

Conan the brave of Finglandrigg Wood

Have you ever heard of a place called Thingland? It really is the most incredible place, full of peculiar plants, amazing animals and crafty critters; that sometimes ... are not what they seem.

You see, Thingland is full of mimickies, grizzlies and thingies. "What on Earth are those...? Is this place real?" I hear you say. Well, yes it is and, even better, it is right on your doorstep.

Let me tell you more...



I wonder if you ...

can you find the mysterious tree faces and furry monkey tails in the mimicky trees?

Conan is a tree critter (the last of his kind in fact), he is a very shy and secretive creature who mainly comes out at night but if you are lucky enough and keep a look out, you might just catch a glimpse of him during the day too.

He is only about as big as your hand, has HUGE eyes and ears, soft brown fur and long grippy fingers that he uses to climb trees. Conan usually wears a floppy hat just in case he gets a bit chilly. His tail is much longer than his body and has brown and white stripes all the way down; this is the part of him that you might spot hanging out of the trees. He usually has bits and bobs from the forest caught in his fur too; you would if you spent your life living in a tree!

Can you think of any other animals who are really great at doing their job?

Conan spends most of his time in and around the woodlands of Thingland (this is what Finglandrigg used to be called many, many years ago and it's much easier to say too); he lives in small holes in the tree trunks called 'critter holes' and doesn't really like to come out very much, unless he has to. Conan is a bit of a scarey-cat really; this is a shame if truth be told, because his name, 'Conan', actually means 'little wolf' and that is the last thing you would think of if you saw this little fella.

Day-to-day life living alone in a critter hole is a bit on the boring side really. Conan would just love to pluck up the courage to go out during the day and explore Thingland but, try as they

1

Can you see Warbler Woodland on your map? This is where his critter hole is. Look out for more critter holes along the way.

might, his friends were finding it very difficult to persuade him...

"Isn't it a fantastically sunny day, Conan?" said the Great Spotted Woodpecker who had been sitting patiently next to Conan's critter hole for the past 45 minutes trying to persuade him to come out. "It sure is," said Conan. "Shame I can't come out today, though; it's just that my left thumb is a bit sore." "Mmmmm," said the Great Spotted Woodpecker, "sounds like a bit of a feeble excuse to me. Why don't you just pop around the corner with me to the Ivy Woods and we can hang out there for a bit. You never know, a change of scene might do you good."

Conan started to slowly retreat back into his critter hole and quiver a little bit with fear. "Not today, thank you. The Ivy Woods are full of mimicky trees and I couldn't possibly be

brave enough to go there during the daytime." "Mimicky trees?" asked the Great Spotted Woodpecker, looking confused. "What on Earth are those? I have never heard of such a thing. It sounds like your imagination might be going a bit crazy again, Conan." Conan popped his head out of the critter hole again to explain all. "The mimicky trees are very scary indeed, they aren't like the friendly trees here in Warbler Woodland; they have faces in them and HUGE scary monkeys that hang down from the branches ready to pounce on you and gobble you up!" "Oh come on, Conan," said the Woodpecker. "You really are missing out; the Ivy Woodlands are an amazing place.

How about you snuggle up under my wing and we can go together?" "Not today, thank you," said Conan, turning



2

his back on the frustrated Woodpecker. Once again, Conan would be spending the day in his little critter hole by himself.

The next day was again glorious and sunny (like most days are in Thingland). This time it was the turn of the Great Crested Newt to try to persuade Conan out of his hole. "Morning, Conan!" shouted the jolly Newt from the forest floor below. "It's a fantastic day today. Why don't we pop down to the hush-hush stream and you can watch me do some diving practice? We could play stick races over the bridge and listen to the sounds of the forest; what great fun we could have together." "Not today, thank you," said Conan. "I couldn't possibly go there during the daytime. That part of the woods is full of silver snakes and strange red thingies that lie on the forest floor just waiting to gobble me up. No, I couldn't possibly go there today; too many scary thingies there for my liking."

"What on Earth are you talking about, Conan?" asked the confused Newt. "I think the silver snakes you are talking about are just old silver birch trees lying



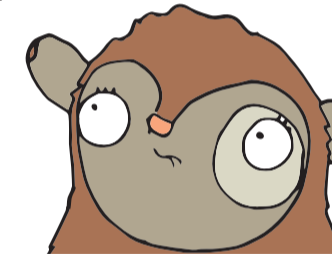
Mining Bees are very rare; they live alone in little burrows in the ground.

Can you spot them ... buzzing around the old kest?

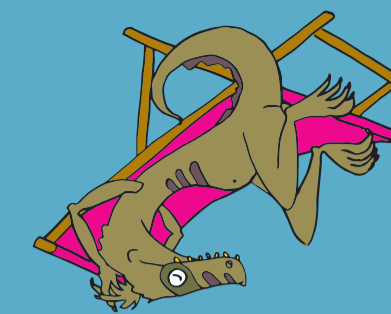
on the forest floor and the scary red thingies are just the 'Scarlet elf cups' minding their own business. There really is nothing to be afraid of out there." "Not today, thank you," said Conan and turned his back on the little Newt, who shrugged his shoulders and disappeared back to the whirligig pool.

Can you spot any 'Scarlet elf cups' on the forest floor? They are an amazing red funky fungus!

The next day was the turn of the gentle Mining Bee to try to calmly persuade Conan out of his critter hole. "Morning, Conan," buzzed the happy little Mining Bee. "Do you fancy a trip out to the Honeysuckle Forest today? The smells are amazing; we can spot magical star moss and even have some fun playing hide and seek in the Fern Woodlands." "Not today, thank you," said Conan. "I think I have a bit of a cold, plus the Honeysuckle Forest is full of huge furry flying thingies and gruesome grizzlies that hide in the swamps. I can see them hiding under the water just waiting to gobble me up." The Mining Bee landed delicately on Conan's shoulder and spoke softly into his ear. "Conan, the huge furry flying thingies are just harmless Bumble Bees snacking on the honeysuckle nectar and the bubbles in the swamps are just Whirligig Beetles having fun!" "Not today, thank you," said Conan, turning his back on the friendly Mining Bee, who buzzed off back to his burrow.



3



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Top tips for using this trail The story is divided up into 6 parts. You can read it all in one go or read a section of the story in a different piece along the route. Use the map to help you find the route and spot features in the story along the way.

How to get there Finglandrigg is one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland on the Solway Nature Reserve about 8 miles west of Carlisle. Follow the B5307 road towards Kirkcubbin, look for the Fringlandrigg sign on the left and a large parking area. After you pass through Kirkcubbin, follow the B5307 north towards Kirkcubbin. Look out for the Finglandrigg sign and the bee and the marsh fritillary butterfly.

Explore extra Why not explore some of our other lovely exciting outdoor places on the Solway? At RSPB Campfield Marsh just west of Bowness-on-Solway we have a wetland visitor centre (and another Tale Trail). Or you could just up the road from here at Drumnagh Moss explore Cumbric Wildlife Trust's Drumnagh Moss Glasson Moss is also next to it and Wedholme Flow just down the road south of Kirkcubbin.

Terrain The route is on gravel paths, boardwalks and grassland. It can get a little muddy in places so wellies or boots are recommended. The shorter blue route is wheelchair accessible and is largely dry underneath.

Length There are two walks signposted through Finglandrigg. The blue loop is 2km and the red loop is 3km.

Explorer's treat Bring some tasty treats and have an explorer's picnic at the tables next to the parking area. Or find your own favorite picnic spot somewhere in the reserve.

The bit for grown ups....



4

By now the word was spreading around Thingland that Conan hadn't left his critter hole for a long time and that something had to be done about it. So all of the forest creatures got together and came up with a very cunning plan. The next morning, very early, just as it was getting light, a swarm of beautiful butterflies called Marsh Fritillaries (or 'Frits' for short) got together and made their way across Thingland to the Gorse Gangway. They started to collect the scrumptious yellow flowers off the Gorse bushes, which in springtime smell of sweet coconut and also just happen to be tree creature's most favourite treat.

In pairs, the Frits carried the flowers back to Conan's critter hole and sat patiently waiting for him to wake up. "Mmmmmmm," murmured Conan as he drifted out of his deep sleep and stretched his skinny little arms. "What a glorious smell!"

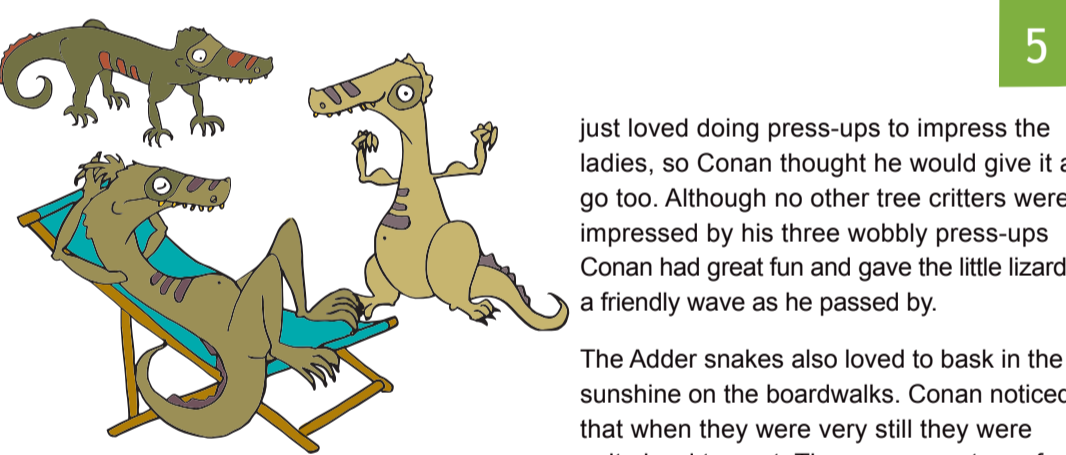
"MORNING, CONAN!" said the Frits in unison. "We have a very scrumptious surprise for you. It's spring time and the Gorse flowers are ready; we have brought a few for you to try." "Yummy, my most favourite treat, thank you ever so much, my little friends." Conan tucked into the gorgeous yellow flowers and rubbed his tummy with delight. "Do you have any more?" he asked hopefully. "There are hundreds of them by the pine forests if you

would like to get some more for yourself," they replied. Conan looked out into the daylight. "I couldn't possibly go to the Gorse Gangway with you, my little friends. I would have to brave the Grizzly Grasslands, daringly cross the Lizards' Lair and boldly make my way along Adder Alley. No, not today, thank you." "Oh please, Conan, we would really like you to come with us." Conan let out a deep sigh and looked out at the lovely Frits who were looking at him so appealingly. "I'm sorry, my little friends, but it's all a bit frightening out there; too many grizzlies, scary thingies and mimickies!" "Now listen," said the Frits. "We know all those other creatures can seem a bit scary but perhaps it's just that you don't know them yet. If things are new or different to us they can seem a bit scary at first. How about you try something new..." The Frits all flew together right in front of him and all together shouted out loud...

"If you see something new and you don't know what to do, if your knees start to shake and your chin begins to quake, Then stand tall and be brave and give them a friendly wave, Be a clever 'copy-cat' not a silly 'scardey-cat'!"

"OK," said Conan nervously. "Do you mean I should try to be more like them and they might seem less frightening?" "Exactly," said the Frits. "Let's give it a go..."

Frits love to eat the nectar of the 'Devil's bit scabious' plant. You can follow the beautiful butterfly trail during May and June time.



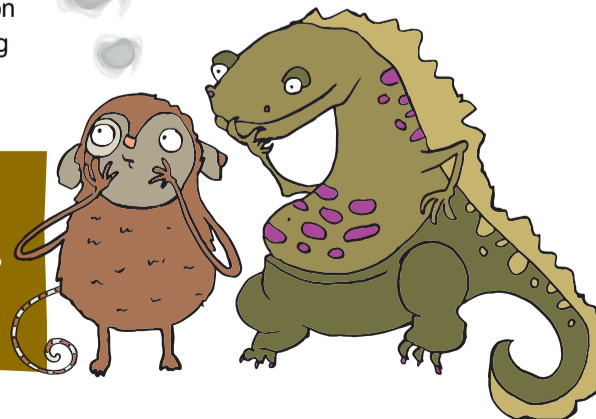
5

Conan slowly climbed down from his critter hole, shook the twigs off his fur and nervously crept towards the Badgers' sett. He gradually made his way past the mimicky trees, over the little bridge of the hush-hush stream, past the elf cups, through the swamps and even across the Grizzly Grasslands. Although it seemed a little scary at first Conan realised that with every step he took he started to feel a little bit braver.

The giant dragons that he had imagined were actually very friendly little lizards. Conan spotted them sunbathing on the boardwalks and instead of scampering back to his critter hole he stood nearby and watched them carefully. The lizards

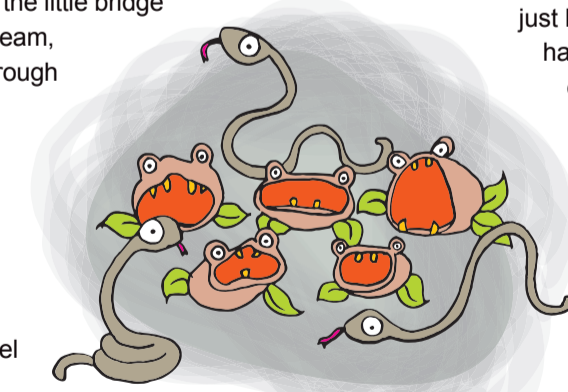
How close can you ...

sneak towards someone on the boardwalks without them noticing? Make sure you step carefully so they don't hear you.



just loved doing press-ups to impress the ladies, so Conan thought he would give it a go too. Although no other tree critters were impressed by his three wobbly press-ups Conan had great fun and gave the little lizard a friendly wave as he passed by.

The Adder snakes also loved to bask in the sunshine on the boardwalks. Conan noticed that when they were very still they were quite hard to spot. They were masters of camouflage and the zig-zag pattern on their skin was a great disguise. Conan dipped his fingers into some mud and painted his arms and legs with zig-zags just like the Adders and had a lovely sunbathe on the boardwalks too. He also noticed that if he got too close to the Adders that they would disappear off into the heather without a trace. Maybe the Adders could feel the boardwalks vibrating as he got closer?



Thingland wasn't full of gruesome grizzlies, creepy mimickies or scary thingies at all; it was in fact an amazing place full of wonder and surprises. Conan discovered that he actually enjoyed exploring and by the time he reached '4 Oak Alley' he was beaming with delight. "WELL DONE!" cheered the Woodpeckers. "SUPER STUFF!" chanted the Newts. "AMAZING!" hollered the Red Squirrels. Conan was having the best day of his life.

Are you brave enough to follow in Conan's footsteps? Can you see his route on the map?

Conan made his way across to the 'Peepy hole tree' and stopped for a well-deserved rest. He sat in the warm midday sun and looked about at the magical world around him. "Well done," said the wise Tawny Owl who had popped out during the day to congratulate him. "I hear that you are quite the explorer now. I think you have earned some muscles for those spindly little legs of yours. You might need them now you are a brave adventurer." The Tawny Owl pointed his wing towards the 'Chalybeate well' and encouraged Conan to go over. "The 'Chalybeate well' contains magical water, Conan. It's full of Iron which will make you big and strong." Conan looked into the well, took one whiff and then shook his

What do you think ...

makes a hero? Who do you know who is a special person?



6

fun local story walks

for children and the young at heart

Walks around
Carlisle & the Solway

Conan the brave of Finglandrigg Wood

By Anja Phoenix



Easy to follow Map & Story
Explore, Spot things & Search for clues on the way



solway Wetlands
LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

Tale trails

Allerdale
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