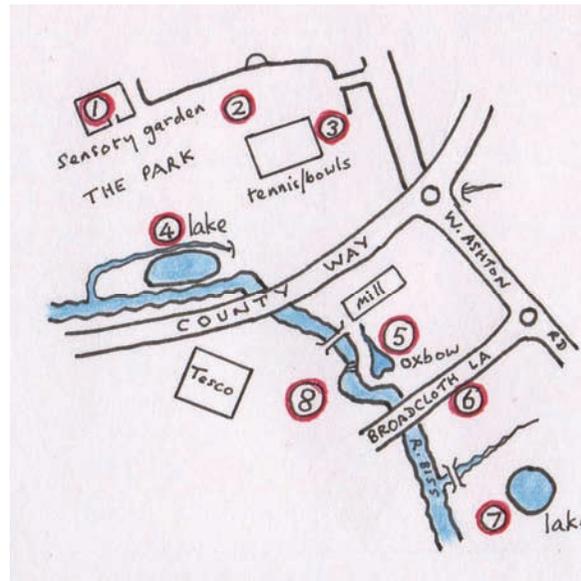


The Community Sensory Garden (1) behind the Town Hall is dominated by a London Plane, planted nearly 200 years ago. Other notable trees include a Cherry, a purple barked Arizona Cypress and a Handkerchief Tree. Against the Town Hall building the two Cornelian Cherry bushes are attractive to bees and Long-tailed Tits in early spring. Just inside the main gate is a prickly Butcher's Broom. This plant really **was** used by butchers to clean their chopping blocks. In June the eponymous flowers of "Tom Ludlow's" Tulip Tree are a wonder; its brown papery fruits persist through the winter. Woodland plants are being established beneath the tree canopy and, together with the statues, wind chimes and wetland features, this is a delightful place to start.



There are many fine trees around the large open space (2) fronting the Art Deco bandstand. The large Chestnuts, one on each corner, Victoria and Unity, were given to the People's Park in 1893 by J J "Poopy" Dicks. This man is well worth researching. Past the Park Club, nearly opposite the Deodar Cedar (native to Afghanistan), is a young Ailanthus or Tree of Heaven, planted to replace one that fell to a terrific gale in 1987. Introduced from China, it was popular in London, because of its pollution tolerance. At the far end, by Lady Brown's Cottages, are several young specimen trees including Himalayan Birch, a Paper-bark Maple and a blue-grey Atlas Cedar. The familiar Sycamore (there are big specimens here) is also a form of maple, that was possibly introduced by the Romans. When its leaves develop tar-spot fungus this indicates the absence of sulphur dioxide pollution.



Just round the corner near the tennis courts (3) is a rather poor double-trunked Redwood but a fine one behind the Police Station can be seen from inside the Park. There are many more at the northern end of Trowbridge; relics of the gracious grounds of the many fine houses built there in the 18th and 19th centuries. All the Redwood species have very spongy red bark, which is insect and fire resistant and is so soft that it can be punched with impunity! Grey Squirrels are often seen here. Behind the railings by the Bowling Club pavilion, is a typically upright and slender Ginkgo or Maidenhair Tree. This deciduous species dates from Jurassic times and is a living fossil.

At the lower end of the Park is a small lake (4) and, despite its rather severe landscaping and spasmodic fountains, it attracts a variety of species of water-birds; occasionally rarities like Scaup and Mandarin have appeared among the Mallards and Moorhens. The Park in general is a good place for birds and members of the Thrush, Tit, and Finch families are well represented.

To the left a footpath leads via an underpass to Biss Meadows Country Park (5), opened in 1993 by the Duke of Edinburgh. The trees here have developed very well and the river path is lined with Aspens and Willows, the latter grown from giant cuttings in the form of large poles. They both have catkins in spring. Built into the river are some artificial rapids and the clean state of the water is evident from the presence of Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail (the latter with bright yellow underparts). At the rear of the oxbow pond, a dense stand of Blackthorn (the fruits are Sloes) provides cover for newly arrived migrant birds. Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Willow Warbler have all been heard singing here in spring. Further on the path enters an open area of rough grassland and scrub (6) bordering the River Biss. This leads via an attractive bridge to more grassland, new tree plantings, a small lake and other intermittently wet areas (7). In May 2007 a rare (for Wiltshire) Ringed Plover visited this area for a couple of days. Mute Swan, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Kestrel, Magpie, Dunnock, Starling, Great Tit and Blackbird are all often seen around here. Typical for a damp floodplain there are Rushes and Teasels, the latter being an attractive food source for Goldfinch. Teasels were used in the cloth industry (see Trowbridge Industrial Trail) although not the species found here. Samples of the dried heads of both types of teasels can be seen in Trowbridge Museum in The Shires.



Back past the oxbow pond is a damp ditch full of wetland plants such as Common Reed, Marsh Marigold, Bulrush, Purple Loosestrife, Comfrey and Butterbur, with its huge leaves. This is a good place in the summer to look for Dragonflies and the smaller but brilliantly coloured Damselflies. All the larger insects are well worth looking at through binoculars. The bushes by the footbridge and the back gardens are usually achirp with House Sparrows, a bird in national decline. If you have binoculars remember to scan the buildings and the sky overhead as scarce birds like Black Redstart, Red Kite, Osprey and Hobby are all seen around Trowbridge occasionally, while Buzzard and Sparrowhawk are quite common.



Cross the footbridge and at the far-end of the Tesco supermarket car park you enter a truly wet meadow (8) with a large shallow seasonal pool, which is very attractive to frogs. At this point, there is no made-up path, so appropriate footwear is necessary for the rough terrain. In summer, this colourful rushy area is full of wildflowers and buzzing with grasshoppers, dragonflies and other insects. About a dozen species of Butterflies have been recorded, and Brimstone, Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma are all likely, even in early spring. Upstream of the new road bridge there are extensive patches of Primroses and Cowslips. This left bank can be very wet and may attract Snipe in winter while Grey Heron can be seen at any time.

You have now finished the Nature Trail but there are other rewarding nature reserves and wildlife areas in the district. These include Southwick Country Park (West Wiltshire District Council, WWDC), Green Lane Wood Nature Reserve (Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, WWT), Picket and Clanger Wood (Woodland Trust), Barton Farm Country Park in Bradford on Avon (Wiltshire County Council, WCC), the downland at Westbury White Horse (WCC), the riverside walk at Melksham (WWDC), Conigre Mead Nature Reserve at Melksham (WWT) and Smallbrook Meadows Nature Reserve at Warminster (WWT).

Information on Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (01380 725670) and the Wiltshire Ornithological Society are available from the libraries and Tourist Information Centres and their respective websites—  
[www.wiltshirewildlife.org](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org) and  
[www.wiltshirebirds.co.uk](http://www.wiltshirebirds.co.uk)

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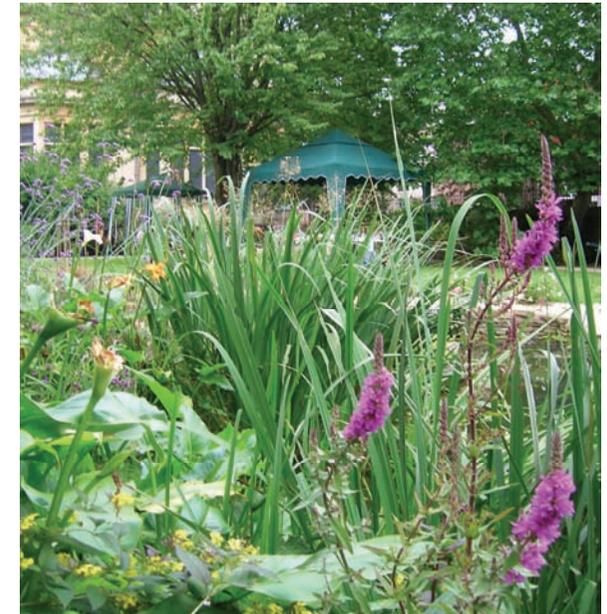
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# Trowbridge Nature Trail



The trail starts in the Park or the Sensory Garden and covers a little over one mile (2 km).