

Buchan Country Park

Trail Guide

Open
365 days
a year



Welcome to Buchan Country Park - a Green Flag Award winning park since 2010.

Owned and managed by West Sussex County Council, the Park is an excellent place for walking, watching wildlife or enjoying a picnic.

Situated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Buchan Country Park is 69 hectares of beautiful countryside on Crawley's doorstep.

Facilities

Free car parking including disabled bays

– see the website for seasonal opening times

Free mini-bus/coach parking with prior arrangement

Toilets – including disabled and nappy changing facilities

Surfaced paths – suitable for wheelchair and pushchair access (see map)

Countryside Centre

– open Sunday afternoons, Bank Holidays and at other times when staffing levels permit

Phil Haskell Wild Garden – dog free

Picnic areas and benches

Dog Dip – designated swimming area for dogs

Orienteering Course for novices – maps are available from the Countryside Centre

Fishing – Crawley Angling Society members only.

For further information visit www.crawleyanglingsociety.co.uk



Wildlife

With its diverse mix of habitats the park is rich in wildlife. At quiet times roe deer are regularly seen and in most years foxes raise cubs. Large patches of bluebells provide a woodland spring carpet and in Summer foxgloves are common.

The bird life is varied. In winter the birch woods are home to flocks of redwing and the alder trees provide food for siskin. Spring sees the arrival of summer visiting chiffchaff and willow warbler; both these birds weigh little more than a tea bag! Recent rarities include nightjar and wood warbler.

Douster and Island Ponds are so rich in dragonflies, that they are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Although the naturally acidic ponds hold little bird life, beneath the water large carp and pike swim.

Habitat management work has improved the heathland and reptiles are flourishing.

Adders are common but pose little threat. On summer days grass snakes have been seen to cross the ponds.

As the crow flies it is little more than two miles from Crawley town centre to Buchan Country Park, yet sparrowhawks, lizards, newts and hornets all call the park home.



Enjoy your visit with us, but please remember to...

Keep your dog on a lead in the car park and under control at all times

Pick up after your dog and use the bins provided

Do not let your dog disturb the wildlife

Take your litter home

Spruce Hill Coppice

In the early 19th Century the area was owned by Lord Erskine, who named the estate Buchan Hill after his father, the Earl of Buchan. Today, bramble, bluebell and bracken dominate the woodland. Old sweet chestnut stumps are also a feature. Follow the signs to link up with the Colgate/Bewbush public bridleway.

Plantation

Much of the plantation was destroyed by fire in 1989. Some large pine trees still show the scorch marks from the fire. Today the mixture of pine trees, young oak and purple moor grass is home to vast numbers of wood ants.

Middle Covert

In medieval times the area was mined for iron ore. The 'craters' dotted about the woodland are the remains of mine pits. Turning the ore into iron consumed a huge amount of timber which led to the loss of much of the ancient woodland. Today, each winter a block of silver birch is cut to create glades for wild flowers and reptiles. In time the birch re-grows to form dense scrub.

The Meadow

Once part of Cottesmore golf club no chemicals have been used on the grass for 35 years. In summer look out for butterflies and grasshoppers.

-  Park Boundary
-  Red Route
▲ Slopes on this path
2.75km | 45 minutes
-  Blue Route
Easy Access
1.3km | 20 minutes
-  Rough Tracks
-  Dog Dip
-  Pond
-  Boat House
-  Picnic Area
-  The Phil Haskell Wildlife Garden
-  Toilets



The Phil Haskell Wildlife Garden

This dog free area was once part of a formal garden and contains a diverse mix of native and cultivated plants along with several ponds.

Douster and Island Ponds

In Victorian times, the park was owned by Mr Phillippe Saillard, a wealthy French businessman. His wealth came from the sale of playing cards and ostrich feathers for ladies hats. Mr Saillard established Island and Douster ponds by damming Douster Brook. In 2016 21 species of dragonfly were recorded from the ponds confirming their status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

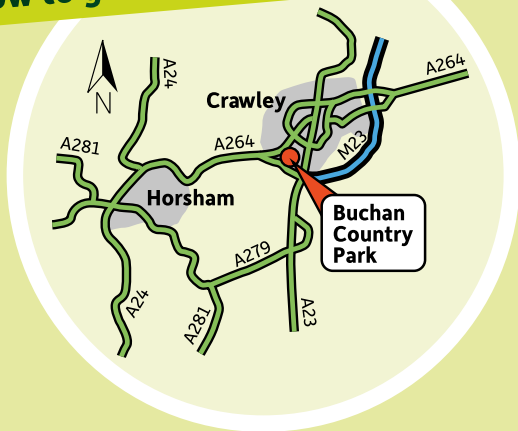
Please Take Care around the Ponds
No swimming or boating
Dogs may only swim at the Island Pond Dog Dip

Target Hill Heath

Part of the hill was used as a rifle range in the 19th century and the remains of the stop butts lie close to the golf course. In 1823 William Cobbett, a political commentator rode through Buchan Hill. He describes the "two miserable miles" as "a bare heath with here and there some scrubby birch. It is a most villainous tract". Today the bare heath is valued as a habitat for reptiles and in August heather turns the hill purple.

 Please be considerate of the local wildlife living in the park and keep dogs under control at all times. Thank you.

How to get to Buchan Country Park:



Friends of Buchan Country Park



Friends of Buchan Country Park are a group of people who are passionate about the park and its wildlife and who promote its use as a beautiful public space. Visit www.fobcp.org.uk for news and events.

Contact us

📍 Buchan Country Park

Horsham Road

Crawley

West Sussex RH11 9HQ

☎ 01293 542088

✉ countryside@westsussex.gov.uk

🐦 [@CountrysideWSCC](https://twitter.com/CountrysideWSCC)

📘 Like us at Buchan Country Park

🔗 www.westsussex.gov.uk/buchan

