

Family fun walk

Discover all kinds of unexpected wildlife... including a rusty old deer, the biggest bats you've ever seen, and an enormous beetle with gigantic grubs!

Start: Ewe Pen Barn, then follow the purple waymarkers
Distance: 2.5 miles, allow 1.5 hours

To avoid harm to wildlife or grazing animals, please stay on the paths and keep your dog under close control. *Please note that the paths can be muddy and slippery in wet weather.*

1 Ha Ha Ha!

What's so funny? Well, nothing really, it's just that the ditch along the edge of this field is called a 'ha ha'. Lots of grand country houses had them to keep sheep and deer out of the gardens. This ha ha was dug around Sherborne House, which you can see in the valley below.

Wild watch! The fields are great places to see birds like the skylark, yellowhammer and red-legged partridge. You might spot hares 'boxing' in spring (males fighting over females)!

2 Sculpture: Shepherd and his dog

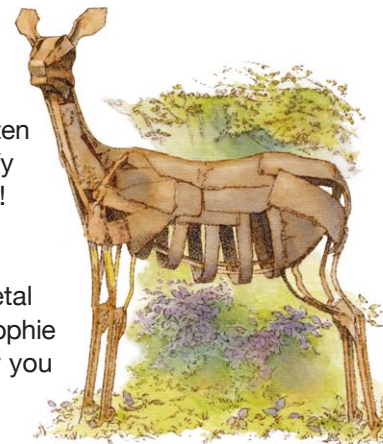
The children of Sherborne School helped make all the wildlife sculptures. This one was made from a fallen oak tree by sculptor, Dave Johnston. Sheep farming was once one of the most important industries on the estate. Can you think of a good name for the shepherd's dog?



Wild watch! This wood is home to the great spotted woodpecker, robin, goldcrest, wren and long-tailed tit. In spring and summer, listen the chiff chaff – it's easy to identify because it calls out its own name!

3 Sculpture – metal deer

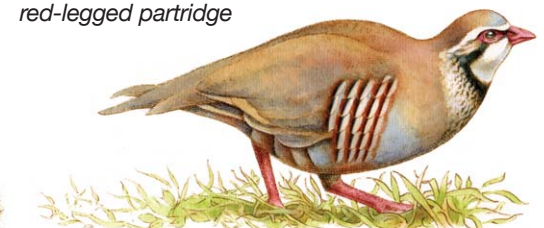
The deer was made out of old metal found on the local farm by artist Sophie Thompson. If you aren't too noisy you might see roe deer here, but they are very shy.



4 Sherborne House

You now pass the front gates of Sherborne House. Can you see the pineapples on the gateposts? These were a sign of wealth – ordinary people could not afford exotic fruits.

red-legged partridge



5 Sherborne Brook and the Cascade

The cascade is a waterfall which was once used to wash sheep. There was also an eel trap here – these long, thin, slimy fish were eaten in dishes like jellied eels or eel pie – yuk!

the Cascade



Wild watch! Look for birds like swans, tufted duck, heron, or the brilliant blue flash of a kingfisher. The trees by the cascade are black poplars – the male trees have red catkins and the females have green, and they need to be blown together to pollinate.

church



6 Sherborne Church

Take a detour into St Mary Magdalene Church, built in 1750 by the 1st Lord Sherborne.

7 What's with the wall?

The high wall on the right-hand side of the road was built around the kitchen garden of Sherborne House. It provided shelter so that exotic fruits such as pineapples and nectarines could be grown.

8 Pleasure Grounds

No, it's not a funfair! The Pleasure Grounds were created so that posh people from the house could take walks. The one mile route had to be raked by a servant to keep it smooth (he had to walk backwards so that he didn't leave any footprints!). You try walking backwards – but don't fall over!

Wild watch! The terrible racket comes from the rookery, where hundreds of rooks live. You can identify a rook by its pale face and beak. The huge tree by the gate is a Cedar of Lebanon. Oil from these trees was used in ancient Egypt to embalm mummies!

9 Sculpture – giant stag beetle

The sculpture shows the life cycle of a stag beetle (egg, grub, pupae, beetle). It was carved by Dave Johnson into the dead branch of this 200 year old beech tree. The wood of the sculpture is rotting – the beetle's jaws have already fallen off. The decaying sculpture will provide a habitat for real beetles.



Wild watch! In autumn, watch for fungi, especially those with wicked names like dead-man's fingers, chicken of the woods and King Alfred's cakes. If you don't know the name of a fungus you find, make one up!

10 Circular seat on the hill

This circular seat around a yew tree was completely hidden by undergrowth until a National Trust warden discovered it. We think it dates back to the 1830s as part of the Pleasure Grounds. It would have been a great place to enjoy the view. What can you see today?

11 The Ice House

Read the panel to find out how food was kept cool before the days of freezers and fridges.

12 Sculpture – very big bats!

When you've walked through the gates, don't miss the three metal bats that are hanging from the trees. They are long-eared bats, made by Sophie Thompson.



13 The old quarry

The bumpy landscape you now enter is an old quarry. Stone was mined here and sent to make buildings in London and Oxford. The mines have long been closed because they are dangerous.

Wild watch! The cool dark tunnels make perfect homes for bats. About 120 rare lesser horseshoe bats hibernate here in winter. Bats only come out in the evening – to see them, join one of our bat walks.

14 Beech Avenue

This lovely avenue of trees was planted in 1841 to line the driveway to Sherborne House. In autumn, the beech trees glisten in copper and gold.

15 Miles of stone walls

The stone walls were built to keep farm animals in the fields. There are 26 miles (42km) of walls on the estate – that's enough to line the whole route of the London Marathon!

Wild watch! The walls are home to an amazing range of creatures such as field mice, voles, weasels, toads, frogs, newts and grass snakes. Walk quietly and listen for rustling sounds.

16 Sheep stuff

As you know, many sheep once lived on the estate. In the winter they were brought to these buildings for shelter – that's why it's called Ewe Pen Barn. If you go through the barn, you can see the pens where they were kept.

We hope you enjoyed your walk. To find out more about the estate, please contact us on 01451 844257 or email sherborneestate@nationaltrust.org.uk

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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