

In and around Ulverston



Welcome to Ulverston, on the coast of the Furness Peninsula where the River Leven meets Morecambe Bay.

Explore coastal woodlands and look out for the rare black darter dragonfly, or follow the river to magical mosses. Ulverston has a rich cultural heritage, surrounded by spiritual sites. The town is a great base to explore woodlands and wetlands, valleys and estuaries.

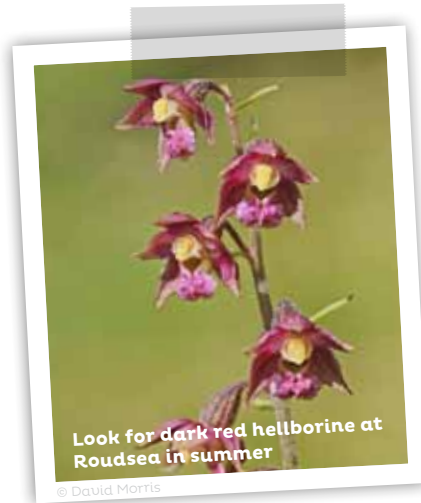
In this guide you will find...

- **Seasonal highlights**
- **Three great days out**
- **How to get around**

Don't Miss...

There's so much to experience in and around Ulverston, but if time is of the essence, here are our top 3 highlights not to be missed:

- 1 Discover black darter dragonfly at Next Ness nature reserve and eider ducks on a guided walk to Chapel Island**
- 2 Spot red deer and rafting spiders at Roudsea National Nature Reserve (NNR) - a very special habitat**
- 3 Watch wading birds along the Rusland Valley and explore its network of paths**



On a rainy day...

Visit Aquarium of the Lakes at Newby Bridge to see some of our watery wildlife up close (call 015395 30153), or take the train to Barrow Dock Museum and learn find out more about the maritime heritage of Morecambe Bay (call 01229 876400).

Fascinating fact

The hazel dormouse is on its very north-west limit in Europe at Roudsea Wood. Much effort goes into maintaining the coppice woodlands here to ensure the survival of this tiny creature.

Seasonal Highlights

This area is full of wildlife, with something spectacular and different to see whatever the time of year:

Look out for:

SPRING

Courting lapwing and curlew around Rusland Valley's wetlands and mosses.

SUMMER

Dark red helleborine and osprey at Roudsea Woods and Mosses NNR.

AUTUMN

Deer in the mosses at Roudsea and Rusland NNRs.

WINTER

Wrap up warm and enjoy amazing views from the limestone pavements on Birkrigg Common.



Where Wetlands Meet Woodlands

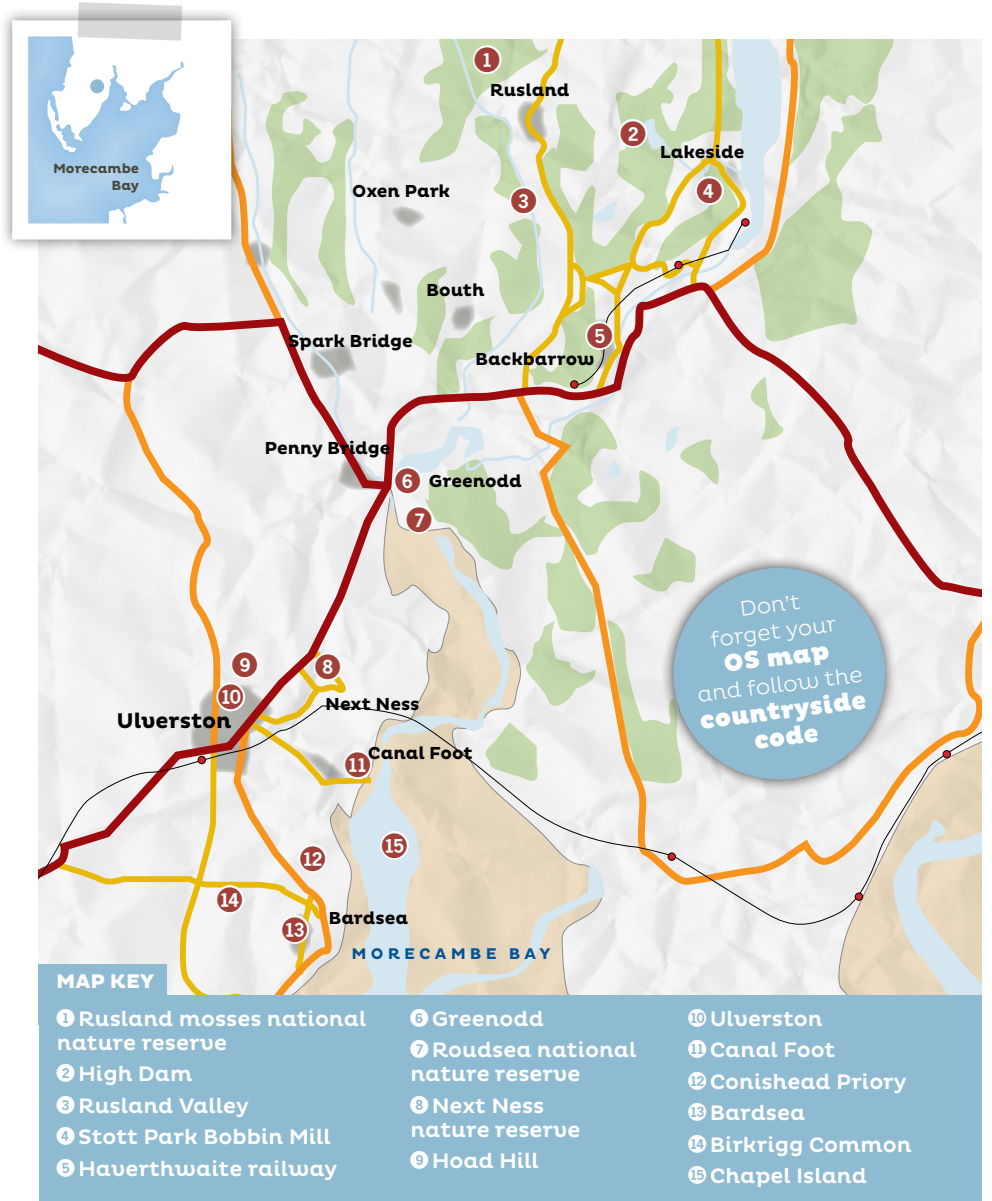
Just a short walk from the town is Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Next Ness nature reserve, a hidden area of wet woodland that is a haven for birds and the black darter dragonfly.

In spring you'll hear birds singing and see cowslips and primrose in flower. Summer is the best time to find flowers such as the crimson flowered marsh cinquefoil. In winter flocks of siskin and redpoll visit the reserve. At all times of year you might see roe deer in this quiet undisturbed haven.

Wander amongst alder and willow trees that tolerate the waterlogged conditions. As a haven for birds, look out for coot, kingfisher, grey heron, little owl, great spotted woodpecker and treecreepers. Spring is a great time to visit as many of these birds breed here.

- **From Ulverston, head east along the A590, cross the canal and take the first road on the right, Next Ness Lane.**
- **Turn right under the railway bridge and the reserve entrance is immediately on the right.**
- **There is only one entrance, follow the straight level footpath through the reserve, and return the same way**
- **For a longer walk continue on Next Ness Lane and Plumpton Lane to Plumpton Hall, follow the Cumbria Coastal Way along the shore to Canal Foot and walk back along the canal.**
- **Back in Ulverston take a stroll to Sir John Barrow monument on the top of Hoad Hill, a favourite viewpoint of locals.**

For refreshments, visit quirky cafes in Ulverston or Ford Park's Coach house bistro and walled kitchen garden. The Bay Horse at Canal Foot is a great place to stop and enjoy the views.



Culture vultures will be fascinated by Conishead Priory and Birkrigg Stone Circles. Follow the Cumbria Coastal Way south past the priory (now a Buddhist Centre with popular café) to Sea Wood with its ancient oak trees. Turn right on a road up to Birkrigg Common and Bronze Age stone circle for amazing views across the Bay.

An ancient cobble path from Bardsea to Chapel Island can sometimes be seen emerging from the sands. This was used by donkeys carrying gunpowder. They wore copper shoes to prevent sparks! Today Chapel Island is a great spot to see eider ducks. Ray Porter, the Levens Sands Guide, takes guided walks organised by Morecambe Bay Partnership.



Rarities at Roudsea

Natural England's Roudsea Woods and Mosses National Nature Reserve (NNR) is a complex site full of rare species and coastal saltmarsh, acid woodland, limestone woodland and lowland raised mire.

Bogs can be brilliant. Over 500 plant and 280 fungi species are found in the reserve, including the very rare large yellow sedge, and the endemic Lancaster whitebeam. As you wander along the paths look out for otters and brown hare. Birds abound and spring can bring displays of hawfinch, sparrowhawk, woodcock and marsh tit. Listen out for the short-winged cone-head cricket or the bog-bush cricket. It's also great for moths, such as the barred tooth-stripe, beautiful snout and green silver-lines and rare butterflies including the silver-washed fritillary and large heath.

- **From Ulverston train station you can reach Roudsea by bus or bike. Cycle along route 70 to Greenodd (6.5km), or take the X12 bus from Victoria Road to Greenodd, where the rivers Crake and Leven meet. This was once an important industrial hub and products from the woodlands were loaded onto ships to Liverpool and further afield.**
- **Follow the Cumbria Coastal Way over the River Leven to Roudsea**
- **A 3km nature trail directs you around both moss and woodland habitats. Simply follow the signs and stick to the boardwalks. Although Roudsea Woods and Mosses NNR is a wild place, all of the trails through the reserve are Tramper-friendly and suitable for sturdy wheelchair access.**

Ticks are present on this reserve and Lyme disease is present in this area of the country. Cover arms and legs, and check for ticks and bites after your visit.



Fascinating facts

- **The hazel dormouse is on its very north-west limit in Europe at Roudsea Wood. Much effort goes into maintaining the coppice woodlands here to ensure the survival of this tiny creature.**
- **The wet peatlands on the nature reserve are home to the raft spider, which is able to run over the surface of bog pools in search of prey. This fierce hunter is capable of killing small fish and even large dragonflies.**

Heritage Habitats

Follow the rivers inland to wooded valley filled with nature and history. Much of this area is clothed in trees and virtually all the woods were coppiced.

Coppicing is a more sustainable way of managing timber resources and by the late medieval period, coppicing was a common management method. It is thanks to coppicing that the Leven, Crake and Rusland valleys are covered in extensive woodlands today. Coppice work has recently undergone a revival in the Furness Fells, and many former coppice woodlands are being reworked using these traditional skills.

- **Visit Rusland Moss National Nature Reserve at the head of the Rusland Valley. Sphagnum mosses dominate the uncut areas of the Moss, with purple moorgrass in the cut areas and fen and carr woodland at the edges. Rare invertebrates found at the site include the large heath butterfly and money spider.**
- **Take a walk along the mosaic of footpaths around the Rusland Valley and look out for breeding waders such as lapwing and curlew in the wet pasture on the valley bottom. If you are in the car, pause in the estuary lay by near Greenodd to see waders on the saltmarsh and in the creeks.**
- **Take a stroll around High Dam and its woodlands to see duke of burgundy butterflies on primroses along the paths. Learn about the dams and relict waterways and their link with Stott Park Bobbin Mill nearby.**
- **On a rainy day find out more about coppicing at Woodland Heritage exhibition at George Barker's Timber Yard, Backbarrow (call 015395 31236), Stott Park Bobbin Mill, Low Stott Park (call 015395 31087), or travel through woodlands on the Lakeside and Haverthwaite railway.**

In its heyday Stott Park bobbin mill churned out 250,000 bobbins a week for the cotton mills of Lancashire. Today, it is the only bobbin mill left with its machinery in good working order. At the mill you can see all the processes of bobbin making and even take home a souvenir bobbin.

Did You Know?

- **Backbarrow Furnace was not only the first blast furnace to be built in the north of England, but also the last to close in 1965.**



Getting here

We believe that a car free journey is a care free journey.

- **Arrive by train to Ulverston on a breathtaking route over the Kent or Leven estuary (All year Mon – Sun). Call National Rail Enquiries 08457 48 49 50. Look out for a Duo ticket when two adults travel on Northern Trains**
- **Hop on the bus from Barrow-in-Furness, Kendal or Coniston**
- **Arrive under your own steam on National Cycle Route 70 (Walney Island to Sunderland).**

Getting Around

The network of footpaths and lanes are perfect for exploring by boot and bike.

- **Take a compass and a map (OS Explorer Map OL7) and wear appropriate clothing**
- **Ulverston is the start of the Cumbria Way, a long distance route to Carlisle**
- **Don't forget the fantastic train route around the whole bay**

Staying Longer

Ulverston is a great base for a short break or a longer stay

- **Call Ulverston TIC or visit Bay Tourism or Go Lakes websites for accommodation**
- **Refuel at cafes and shops in Ulverston and Greenodd**

Moving on

Look out for other guides in this series at www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover.

- **Take the train to Arnside, a haven for butterflies like high brown fritillary**
- **Take the bus to Barrow-in-Furness, home to the natterjack toad and grey seal**
- **Cycle to Grange-over-Sands and watch oystercatchers from dramatic viewpoints**



Useful contacts: call or search online

- **Ulverston Tourist Information Centre Coronation Hall, County Square, 01229 588994**
- **www.baytourism.org.uk**
- **www.golakes.co.uk**
- **National Rail Enquiries 08457 48 49 50**
- **Traveline 0871 200 22 33**
- **National nature reserves www.naturalengland.org.uk**



This leaflet is brought to you by Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership's Nature Improvement Area and Morecambe Bay Partnership's 700 Days to Transform the Bay scheme. It is funded by Defra, DCLG, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Coastal Communities Fund and RSPB Futurescapes EU Life Comms +.

The routes described are for guidance only. Please use an up to date map when exploring this area. It's a good idea to plan your route in more detail before you set off, and to check the weather forecast and tide tables. Wear appropriate clothing and don't forget to take food and water. The Partnerships above cannot be held responsible in the unlikely event of injury or accident whilst exploring this area. For more information on the exploring the nature of Morecambe Bay visit www.morecambebaynature.org.uk