

Orchards

There have been orchards in Haslemere for many hundreds of years, but sadly virtually all of them have disappeared as the town has expanded. Many of the trees that grew in them and species of wildlife that utilised them have become extremely rare or disappeared altogether. In the latter half of the twentieth century the Swan Barn orchard fell into disuse and now only five of the original trees remain. However, in 2002 The National Trust started an orchard restoration scheme. Over 20 new trees have been planted, all rare or endangered traditional varieties of apple, pear, plum, damson and cherry. The grassland under the trees is being grazed with sheep and cattle to restore the wild flowers and the wildlife is starting to move back in.

Ponds and Streams

Species such as the Southern Hawker, Emperor and the endangered Golden Ringed dragonfly can all be seen in these areas. Plants such as the Marsh Marigold, Yellow Iris and Ragged Robin thrive in the wetlands. Amphibians, such as newts, frogs and toads, depend on the ponds and streams and their spawn can be seen in the water's edge during the spring.

Both ponds have recently been rebuilt and dredged to improve the habitat. This will ensure the ponds maintain their levels and survive into the future. Moorhens and Mallards nest on the ponds. Herons are a common sight and kingfishers can often be seen darting along the water's edge.

Hedgerows

If you consider the woodlands as towns, the hedgerows are the roads that connect wood to wood. They are a crucial element of the overall farm habitat. Hedgerows provide food and nesting sites for many birds, mammals and reptiles and allow safe passage from predators for animals such as the dormouse. Wild flowers flourish along the base of the hedge which are a riot of Cow Parsley and Stitchwort throughout the summer.

Hedges require regular maintenance, not only to prevent stock escaping, but also to prolong their life.

This is achieved by rotational coppicing, layering and planting up the gaps. The Trust aims to plant more hedges and sensitively manage those that are already here to increase the benefits for all the wildlife.

Woodlands

The woodlands here are ancient in origin, at least 400 years old; they may well even date back to prehistoric times. The species that depend on them have greatly declined over recent years. Dormice, bluebells, white admiral butterflies and greater spotted woodpeckers rely on these woods and the traditional management that takes place within them for their survival.

The National Trust manages these woods for the benefit of the wildlife by removing non-native softwoods and invasive exotics like rhododendron. The Trust will also be reintroducing a coppice cycle within the wood, whereby a proportion of the trees are cut each year and allowed to regenerate naturally. This type of management has been happening here for many hundreds of years. It greatly prolongs the lifespan of the individual trees and provides the ideal conditions for the wildflowers, insects, mammals and birds to thrive.

Grassland

The fields here have been farmed over many hundreds of years. During the twentieth century management intensified and many species of wild flower were lost.

The National Trust aims to reverse this process by returning to traditional hay cropping and grazing. These measures will significantly improve the grassland for flowers, insects, mammals and birds. Look out for Ladies Smock and the beautiful orange tip butterfly in the spring. Throughout the summer the fields are awash with buttercups and meadow brown butterflies and alive with the buzzing of bees. With the reintroduction of hay cutting you may even be lucky enough to see a barn owl hunting for small mammals.

Travel & Local Information

For information on Haslemere and the local area and other walks contact:

Visit Haslemere (Visitor Information Centre) at

Haslemere Museum,
78 High Street, Haslemere
tel: 01428 645425
www.haslemere.com/vic

For local train and bus information call Travel Line South East on 08706 082608 or visit their website: www.travelline.org.uk

Parking and refreshments are available close by in Haslemere town centre.

Please follow the Countryside Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.



HASLEMERE WALKS

SWAN BARN FARM

WALK

4

Distance: 1 mile / 1.6 kms

A charming walk from Haslemere High Street, through field, farm and wood


WALK TYPE

EASY



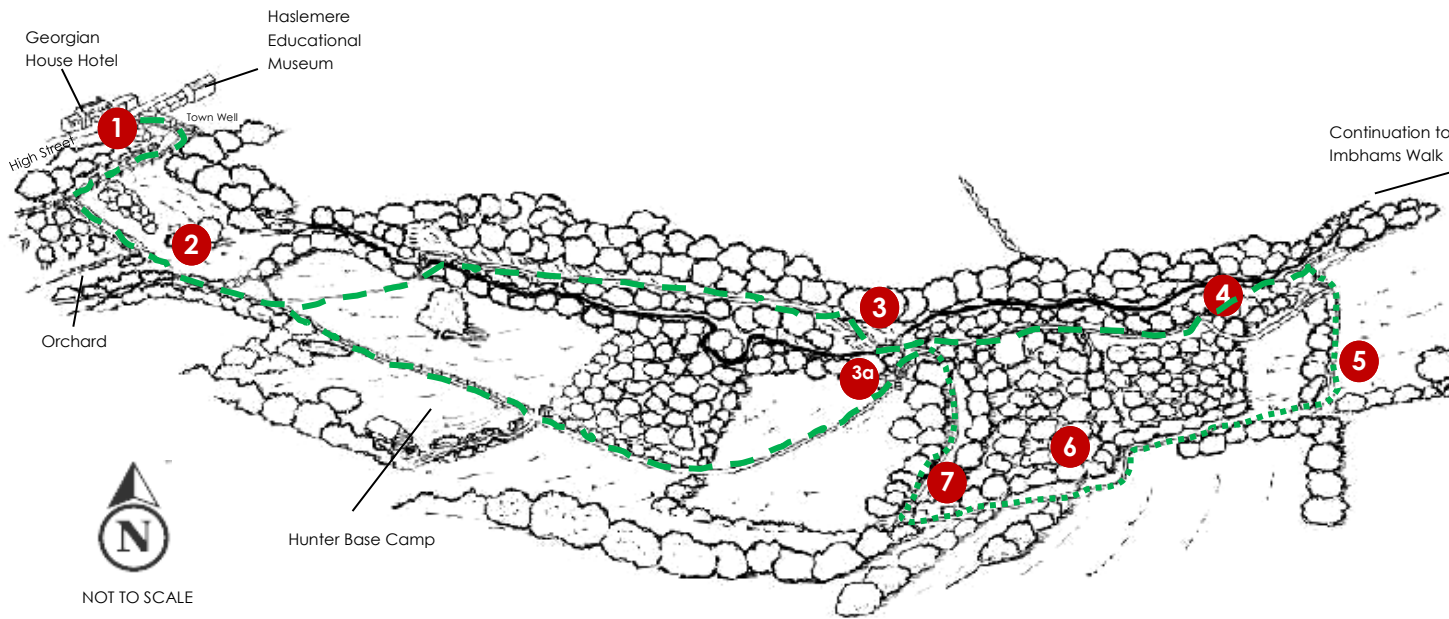


SWAN BARN FARM WALK

-  MAIN ROUTE
-  OPTIONAL ROUTE

ABOUT THIS WALK

The walk starts from Well Lane, off Haslemere High Street. It will take approximately 30 mins to 1 hour. The optional extension to the walk is not over a right of way but over farmland. During and/or after wet weather this area can become particularly muddy, so appropriate footwear should be worn. Parts of this walk are over uneven ground and there are a number of narrow gates to go through. It is therefore not recommended for pushchairs, wheelchairs or anyone with walking difficulties.



ROUTE

- 1** Go up Well Lane, bearing left of car park to the interesting Town Well. Turn right, passing some wooden benches, and continue until reaching NT information panel. Turn left through the gated entrance marked 'Serpent Trail' passing the fenced restored orchard on your right.
- 2** Continue downhill, passing a small restored pond to your left. Go through gate opposite a pond and turn left along lane. Go through a gate on your left, on the edge of a field, marked 'Take care of Cattle' and NT sign. Continue diagonally across field to the far side; pass through a gate and over a small footbridge over the stream. Turn right, ignore path straight ahead.
- 3** Follow main footpath through wood. Cross over the stream on a footbridge in a dell and bear left through Witley Copse and Mariners Rewe (two wooded areas) along footpath.
- 3a** (There is the option here to turn right and follow the footpath on a short circular route back to Well Lane, avoiding the muddy paths further on in gateways and fields. Turn right at fingerpost and walk along path through woods. At No.7 go through small gate, turn right to join path across field walking West.)
- 4** Continue on footpath through wood until reaching a gate with a bench beyond. At this point there is the option to return along the footpath to No.3, or continue on a "permissive" path towards Imbhams Farm, mainly through farmland.) Through gate cross over a small footbridge and through a second gate. Turn right along field's edge with trees and restored bank on your right.
- 5** After restored bank and ditch turn right through 5-bar gate, ignoring small gate ahead. Always quite muddy here! Continue on track through 5-bar gates and fields onto a wide track into Longmoor Wood until arriving at a closed gated entrance to the Wood. Turn left through wide gap into field and then immediately right.
- 6** Continue along path in fields with fence on your right, through three 5-bar gates.
- 7** At third gateway turn right, through a small gate, onto the Serpent Trail. Continue through wood to fingerpost at No.3a. Turn left, cross footbridge over ditch, and go through gate. Continue ahead on path across field. Pass through gap in fence, bearing right along edge of field. Go through gate and past the black barns (Hunter Base Camp can be seen on left uphill). Along lane, passing a restored pond on your left back to No.2, then through gate on your right and retrace your steps to No.1.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR



Apple Tree



Common frog



Moorhen



Great Spotted Woodpecker



Bluebell



Pear Tree



Common newt