

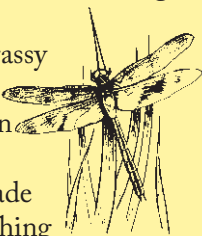
Take care crossing the A49 as speeding vehicles threaten. Go through the smaller gate and pause to read items in the noticeboard by the stream. Then head across the Lower Western Grassland keeping parallel to the hedge on the left that separates the Reserve from the Town Park. This will bring you to:

**POST 7** Sited close to the mainline railway running parallel to the A49. Notice the tall line of trees by the railway tracks: obviously planted in a row... for what reason? Look at the embankment that helps hide the tracks from the Reserve and perhaps wonder why it was built here: the stream running close by should give you the answer. The grassland here is more extensive and wetter: Soft Rush and Tufted Hair-grass dominate and the grasses become tussocky: it is managed and cut periodically.



As you head northwards between the railway and the A49, look out for Yellow Iris, Buttercups and the tall, creamy Meadowsweet. Notice also that the drier areas support Cotton Grass, Hair Grass and Meadow Grass while the wetter areas consist more of reed, Soft Rush and sedge.

**POST 8** is to be found towards the northern end of the Reserve on a grassy footpath between open stretches of water on the left – often clogged or concealed by the invasive rushes – and the boundary fence and stream on the right. Frogs and newts may be found in the water, while dragonflies



and damselflies skim the surface of these man-made scrapes. Lookout for a solitary Grey Heron searching for food. The Ashbrook is cleared from time to time as it becomes fast flowing in wet winters.



**POST 9** is back where you came into Lower Western Grassland. As you retrace your steps keep parallel to the A49 and follow the grassy path back towards the double gates.

This Discovery Trail has been supported by Stretton Focus Community Award Scheme and by the Campaign to Protect Rural England - Shropshire. This leaflet has been produced by the Coppice Leasowes Working Group, with the drawings by Gerald Newton (01743 351692). Designed and printed by Marshbrook Print (01694 731510)



# Coppice Leasowes Local Nature Reserve

## Discovery Trail

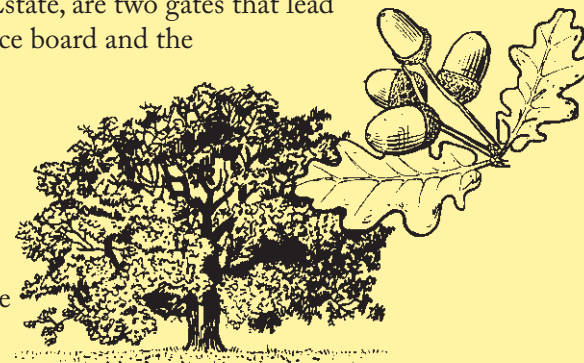


By following the Trail you will see most of what the Reserve has to offer visitors and avoid really boggy or steep, slippery areas. You should encounter 9 numbered and painted stakes that are located at places of floral, geological or wildlife interest.

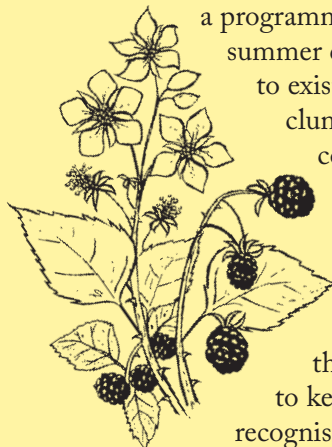
Do please keep dogs on leads if cattle are grazing; also during winter some paths can become muddy and slippery in places so strong shoes or boots are advised.

There are no official car parks at the Reserve but unrestricted parking is possible on the roads on the Battlefield Estate, off the narrow Watling Street North. At the end of this Street, just before it curves into the Estate, are two gates that lead into the Reserve. Here there is a notice board and the first of the marker posts.

**POST 1** is located on high ground close to occupied houses. The land slopes down towards the A49 and forms part of the Upper Eastern Grassland. The grasses on the Reserve are kept quite short by a programme of late



summer cattle grazing that allows special grassland wildlife to exist...look out for grasshoppers, butterflies and shrews near clumps of Ragwort, thistles and nettles. These plants are controlled by strimming and pulling – rather than by spraying with chemicals.



Now head to your right (north) towards the top of Primrose Wood. On your way you will see a thin strip of fenced land planted with trees: the fence is to keep out the cattle until the trees mature. This area has to be strimmed to keep the grasses and thorn whips under control. See if you can recognise young Oak and cherry trees.

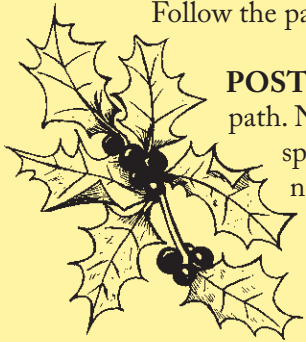
**POST 2** is located just inside the gate leading into the long, thin area of semi-natural woodland that consists mainly of oak and sycamore with an understorey of bramble and wild flowers. The slope leading into the wood is carpeted with Wood Anemones and Primroses in the spring bringing swathes of colour that are admired by residents and visitors alike.



See if you can tell the difference between Oak and Sycamore...rough versus smooth trunks gives a valuable clue, especially in winter! The higher ground to your right ends at the fenced edge of the wood and the sunken lane where unsuspecting motorists using inefficient sat-navs sometimes find themselves stranded.

Follow the path(s) northward through the wood and you will come to...

**POST 3** This is located close to the stump of an old oak tree by the path. Notice the increase of holly nearby and you may be able to spot the remains of a small, disused limestone quarry below – now occupied by a clump of young trees. It will prove easier to visit the quarry via the path below it (by Post 5). The mature trees in this area provide shade in summer but at times the shade becomes too dense and prevents the ground storey from flourishing.



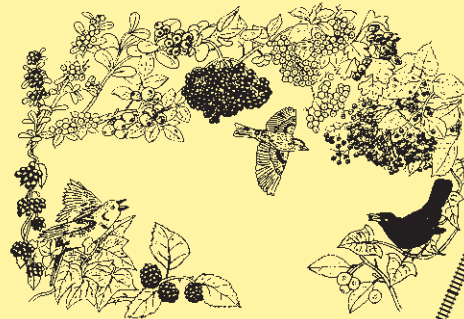
Brambles cover much of the sloping floor and provide small birds and mammals with food and cover. See if you can spot tits, Nuthatch, Tree-creepers, Wrens or even woodpeckers here: you may be able to hear their calls if you wait quietly. You may also be able to spot some bird boxes on the north side of selected trees just above head height.



**POST 4** is reached by continuing along the path towards the northern end of the Reserve. Here is a small triangular area of mown grass with a picnic bench and more open woodland. There is a gated entrance from the sunken lane and Town Council workers use this as access for their track and maintenance tools. Rabbits, squirrels, rats and mice enjoy the short grass, as do butterflies and moths.



**POST 5** To reach this you need to follow the lower path (south) back in the direction you came. You will find a tall hedge between you and the A49 that helps to block out some of the sounds of traffic on this busy road. The hedge is planted mainly with deciduous hawthorn and it has been layered in



places – but deliberately allowed to grow tall along much of its length. Looking to your left you may notice the bramble cover being cleared in patches to allow smaller ground plants to become established. Post 5 is by the path below the small quarry and you may wish to scramble to it to see if you can discover any fossils there or to wonder why it was established in the first place. The Wenlock limestone should give you a clue.

**POST 6** To get here you need to continue along the path by the edge of Primrose Wood to the gate, go through this and cross over the area of grassland, passing a small boggy area full of rushes on the right and a tall dead willow on your left before heading down toward the A49 and the gate that opens onto the main road. The grassland here is a continuation of that at which you started but this is lower, wetter and tends to become less species rich.

