

Ludwell Life

Sharing Enhancing Enjoying Protecting... Ludwell Valley Park

Discover Ludwell Valley Park: Self-guided Walk

Walk 4. Northbrook & the Ridgeway

This walk is designed to be used in conjunction with a walk map available here

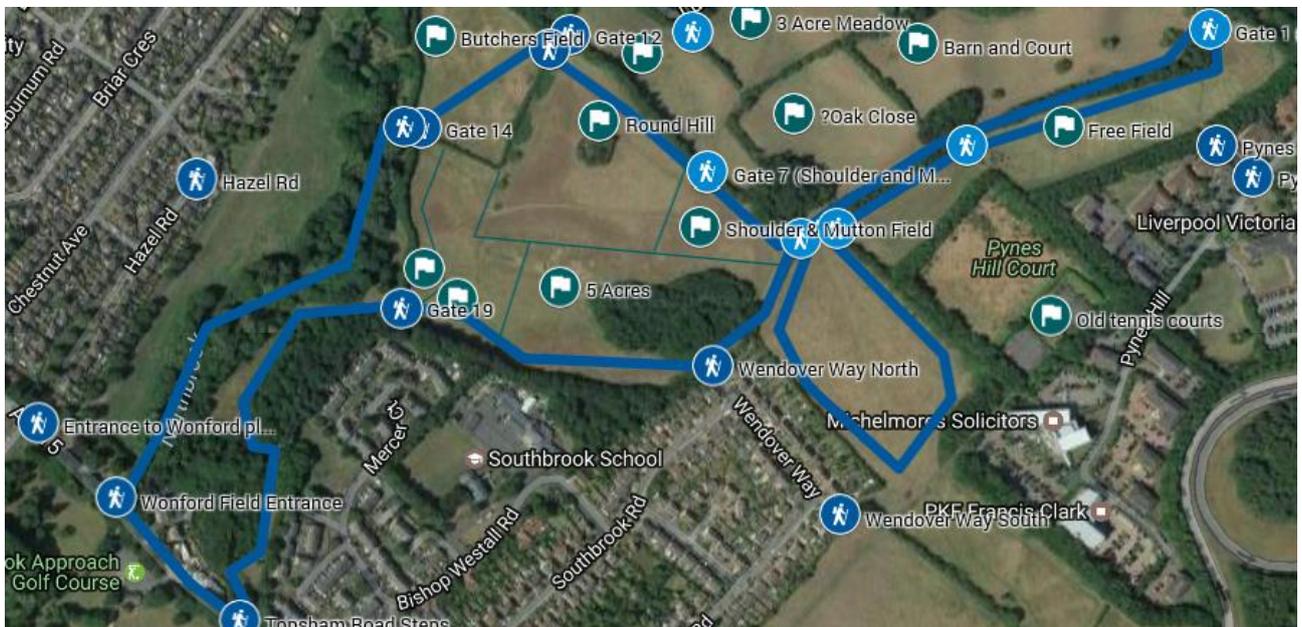
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The numbered gate references, park entrance points and field names in this walk guide are shown on this map.

Duration 1 hour & 15 minutes

Level Moderate. Slopes and rough paths, not suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs

Start Footpath (steps) entrance signposted to Ludwell Valley on North side of Topsham Road, between School Lane and Northbrook Golf Course



DIRECTIONS

1. Go up the steps and follow the footpath along, keeping the woodland on your left and houses on your right, passing Gate 18 on your right (signposting Ludwell Lane and Woodwater Lane). Do not go through this gate and keep on the higher path.

2. As the path starts to go downhill, turn right through Gate 19 into Great Meadow and Tea Field. Follow the hedgerow on the right perimeter of the field, going up a gentle slope as the path curves to the left towards the top of the field, passing a bench and information board.

3. At the top of the field, go through Gate 8 and turn immediately right into a further field with a bench in front of you. *From here you can admire the fine views over the Exe Estuary towards Topsham and Exmouth.* Turn right and follow the perimeter fence around the field in an anti-clockwise direction.

Optional extension - At the bottom of the field, cross over the footpath and cycle lane, through the opposite kissing gate into Little Perraton field. Follow the perimeter boundaries of these two fields in a clockwise direction. (NB You will see an access point onto Rydon Lane at the top of the second field). Return to the bottom of the field and back over the cycle lane/footpath into the previous field.

4. Complete circuit back to the top of this field where you came in but, instead of going back through Gate 8, turn right through Gate 9 into the field on your right. Walk along the hedgerow boundary of this field which is full of wildflowers in the summer. Go through Gate 10 and into Free Field, passing a bench on your left and a gate to Pynes Hill on the right of the field.

5. At the end of the hedgerow, follow the fence around and go through Gate 1 into Barn and Court field on the north side of the ridge. Follow the path at the top of the field along, keeping the fence and trees on your left and looking down towards 6 Acres field on your right. *Note the views over the Exeter cityscape and beyond.*

6. Continue along the top of the ridge, passing through three gates. At the end of the tree line, as you pass a small copse on your right, go back through Gate 8 and enter Shoulder and Mutton Field. You will see Round Hill, the copse on a mound at the lower end of the field. Keeping the perimeter fence on your right, follow the path down towards the copse, passing the "Fool on the Hill" bench. Continue to follow the perimeter fence down, with the copse on your left, and go through Gate 13 in the bottom corner into Butchers Field.

7. Take the diagonal path across Butchers Field and exit through Gate 14 at the bottom left corner. Turn immediately right through Gate 15 (Panny Bridge) and you will see a small footbridge over the Northbrook ahead of you. Cross over the bridge and turn immediately left along the bank of the Northbrook.

8. Pause for a few peaceful moments on the bench by the water, (installed by volunteers from Ludwell Life), looking out for a variety of birds including wagtails, whitethroats and wrens.

9. Keep on this path alongside the Northbrook until it emerges onto the Topsham Road. Turn left on the pavement, passing Northbrook Approach Golf Course on the right, and back to the steps at the starting point of the walk.

Look out for

Look over the Exeter skyline and identify landmarks – Exeter Cathedral, Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, University, Heavitree Church, St Leonards Church

Enjoy the view over the Exe estuary towards Exmouth and note Haldon Belvedere tower on the horizon to the west

Spot the wildlife including a great variety of British and migrating birds including buzzards, woodpeckers, goldfinches. Foxes, rabbits and squirrels are often seen in the valley as well as dragonflies near the Northbrook (or, as it is known locally, the Panny)

Enjoy the trees and wildflower meadows and look out for butterflies and bees.

Enjoying your visit

To get the most from your visit without harming the wildlife that lives there, please remember:

Respect wildlife

Please don't pick flowers or disturb nesting birds! If you see anything particularly exciting during your visit, please tell us about it via Facebook, Twitter or email

Dogs

Dogs are welcome in the Valley Park, but please keep them under control and clean up after your dog. There are a number of dog bins at entrances to the Valley Park.

In the winter, there are likely to be overwintering birds looking for food, particularly in those fields where you see the signs explaining this. It is particularly important to control your dog in these fields ie keep them to the edges of the fields only, as they are specially planted to attract important bird species such as curlew buntings and the birds will not use these fields if disturbed.

Cattle

There are cattle in some fields from April to October – please keep your dog under close control and do not allow them to approach the cattle.

Be properly dressed

Generally the terrain is uneven and after rain, some paths can be very muddy.. Make sure you have the right footwear – Wellington boots or stout shoe / walking boots are advised – and wear sensible clothing. You may find a walking stick helpful on the slopes.

Toilet facilities

Wonford Sports Centre, (Burnthouse Lane, Exeter EX2 6NF) have very kindly said that anyone doing one of the Ludwell Life guided walks is welcome to use the Centre's toilet facilities. Just tell the staff on reception that you are on a 'Ludwell Life walk' and they will show you the loos.

About Ludwell Life

Ludwell Life is an independent community group, set up to protect and enhance Ludwell Valley Park. There are lots of ways to support what we do, from joining as a Friend, to coming along the regular conservation, litter picking and other events we organise. Sign up to our monthly newsletter, follow us on Facebook or Twitter or email us.

Volunteers have put this walking guide together, to encourage more people to enjoy and get to know the wonderful public space that is Ludwell Valley Park



@LudwellLife



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