



## Waymarked walks

This page gives details of three waymarked walks around Woodchester Park.

**Woodland Walk**, marked with blue arrows on posts, is a short walk of 1.7 miles (2.7km). It gently climbs through the beech trees of Marmontsflat Wood to a rewarding viewpoint with spectacular views of Woodchester Park and the Mansion.

**Boathouse Walk**, marked with orange arrows on posts, is 3.5 miles (5.6km) long. It passes the Mansion, the terraced gardens and includes some of the lakes and a picturesque nineteenth century boathouse

**Valley Walk**, marked with red arrows on posts, is 7 miles (11.3km) long. This walk explores the lakes and some of the woodland, with historic viewpoints giving glimpses of the Mansion, the terraced gardens and the Old Kennels.

Some sections of each walk are steep in places and the ground can be muddy, especially after rain.

## BLUE ROUTE: WOODLAND WALK

**Marmontsflat Quarry** was in use until early 1900s, providing building stone for the Woodchester Estate. Since then, nature has taken over and colourful wildflowers and shrubs thrive in this sunny, south-facing spot.

**Beech Woodland**; beech leaves cast dense shade that makes it difficult for other plants to grow under them. Spring flowers like bluebells and anemones manage by blooming early, before the beech leaves are fully open. A few plants, such as box and yew trees, can grow in shade.

**Viewpoint.** The woodland track winds through beech and Lawson's Cypress trees to a secluded bench with wonderful views looking east along Woodchester valley to Minchinhampton Common and the village of Amberley. In May, sweet-scented lily-of-the-valley bloom beside the track.

**The Ice House.** Near the large horse chestnut tree are the remains of a brick-lined Ice House, an underground cold store built for the earlier Georgian Mansion. Ice Houses were

popular with rich families in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who used the ice to chill their drinks in summer.

**Coach house and stables** are the remains of a stone-built coach house and stables that were associated with the Georgian Mansion. Property details prepared for the sale of Woodchester in 1846, describe these buildings as "everything the most fastidious Gentleman can desire...Coach Houses for Eight Carriages....Stables with Twelve Stalls and Harness rooms..."

**Home Mead**, the parkland beside the track, was re-created by the National Trust in 1996 when woodland was cleared and the ground encouraged to revert to grassland. This pasture is an important feeding area for Woodchester's famous greater horseshoe bats who feed on insects in the dung left by grazing cattle and sheep.

### ORANGE ROUTE : BOATHOUSE WALK

Boathouse Walk follows part of the Woodland Walk route, starting with Home Mead, Coach house and stables and the Ice House.

**Temple Site.** The wooded valley enclosed by the curve of the track contains the remains of terraced gardens, which were created in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Historic records describe a temple overlooking Italian-style gardens with fountains playing in ornamental ponds.

**Brick Kiln Pond** is the first of a chain of five man-made lakes in Woodchester Park. The dam was breached in the 1940's, there is now an on-going project to restore the lake and the pasture.

**Break-heart Hill.** Trees have been cleared from this area of hillside, creating a sunny, south-facing butterfly glade. On sunny days in spring and summer the wildflowers teem with colourful insects including peacock, painted lady, silver-washed fritillary butterflies and scarlet tiger moths.

**Middle Pond Dam.** Old alder trees fringe the banks and white water lilies grow in the lakes, providing shelter for fish such as carp, roach and tench. Dragonflies and damselflies patrol the lake margins in warm weather.

**The Boathouse** was built in the early nineteenth century and used by the family and their guests for picnics and outings. It was restored in 1998, when the roof, windows and floor timbers were replaced. Bats roost in the roof space, emerging at dusk to hunt over the lake.

**Mansion Parkland.** Many of the large trees in the parkland are over 150 years old. They were planted as specimen trees to create impressive landscape features to be viewed from the carriageways and Mansion. The oaks here are a special variety from Devon, called Luccombe Oak.

### RED ROUTE - VALLEY WALK

Valley Walk follows the first five stops of Boathouse Walk and then heads up the hillside to a viewpoint at the 1749 bench, before going east along the valley to Park Mill Pond, returning via the Old Kennels, Middle Pond Dam, Break-heart Hill, Brick Kiln Pond and Mansion Parkland.

**1749 Bench.** 1749 is carved on the stone bench under an old yew tree. It is one of a series of seats that were located at scenic points around the valley.

**Viewpoint.** The remains of the old bench have been here so long that the yew tree has grown around the edge! The panoramic view reveals the dramatic changes that have occurred in the landscape in recent years.

**Park Mill Pond.** Up until the mid-nineteenth century there was a mill below the dam with a huge water wheel, grinding wheat for the estate and other local landowners. Nowadays the lake is home to many different kinds of wildlife including wildfowl, kingfishers and visiting otters.

**The Old Kennels.** This stone open-faced farm building is known as the Kennels. It is all that remains of a larger building that included the Kennel Keeper's cottage. Now it is an attractive picnic spot with tables and benches.

**Middle Pond Bench.** This historic stone bench was discovered by foraging pigs. It was restored in 2003.