

To start, leave the information centre and turn right through the garden, through a gate, down the steep track and enter the apple orchard (1).

The old lichen-encrusted trees of the orchard (2) attract nuthatches and you may see green woodpeckers foraging in the grass below. In autumn and early winter butterflies such as red admiral and peacock, or birds such as redwing and fieldfare, feast on the fallen fruit. Down to your left is a small observation area that overlooks a bank where kingfishers often nest.

Continue through the orchard to the weir (3). The Leigh Brook has cut a winding valley with steep woodlands and rich meadows. There has been a weir here to power the nearby mill for at least 200 years. Look for grey wagtails on the brook; in winter the brook-side alders are good places to see flocks of long-tailed tits and siskins. Dragonflies and damselflies thrive here in spring and summer and otters have returned in recent years.

Continue along the track, passing a newly restored pond to the right (4), into Daffodil Field. This takes its name from the time when daffodils were commercially grown here; few now survive. As you go through the next gate into a large meadow (5), look to your left to see Pivany Bridge. This takes its name from the 19th century name for the meadow, *Great Epiphany*, because its rent was due on Epiphany Day, 6th January. In about 1840 this was part hopfield and part arable, but today it is known as *Big Meadow*, thanks to the meadowland that has developed since. In spring, before the hay is cut, look out for cowslips, knapweed and even green-winged orchids.

Follow the track along the bottom of the meadow into woodland. Woodland occupies about half of this reserve. On the steeper slopes and in patches by the brook, the trees were coppiced until 50 years ago. Coppicing has been resumed to encourage the marvellous carpet of bluebells and other wild flowers such as yellow archangel, stitchwort and wild garlic.

Continue along the track until you reach Papermill Meadow (6), an old pasture that has not been ploughed or sprayed and retains a rich mixture of plants and insects. In summer the sheltered conditions attract up to 25 species of butterfly whilst in early autumn look out for the tall purple Devil's-bit scabious, now quite a rare plant.

Cross the field to the abandoned Papermill Cottage (7). The mill below here was swept away in floods and the miller's cottage now hosts a colony of pipistrelle and lesser horseshoe bats. Continue on the path past the cottage but don't follow the public footpath down to the brook. Instead, turn right at the end of the meadow and head uphill (8). In the corner of the meadow you'll find old pear trees and some fine wild service trees (9).



Follow the path along the meadow edge with the wood on your left (10), all the way up to the top left hand corner of the meadow where you'll enter Tor Coppice (11). This is another area where traditional coppicing has been restored by the Trust. Continue along the path through wood and after about 50 metres turn right and down through the wood. Both native species of lime grow amongst the predominant oaks and hazels down to the edge of Big Meadow.

At (12) follow the trail to your left, running parallel to the woodland edge. You'll go past a large beech tree - the only one on the reserve - and through areas carpeted with bluebells each spring.

After about 90 metres you reach a junction (13) where you can turn right into the meadow and walk downhill to rejoin the brook-side path (then turn left back to the information centre\*), or follow the main trail left through another section of woodland. If you follow the main trail, after a further 20 metres (14), take the right turn through the lower section of the wood. You'll see boxes in trees through this section - they're to encourage bats and many species of bird. The woods are also rich in fungi. Descend through the wood to the orchard (15) and re-join the main track to return to the information centre.

\* Route not shown on map.

