

# Grove Park Nature Reserve

Please feel free to wonder around the nature reserve at your own leisure. However, if you prefer, this leaflet will guide you around the reserve using 6 numbered markers. Each marker will indicate where there are plants or animals of interest.

**i) Point 1** on the nature trail is the entrance to the reserve. This area is a rough grassland with bramble, buttercups, clovers, ragwort and hogweed. Bluebells, winter aconite and snow drops have been planted here and can also be seen in early spring.

After passing through this you enter the main area of woodland on the reserve. The woodland shows numerous signs of its origins as an overgrown Victorian garden, with its mix of native and exotic species. Along with ash and oak are one or two hornbeams, horse-chestnuts and a few limes and poplars. Ivy scrambles up many of the trees and is a very important plant for wildlife as it flowers and provides nectar for insects in late Autumn when other plants have finished flowering.



English oak



Ash



Horse chestnut



Poplar

**ii) Once you are in the woodland you will be at Point 2** where there is a bridge over a small stream that feeds the newly created pond. The margins have been planted with yellow iris, soft rush, water-cress and brooklime.



Yellow iris



Brooklime



Water-cress

**iii) Continue along the left hand path through the woodland and you will pass oak, ash, and horse chestnut trees. These trees have an understory of ivy clad elder and hawthorn. In early spring you may see on the left hand side miniature daffodils and the rarer and more elusive wood anemone.**



Common vetch



Creeping cinquefoil

**iv) Walk until you reach Point 3** where the vegetation opens out into grassland with scattered scrub. The grassland here is typical neutral grassland, reflecting the underlying London Clay. Wild flowers include meadow vetchling, common vetch, creeping cinquefoil and the occasional clump of wild strawberry, a relic of the former use as allotments. Ant hills, nests of the yellow meadow ant, are dotted throughout the grassland. This is where you might see common lizards basking on sunny mornings. These ant hills also attract green woodpeckers. A hollow to the right of the path marks the site of a former pond, now dried out. This was apparently the site of an anti-aircraft battery during the Second World War.



Yellow meadow ant



Common lizard



Green woodpecker



Meadow brown



Gatekeeper



Red admiral



Common blue



Common knapweed



Burnet moth



Bird's-foot trefoil

**vii) Retrace your steps back past the plum thicket and continue on the left hand path until you reach Point 5** which leads to a secondary entrance at the bottom of Hoser Avenue. The gate is usually locked but it is an area that the 'Friends of' hope to enhance in the future.

**viii) Follow the path until you get to Point 6** where you will see the remnant of a worn cast iron fence that marks the boundary of the Victorian garden. Although difficult to identify this boundary contains the remnants of a hawthorn hedge. Just beyond here you will see an overgrown privet hedge and in the woodland understory, snowberry, another relic from the former garden. Snowberry was popular for its unusual, pure white berries, but it can be highly invasive in woodlands and its removal is one of the staple tasks for Grove Park nature conservation volunteers. To the left you will see the shallow stream that feeds the pond and takes you back towards your start point.



Snowberry



Hawthorn



- Broadleaved woodland and dense scrub
- Semi-improved neutral/calcareous grassland
- Old hawthorn hedge
- Newly planted hawthorn hedge
- Scattered scrub
- Wet flush
- Pond
- Former pond
- Footpath
- Ditch
- Green Chain Walk

**v) If you continue north you will come to a thicket of plum trees which must have been an orchard. These produce a fabulous crop of fruit in the autumn, which is greatly appreciated by birds, wasps, foxes and local people. Take the left hand fork to reach Point 4.**

**vi) At Point 4** you are overlooking the railway and Hither Green Cemetery. This is the most extensive area of meadow on the reserve and probably the best area to see butterflies and moths. Look out for common blue, meadow brown, gatekeeper, red admiral butterflies and the striking black and red day flying burnet moth. Meadow wildflowers include common knapweed, bird's-foot-trefoil, tufted vetch and wild carrot.