Don't resent the weather if it's less than your idea of perfect, but ENJOY the effects of light and colour, the cloud formations, light on water, scents of woodland and water, the changes the seasons bring.

TUNE IN - and turn on to NATURE in all her glory...

IT DOESN'T COME MUCH BETTER THAN THIS.



"Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating: there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather."

John Ruskin

2



Silver Bank Barn is the next building

The slit windows are for ventilation. (without ventilation to allow it to dry, the hay stored here - if it's still green and damp generates heat and causes fires.) hence the slit windows

WHY IS THE BACK DOOR SO BIG? DOES HALF WAY UP A WALL?



WHY IS THE back door so BIG?

SLIT WINDOWS ARE FOR VENTILATION

3

OFF THE ROAD AT LAST!

Turn RIGHT on to the Bridleway and walk under Yewdale Crags.

"A little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money."

John Ruskin

pass through the gate notice that it closes automatically, due to the ingenious rock weight.

Not all gates are self-closing so please remember to check that they are shut after you.



DURING YOUR STAY  
Spot other ingenious gate fasteners.



(There is at least one in Cumbria with hinges made from an old Wellington boot!)



PAUSE frequently on this walk to listen  
to the birdsong



Do Birds  
have  
favourite  
trees?

This will vary according to where you are.  
(—Woodland, water - or Open Country —)



How many different calls  
can you identify  
and what are the birds  
singing about?

Twenty owls roost in the trees  
in this wood.



DEER watch from the hillside  
SQUIRRELS leave evidence  
of their hazelnut feasts.

MOVE SLOWLY & WATCH.  
You may be lucky enough to  
see some of these....

And "Tread lightly, talk softly...."



be alert

—and you will be surprised how much more you see.



**IF WALKING EARLY OR LATE IN THE YEAR REMEMBER:**

*"Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you."* John Ruskin

To the left Borrowdale volcanic rock, and you can clearly see here how the ice has picked and plucked at the rock over the millennia to create the rock that gave this valley its identity. To the right are ferns seemingly growing out of the bare rock top of a dry stone wall.

*"Mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery."*

John Ruskin



There is a belief in certain circles that the spores of the fern Golden Polypody can make one disappear...



**BRANTWOOD**

has a wonderful fern garden where you may be able to track down this potentially useful wonder.



*(Useful in terms of getting out of jobs?)*



TAKE A REST BETWEEN THE TWO WELL ENDS.

Smell coconut? That's the gorse,  
used for fodder in the past.

NETTLES too have a distinctive smell  
and the delicious young nettle tops were eaten  
as a vegetable as well as  
being used to dye cloth.



Always nearby there will be DOCK LEAVES  
Useful if you're nettled, but you do need to  
rub HARD...

Wild Roses have glorious smell and their  
fruits in autumn are a rich source of  
Vitamin C. familiar to many older people  
as it was served with school rice pudding  
- although it was regarded as 'vulgar' to  
mix it in and turn the awful 'pudding pink'!

FOXGLOVES, known to some as  
DEAD WOMAN'S TUMBLES  
were used in folk medicine  
to ease heart complaints,  
and are a source of digitalis.

"The foxglove tells us that our life is a  
whole, consisting of youth and age, of  
flowering moments and dying moments of buds  
and seeds, of uses and needs.

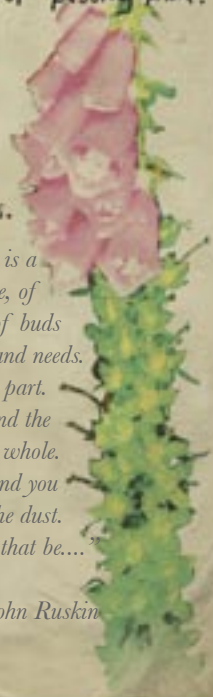
It is not one big blossom, but a whole part.

Its wealth resides in its wholeness and the  
relationship of all its parts to the whole.

The dust gathers to make foxgloves, and you  
and me we too can shape the dust.

What shape will that be...?"

*The Nature of Life - John Ruskin*



Look at the female LARCH tree. — it has cones  
 — or if you are here earlier in the year 'roses';  
 The delicate flowers illustrated so perfectly  
 by Ruskin.

— Six steps up the  
 bank to the left  
 and a turn round  
 will give a view  
 to the main road.

Wonder what it was like  
 before the modern  
 motor transport?

On the horizon can be seen radio and  
 phone masts above Grizedale Forest.

— bird life is  
 well catered for  
 with owl holes in barns  
 to give shelter to these  
 welcome birds, which keep  
 down vermin along with  
 places like crow-stepped  
 gables on which birds can  
 perch.



Here's a door in the wall which  
 may just lead into someone's  
 garden, or it could perhaps

Lead to

- \* The Secret Garden \*
- \* Alice's Wonderland \*
- \* The Pied Piper's lair \*
- \* A Secret Country \*



... or even a fairy mound...?

**AWAY TO THE WOODS!**

REMEMBER, The more quietly  
 you walk, the more carefully you  
 look and listen, the more  
 you will see. Sight is crucial  
 in the animal world  
 to detect the motion of  
 predators or prey.



be alert



LISTEN to the beek chuckling.  
What could it be laughing  
about?

Beek is a Norse word still  
in use in Cumbria for a stream.

AND IT MAKES YOU THINK...

How many raindrops do you  
suppose it takes to make a puddle?



Are there holes in the sky,  
where the rain gets in?  
- Spike Milligan thought so,  
and if there are do these same  
holes get used and shared by  
stars when they shine at night?



What exactly are birds chattering about?  
Are they talking to themselves or to each other?  
And why does the wind whisper? What is so secret?

"Among a hundred men there is one who can think,  
but only one among a thousand can see."

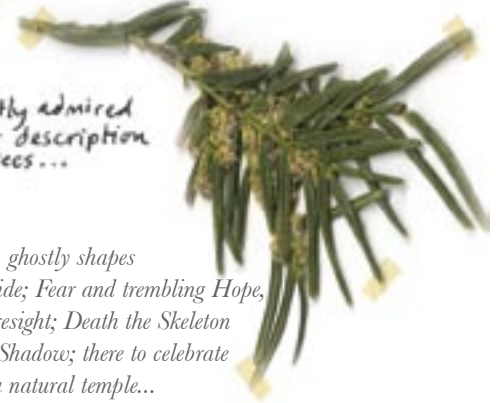
John Ruskin

SO look at things and where they grow - ivy, moss and  
lichen on trees, moss too-covering rocks and  
boulders, headstools on dead wood and for the  
really observant, a Witch's Broom in the birch tree.

"Stare. It's the way to educate your eyes. Stare, pry, listen.  
Eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long."

Walker Evans (American photographer)

After crossing the second bridge, the mystery  
of the valley's name unfolds. Just look at  
all the yew trees. No wonder the crags  
and the valley were named after them!



Ruskin greatly admired  
Wordsworth's description  
of yew trees...

".... ghostly shapes  
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,  
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton  
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate  
As in a natural temple...  
United worship."

Since ancient times the Yew has been viewed  
as a protector of the dead.

It has become a common feature in graveyards  
across Europe as a guardian against evil and  
negative forces.

Some people even believed  
that the removal or cutting down of the tree  
would result in misfortune.

The location of churches has often been associated  
with Pagan sites of worship and perhaps this  
is one reason why so many are found together.

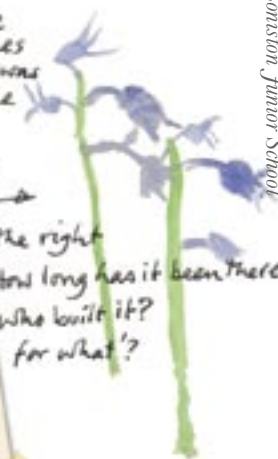
The tree is also a symbol of immortality, with the  
tree being able to live to considerable age.

The yew is also poisonous to cattle ~ a good reason to ensure gates are closed and sheep and cattle kept where the farmer intends!



SHEEP all over the place in Cumbria!  
But did you know that here its not "to spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar" but in fact it's "don't spoil the SHEEP for a ha'porth of tar" - and that was because it was false economy to be grudging with sheep salve which, in the past was a mixture of Stockholm tar and rancid butter!

HERE, when the river is in spate the white lady waterfall rushes under the bridge ~ the bridge was built high to accommodate the back after heavy rain.  
Here too there's a ford and a bluebell wood to the right.



An ancient ruined wall to the right



How long has it been there  
who built it?  
for what?

The majority of stone walls in Cumbria were built between 1720 and 1850 although some are much older. By the early eighteenth century the majority of farmsteads and hamlets were surrounded by small irregular fields and this was known as in-by-land. In-by-land walls were usually built of river cobbles and glacial debris.



More land was brought into use as more food was needed and the lower valley sides were converted to pasture and enclosed. These fields became known as intakes, and were more regular in shape. The intake walls were built using locally quarried stone rather than clearance stone.



The Enclosure Act of 1801 abolished the rights to much of the common land and much was parcelled off.

It was at this date the walls appeared which have become an integral part of the landscape. Fortunately a large amount of common land remains



By the water you will see alders. These trees have played their part in history. In the past alder trees were renowned for their hardness and failure to rot in wet conditions.

The water resistance made this wood the ideal material for constructing drains in mediaeval towns and cities. Alder was also used to make hard-wearing and waterproof clog soles for poorer people as, along with its waterproof properties it is a poor conductor of heat.

The green dye extracted from the flowers of the alder was used to camouflage the garments of outlaws like Robin Hood and, it is said, that fairies colour their clothes with this too, to conceal them from human eyes...

Alder leaves placed in the shoes at the beginning of a long journey keep the feet cool and prevent swelling, - and diviners in search of water hidden underground are known to often use forked branches taken from the Alder tree traditionally called 'Wishing Rods'

"Remember that the most beautiful things in the world are the most useless; peacocks and lilies for instance."

John Ruskin

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

Henry David Thoreau

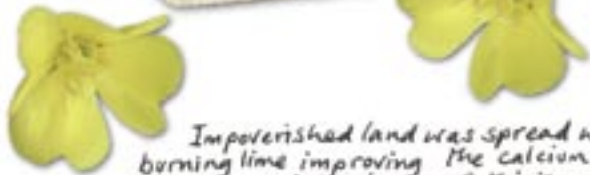
Looking skywards up into the tree canopy is reminiscent of gazing into the vaulted roof of a cathedral.

"The sky is the part of creation in which nature has done for the sake of pleasing man."

Over the fields to the right stand the remains of an old lime kiln, a reminder of eighteenth century land improvement practice.

John Ruskin

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Impoverished land was spread with burning lime improving the calcium content and the legacy of this is evident in springtime when the surrounding area is rich in primroses.

Look here at the trees roots often so shallowly rooted that they creep over and cling around the rocks. Consequently they are vulnerable in storms particularly evident here in the many blown-over tree stumps.



The huge boulder to the right in the field must have crashed down from the crags above during some long ago storm. ~ what a skin that must have made!

There's cuckoo spit in the grass in early summer too. Look up at the magnificent scires to the left.



Taking GREAT CARE, cross the road at this point and take the track signed to Low Yendale farm cottage, with its bed and breakfast sign.

The hedgerow down this lane is full of hazel, beech and hawthorn with flurries of wild flowers growing beneath ~ or, as Ruskin preferred to say:

**WONDERFUL** to think how many animals, birds and plants hedgerows like this one support. (To roughly date a hedgerow it is said that one should count the tree and shrub species in one or more 30 yard stretches and then, applying Dr. Max Hooper's rule assume that in each 30 yard stretch each shrub species represents a 100 years.)

"There are no such things as Flowers there are only gladdened Leaves"

**RAVEN CRAG** in the distance to the left.

~ These Ravens get everywhere, first there was Kate, now the descendants of the birds Wordsworth came to this Crag to 'birdnest' for eggs. **NAUGHTY!**

~ Their ravenous cries still-echo round the valley.

The collective noun for a group of Ravens is an "unkindness".



Make up names for groups of things. The collective noun for a group of ricks is a clamour, Swallows are a flight, Swifts are a flock, but Curlews are a herd ~ and you thought herds referred to animals...

How about a snuggle of grannies, or a Bawl of babies...?



**LOW YENDALE BARN** a handsome building

How simple and how clever to build in the string course to divert the (rather frequent) rain away from the wall - and how thoughtful to build in the larger owl holes to encourage these beautiful birds to keep down the vermin.

An Owl's ears are asymmetrical.

The left ear points downwards and is higher than the owl's eye level.

The right ear is lower and points upwards.

And how about your ears, are they perfectly symmetrical?



There's evidence of an ancient pack horse bridge here, beneath your feet are the setts and a careful glance will show that the bridge ends have been extended, the ancient one taking up the space in the middle.



6

Arthur Ransome stayed here in 1908

The beck chatters away  
as it winds its way down  
— there are those who  
think Wordsworth's poetry  
doesn't rhyme as he rhymes  
'water' with 'chatter'.  
Listen to the local dialect  
and you'll soon hear that  
round here it's 'watter'...



That's not fly tipping in the beck, it's  
a water gate, re-cycling old farm gate  
to catch debris as it comes down the  
Swallow beck after heavy rain, thus  
preventing the beck becoming choked  
and blocked.



Over the sound of the beck can often  
be heard the mewing of the hawks  
who inhabit the crags opposite.

Bilberries and beechmast to the right  
Delicious but labour intensive to  
gather and not the solution if you  
want an instant snack!



The Starving Hiker...



Follow the signs to BOON Crag, walk  
along the old paved surface  
that enabled the carts and  
sleds to transport slate  
from the Youdale Valley to the  
head of the lake for  
transportation on barges.



It's irresistible to look back but do try not  
to fall over as you take your fill of the  
ever-changing scenery...

The ancient hedge is now showing  
evidence of holly - used as fodder  
in the past (ouch!), honeysuckle,  
hazel, beech, birch and rose.  
The sheer variety is a sign of  
the great age of such hedges.



(Wood Aven known as herb bennet  
used for the treatment of  
mouth ulcers, skin infections and  
diarrhoea) buttercups, Vetch,  
Sorrel (edible) and a variety of  
wildflowers grow beneath.



The old gate stoup on the right of the track no longer has a gate - is it a retired gate stoup perhaps? Although no gate hangs there now this stone is covered with ancient lichens.

"Nature is painting for us, day after day, pictures of infinite beauty if only we have the eyes to see them."  
John Ruskin

Look closely and discover a miniature landscape - and perhaps the odd face...?

More biberries to the left of this gate, and from here a good view of BANK GROUND - the "holy haw" of "Swallows and Amazons".

Ash was used for spears in the old days and the Norsemen named their enchanted ash *Yggdrasil* and made it sacred to Odin. This magical tree's roots extended through the universe, and under its branches the norms dispensed justice.

To the ancient Britons this was the tree of rebirth from which Druidical stents were made.

Ash is the tree of power, resident in water and carrying of an ash stake was here protecting against drowning. The Greeks declared this tree sacred to the sea god Poseidon.

Ash, long smooth and grey  
Born from green or old.  
Buy up all that comes your way,  
Worth their weight in gold!

To the right, a pollarded ash which, like the gorse and holly was used in the past as fodder for sheep and cattle.



Bistort grows here, the young leaves, used in spring to make Easter ledge pudding, a local delicacy full of iron and essential vitamins after the deprivations of a winter diet. The Pidding was boiled in a bag with pearl barley and served with meat.

NOTE:

Tastes disgusting!

To the left stands an old farm with another magnificent barn.

This farm was originally a traditional Long Horse where the animals were kept at the end of the building nearest the path. Meanwhile the "pigguss" (or it might have been the privy) was located at the far end of the building - the smells it generated being as far as possible from the living quarters as, particularly in hot weather and before the W.C. was invented, life must have been overwhelmed by nasty riffs. . .

7

Today however, there are some wonderful riffs as you pass through the National Trust wood yard with its wonderful smell of freshly cut and stored timber.

A THOUGHT

If someone can't see, they're blind and if someone can't hear, they're deaf, so what do you call people who can't smell?

The cottage to the right has some intriguing overhanging gables.

In the wall at the end of this stretch of the walk is a George V. post-box, and alongside it a milk stand 12-gallon churns (or 'kits' as they were termed locally) were left here for collection after milking.



a milk stand



### SIGNPOST TO CONISTON 1 MILE

Look for the spinning gallery at Born Crag. We live in an age of light the like of which our ancestors never dreamed.

Notice the porches on old cottages in this part of the world or, inside an old building the window seats?

Such features were to enable people to make the most of daylight. In the past one got up with the Sun and went to bed at sunset or soon after.

Candle or rush light is limiting for needlework, reading or any other activity that requires a good light and candles were expensive.

To maximise the light a tallow candle was placed in the candlestick and a peeled rush, dipped in mutton fat (a rush light) secured diagonally in the bracket in front of the candle, thus giving three lights. It is said that the expression "to burn the candle at both ends" comes from this economy.



The spinning gallery, common to many old Cumbrian farms allowed people to spin and weave outdoors, if the weather was less than perfect.

Growing nearby is alkanet with its small intense blue flowers and prickly hairy leaves. This was used as a dye plant, producing a red dye (plants do not necessarily give the colours you might expect when you observe their flowers or foliage) and where plants like this grow can often give clues to the fact that cloth was worked here.



Stand on the bridge and look up to the right where you will see a number of apertures in the slate wall. These are bee holes where the straw bee skeeps were kept to protect them from the weather.



Here also grows the yellow pimpernel. To the right, across the fields is The Labyrinth, now flooded and full of rhododendrons.

- a haunt for heron (look for something that resembles a walking stick...)

8



The three pines to your right are said to have been planted to remind people of the Trinity.

To the left of the main road is the site of the original Waterhead Inn (now further down the road) the original demolished because it spoiled the landowner - Mr. Marshall's view!



The beck here is known as School Beck. There was a Dame School at Boon Crag. This giving the beck its name.



Until the 1960's this beck was the border between Hawkshead and Coniston, consequently some of the German miners who came to work at the copper mines appear in the Hawkshead Church registers rather than those of Coniston church and there are still surnames borne by local people showing that their ancestors were some of these men.

Here there's a good view of the Lake opposite is Kirkby Quay.

Walk on to the Waterhead Hotel.

Across the lake is a clear view of Tent Lodge. The Blackett's horse in "Swallows and Amazons". At the time this book was written the horse belonged to Miss Holt, a daughter of a wealthy Liverpool shipping family.

Continue down to Blue Bird Lodge, originally the stable block for the Waterhead Hotel opposite.

It was at the Waterhead Hotel that Ruskin's friends were put up when visiting Brantwood. Here Charles Darwin and Charles Dodgson A.K.A. Lewis Carroll stayed and, more recently the contralto Kathleen Ferrier.

It was also here in 1939 that that Malcolm Campbell threw a huge party for the children of Coniston after breaking the water speed record. Continue down to the boat landing to catch the boat to Brantwood.



## CONISTON BOATING CENTRE

10

The same water that existed on earth millions of years ago is still present today. Consequently the water that comes from your tap could contain molecules that Neanderthal man drank...

Overall the amount of water on our planet has remained the same for two billion years

### You should never drink water straight from a lake or river, as it can be damaging to your health.

At this point you will have a good view of the lake that the Vikings called, Turstin, 'water meaning Thorstein's water which in turn gave W. G. Collingwood the title of his novel "Thorstein of the Mare," the twelve year old Arthur Ransome's favourite book.

Like many lakes and waterways Coniston Water has throughout history, been by turns a fishery and source of food - an important source of fish for the monks of Furness Abbey who owned the lake and much of the surrounding land in 13th & 14th centuries - a carrier of goods and a highway for transporting materials and people.

*"No human being, how ever great, or powerful, was ever so free as a fish."*

John Ruskin



At the jetty TAKE TIME TO LOOK AT THE VIEW DOWN THE LAKE, whilst waiting for the boat, Not far from here Donald Campbell died making his attempt on the World Water Speed record on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1967

In the late 1930's the threat of a Second World War was very real. Speed Ace Sir Malcolm Campbell had previously used stretches of water in Switzerland and Italy was looking for a suitable stretch of water in Britain on which he could continue his pursuit of the world water speed record: He refused to consider Windermere as an option because his friend Sir Henry Segrave had died there in 1930, making his attempt on the record.

Coniston Water was ideal, being straight and having no islands in the middle to break up a clear run; although shallow at the edges it shelves suddenly to a considerable depth and for these reasons Sir Malcolm, one of the few land speed heroes to die a natural death, chose this particular stretch of water.



During his lifetime he set the water speed record no less than four times. His highest speed being 141.740 mph in Bluebird K4, On August 19<sup>th</sup> 1939 on Coniston water. Sir Malcolm's son Donald chose this stretch of water on which to continue their attempts.



Endeavouring, yet again to better the record. Donald died in his boat Bluebird K7 on January 4th 1967 and he remains the only person to set both land and water speed records in the same year (1964).

Donald, when asked by a journalist if he was not afraid of death made the prophetic reply

*"If I have to go, old boy, I hope I'm going ruddy fast at the time."*

Donald Campbell



The Bluebird Cafe building at the Brat landing dates from 1860. Built by the Furness Railway Company it accommodated the crew of the original steam yacht, Gondola. This Yacht, gave Ransome the idea for Captain Flint's house boat, in "Swallows and Amazons" and this fictional boat was also modelled on 'Esperance' (now at Windermere Steamboat Museum.)

Malcolm Campbell extended the building in 1947 for the jet fired Bluebird K4, which was too large to fit in the boathouse at Pier Cottage. In the same year it became his headquarters.



Donald Campbell wrote: "Life is an eternal challenge, a variant on Maeterlinck's theme that the Bluebird of happiness is by the side of each and every one of us, always within reach, yet, if pursued to catch and possess, is beyond our grasp..."



Father and son both attempted to pursue Maeterlinck's Bluebird on land and water. Donald died pursuing that dream.

Board the boat at The Boat Landing. The friendly - and extremely knowledgeable - crew will be happy to answer your questions as you travel with them. They also give an excellent commentary, which should help identify buildings and locations on your trip.



Across the lake, the woods on the opposite shore are closely linked with the charcoal burning industry associated with the metal smelting process but charcoal was also a constituent in the production of gunpowder, which was produced in the surrounding areas, well into the twentieth century.

Arthur Ransome mentions charcoal burning in "Swallowdale" and "Swallows and Amazons"

§ At the head of the lake is Monk Coniston, once the home of Mr. Marshall the man who pulled down the original Waterhead Hotel because he felt his view of the lake was spoiled.

§ To your left is Pier Cottage. Gothic in style, Pier Cottage was built by John Beaver, a keen fisherman who lived at The Thwaite. In the 1860's it became the home of Captain Felix Hammill, the Commodore of the Furness Railway Company and at this time it was also the berth for the steam yacht Gondola.



Capt Hamill

Pier Cottage was where both Campbells kept their Bluebird boats and was used by both from 1939. To the left of the pier can be seen the slipway, built for Gondola. Most of the The point on which Pier Cottage is built is man-made and built from railway slag. Also tucked in just behind Pier Cottage is Kirkby Quay.

The launch on which you are travelling now collects passengers from the Waterhead Jetty. In summer among the reeds here is a riot of sweet smelling Meadowsweet and Purple Loosestrife with its 6-petalled, bright purple flowers. Prehistoric man used reeds for swift flying arrow shafts; later they were peeled and dipped in mutton fat to make rush lights to supplement the - much more costly - candlelight.

Come into the garden All - for the Black Bat night...

§ As the boat turns to sail down the lake Tent Lodge is visible on the opposite (port) side.

It was here Tennyson spent his honeymoon and got so carried away on his long solitary rambles during which he composed his poetry, that he frequently missed the gate on his way back! Eventually the gateposts were painted white in an attempt to draw his attention to the fact he'd reached home!



Next comes Bank Ground, the "Holly How" of "Swallows and Amazons" where Roger tacked down the field to the lake. In Ransome's time there were two bathouses on the shore where there are now three.

11

To the left of Bank Ground lies Lane Head; the family home of the Collingwoods and W. G. Collingwood, writer and artist who acted as secretary to John Ruskin. It was here at Lane Head that Arthur Ransome learned to sail.

This is a good point to look over the lake to the cottages above Coniston Village known as The Banks.



Built in the 1860s and 70s this was housing for the married miners and their families. Above the Banks and slightly to the left can be seen the last working quarry on the Old Man. This is Brossen Stone quarry where the green slate is quarried.

From here there's a fine view of the Coppermines Valley (if it's not raining...)

Above the right hand shore can be seen the Catholic Church to which Ruskin gave stained glass because although raised as an Evangelical Christian he liked the Catholic priest preferred him to the Anglican vicar (so the Church of England missed out!)

§ Next comes the Coniston Sailing Club, the club house of which was the original copper ore warehouse for Coniston Hall, formerly the home of the wealthy (Le) Fleming family before they made their home at Rydal Hall.

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The (Le) Flemings owned the mineral rights in this area and it was here, from the copper ore warehouse that the ore was loaded into barges for transportation down the lake.



Coniston Hall is the oldest building in the area, originally dating back to 1250. It is situated about a mile from the village and was bought ~ and gradually restored ~ by the National Trust in 1972. It has some of the tallest chimneys in the county, (probably built as a statement of wealth as much as to counteract the downdraft and prevent a smoke-filled room) Superstition says that, as the Devil liked to hide in hot corners the chimneys were built to a circular design, consequently he had nowhere to hide...



As you travel look up and notice the colour of the sky reflected in the water.

§ Notice to the solar panels on the boat.

In 2005 The Coniston Ferry Services who run Coniston Launch were the first boat operators to convert their boats to solar-electric power to reduce environmental pollution. Energy is trickled down from the advanced solar panels on the roof to the batteries beneath the deck (the heavy batteries also reduce the need for ballast) Carbon emissions are reduced and this also makes the motors quieter. In bad weather a diesel motor provides back up. This gives a good opportunity to relax in peace and listen to the sound of the water...



Carbon emissions before conversion were in the region of 5 tonnes per boat. They have now been reduced to 2 tonnes.

This is a good point to 'take your pencil for a walk.' Don't look at your notebook, just follow the line of the hills with your eye and trace it, without looking down, onto your notebook. Listen to the commentary and the crew will name the hills for you. Later you can make a Calligram round the shape of the hills.



You are now approaching Torver Jetty. 13

§ It was near this spot that Donald Campbell died making his attempt on the World Water Speed record on January 4th 1967.

Campbell's first run down the lake on the morning of January 4<sup>th</sup> 1967 went well, achieving a top speed of 297 m.p.h.

He turned for the return run and, as he passed the start of the measured kilometre, she was travelling at over 320 m.p.h. reaching a top speed of approximately 328 m.p.h.

Then something went wrong...  
His final words were:

"Pitching a bit down here...Probably from my own wash...Straightening up now on track...Rather close to Peel Island...Tramping like mad...er... Full power...Tramping like hell here... I can't see much... and the water's very bad indeed...I can't get over the top.. I'm getting a lot of bloody row in here... I can't see anything.. I've got the bows up... I've gone...oh..."

Bluebird flipped and disintegrated at a speed in excess of 300 m.p.h. midway between the Torver Jetty and the building on the opposite shore, she sank in 144ft. of water.

The wreckage of Campbell's boat was recovered on 8 March 2001 when diver Bill Smith, who had been inspired to look for the wreck after hearing the Marillion song "out of this world" written about Campbell and Bluebird, brought the wreck from the bed of the lake.



Campbell's body was recovered from the lake on May 24, 2001. On August 10<sup>th</sup> of that year, the Barrow-in-Furness Coroner decided that, based on DNA evidence the remains found near the wreck of Bluebird were those of the late Donald Campbell. On 12 September 2001 after a funeral service in Coniston he was laid to rest in Coniston cemetery at the edge of Coniston Water, thirty-five years after his death in the lake this headstone features a carved bluebird.

When Bill Smith found the wreck of Bluebird Cumbria, like the rest of the British Isles was under severe restrictions imposed by the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

Consequently there were few but local people to witness this historic occasion

Similarly repatriation of the funeral at St. Andrew's Church was overtaken by the events of 9/11 and consequently received relatively little publicity nationally.



Opposite on Fir Island Cormorants roost ~ Coniston has only two islands this, and Peel Island much further south. There was a third 'floating' island but this became dislodged in a storm many years ago and has become part of the shoreline.

Floating islands are the origin of "disappearing island" legends such as the Isle of Avalon.

For bird spotters there are also grey lag, mute swan, Canada geese, buzzards, heron, Sandpipers and oystercatchers. Along with these can be seen water birds among which are Coot, tufted duck, goosander, red-breasted merganser, dabchicks, Golden-eye, pochard, mallard and great-crested grebe.



The forest on the opposite shore is Grijedale, well worth a visit to walk among the wind-eroded forest sculptures.



Deep in the deciduous forest is 'Dogs Home', the hidden cottage of 'Picts and Martyrs'. These 'cottages' were originally the homes of the coppice workers who worked here.



There are sites of three Georgian Viewing Stations on the shores of Conistone Water one being near the head of the lake. Beck Leven on the shore here looks across to the mountains and gives a splendid view of Dow Crag, Conistone Old Man, with Brosson Stone Quarry on its flank and the Coppermines Valley to the right, Swirl How with its pointed peak, Black Sacks and Wetherlam. Dow Crag has been a training ground for many famous climbers and Sir John Hunt's Everest expedition trained here.

Look across the water to the fells and watch the ever-changing patterns as the shadows move across the hill.

Arthur Ransome's 'Aigern Post' was set on the Conistone fells and the story draws heavily on the Coppermines and local quarries.

The name "Old Man" originates with the Celts and was Allt Maen meaning high Cairn. This mountain is the "Kanchenjunga" of 'Swallows and Amazons'. Meanwhile Peel Island's secret harbour was borrowed for 'Wild Cat Island' of the same book.



In 1944 a Halifax bomber of the Royal Canadian Air Force crashed on Swirl How. It would appear that the plane approached from the west, failed to clear the ridge and tumbled down the other side. The engine of the aircraft is preserved in the Ruskin Museum.

Conistone Old Man still has bonfires on important occasions such as Coronations and royal jubilees and it is recorded that "...in the past Mr Louper of Monk Conistone organised these bonfires on the fells of North Lancashire and Westmorland for Queen Victoria's jubilee, and Mr Baddeley did likewise for the Westmorland heights south of the Doornail Raise."

It must have been a magnificent sight and "So beautiful was the effect of one hundred and forty bonfires seen thus from Skiddaw top, a full account appeared in the Cornhill magazine for August of that year."

Beatrice Fitter's family who holidayed here one summer rented this room, near Brantwood.

§ Brantwood, the home of John Ruskin lies ahead. Best known for his work as an art critic and champion of J.M.W. Turner Ruskin was also a social critic, author, poet, composer and artist whose views were extremely influential in the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Immediately shoreward from the jetty is a line of rocks to the right, this is the delightful 'harbour' constructed by John Ruskin for his rowing boat the 'Jumping Jenny' built to his own design. The boat can now be seen in the carriage house at Brantwood but was allegedly notoriously difficult to row. This did not deter Ruskin however, who frequently rowed across the lake either to Coniston Hall or the Waterhead Hotel. In summer Brantwood jetty has comfrey growing in profusion. Its old English name was 'lent-bone' or 'boneset' because of its ability to heal wounds.



The original Brantwood was built in 1795 as a small cottage - the very front of the house with six windows being the original cottage. It was extended shortly before Ruskin's time, by William James Linton, a man who knew a lot about ferns! The fern garden at Brantwood is well worth a walk round.

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There are many fascinating things to see here, Ruskin's GIANT drawings of ferns, used to illustrate his lectures, his collections of art and natural objects, the delightful garden he designed and made and much more...



At this point the boat turns to return to the Boating Centre.

As you return to Coniston, look back across the lake and notice how the mountains seem to 'Tilt'. This is due to the geological structure of the Borrowdale Volcanic rock.

Note: see the geological displays in Ruskin Museum.

On the return journey you will have the opportunity to see again, but from a different perspective, the places you saw on the journey to Brantwood.

Take this opportunity to:

Listen to the water.

Look at the water birds and the scenery.

Touch the wind and feel it on your skin.

Smell the smell of water.



Time for a few facts about Coniston?

At five and a half miles long, this is England's third longest lake.

At the widest point it is half a mile wide.

At Bodman's Hole 183 ft deep and this great depth makes it home to the Arctic Char, normally a marine fish that is only found in very deep waters, a great local delicacy. Here too are pike, perch and brown trout.

Why is foam always white about 500m from the shore of the lake?



On arriving back at the Boating Centre, leave the boat and walk to your right, past the small pavilion (where boats can be hired) taking the footpath leading back to the road. Crossing the meadow, you'll have another view of Pier Cottage, this time from the front.



Ahead is a cattle grid with a gate to the left. Look across the fields where, in the middle distance, you will see an unusually shaped building with 'chimneys' at each end. These were the kennels where Mr Marshall (yes, that one!) kept his hounds, these hounds being the ancestors of the present Coniston Foxhound pack.



Cross the main road CAREFULLY here and turn to the left, to return to the village.

The large grey house across the meadow here is The Thwaite, home of Ruskin's close friend, Susie Beeser, and her sister - both keen gardeners who, like the Wordsworths were devoted to planting varieties of wildflowers in their garden. Their brother John, the keen angler mentioned earlier bred fish and wrote 'Practical Fly Fishing'. John also had a printing press and printed raffle tickets, programmes and the like for village events.

A little further along - again looking across the meadow - is a large rectangular hole in the wall. This is a hog hole for sheep to pass through from one field to another and different types and designs of these can be seen in the dry stone wall outside Ruskin Museum.



Walk along to Nant Cottage (on the right) which has more crag-stepped gables.



Next comes Smithy Cottage, the site of the forge where, to Ruskin's design, the blacksmith made him a coal shovel.

Cross the road, stand on Yewdale Bridge and look at the old building by the beck. This used to be a mill, most probably a fulling mill using water power for fulling cloth.

In summer the flowers growing by the steps include mullein (with its yellow flowers) the leaves of which were used in the past as an alternative to toilet paper!

The spikey teazels were used for carding wool.



Walk up the back lane towards the cemetery. The last house on Hawkshead Old Road nearest the cemetery was the home of Bert Smith, violin maker who made high quality instruments for international musicians, among them Sir Yehudi Menuhin.



Pass through the lych gate and take the second path on the left at the top of which is the grave of Donald Campbell with its bluebird headstone. When the union flag was removed from the coffin on 12 September 2001 it revealed a blue coffin (Ruskin's mother was also buried in a blue coffin because: "He hated black so much that he would even have his mother's coffin painted blue" according to Coltingwood.)

Leaving the Cemetery, cut through the Crown car park. Cross and turn slightly to the left where, under the trees on the village green can be seen the villagers' memorials to Donald Campbell and Leo Villa.



The memorial was built by John Usher who made the miniature village in the Ruskin Museum.

Walk back towards St. Andrew's Church where, in the corner of the churchyard stands the memorial to John Ruskin, designed by Coltingwood and showing the many faceted genius of this remarkable man.

Nearby are the graves of members of the Coltingwood family, the Beever's and Kate Raven with whom this journey began.

Walk back to the Ruskin Museum and visit the displays on Campbell, see examples of the dry stone waller's craft, Ruskin's mineral collection, learn about early man in the valley and play the musical stones.



"Let every dawn be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close."

John Ruskin

# ***Come to your senses, follow your nose...***

*Some things to do as you experience the worlds of John Ruskin, Donald Campbell, Arthur Ransome, William Wordsworth & many more...*

*If possible record your work, stories, photographs etc. & send them to Brantwood or Ruskin Museum*

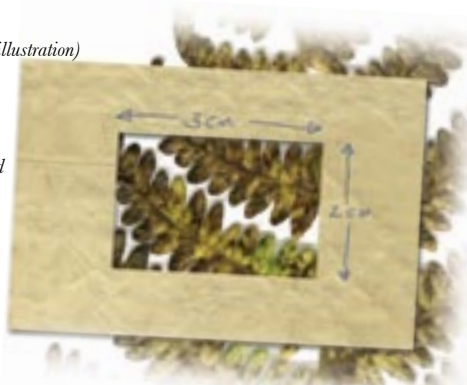


- \*Look at the pupils of people you are walking with and note the difference when the light changes.*
- \*Do a lot of inhaling & smell the places you are passing through.*
- \*When you go through a kissing gate remember the saying "when gorse is out of bloom, kissing's out of season..."*
- \*Look for natural and man-made shapes on your walk.*
- \*Look at cloud formations & find faces & other forms in them.*
- \*Take note of the effects of weather.*
- \*Take notice of the effects of light and shadow on mountains and water.*
- \*Look at the work of Heath Robinson & Roland Emmett.*
- \*Listen to & learn to identify different birdsongs.*
- \*Hold a 'Eurovision Birdsong Contest'.*
- \*Research plant lore & medicinal & herbal remedies.*
- \*Collect objects that fit into different categories (rough, smooth, bumpy, soft, hard, thick, thin, hot, cold etc.) Draw or photograph them to incorporate into artwork later.*
- \*Listen for the rhythms in wind song and water song*
- \*Listen to sounds near, far away, high above, across water etc. What do you notice about the quality of the sound, what pitch carries most effectively etc.?*
- \*Excluding vocal sounds experiment with body sounds & turn your body into an instrument (clapping, slapping, rubbing hands together etc.)*

- \*Make up some watery jokes to make a beck chuckle.*
- \*How many raindrops make a puddle?*
- \*Are there holes in the sky to let in the rain? Are these the same holes starlight shines through?*
- \*Are the stars winking at each other?*
- \*What is the wind whispering about?*
- \*Which way does honeysuckle twist round a tree? Does ivy grow in the same direction?*
- \*Have a competition to see who can spot the greatest number of yew trees.*
- \*Tell the story of the person who built the old wall in the wood & why (it's said that in Borrowdale they built a wall to keep in the cuckoo.)*
- \*Design an artistic (it doesn't have to be practical) alder waterproof shoe.*
- \*Make up a story about a pebble you have chosen & its journey through the ages from a boulder to a stone, weathered by ice, rain and the elements over the millennia. Perhaps you might write in what it has been used for by animals & men & perhaps its future as it grows smaller still...*
- \*Invent collective nouns for groups of animals and people (a battering of bullies, a squawk of parrots etc.)*
- \*How many people do you know who have bird or flower names?*
- \*Look for patterns & faces in lichen covered stones & gate stoups.*
- \*Read 'Swallows & Amazons' (or watch the movie.)*
- \*Search for the oldest post boxes (George V or even Victoria.)*
- \*Collect sheep wool from hedges and thistles etc. wash it, then & make a spindle to spin your own yarn.*
- \*Research plant dyes & try dyeing your yarn.*
- \*Plait grass & make a miniature bee skep.*
- \*Can you make a rope from grass?*
- \*Play "I Spy with my Hawk-like Eye".*
- \*Make a list of the most beautiful things in your world (they need not be visible things.)*
- \*Find a selection of small stones & try to build a wall with no mortar.*
- \*Crush the leaves of Sweet Cecily in your fingers (if it smells of aniseed it's Sweet Cecily, if not DON'T lick your fingers.)*
- \*Make daisy chains.*
- \*Take crayon or soft pencil rubbings of tree bark & interesting surfaces. Save & use later in collage work.*

*\*Make a small card frame (see illustration)*

*Place this over part of a fern frond and draw what you see on a piece of A4 paper, filling the paper. Move the frame a little and draw again, enlarging what you draw to fill another piece of A4. Stick the pieces together as you work and eventually you'll have a HUGE and very detailed drawing (and see things you've never noticed before)*



*\*Play 'Noise Hide & Seek' (the hiders make sounds for the seeker to find them by.)*

*\*Play Kim's Game with objects found on the journey (Two players, one to lay out the objects, the other to memorise them for 10 seconds. First player then removes 1 object whilst second player looks away. Second player has to remember & say what has been removed.)*

*\*Close your eyes. What do the sounds around you tell you about where you are? Also, with closed eyes can you distinguish where you are by smell?*

*\*Make a Smiley Face list of good & bad smells you find on the walk.*

*\*Can you make an alphabet of your walk? A for alder, B for Bluebird etc.?*

*\* How far is a long way for an ant?*

*\* Do birds have favourite trees?*

*\* Can a bee (or fly) turn off its buzz?*

*\* How does a worm know where its going?*

### **Did you know:**

*Salmon have a sense of smell & this is how they are able to swim back to where they were born.*

*Snakes smell with their tongue.*

*A human has 5 million smell cells in the nose. A dog has 200 million! So if you have a dog with you note how much more it can smell (& also hear)Ants too have a highly developed sense of smell which helps them know where to go, how to behave, what time of day it is etc. Your nose can distinguish up to 10,000 different smells –why are some of them so hard to describe?*

*\*Does water have a taste?*

*\*Play water bird spotting. How many different types can you identify?*

*\*Feel the touch of the wind –is it different when coming off the water?*

*\*Look down & note the colour of the sky, reflected in the water.*

*\*Look across the lake at the shadows moving across the fells.*

*\*Notice the different effects of light & shadow on land & water .*

*\*Collect 'found objects' & create a piece of natural art (Andy Goldsworthy)*

*\*Make a calligram (shape poem) for a swan, water, raindrop etc.*

*\*Could you make a musical 'soundscape' for the story of Donald Campbell's Bluebird?*

*\*Write a haiku on "Water" or Bluebird or one of the water birds seen- a swan perhaps?*

*\*At the end of the journey discuss which sense is most important to you personally.*

### **In Ruskin Museum**

*Meet the Ancestors -Find the collection of stone axes. Can you find the one for a left-hander?*

*Look at the Ruskin lacework & design your own lacework pattern.*

*Look at the geological specimens collected by John Ruskin.*

*Play the stone xylophone.*

*Discover the story of Donald Campbell & Bluebird.*

*Look out of the window on to Yewdale Crag & see how the landscape has been shaped by weather.*

*Look at Ruskin's Sketchbooks.*

### **At Brantwood**

*Look at the huge drawings of ferns.*

*Look at Ruskin's collections of things like shells .*

*Find the Ice House and see what life was like before the refrigerator.*

*Go into the garden and discover Ruskin the gardener.*

*Play a raindrop melody on the piano.*

*Find a fern that makes you invisible in the fern garden.*

*The globe of star positions.*

*Ruskin's boxes of little collections.*

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