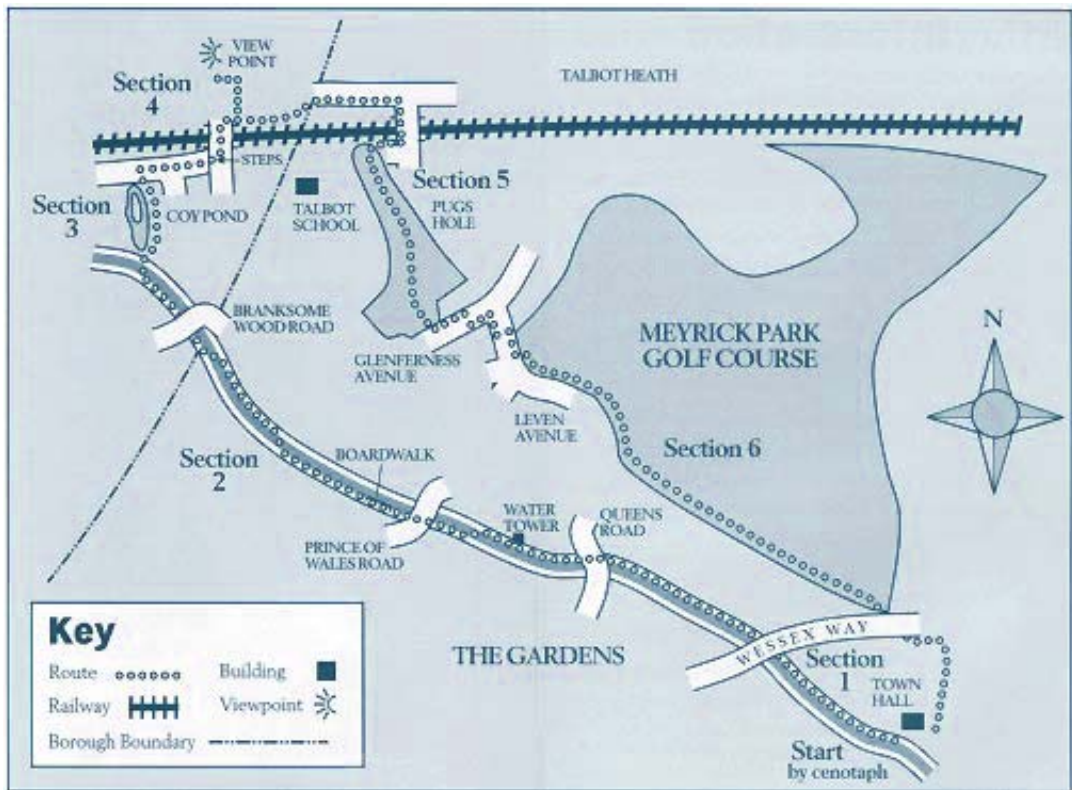


Stream, Heath & Woodland Walk



A self-guided trail incorporating Bournemouth Gardens, Coy Pond, Talbot Heath, Pug's Hole and Meyrick Park golf course.

The walk starts at the Cenotaph and is divided into 6 sections.

Section 1 - Central Gardens

The Gardens were acquired by the Council between 1871 and 1921. Until the 1850's, the Central Gardens were known as Decoy Meadow because a large pond used for wildfowling was located there. When the area became more urbanised the pond was relocated. A short distance from the start on the right-hand side of the path are some seats and a young oak commemorating the life of Princess Diana. On the left side of the path stand three specimens of the Dawn Redwood which can be identified by its interesting, orange-red bark. This fine tree was thought to be extinct until its rediscovery in China in 1941.

Beyond the Wessex Way there is a twin-stemmed specimen which has the widest girth at chest height for this species in Britain.

Section 2 - Upper Gardens

The water tower was built in 1885 in the gothic style popular with the Victorians. It was used to power a sprinkler system and large fountain but remains today as an attractive landmark. The entrance is sealed and the tower provides a valuable roosting site for bats, which can be seen at dusk on summer evenings hunting for moths and other insects.

Cross Prince of Wales Road from the south (left) side of the stream to reach the boardwalk. This runs through a wet area managed as a wildflower meadow. Look out for Yellow Iris, Cuckooflower, Ragged Robin, Meadowsweet and more. Butterflies such as the Orange Tip, Brimstone and Small Tortoiseshell occur and frogs are plentiful here during the spring and summer.

Section 3 - Coy Pond

Cross over from the south (left) side of the stream and follow the path, with the stream on your right. Take the first right and cross the bridge. When you reach the steps, cross the road to Coy Pond. Read the information board before walking round the right-hand side of the pond.

It was created in 1888 when the railway embankment behind it was developed, its name being a reminder of its previous use. Coots, Moorhens, Mallards and domesticated geese and ducks can be seen on the pond and its island. Patient observers may spot the Grey Wagtail.

Go up the steps out onto Wren Crescent, cross over and turn right. Continue straight on into the cul-de-sac and up the steps. Turn left at the top and go over the railway bridge onto Talbot Heath.

Section 4 - Talbot Heath

Turn right and then almost immediately left. Follow this path for a short way to reach a viewpoint of the heath. Retrace your steps and then continue on the main route with the radio masts on your left and the railway line on your right.

Talbot Heath is a small fragment of a once extensive heath, which spread from Christchurch to Dorchester and beyond. It is dominated by heathers and gorse with scattered Silver Birch and other trees. Common Lizards and Adders may be glimpsed on warm days, basking on vegetation or dry open patches. Heathland birds such as the Stonechat and rare Dartford Warbler can be seen. There are some Bronze Age burial mounds on the heath dating from 2200-800 BC, including one inside the fence around one of the radio masts.

The path leads to East Avenue. Walking along the right-hand side and then turn right into Rothesay Road.

Cross back over the railway line (take care as there is not footway) and then take the first right. As you approach the entrance to Talbot Health School, follow the marker down into the woodland of Pugs Hole.

Section 5 - Pug's Hole

This area is believed to have been named after a smuggler called 'Pug' who is said to have hidden his goods here when the area was still heathland. The wood is a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees and attracts numerous birds through the year including woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Coal Tits and Goldcrests.

On reaching Glenferness Avenue turn left and walk uphill. Cross over at the bollard crossing, go on a little further and then turn right into Leven Avenue. Continue a short way and enter the golf course at the break in the fence.

Section 6 - Meyrick Park Golf Course

Be aware of golfers on the course as balls can stray onto the path. Follow the yellow-marked trees around the edge of the course.

Once called Poor Common, the land was given to the people of Bournemouth by Sir George Meyrick along with four other parks in return for common land which was enclosed. There is plenty of wildlife interest including various species of birds and a large population of Grey Squirrels. These are not native to Britain having been introduced from North America in 1876.

Follow the remaining green markers to Braidley Road, leading to the Town Hall and the Gardens.

Distance 3.5 miles

Allow 1.5 to 3 hours

Parking Limited time parking along Bourne Avenue or use one of the Town Centre car parks

For further information on activities and walks in Bournemouth visit

www.bournemouth.co.uk or call 0845 051 1700.