



Guided Walks on Magdalen Hill Down

Come and 'Meet the Butterflies' with a leader from Butterfly Conservation who will help you see lots of species. Mid-July - August is an excellent time of year to visit the reserve.

Meet at 10.30am in the gravel car park opposite Magdalen Hill Cemetery on the B3404 Alresford Rd, Winchester. (There is a bus stop at this point). The walks will last approximately 2 hours.

Sunday 27th July	Wednesday 30th July
Sunday 3rd August	Wednesday 6th August
Sunday 10th August	Wednesday 13th August
Sunday 17th August	Wednesday 20th August

The reserve is always open and visitors are welcome to enjoy a self-guided walk at any time. The following notes might make an independent visit easier and more enjoyable.

Main starting point:

Park in the gravel car park as detailed above or alight from the bus at this point. The reserve is less than a 5 minute walk away up the track between the cemetery and Blackwell and Moody Stonemasons.

You can walk anywhere on the reserve and dogs are allowed providing that signs requesting that they be kept on leads are observed and, most importantly, that poo bags are carried and droppings picked up and taken home.

As the map overleaf shows, the reserve has three distinct parts:-

1. The Original Reserve - mainly a steep south-facing hillside of unimproved downland, which was cleared of scrub in the early 1990's. The steep slopes are the best places to see Chalkhill Blues.

2. The Extension - the summer flowers will be lovely and many butterflies will be seen. A network of grassy paths provides relatively easy walking. This area was an arable field of 32 acres that was sown with native grasses and wild flowers - 47 species in all - in 1997.

3. Magdalen Hill North - this is the largest area - 55 acres - and can easily be accessed by a hardened path that is also suitable for wheelchairs. Persons holding a Radar key may use the carpark at the top of the track, accessed via a locked gate. Superb flowers and extensive views can be enjoyed, together with a range of the butterfly species present on the whole site. Like the extension, this was an arable field and was sown with native seeds as part of a joint scheme between Butterfly Conservation and Hampshire County Council in 2004.

The whole reserve - 110 acres - is a wonderful place for nature and we hope you will enjoy your visit.

Suggested route:

A walk of about two miles but with the option to cut back at two other points, or simply return and retrace one's steps.

At the top of the track by the cemetery (G) turn right and follow the hardened path to a set of gates. At this point there is an option to turn left through a kissing gate to go through the cattle corral into the Extension (A) or to enter the Original reserve through another kissing gate (B). On the right is a very chalky area created as a special habitat for the wild flowers and butterflies, like the Small Blue, that need a very chalky environment.

Alternatively, you can go through the gate on the hardened path admiring the wild flowers in profusion on each side of the path. About two-thirds of the way along, a sign will point to the left. This is another point where you can enter the Original reserve (C) and head back in an Easterly direction as a shorter walk.

The flowers are particularly good here in a large area where the topsoil has been reduced. Again, flowers that like chalk thrive, like Horseshoe Vetch, Rockrose, Kidney Vetch and Birdsfoot Trefoil.

Otherwise, carry on to the end of the hardened path (its total length is less than a mile) and turn left at the end (D). Anyone walking to the reserve from the City of Winchester will enter the reserve at this entrance (virtually opposite St.Swithun's School - there are bus stops each side of the road here too).

Enter the gate (E) at the end of the grassy track and turn left. Walk past the Bronze Age tumuli and keeping on the higher path, go through a kissing gate. You will then reach another kissing gate (C). At this point keep straight on (turning left through the kissing gate would take you back onto MHD North and the hardened path). Here the path leaves the top of the reserve and wends its way across the hillside. This is a good place to see Chalkhill Blues.

You will reach the far end of the Original reserve at a gateway under large trees (F). If you started at the cemetery end, the best route now is to go straight ahead and follow the grassy path through the Extension, turning left at the electricity pole to return to the cemetery track (G). You have now completed a circular walk of about two hours duration.

If you started at the City end (D), you can turn left and walk alongside the trees, through a kissing gate and join the hardened path at A to head back west to your starting point. Or you can carry on to G and walk the whole of the hardened path to your starting point.

If you have enjoyed this walk, do look at our website for details of other butterfly events and for more information on the activities of Butterfly Conservation.

www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk