

## Wreay Woods Walk

by Vivienne Crow

### The Facts:

Start/finish: St Mary's Church, Wreay

Length: 4.3 miles/6.9km

Total ascent: 660ft/201m

Approximate time: 2¼-2½ hours

Grade: Easy

Terrain: Quiet country road; field paths; riverside and woodland trails

Map: OS Explorer maps OL5 and 315 (both are required); or OS Landranger 85

### Overview:

This walk takes in some of the pretty countryside around Wreay. As well as enjoying some inspiring views across to the North Pennines, it follows the gently meandering River Petteril as it passes through Wreay Woods Nature Reserve. In spring, the woodland floor is covered with wildflowers, including bluebells, wild garlic and wood anemone, while in autumn, the many tree species sport a glorious range of hues. Whatever time of year you visit though, keep your binoculars handy: you may be lucky enough to see red squirrels, roe deer and, at dawn or dusk, otters. The bird life includes kingfisher, wagtail, long-tailed tit, dipper and great spotted woodpecker.



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The Sarah Losh Heritage Centre is within the refurbished Chapel of Rest. Here you will learn about local history, the 12 Men of Wreay, Sarah Losh and her family, St Mary's Church and Sarah's other creations. Suitable for all ages, the exhibition is open from 10am to 4pm each day, free of charge. The Centre is available to rent for workshops, exhibitions, concerts etc. Please contact The Friends.



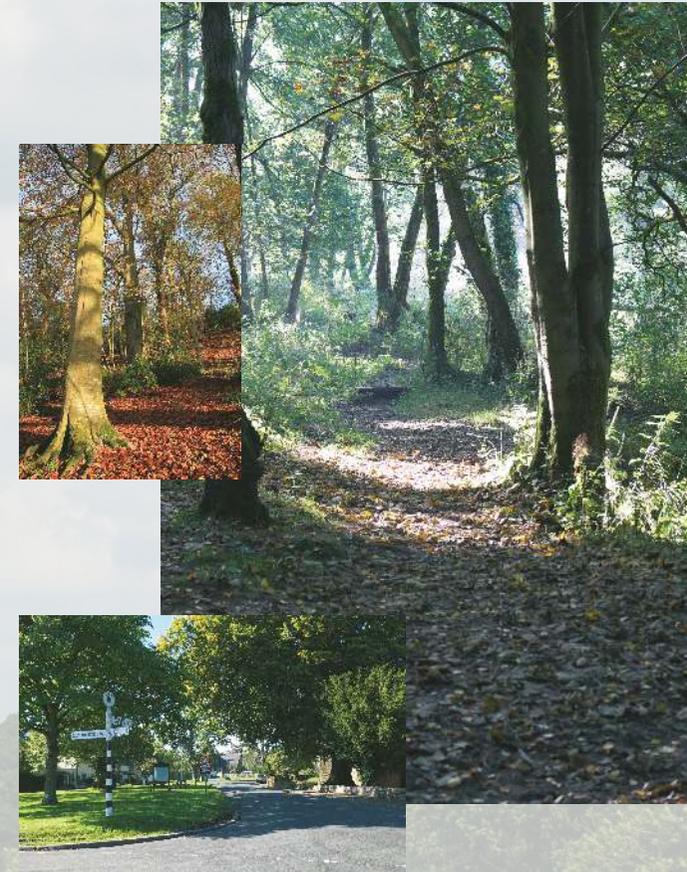
The Friends of St Mary's Church, Wreay was formed to encourage interest in St Mary's and the Losh family as well as raise money for the care and preservation of the buildings. There is an annual Friends Open Day in September with visiting speakers and musicians. A free newsletter, 'Pinecone', is issued to all Friends twice a year. If you are interested in becoming a Friend then please contact:

The Friends of St Mary's Church, Wreay,  
c/o Wreay Syke Fold, Wreay, Carlisle CA4 0RJ  
016974 73744 / 016974 73687  
[www.stmaryswreay.org](http://www.stmaryswreay.org)



THE FRIENDS OF  
ST MARY'S CHURCH, WREAY

# Wreay Woods Walk



Be inspired!

Explore the natural beauty of Wreay Woods and discover the fascinating history of the village of Wreay

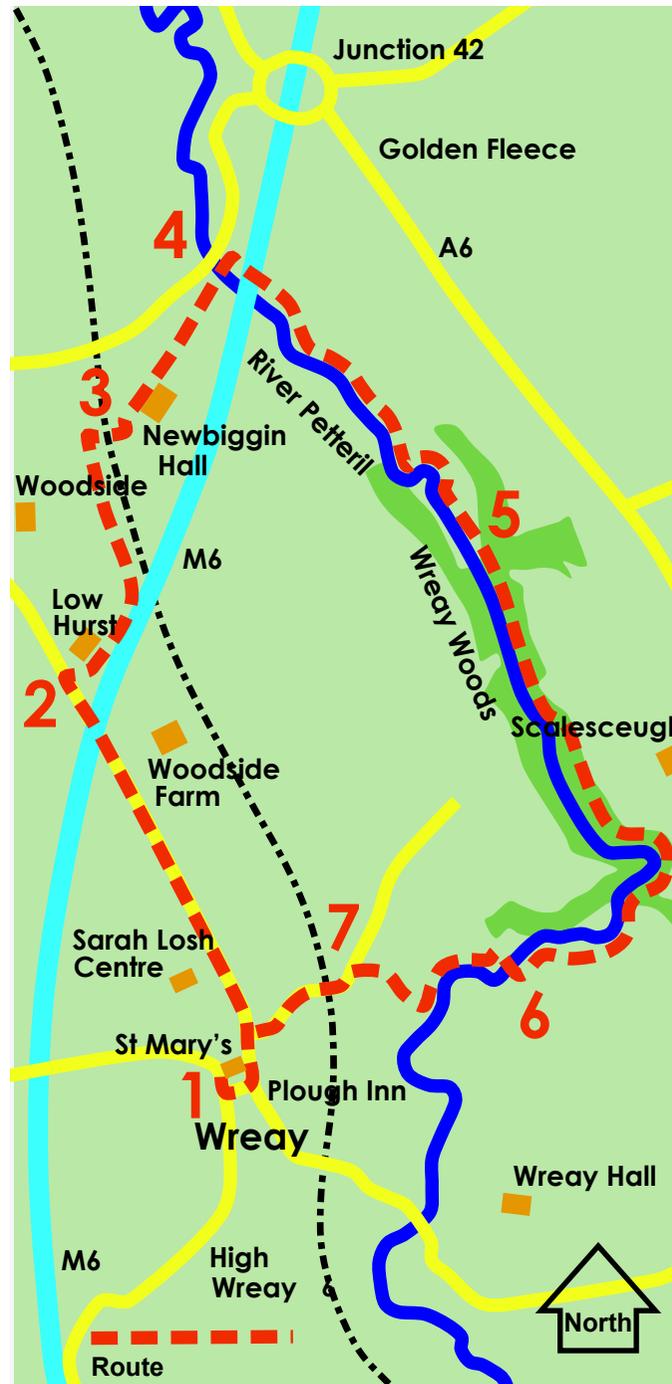
## THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, WREAY

1. From the entrance to the church, turn left along the road and immediately left at the junction to continue beside the church grounds. Go left again at the next junction to head roughly north out of Wreay – following signs for Carlisle and Brisco. The Sarah Losh Heritage Centre lies to the west of the road. Stop off to learn about the unique history of Wreay and the Losh family. With good views to the north and east, including the North Pennines, the road heads downhill and under the motorway.

2. Just less than one mile from the church, you'll pass the entrance to Highways England's Low Hurst depot. Immediately after this, turn right along a rough track leading into a large field. As soon as you enter the field, turn right to walk beside the depot's metal railings. On reaching the fence at the top of the motorway embankment, turn sharp left and then follow the field boundary round to the left again as you reach the railway. Keeping in to the edge of the field, head downhill to cross a fence via a stile. A wooden boardwalk heads down the embankment. Cross Woodside Beck via a footbridge, and then keep close to the fence on your right until you reach the railway bridge.

3. Cross the bridge and, once through the pedestrian gate on the other side, ignore the large gate on the right; instead, walk away from the railway with the fence/hedge on your right. Cross the step stile to the right of a large wooden gate and then walk along the lane. At a junction of lanes, keep straight ahead to pick up a surfaced path on the other side of a large metal gate – signposted Newbiggin Bridge.

4. Soon after crossing the bridge over the River Petteril, take the path through the hedge on the right – signposted Wreay. Quickly joining the clear



riverside path, head upstream, soon passing under the M6 motorway. Having gone through a small gate, keep reasonably close to the River Petteril as you cross a field. Enter an area of pretty woodland via another small gate. After the next gate, ignore a track heading uphill to the left; instead, continue beside the river as you cross another area of open ground.

5. Once through yet another pedestrian gate and having crossed a footbridge, you enter Wreay Woods Nature Reserve. The path beside the river can be muddy after wet weather, but there are boardwalks across the worst sections and, when the sun is shining and the birds are singing, this peaceful, wooded gorge is a lovely, relaxing place to be. In winter, siskin and the increasingly rare redpoll can be seen in the alders that grow along the banks of the river. Come the summer and blackcap, spotted flycatcher, garden warbler and chiffchaff fly in. Where the path climbs away from the river for a short while, keep right as it joins another public right-of-way coming down from the left.

6. Leave the woods via a kissing-gate, keep close to the fence on your right and then cross the river via a sturdy footbridge. On the west bank, bear left, still following the line of the Petteril. About 300 yards after crossing, you'll see a fence running up the field to the right. It has a footpath sign at the start of it. Turn right here to walk with this fence on your left. When the fence abruptly ends, keep heading in the same direction to cross a wooden step stile. Continue uphill – more steeply now – beside a fence.

7. At the top, cross another stile and turn left along the surfaced lane. At the road, turn left. Take the next road on the right and then keep right to return to St Mary's Church.