Buchan Country Park
Trail Guide

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.

Open 365 days a year

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

How to get to Buchan Country Park:

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

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.

Contact us

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@BuchanCP
Like us at Buchan Country Park
www.westsussex.gov.uk/buchan

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

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### Spruce Hill Coppice
In the early 19th Century 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.

### 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.

### Douster and Island Ponds
In Victorian times, the park was owned by Mr Philippe 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

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