

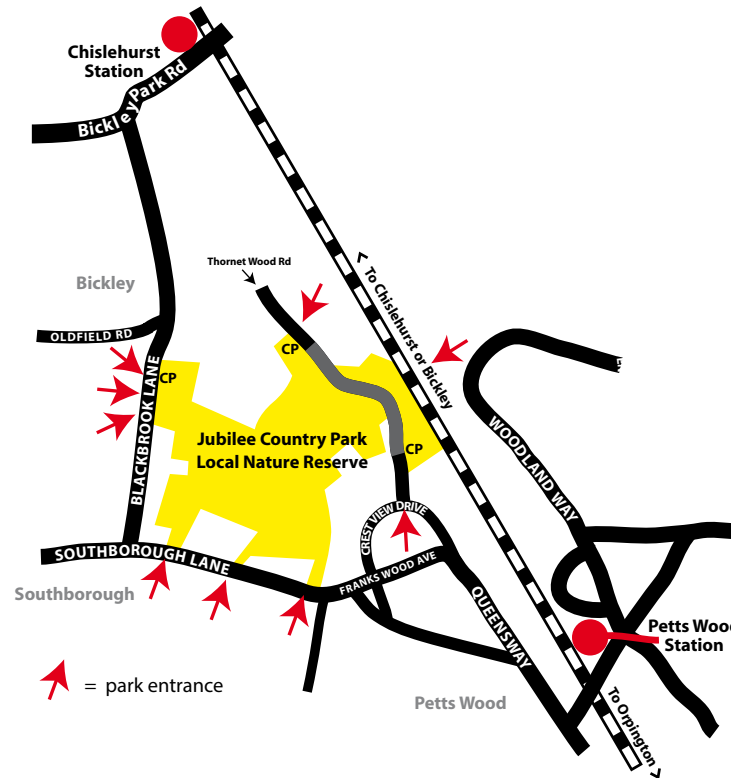
# Jubilee Country Park Nature Trail

# Local Nature Reserve

# Petts Wood/Bickley



## How to get there...



**Jubilee Country Park can be reached using the following bus routes: R3, R7, 162, 208, 269, 273.**

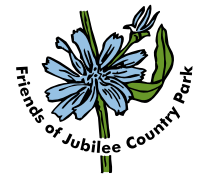
**Trains:** Nearest Stations: Petts Wood, Bickley and Chislehurst

Correct at time of going to press.  
Latest information from [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)  
Transport for London 0343 222 1234

## The Friends of Jubilee Country Park

If you'd like to support your Local Nature Reserve, why not join the Friends of Jubilee Country Park? Our aim is to protect and conserve the park for the benefit of both wildlife and people. Join us on guided walks, at talks and at community and social events. You may also like to get involved in wildlife surveys or join our weekly conservation work party to help our local amphibians, birds, butterflies, insects, reptiles and wildflowers. It's great fun and no previous experience is required.

For more information, see our website  
[www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk](http://www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk)  
Email [jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk)  
Telephone 07976 409743



## The Petts Wood and District Residents Association

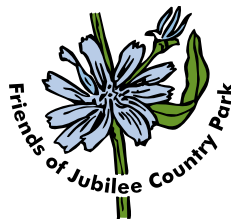
The Petts Wood and District Residents Association was founded in 1929 to preserve and develop an active interest in local government. It is strictly non-party and non-sectarian. For further details, see our website  
[www.pettswood.org.uk](http://www.pettswood.org.uk)



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## What to see in Jubilee Park

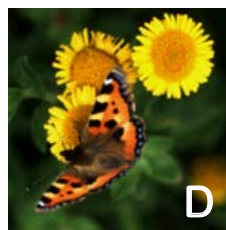
Jubilee Country Park is part of a wildlife corridor linking to open countryside via Petts Wood and Scadbury Park along the London Loop. Its 62 acres of wildflower meadows, hedgerows and semi-natural ancient woodland contain remnants of an ancient farmed landscape once common, but now rare. Look for some of the many plants and animals which have become uncommon in the countryside. Some you will be able to see on the way around the nature trail indicated by posts. Others may be anywhere in the park and are shown in some of the pictures opposite. How many can you spot?

## Looking back to the past

The earliest recorded landowner of the area which now forms Jubilee Park was the Bishop of Rochester in the Domesday Book of 1086. Successive Bishops held Thornet Wood (except during the Commonwealth) until 1845, leasing it out to tenants to generate income. The Bishop retained the right to fell timber and hunt. In 1780 Bickley Hall was built nearby for the Wells family, wealthy shipbuilders from Deptford, who rented and sublet fields for arable or pasture until 1841 when John Wells was declared bankrupt. In 1861 the Bickley Estate was purchased by property and railway developer George Wythes. In 1914 Wythes Estate Ltd began construction of the West Kent Golf Course which remained there until 1940 when the clubhouse was destroyed by a parachute mine. During World War II, the area was used as a heavy anti-aircraft gun site. After derequisitioning in 1960, planning applications to build houses on the area were fiercely opposed by the local community. In 1977 the land was bought by Bromley Council, named to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, and opened to the public in 1981.

## How to get around

The Jubilee Nature Trail is marked by 15 posts numbered in yellow. The route is shown on the map inside this leaflet. Follow the yellow arrow signs on the wooden posts around the park. It is about 2mils (3km) long and the underlying London clay means it is sometimes very muddy but at other times the soil dries forming deep cracks. There are gates and steps and though the park is fairly flat there are some short gradients over 10% (1:10) as shown overleaf. Please follow the Country Code, keep to the footpaths and remove your dog waste. Cycling is allowed on the cycle track only, horse riding only on the bridleway. Fishing is not allowed. Bromley Parks and Open Spaces By-laws apply.



**In summer see how many butterflies and moths you can spot**

**Butterflies fly in daytime and favour brightly coloured flowers; many moths are nocturnal and are attracted by pale, scented flowers. Most adults of both drink nectar from a variety of flowers, but often the caterpillars only eat one type of plant.**

**A Swallow-Tailed Moth: as a caterpillar it is camouflaged as a twig to hide from predators. It lives on elder, hawthorn and blackthorn and hibernates during winter.**

**B Small Copper Butterfly: caterpillars eat dock and common sorrel.**

**C Common Blue Butterfly (male): female is brown, caterpillars eat bird's foot trefoil.**

**D Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly on Fleabane: caterpillars eat young nettle leaves growing in a sunny position. Look for butterflies hibernating in your shed during winter.**



**Look and listen for bush crickets and grasshoppers**

**Young hatch in April/May from eggs laid the previous autumn. They look like adults, but can't fly. They grow and shed their skins several times before becoming mature. Adult males attract females with chirping song in summer. They are sometimes eaten by birds or small mammals. Live for about 5 months. Crickets differ from grasshoppers in many ways which include having long antennae and eating soft-bodied minibeasts as well as plants.**

**E Roesel's Cricket.**

**F Meadow Grasshopper-feeds on grass. There are at least 28 species of grass growing in Jubilee Country Park. How many can you see?**

**The great variety of mini-beasts provide food for birds, amphibians and small mammals**



**G Bluetits nest in tree holes and bird boxes; egg laying is timed so there are plenty of caterpillars and grubs for the growing chicks- as the chicks get bigger, adults may bring grubs and caterpillars back to the nest 600 times per day.**

**H Nuthatches use their chisel-like beaks to prise insects from tree bark or open acorns wedged into crevices.**

**I Newts breed in the ponds but spend most of their lives away from water hunting invertebrates and hiding under logs and stones.**

**J Common Shrews have to eat every 2-3 hours and need to eat 70% of their own body weight in minibeasts every 24 hours. Their hearts beat 900-1000 times/minute, but they only live for about a year.**

**K Weasels hunt for mice and voles.**

**In winter look for fungi, mosses and lichen**



# The Jubilee Nature Trail

As you start the Nature Trail notice the goat willow and aspen to your left. In spring both have male and female catkins on different trees, but aspen is wind pollinated while the nectar of goat willow attracts insects early in spring. Aspen's flattened leaf stalks cause its leaves to flutter when the wind blows.



Left: Goat Willow leaves  
Far left: female catkins  
Above: male catkins



Right: Aspen leaf  
Left: female catkins  
Above: male catkins

**1** This area was used as allotments from the 1940s - 1971 and the woodland around you has developed since. The taller trees are early colonizers e.g. silver birch which only live for about 60 years. Look for longer-lived trees such as oak and beech which are now quite small but will eventually dominate this woodland. Dead wood is broken down by fungus, returning nutrients to the soil: in spring look for scarlet elf cups; at other times, witches' butter.



▲ Witches' Butter ▼ Elf Cups ▼ Silver Birch



**2** Beneath the grassland here are remains of gun emplacements and buildings dating back to World War II. Calcium in the concrete makes the soil more alkaline so you can find chicory and the moss *Barbula convoluta*. Chicory is the emblem flower of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park. At the path edge where the soil has been disturbed look for common mallow.

*Barbula Convoluta*



Chicory



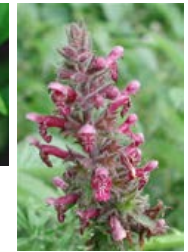
Common Mallow



**4** More light reaches the woodland floor where the paths meet so there are many wildflowers here in summer. Look for field rose and gatekeeper butterflies drinking from nectar-rich blackberry flowers. Hedge woundwort borders the right of the path as you go into the woodland. Its leaves were used as a poultice applied to wounds and contain a volatile oil with antiseptic properties.



▲ Gatekeeper Butterfly



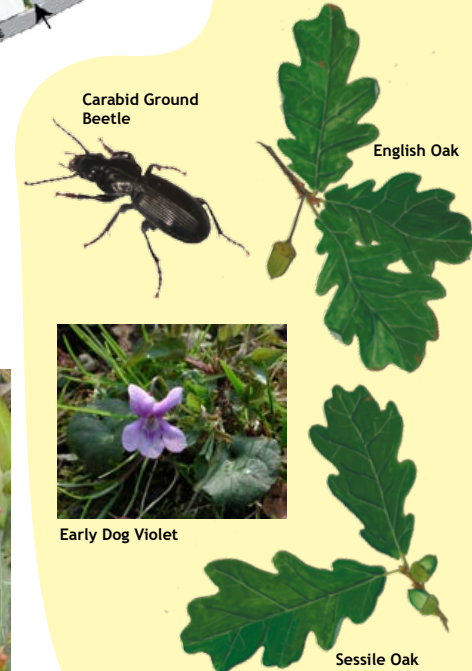
▲ Hedge Woundwort



▲ Field Rose



**5** You are now in Thornet Wood. This semi-natural ancient woodland is dominated by oak trees: the two native species and hybrids between them. English oak has long-stalked acorns, stalkless leaves; sessile oak has acorns with no stalks and long-stalked leaves. Look for ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebells, wood anemones and early dog violets which flower before the leaves grow on the trees and shade them. Ground beetles hunt in the leaf litter.



Carabid Ground Beetle

English Oak



Early Dog Violet

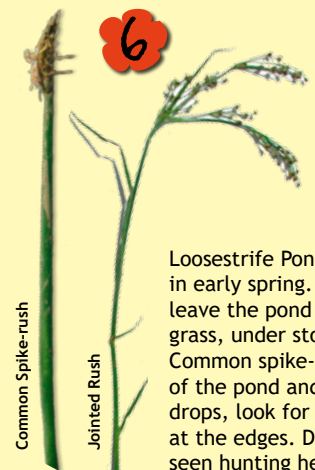
Sessile Oak



Yellow Meadow Ant

**3** As you walk towards post 3 look for spindle trees planted on the left. This small tree likes alkaline soils and is so named because its wood was used in the past for making spindles, used when wool fibres were spun into thread.





Common Spike-rush

Jointed Rush

Purple Loosestrife

Loosestrife Pond. Look for frogspawn in early spring. In summer tiny froglets leave the pond to live in the long grass, under stones and in crevices. Common spike-rush grows at the back of the pond and when the water level drops, look for jointed rush growing at the edges. Dragonflies can often be seen hunting here; their larvae live in the pond for 2-3 years.

7 Behind the trees in front of you an old sandy bunker remains from the days when this part of Jubilee Park was a golf course. The drier, acid soil in this area supports different plants to elsewhere in the park including lesser stitchwort, tormentil and nectar rich Devil's-bit scabious. In summer look in the grass for silk tents spun by female nursery web spiders where their young spiderlings are protected.



Nursery Web Spider



Lesser Stitchwort



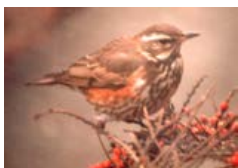
Devil's-bit Scabious



Tormentil

As you walk towards post 8 the grass becomes coarser and there are less flowers because this area was once reseeded and fertilised.

8 Ray's Pond was dug in 2009 and is already very important for wildlife. The information board shows some of the plants and animals that live here. The seasonal pond you passed (Jennie's Pond) is a stepping stone for creatures moving between ponds.



Redwing



Greenfinch



Grey Heron

9 To your right are pine trees, planted in the 1930s at the golf course boundary. Look for Scots pine with its orange bark and quite short needles in twos. The cones nearest the branch tips were fertilised last spring, those further down the branch are 2 years old. They ripen at 3 years old and shed winged seeds. Near the horse paddock is Austrian pine, with grey bark, longer needles and onion shaped buds. Listen for the high pitched call of goldcrests as they search for insects in the pine tree tops. Britain's smallest birds, they weigh about the same as a £1 coin.



Goldcrest



Scots Pine & cone



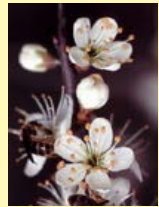
12 In summer the meadows are full of corky-fruited water dropwort. Keep to the path but look for grass vetchling and common spotted orchid. Across the field an old medieval boundary ditch and bank are marked by a line of trees, mainly oak. Blackthorn here was once part of a stockproof hedge.



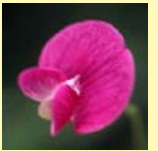
Left Above: Soldier Beetles on Creeping Thistle  
Above: Midland Hawthorn  
Left: Common Hawthorn



Common Spotted Orchid



Blackthorn



Grass Vetchling



Large Skipper on Corky-fruited Water Dropwort

11 Hedges provide food, shelter and safe passage for many different animals. Look for wild cherry, and shield bugs which suck plant sap. Both provide food for birds. Underneath oak leaves you may find spangle galls which mature in September and fall to the ground. Each contains the larva of a tiny female gall wasp which hatches in spring and lays eggs which develop into the next generation of male and female gall wasps.



Wild Cherry



Shield Bug



Common Spangle Gall



Silk Button Spangle Gall

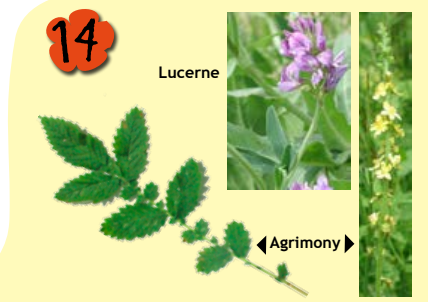


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Red Bartsia

Goldfinch

In summer look for red bartsia near this post. This semi parasite gets some of its food from grass roots to which it is attached. In autumn and winter goldfinch and greenfinch fly in at dusk to roost in the scrub.



14

Lucerne

Agrimony

Listen for grasshoppers and crickets in summer. Agrimony on the right is an indicator of unimproved grassland. Lucerne is from the Mediterranean area but was often planted in the past as part of arable crop rotation to improve soil fertility because, like many plants in the pea family, in poor soils it develops nodules on its roots which contain bacteria able to change nitrogen in the air to nitrate (plant food).



Lesser Celandine



Cuckoo Pint berries & flower



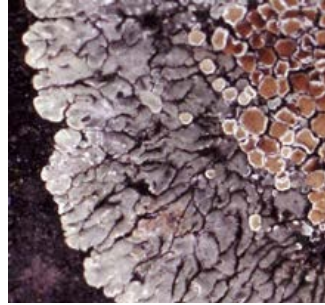
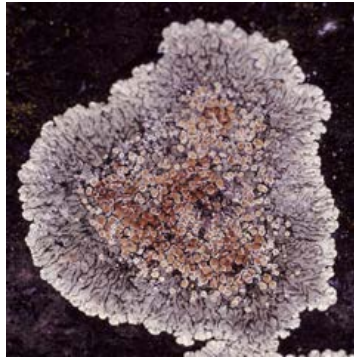
15

Next to this post is a veteran English oak tree. It marks the line of the ancient boundary of Towncourt Wood. Nearby in spring look for lesser celandine whose flowers only open in sunshine, and cuckoo pint, which is pollinated by flies attracted to its unpleasant smell. It has poisonous red berries in autumn.

# Look for lichens...

on tree trunks and branches, fences and concrete

Lichens are made up of a fungus and a species of alga growing together. Algae are very simple plants and like all other plants make sugars using sunlight, carbon dioxide and water. The fungus uses some of the sugar made by the algal partner.

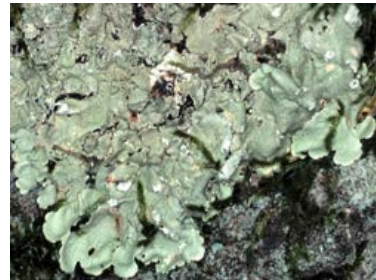


A

**A** Some of the lichens in Jubilee Park are like crusts, e.g A) *Lecanora muralis*.  
others are leaf-like (foliose) e.g

**B** *Hypogymnia physodes*

**C** *Flavoparmelia caperata*



B

C



D



F

**D** Some are fruticose (branched) *Evernia prunastri*.

**E** or have leaf-like scales at the base (squamulose) e.g. *Cladonia coniocrea*.

**F** Some appear to be just a powdery mass on tree trunks, *Lepraria incana*.



E

Lichens are used as pollution indicators. In the past sulphur dioxide was the main air pollutant and by looking at the lichens growing near your house you could tell roughly how much sulphur dioxide was in the air where you lived. A, E and F are all lichens which will grow in areas where sulphur dioxide pollution is up to  $125\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , B and D tolerate maximum sulphur dioxide levels of  $60\text{--}70\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , while lichen C will tolerate levels up to  $40\text{--}55\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ .

Now the level of this pollutant in the air is dropping and lichens like *Flavoparmelia caperata* are coming back to live in Jubilee Park that were not able to live there a few years ago. However levels of nitrogen oxides in the air (from car exhausts for example) are going up, so the species of lichen coming back to Jubilee Park are only those which can live with increasing nitrogen enrichment.

We hope you enjoyed the trail and visit Jubilee Country Park again soon.

