

Browsholme Hall Lakeside Nature Trail

(Map on Reverse)

1. From the Tithe Barn, turn right, walk through the cobbled yard and through the gates leading to the hall.

The Hall was built in 1507 and the gardens contain a mixture of native and ornamental species and many fine mature trees like horse Chestnut and Oak. As you walk past the house and down the drive there is a Yew walk on your left. It provides winter cover and nest sites for small birds. The fruits are enjoyed by Thrushes and Blackbirds. Goldcrests and Tits hunt for insects on the Yews craggy bark.

All parts of Yew are poisonous to people and animals.

2. Continue down the drive until you come to the lake on your left hand side. In summer swallows nest in the boathouse and hunt for insects over the lake. It may take up to 6,000 insects a day to raise one brood of chicks. In winter a Barn Owl sometimes roosts here, hunting the voles that live in the areas of long, unmown grass

3. The lake is stocked with Mirror Carp, watch out for them leaping for insects. Mirror Carp have a row of scales along the back and a few on their sides, otherwise they are scaleless. They like open sunny ponds like this one with shallow water and a muddy bottom, where there is plenty of things to eat.

Carp were once a popular food as they can survive out of water for a few hours in baskets packed with wet straw. A feast in 1279 for the Archbishop of Canterbury had 100 carp on the menu.

We encourage Wildflowers and Grasses around the lake. Thistles and docks may not be popular with gardeners or farmers but provide food and a home for many insects that themselves provide food for many birds. Moths, butterflies and bees feed on the flowers, spiders spin webs amongst the spines and birds such as Goldfinches take the seed in late summer. Growing around the lake you may see Water Mint, Common Reed, Ragged Robin and Fogloves.

4. Some of the Silver Birches here have "birds-nest" type growths on them, known as "Witches Broom". In the past it was said to be caused by a witch flying over on her broomstick. Its actually caused by a fungus, which stimulates extra growth in the place of one shoot, and then feeds on this extra growth. It does not cause serious harm to the tree, and so is classed as a gall.



Browsholme Hall



Gardens



Lake



Small Tortoiseshell



Witches Broom

On your right is a plantation of Scots Pine planted in 1960 they are widely grown for commercial use. Look out for Nuthatches and Treecreepers hunting on their fissured bark for small insects. In late summer look for brightly coloured

On some of the trees you may see frilly lichen this indicates both the moisture level in the air and its quality.

We have also planted Holly, Field Maple and Rowans around the lake which provide berries for the birds in winter. In some of the marshy areas, natural alder woodland is developing.

6. The footpath crosses between the marshy area and the sediment trap pond. There is a small bridge to cross. This is a good place to rest and take in the natural world around you. In spring the marshy area is full of frogs mating and calling.

In summer look out for the big blue Common Hawker Dragonflies flying above the water and Red Common Darter Dragonflies sunning themselves on logs. The smaller delicate ones you may see are Damselflies. Dragonflies and Damselflies lay their eggs either in the water or on or in pond vegetation. You may also see the male Dragonflies having aerial battles or carrying a female to mate with.

In late summer and early autumn look out for brightly coloured fungi, such as Fly Agaric. In the Middle Ages it was used to repel flies. It is poisonous.

7. As you head back along the opposite side of the lake look among the long grass for Ragged Robin, Meadowsweet, Foxgloves and Salvia, nectar rich plants that attract a variety of butterflies, bees and hoverflies. In autumn the mature Horse Chestnuts produce plenty of conkers that attract foraging Grey Squirrels.



Nuthatch



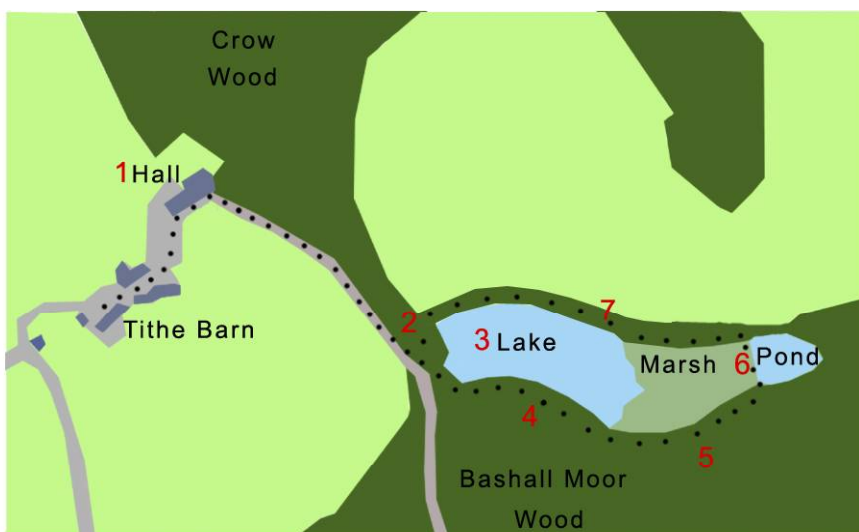
Red Common Darter



Fly Agaric



Foxglove



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