

WILDLIFE

With its diverse mix of habitats the park is rich in wildlife. At quiet times Roe Deer are regularly seen. In most years Foxes raise cubs although they are frequent casualties on the nearby busy roads. Scattered large patches of Bluebells provide a woodland Spring carpet. In Summer Foxgloves are common.

The bird life is varied. In winter the Silver Birch woods are home to flocks of Redpolls. The many Alder trees provide food for Siskin. Spring sees the arrival of summer migrants like the Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler; both these birds weigh little more than a tea bag! Tree Pipit and Yellow Hammer frequent the open heathland. Rarities recorded in the park include Nightjar, Dartford Warbler and Great Grey Shrike.

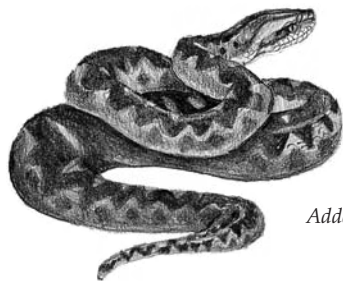
Douster and Island Ponds are so rich in wildlife, especially Dragonflies, that they are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The ponds are naturally acidic and hold little bird life but beneath the water large Carp and Pike swim.



Dragonfly

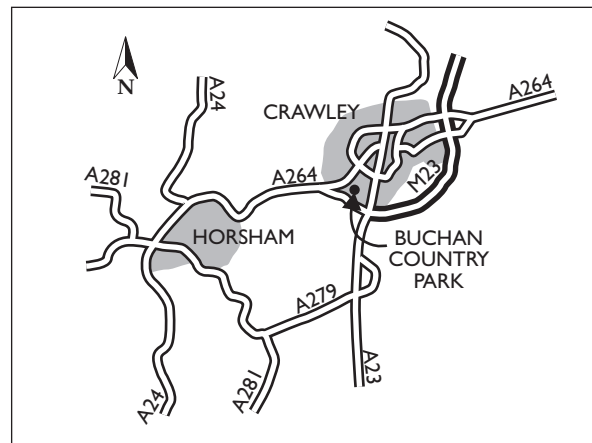
Habitat management work has improved the heathland and reptiles are flourishing. Adders are common but pose little threat. A small, shy snake, they quickly move away if disturbed. On hot summer days Grass Snakes have been seen to cross the ponds.

As the crow flies it is little more than two miles from Crawley town centre to Buchan Country Park, yet Sparrowhawks, Newts, Bush Crickets and Hornets all call the park home.



Adder

HOW TO GET THERE



FISHING

Managed by Crawley Angling Society, fishing is permitted on Douster Pond only. No night fishing or day tickets. Further information can be obtained from:

Honorary Secretary, Simon Clark, 01923 467064
email: secretary@crawleyanglingsociety.co.uk
www.crawleyanglingsociety.co.uk

We hope that you enjoy your visit to the Park, but please...

- control and clean up after your dog
- take your litter home
- dogs may only swim from Island Pond Dog Dip
- do not disturb the wildlife
- leave flowers and fungi for others to enjoy



For more information about Buchan Country Park contact the Countryside Centre on (01293) 542088 or visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/buchanpark
email: buchan.park@westsussex.gov.uk

If this information is needed in an alternative format please contact us and we will try and meet your needs. Call 01243 777544

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Buchan Country Park Trail Guide



WELCOME

Welcome to Buchan Country Park - 170 acres (69 hectares) of beautiful countryside right on Crawley's doorstep.

Owned and managed by West Sussex County Council the park is a haven for quiet recreation and a variety of wildlife. An ideal place for walking, wildlife watching or enjoying a picnic, Buchan Country Park has plenty to offer. Lose yourself amongst the birch trees, wander around the heath and linger in the meadow. Enjoy this special piece of Sussex countryside and the wildlife that calls it home.

FACILITIES

The network of **Surfaced Paths** ensures easy walking in most weather conditions. Much of the park allows good access for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Ample **Car Parking** is available from 8am to 9pm in summer and 8am to 6pm in winter. The **Countryside Centre** provides information and displays about the Country Park and the wider countryside. The centre is open on Sunday afternoons, Bank Holidays and during the week when staffing levels permit. Schools, clubs and other organisations can arrange activities by contacting the ranger on duty. Island Pond has a **Dog Dip**, a designated area where dogs may swim without disturbing other users and wildlife. There is a permanent 3.5 kms (just over 2 miles) novice **Orienteering Course**. You may buy an information pack and map, price £1.50 from the Countryside Centre. A **Toilet Block** adjacent to the centre includes facilities for the disabled and nappy changing, accessed by a RADAR key available at the centre.

HISTORY

In medieval times the area now known as Buchan Country Park was heavily used for wood extraction and grazing for sheep. As a result, the original woods became heathland - a small area of which is left on Target Hill.

In the early part of the 19th century, the estate was owned by Lord Erskine, who named the park 'Buchan', after his father, the Earl of Buchan. In Victorian times, the park was owned by a Mr Saillard, a businessman whose wealth came from the sale of playing cards and ostrich feathers for ladies' hats. Among the additions he made to the estate were the establishment of Douster and Island Ponds and the construction of a grand mansion, now a co-educational prep school known as Cottesmore School.

West Sussex County Council purchased the park on 31st July, 1969 and it was designated a Country Park in 1980.



Silver Birch

Cherry

SPRUCE HILL COPPICE

Once covered in dense Bracken this area used to suffer from frequent, malicious fires. After careful management of the Bracken, Bluebells are common in the spring. Follow the permissive path signs to link up with the public bridleway that crosses Holmbush estate.

PLANTATION

Much of the plantation was destroyed by fire in 1989. Some Oak survived but their slow growth is evidence of the poor ground they are growing in. After the fire, Silver Birch seedlings quickly colonised. A section of birch is now cut each winter and allowed to grow back naturally providing glades for reptiles and flowers and dense scrub for birds – a practice known as coppicing.

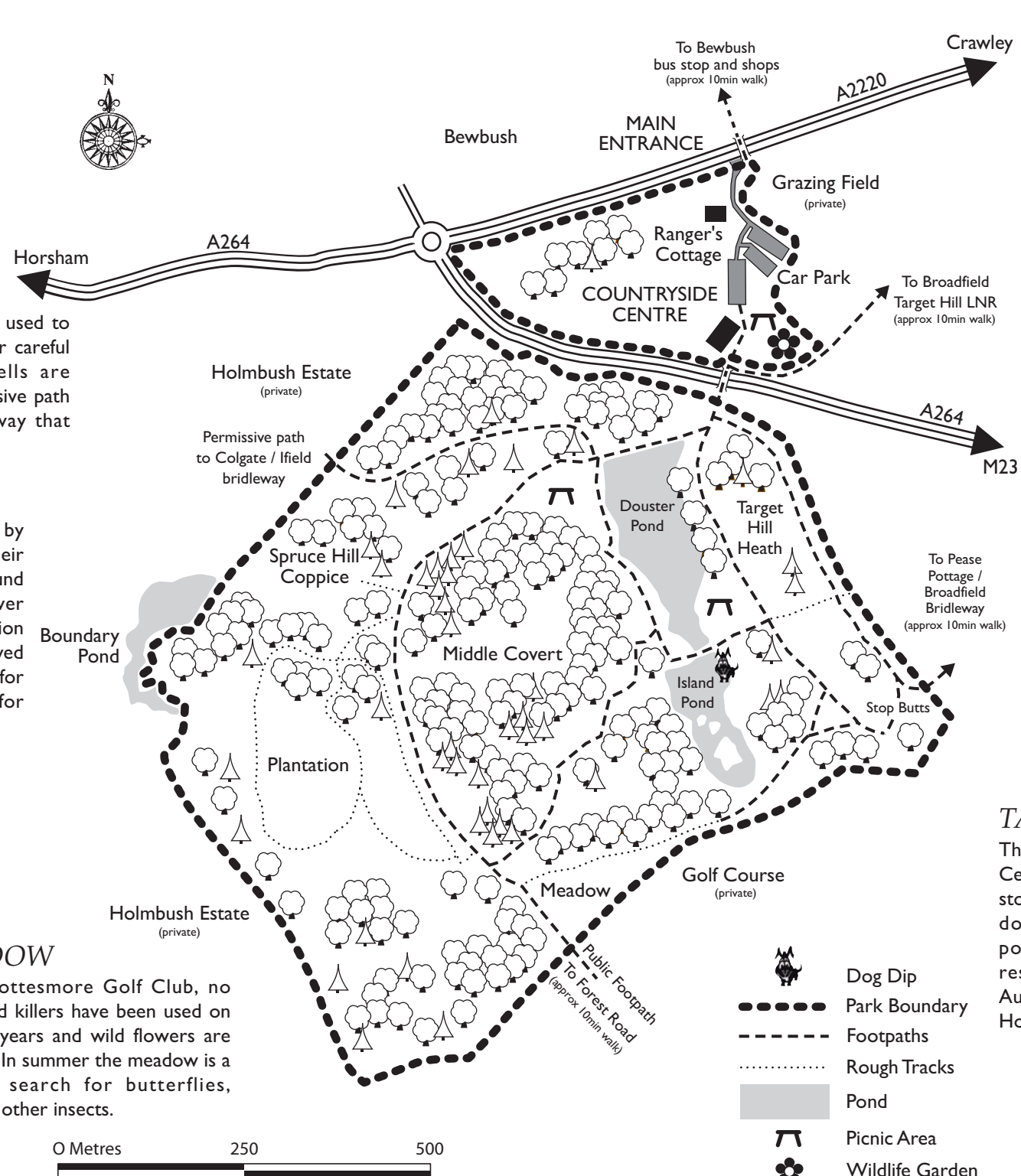
MIDDLE COVERT

An area of woodland and glades which contains some lovely old Beech and Oak trees providing a perfect place for the study of fungi - especially in Autumn.

THE MEADOW

Once part of Cottessmore Golf Club, no fertilisers or weed killers have been used on the grass for 30 years and wild flowers are slowly increasing. In summer the meadow is a great place to search for butterflies, grasshoppers and other insects.

Rowan



WILDLIFE GARDEN

A dog free area. Once part of a formal garden this area contains a diverse mix of native and cultivated plants, along with several ponds.

TARGET HILL LNR

Owned by Crawley Borough Council, this Local Nature Reserve was a landfill site but is now home to a wide range of habitats and wildlife. In July Broad-leaved Helleborine, a type of orchid, are common.

DOUSTER AND ISLAND PONDS

Douster and Island Ponds were constructed in Victorian times by damming Douster Brook. The exotic conifers, such as Monkey Puzzle tree, are also a reminder of this era. In 2008, 16 species of dragonfly were recorded from the ponds confirming its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PONDS ARE DANGEROUS – NO SWIMMING OR BOATING. DOGS ARE ONLY PERMITTED TO SWIM AT THE ISLAND POND DOG DIP.

TARGET HILL HEATH

This area is known as Target Hill because, in the 19th Century it was used as a rifle range. The remains of the stop butts can be seen close to the golf course. Once dominated by the alien shrub, Rhododendron ponticum, Adder and Lizard now flourish on the restored heath. Heather turns the heath purple in August and attracts many species of insect including Honey Bee.

Beech

Oak

Sweet Chestnut