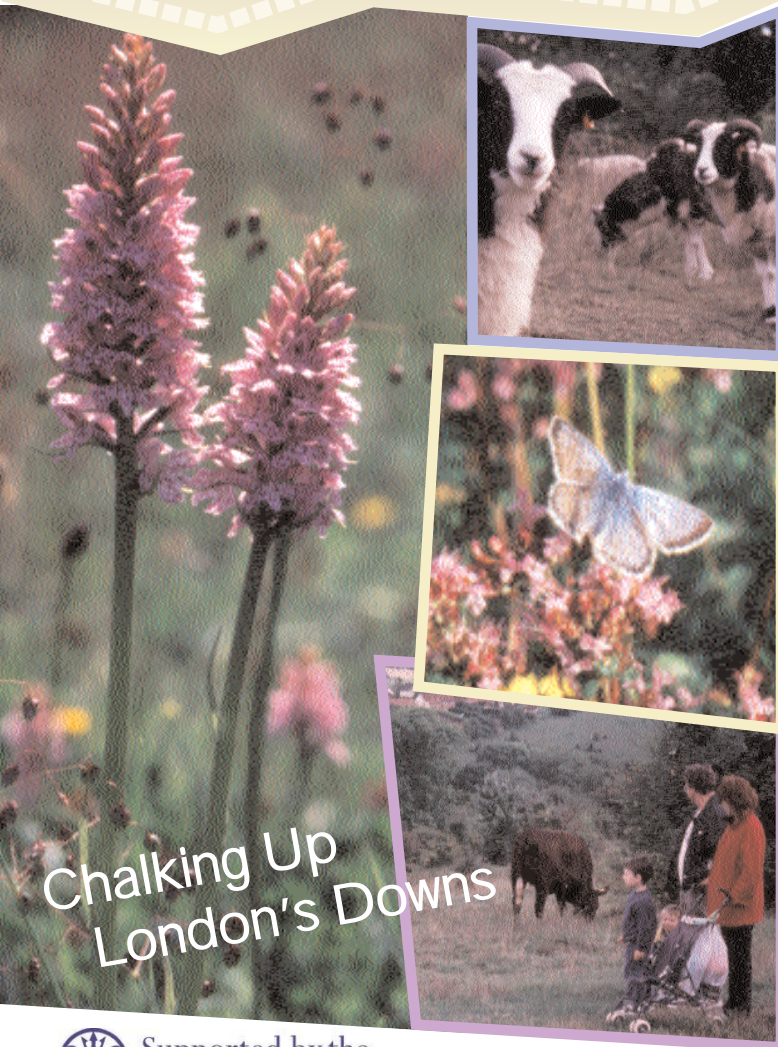
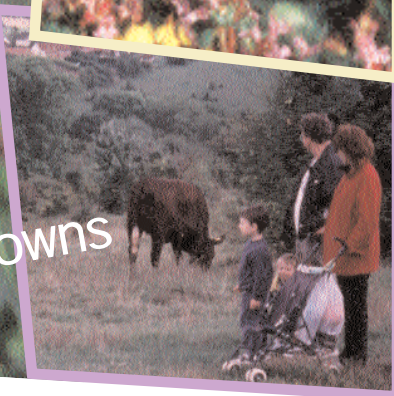
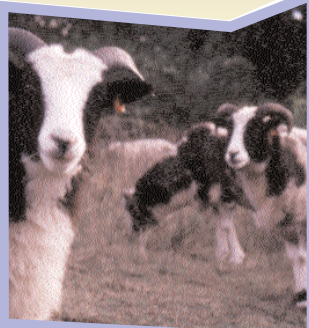


London's Chalk Downlands

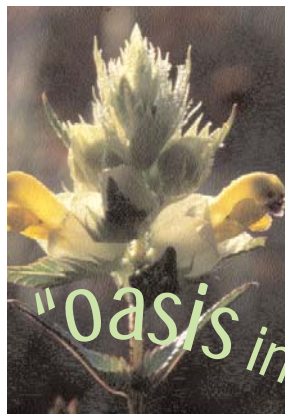
Rare Wildlife on Our Doorstep
Help ensure their survival



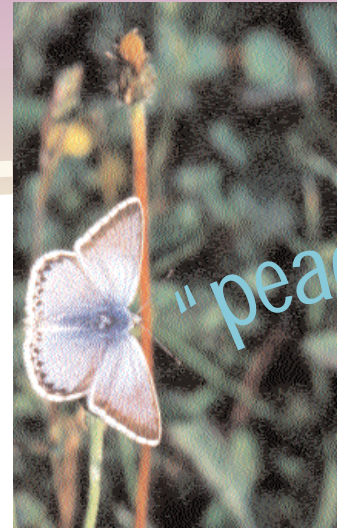
Chalking Up
London's Downs



Did you
know that
south London has
exceptionally
colourful and
attractive
grasslands that
are home
to some of
Britain's most
treasured
wildlife?



"oasis in the city"



"peace & quiet"

The chalk
downland of
Bromley,
Croydon
and Sutton
forms one of our
most celebrated
landscapes and
is well worth
a visit,
You can see an
amazing variety
of wild flowers,
butterflies and
other colourful
insects here in
summer



"memory lane"

Chalk has a history, dating back to the age of the dinosaurs, when it formed on the seabed more than ninety million years ago. Over millions of years the seabed solidified into rock and the land changed bringing the chalky rock to the surface.

The chalk downland we see today owes its appearance to human influence. Its original woodland cover was cleared in the Stone Age and crops planted in some areas.



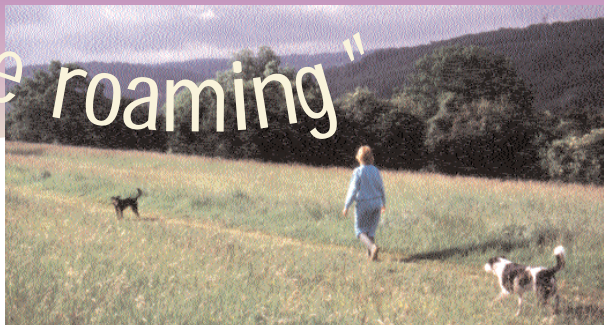
"Freedom to move around"

The thin soil was quickly exhausted so cultivation was abandoned and for thousands of years it's been used for grazing. Sheep, cattle and other animals kept the grass short providing ideal conditions for the flowers and other wildlife to flourish.





"unlimited free roaming"



We have 320 hectares of chalk grassland in south London. Many of these sites are small and isolated but a partnership of land owners and managers is working to ensure their survival. Sheep and cattle are grazing some areas once again and cutting is used where this isn't practical. Grassland is being restored by clearing invasive shrubs and trees, but patches are left providing food and shelter for insects and birds. This mosaic of grassland and bushes is richer in wildlife than windswept grassland alone. Flowers and butterflies are moving back into areas which they had left.

Chalk grassland is an ideal place to enjoy the great outdoors, whether you're walking the dog, taking a stroll with the children, jogging, or just getting some fresh air

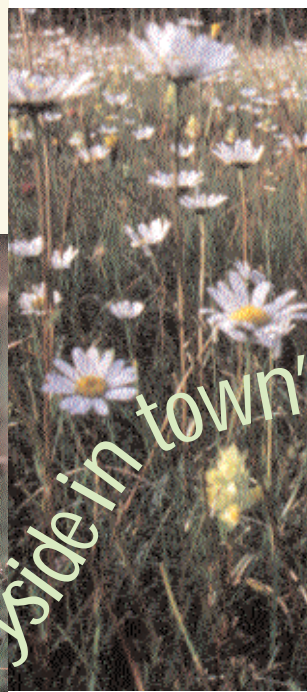


Or if you'd like to help shape the future of the chalk downland you can get involved in practical conservation action



However you get involved we hope you will enjoy visiting these special sites, with all our help they will be with us for many years to come.

"good for kids"



"countryside in town"

Changes in farming have meant that chalk grassland was ploughed up as modern fertilizers made it possible to grow crops here. The downs have also become less grazed and, as a result of this neglect, bushes and trees have reinvaded the grassland transforming the previously open landscape into woodland. Downland was also lost to development - to feed our insatiable appetite for new roads, housing, sports facilities and industry.

It's not enough just to protect what flower-rich grassland survives, as even neglect alone can lead to the extinction of characteristic downland wildlife as it becomes covered by shrubs.

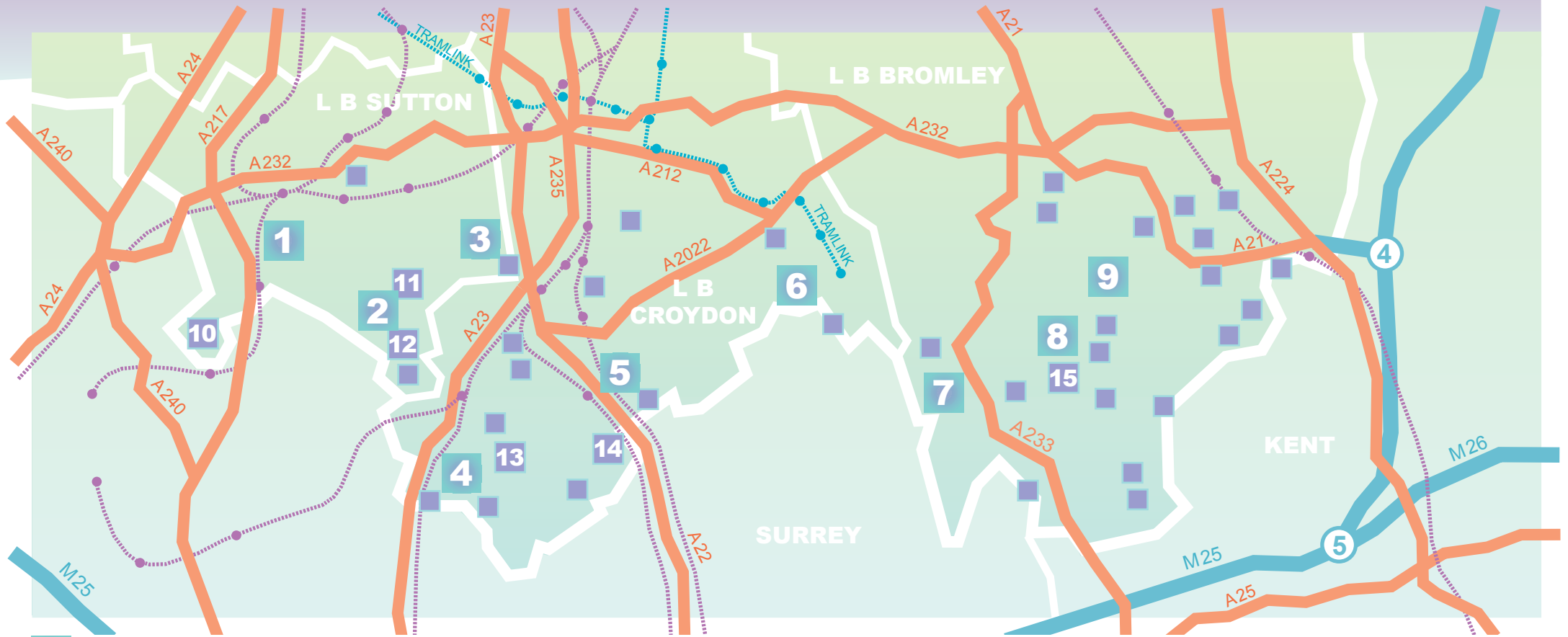
Action by grazing or cutting is needed to keep the downland open

More than 95% of the UK's ancient flower-rich downland has been destroyed in just the last 50 years



London's Chalk Downland

– Rare Wildlife on Our Doorstep



- 1 Key Sites** (more details overleaf)
- 1 Devonshire Avenue Nature Area
 - 2 The Oaks Park
 - 3 Roundshaw Downs
 - 4 Farthing Downs, New Hill & Happy Valley
 - 5 Riddlesdown
 - 6 Hutchinson's Bank
 - 7 Saltbox Hill
 - 8 Downe Bank
 - 9 High Elms Nature Reserve
- 10 Other sites to enjoy**
- 10 Cuddington Meadow
 - 11 Wellfield Grassland
 - 12 Carshalton Road Pastures
 - 13 Coulsdon Memorial Recreation Ground
 - 14 Kenley Common
 - 15 Blackbush Shaw
 - 16 Blackbush Shaw
- LB Sutton 020 8770 6246**
- LB Croydon 020 8686 4433 x2438**
- LB Bromley 020 8313 4665**

Sites with restricted access or private

Please telephone the numbers shown for more details of these sites

Please remember

- Avoid disturbing wildlife
- Take your litter home
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Keep to the paths where possible
- Keep your dogs under close control
- Take nothing but photographs
- Leave nothing but footprints

Photos by kind permission of:

- Andrew Scott
- Butterfly Conservation
- The Wildlife Trusts

Leaflet designed by:

- Projects & Graphics
- L.B. Sutton
- 020 8770-6241

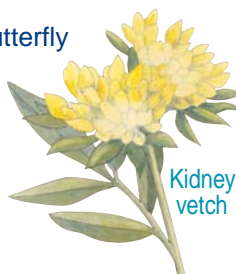


London's Chalk Downland Key Sites



Devonshire Avenue Nature Area This tiny (0.3 ha) site is a wildlife oasis in suburbia, especially in summer. The site of former houses and gardens is now home to a range of wildflowers, such as restharrow and purging flax, which are more usually found on downland sites further south.

The nationally rare small blue butterfly does not easily colonise new sites, yet Devonshire Avenue's kidney vetch, the small blue's favourite plant, have attracted it to the area. Many other butterflies feed on the buddleia bushes.



Contact 020 8770 6246

Open all year

How to get there

Train Sutton station - 800m

Buses 80, 280 and 420, stop in Brighton Road close to the junction with Devonshire Ave - 300m

Bus S1 stops on Langley Park Rd Hail & Ride - 250m

Devonshire Rd and Devonshire Ave have limited public parking. The site is accessible by stiles.



The Oaks Park

The history of Oaks Park dates back to the 14th century, when it began as a grove of oak trees planted as part of a small estate. Over the years the estate welcomed many royal and noble visitors, and during the Second World War its house was used by the local Home Guard, Royal Air Force and the Army.

The house was demolished in 1959, and Oaks Park is now a haven for wildlife. Its combination of woodland and chalk grassland changes through the seasons. In spring the trees are circled by yellow aconite, clumps of snowdrops, crocus and violets while summer sees harebells, hoary plantain and yarrow take over, and the air is filled with the scent of pineapple weed. In autumn many species of fungi can be found along the woodland walks, and later in the year flocks of fieldfare make the area their winter home.



Over the year many other birds can be seen and heard, including the skylark, house martin, kestrel, goldfinch, cuckoo, mistle thrush, nuthatch and woodpecker. Patient visitors may also catch a glimpse of the elusive weasel.

Contact 020 8770 6246

Open all year

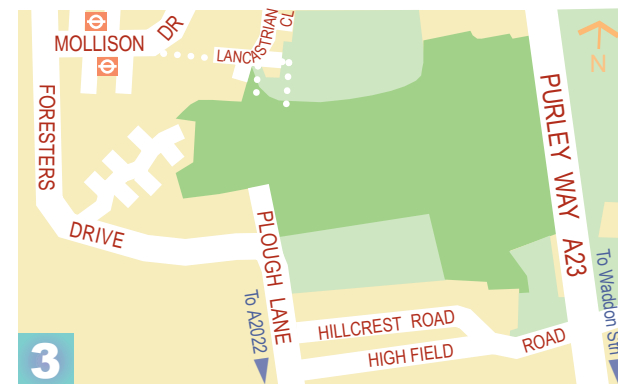
How to get there

Train Carshalton Beeches station - 800m

Buses S4 Hail & Ride in The Warren, 154 stops in Beeches Av.

Car parks off Woodmansterne Road and Croydon Road

Facilities include a Nature Trail, Cafe, Woodland Craft Centre,



Roundshaw Down A gentle chalk downland slope with views to North London. In spring you can enjoy swathes of oxeye daisies, while summer brings traditional chalk flowers such as the greater knapweed, greater yellow-rattle, wild carrot and field scabious.

Several pairs of skylarks breed there, spiralling in the air singing to proclaim their territory. Meadow pipits also nest in the long grass, and kestrels patrol the area searching for prey. Common blue butterflies are abundant, feeding and depositing their eggs on birds-foot trefoil. A small patch of ancient woodland next to Plough Lane has a range of unusual woodland plants including town-hall clock and goldlocks buttercup.

Small patches of tarmac among the flowers hint at the site's important past as London's first airport. The increase in size of airliners needing longer runways led to its decline and Croydon airport closed in 1959.

Most of Roundshaw Downs is a Local Nature Reserve. Local volunteers planted a tree belt hedge along the southern boundary in the 1980s and a hedge on the northern edge in the 1990s to provide shelter for insects. To keep it as grassland the site is mowed regularly and the hay removed.

Contact: 020 8770 4627

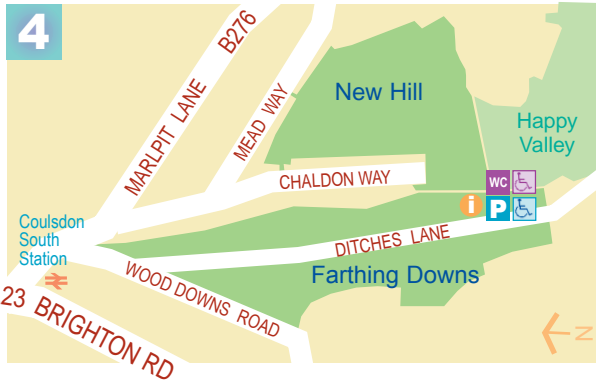
Open all year

How to get there

Train station Waddon - 1km

Buses 154, 455, S4 stop in Mollison Drive - 200m. 289 stops on Purley Way - 50m. 119 stops at Croydon Airport - 400m

Limited parking on adjacent roads and Apeldoorn Estate



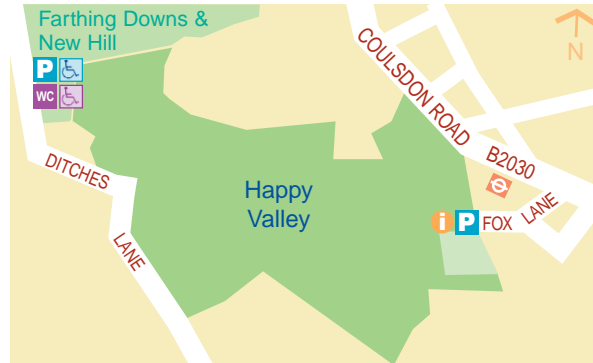
Farthing Downs, New Hill and Happy Valley

From the breezy ridge top of Farthing Downs there are views of tree-lined suburbia and distant towers of Croydon, City of London and Canary Wharf. Nearer at hand is the rolling countryside, made up of a mix of open fields and woods including the quiet haven of Happy Valley. The slopes of the Downs are dotted with patches of young woodland that provide shelter for docile Sussex cattle which graze here all year round. Sheep graze some areas here too from time to time. Skylarks sing overhead where it's more open.

On the steep slopes of Happy Valley there are many notable flowers, including cowslips in spring and up to ten species of orchid. There are fine views from the upper slope across the meadows to the ancient Devisden Wood. Some Sussex cattle graze part of the valley in spring and summer.

Between June and August you will see typical chalk flowers in bloom on Farthing Downs and Happy Valley. These include common dropwort, wild carrot and small scabious. Some less common plants include the brilliant blue clustered flower heads of round headed rampion and a big population of what is nationally an extremely rare plant, greater yellow-rattle.

In spring and summer, after wet weather, you may find Roman snails venturing out into the grassland. This is the largest land snail in Britain and it's only found on the chalky soils needed to make its heavy shell. On a summer night you might catch the green light of glow-worms as the adult female beetle clings to grasses to attract a mate.



On New Hill chalk grassland survives where bushes were cleared on the slope in the 1990s. From this flowery vantage point is a sweeping view of the length of Farthing Downs.

On Farthing Downs, when the grass is short, you can see low banks that mark the boundaries of rectangular fields ploughed by Iron Age people 2000 years ago. Two groups of seventh century Saxon burial mounds lie on the ridge top - excavations have shown that children and adults were buried on this Ancient Monument.

Farthing Downs and New Hill

Contact 020 8660 8533 **Open** all year

How to get there

Train station Coulsdon South - 400m

Buses 60 and 404 stop in Marlpit Lane - 50m

Bus 405 stop on Brighton Rd, 400m

Car park at the south end of the downs. Turn off Marlpit Lane into Downs Road and take the left fork leading over the Downs

Public toilet at the Farthing Downs car park (also for the disabled, operated by a RADAR key)

Happy Valley

Contact 020 8760 5756 **Open** all year

How to get there

Buses 404, 466 stop at the Fox Public House on Coulsdon Rd

Car Park off Fox Lane



Riddlesdown The wooded slope of Riddlesdown rises steeply from the A22 Godstone Road to the top of a grassy plateau dotted with trees. Sheep graze in clearings on the slope and a few rare bushes of juniper grow. The surfaced track from the car park follows the course of a Roman road and from here are fine views across the valley to leafy Kenley and Kenley Common.

The chalk downland nearest the car park is maintained by hay making but the track leads into a sloping paddock grazed by a small number of Sussex cattle. The richest areas of downland are on the slope, where you'll find characteristic chalk flowers as common rockrose, milkwort, horseshoe vetch and marjoram as well as small numbers of common spotted, bee and pyramidal orchids.

The warm south-west facing slope provides shelter for the vivid common blue butterfly and, in July and August, the powdery blue male chalkhill blue butterfly.

Behind the car park is Coombes Wood – an area of ancient woodland. Most of Riddlesdown is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Jackdaw and kestrel breed in nearby Riddlesdown Quarry which is closed to the public - to visit on a guided walk call 020 8660 8533.

Contact 020 8660 8533 Open all year

How to get there

Train stations Riddlesdown Stn - 700m
Kenley Stn – 250m

Buses 412 and 612 stop in Mitchley Ave close to the junction with Riddlesdown Rd -150m

Bus 407 stops on A22 Godstone Road - 25m
Using this stop it is a short steep climb to the plateau top.

Car park at the south east end of Riddlesdown Road.



Hutchinson's Bank This large nature reserve complex covers much of a dry chalk valley on the western side of New Addington. The steep grassland slope hosts diverse butterflies, plantlife and birds.

You'll find pyramidal, common spotted and man orchids as well as grasses, kidney vetch and the nationally rare greater yellow-rattle. It's a paradise for moths, more than 100 species have been recorded here, and in a good year over 28 species of butterfly can be seen, including small blue and dark green fritillary.

Over recent year the wild flower rich grasslands have suffered from scrub invasion, but are now being carefully restored to their former glory.

The nearby gladed woodland of the Chapel Bank Nature Reserve has a nationally rare grass - mat-grass fescue, as well as impressive displays of common spotted and other orchids.

This site is an exceptionally rich mix of grassland, hedgerows and woodland, and includes the grassy verges alongside Featherbed Lane and the triangle of ancient woodland known as Three-corner Grove.

Contact 020 7261 0447 Open all year

How to get there

The **Tramlink** Terminus at New Addington is close to a footpath leading down to Featherbed Lane from North Downs Road, New Addington, making this the ideal way to visit the site.

Car parking is very limited near the reserve

Access is gained to all of the site from Featherbed Lane and direct to Hutchinsons Bank at the top of Farleigh Dean Crescent.



Saltbox Hill Hidden in a rural valley, the peaceful and tranquil Saltbox Hill lies just north of Biggin Hill. A mile away from Charles Darwin's home at Down House, this local habitat gave the great evolutionist inspiration as well much loved picnicking spots in the nineteenth century.

You'll find pyramidal and bee, as well as the fly orchid and nationally scarce man orchid. On summer days the wild basil adds its own special aroma to the air while sunny west facing slopes provide ideal conditions for over 30 species of butterfly, including the increasingly scarce chalkhill blue, grizzled skipper and dark green fritillary.

Springtime visitors will be greeted by a carpet of bluebells, wood anemones and yellow archangel in the nearby woodlands which are also home to woodpeckers, nuthatches and treecreepers.

Contact 020 7261 0447 Open all year

How to get there

Bus 464 to Tatsfield runs from New Addington (Parkway) runs up Saltbox Hill. **Bus 320** from Bromley North Stn to Biggin Hill Valley

Car parking is not possible near either entrance, but very limited parking is available nearby on Main Road (A233)

Access to the London Wildlife Trust reserve is by public footpaths that run through the site, one north to south starting on Saltbox Hill itself, with the other starting from Hanbury Drive



Downe Bank has a special place in natural history - it was here that Charles Darwin carried out some of the research later used in his famous book *The Origin of Species*. Today's visitors can still enjoy much of the rare wildlife that inspired Darwin, including several species of orchid, toothwort, adder's-tongue and false oxlip. In the wooded areas there are bluebells, hazel coppice, and mature beech, as well as yew, holly and woodland hawthorn.

The area is home to many birds - 31 species, including goldcrest, lesser spotted woodpecker, song thrush and turtle dove have been noted at Downe Bank. Butterflies such as the white-letter hairstreak, common blue and brown argos can also be found.



Toothwort

Contact 01622 662012
Site managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust

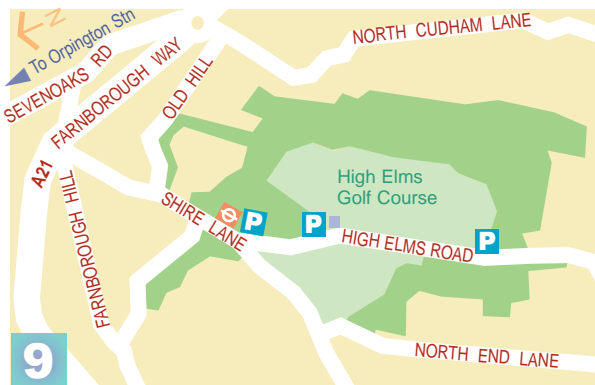
Open all year



How to get there

Buses There are frequent timetable changes, so please see local directory for buses to Downe Village

Car parking for general visits is at Downe Village - walk to the reserve. The car park at the reserve is locked and only available for supervised visits.



High Elms Country Park Nature Reserve

High Elms sits on the rim of the Thames basin where it meets the North Downs, 15 miles from central London. It is large wooded site straddling a downe, or ridge, of chalk and clay with flints. The area, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is home to 11 types of orchids including the bee, fly, butterfly, man, pyramidal, twayblade, common-spotted and bird nest.

One of the UK's most endangered mammals can be found at High Elms: there is a large community of dormice - the closest to central London - thriving in the ancient woodland there. Dormice were once common across the UK but are now an endangered species found mostly in southern counties.

High Elms was once owned by Sir William Lubbock, an eminent Victorian conservationist politician, scientist and author. He introduced 30 Acts of Parliament including the Open Spaces Act, Wild Birds Protection Act, Ancient Monuments Act and Bank Holidays Act.

Contact 01689 862815

Open all year

How to get there

Train Orpington BR Station

Bus R2 to Farnborough Village

Car: M25 Junc 4, A21, At Roundabout take Farnborough Hill Rd exit, left to Shire Lane (Follow London Tourist Board Signs), left to High Elms Rd and car park. Further parking at Cuckoo Wood.

Facilities include a Visitor Nature Centre with Conservation Garden and toilets for disabled visitors.

Getting Involved

Contacts

There are many ways you can get involved, from practical conservation work, to taking guided walks, or helping out at visitor centres.

London Wildlife Trust
020 7261 0447
www.wildlondon.org.uk

Bromley Countryside Management Service
020 8313 4665

Bromley Active Lifestyles
020 8290 4000

Bromley Parks and Countryside Rangers
01689 862815

London Borough of Croydon
020 8686 4433 ext 2438
www.croydon.gov.uk

London Borough of Sutton
020 8770 6246
www.sutton.gov.uk

Corporation of London
020 8660 8533
www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/openspaces

Countryside Management Service
020 8313 4665



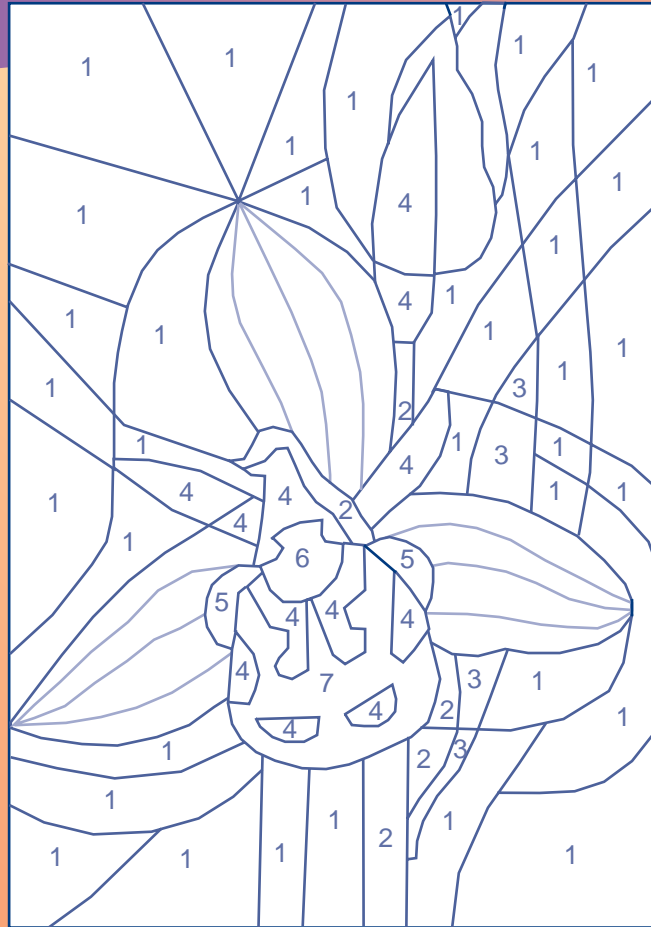
Chalk Downland Activity Sheet 1



Spot the Difference

There are 15 differences to spot between the two pictures of walking on chalk downland above.
Draw a circle round each one you find.

Chalk Downland Activity Sheet 2



Colour by numbers

Colour in each bit of the picture using the colours numbered below to find a **rare chalk downland plant**

Why do you think it is called a **bee orchid** ?

No number - White **1** Pale blue **2** Pale green
3 Dark green **4** Yellow **5** Orange **6** Red **7** Brown

Interested in Wild Activities?

The following centres run an interesting range of fun activities, courses & events.
Join in - have fun - make some wild friends!

The London Wildlife Trust's Centre for Wildlife Gardening

28 Marsden Road, London SE15 4EE



Open 10.30am-4.30pm

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays & Sundays

The Centre is a short walk from East Dulwich and Peckham rail stations. Call for details of courses and events in the award winning green building.

☎ 020 7252 9186 www.wildlondon.org.uk



Sutton Ecology Centre

The Old Rectory, Festival Walk, Carshalton, Surrey. SM5 3NY

Open 10am - 4pm Monday-Friday

10.30am - 1pm and 2 - 4.30pm Saturday

Grounds open from dawn to dusk all year

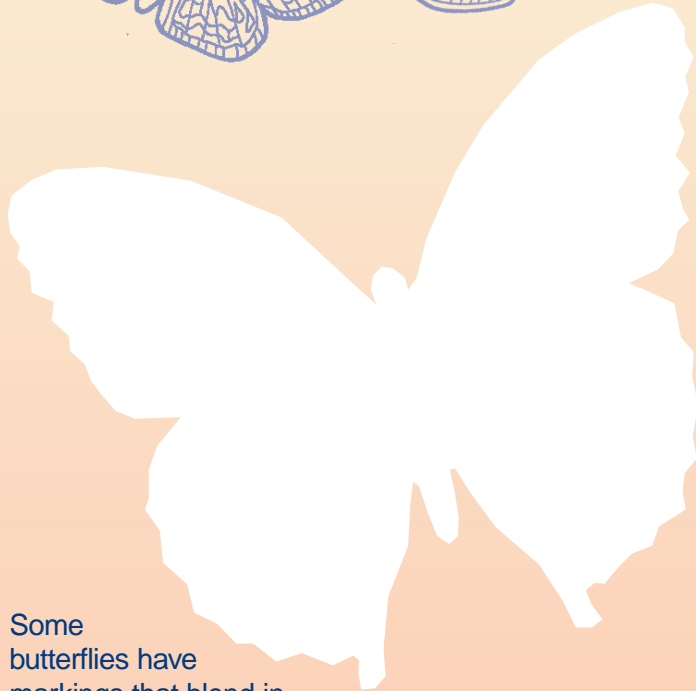
The Centre is a short walk from Carshalton rail station. Enjoy a stroll around the grounds which include woodland, a wildlife pond and alternative energy area; or join in a childrens holiday activity. The centre runs courses and regular events, call for details.



☎ 020 8770 5820

www.sutton.gov.uk

Chalk Downland Activity Sheet 3



Some butterflies have markings that blend in with their surrounding landscape, others have distinctive colouring to warn off predators. What type will yours be?

Design a Butterfly

Colour in the butterflies making up your own markings for the large one. Give your butterfly a name. What do you think it likes to eat?

Chalk Downland Activity Sheet 4



Odd One Out

Fill in the missing vowels to name the plants, colour them in their correct colours, then discover which is the odd one out!

Interested in Wild Activities?

The following centres run an interesting range of fun activities, courses & events.
Join in - have fun - make some wild friends!

South Norwood Country Park

Albert Road, South Norwood, London SE25

Grounds open from dawn to dusk all year
Visitors centre open weekends 12noon -2pm

Wildflower meadows, a wetland area and lake attract a variety of birds and butterflies. Other facilities include a viewing mound, childrens playground and visitors centre.

☎ 020 8656 5947 www.croydon.gov.uk

High Elms Nature Centre

High Elms Country Park,
Shire Lane, Farnborough.
BR6 7JH



Summer opening

2 - 4pm Wednesday 11am - 4.30pm weekends

Winter opening 11.30am - 3.30pm weekends

School holidays 2- 4pm Tuesdays & Thursdays

The centre has a range of displays including a woodland scene with animal sounds. Explore the wildlife pond, apiary, orchard, wildflower meadow, and living willow structures. Watch birds feeding their chicks in our nest box in Spring! The centre runs walks, talks and regular events, call for details.

☎ 01689 862815 www.bromley.gov.uk