

Woodland walk...2.3 miles

The Vyne, Hampshire

THE NATIONAL TRUST


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This gentle walk explores Morgaston Woods, part of The Vyne estate in Hampshire. Along the way you'll discover ancient trees, wildlife-rich wetlands and medieval fishponds.

Start: Middle Gate, Morgaston Road – map: OS Landranger 175/186 – grid ref: SU625572

How to get here & local facilities

By bike: National Cycle Network route 23, Winchester to Basingstoke, passes within 1ml

By bus: Stagecoach in Hampshire 45 from Basingstoke (passing  Basingstoke). No Sunday service

By train: Bramley (Hants)  2.5ml, Basingstoke  4ml

By car: 4ml N of Basingstoke between Bramley and Sherborne St John. From Basingstoke Ring Road A339, follow North Hampshire Hospital signs until property signs.

Very limited parking at Middle Gate. The Vyne Historic House, chapel, garden, shop, refreshments and WCs nearby (during property opening hours).

Things to look out for...



Birds

The bird hide is a great place to spot all kinds of wildfowl and wading birds in the wetlands, like lapwing, redshank, heron and snipe.



Medieval fishponds

The fishponds were created in medieval times to supply fish for eating. The disused ponds were then planted with poplars in the 1950s, to provide a crop of wood for making matchsticks. The poplars still stand here today.



Trees

There are a variety of woodland trees, including ancient oak with hazel coppice, sweet chestnut, ash and more recent plantations of larch, Douglas fir and Scots pine.



WW2 infrastructure

The concrete track, which forms part of the walk, was constructed during WW2 to act as a decoy for enemy bombers and to distract from the nearby munitions depot at Bramley. Look out for the loading ramp next to the woodsheds, where wagons would have been loaded.



The wetlands are frequented by numerous species of birds. Wey Brook is also a haven for Watervoles. Sightings are rare, but they can often be heard along the brook making a distinctive 'plop' as they jump into the water.



Morgaston Woods are home to numerous varieties of fungi, mosses and lichens which can be spotted during your walk. Dead wood is left in-situ as much as possible to provide places for fungi to grow. Wild roe, fallow and muntjac deer can often be seen in the woods.



In spring, large areas of the woodland floor are carpeted by richly scented native bluebells. Look out for other woodland wild flowers too, such as wood anemone, wood sorrel, violets, primroses, foxgloves and common spotted orchids.

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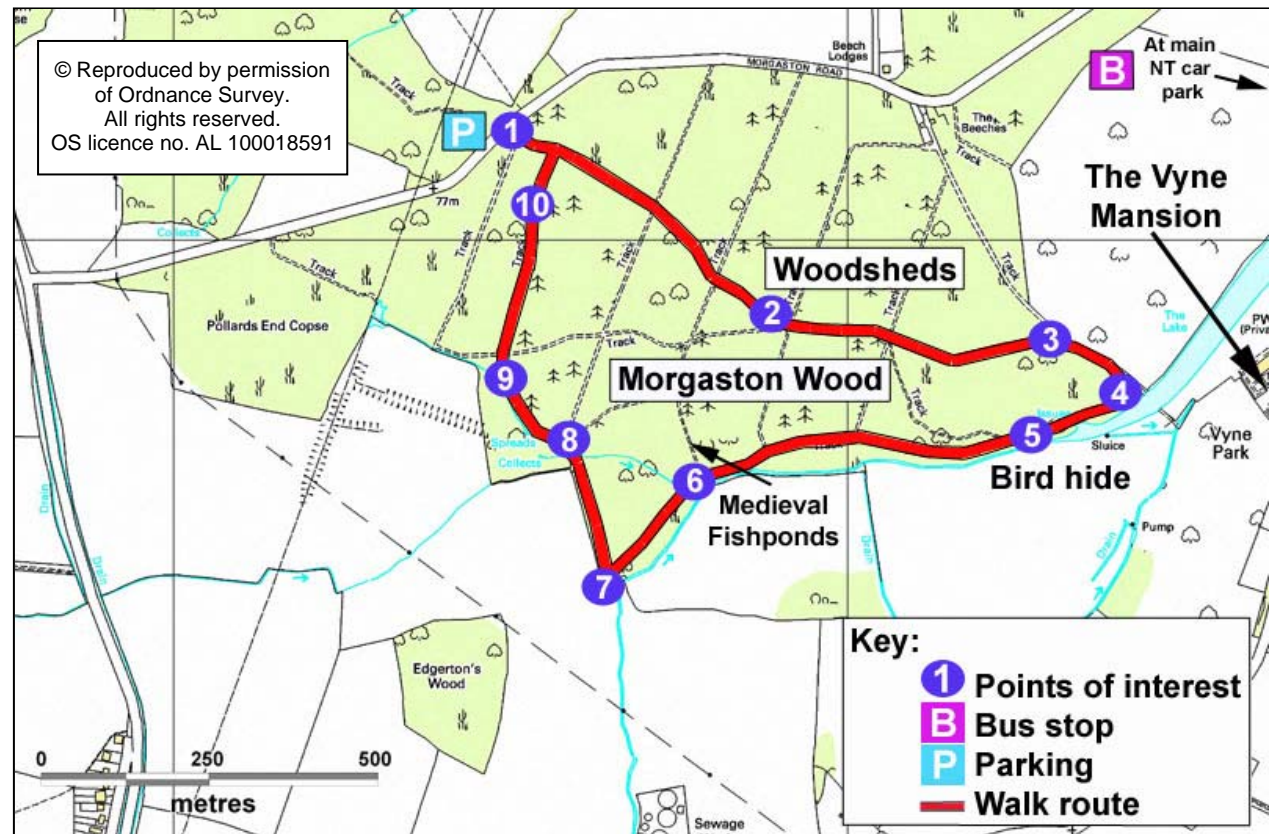
Directions...

1. From Middle Gate pass through the kissing gate and bear to your left following the concrete path.
2. At the woodsheds, bear left. Leave the concrete track, keeping the large woodsheds to your left, and the smaller wooden shed on your right. Follow the brown arrows on the way-marker posts from now on.
3. At the edge of the woods, with the parkland in front of you, turn right and walk along the now unused historic main driveway to The Vyne mansion.
4. At the bottom of the path, you may catch a glimpse of The Vyne mansion on the far side of the lake. Turn right onto Beech Ride, named after the beech trees planted either side of the path.
5. Continue along the path until you reach the bird hide. Here you can view the inland wading birds.
6. As you proceed along Beech Ride, note Wey Brook to your left. This feeds the wetlands and main lakes of The Vyne. As you continue along Beech Ride, you will pass the medieval fishponds. The dam forming the ponds is visible on your right.
7. At the woodland corner turn right. This corner is known as Loader's Gate, as it was where timber products from the woods were loaded for transportation.
8. The path passes over a small culvert. The culvert supplied water to the medieval fishponds, now on your right. The main path rises in front of you, but do not follow it. Instead, turn left, following the brown way-marker arrows.
9. The path here can be uneven and undulates. Continue straight on, passing a small glade on your right, where numerous species of butterflies can be seen in the summer months.
10. When you reach the concrete track, do not follow the brown way-marker arrows, but turn left along the concrete track to return to Middle Gate.

Terrain & accessibility

2.3 mile (3.7km) circular walk. Gradient of 1-in-15 on Old Main Driveway (point 3). Gradients of 1-in-10 & small section of 1-in-6 between Loader's Gate & Middle Gate (point 8 & 9).

Mixture of concrete and grass paths. Some uneven areas & protruding tree roots on paths, may be muddy after wet weather. Take care near waterways & ponds. Dogs welcome under close control.



Contact us: 01256 883858 or theyyne@nationaltrust.org.uk

National Trust places to visit nearby: Basildon Park, Sandham Memorial Chapel

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