



Ham Hill Nature Reserve

On the east side of the road leading from the village of Ham to the top of Ham Hill and the Mid Wilts Way is Ham Hill Nature Reserve, which is run by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. The central feature of this small reserve is a holloway or sunken road, formed over the centuries by thousands of feet, oxen, horses, cattle and carts, which have worn away the chalk to create a steep-sided ravine with the roadway running along its base. Prior to the building of the current road running alongside the reserve, this roadway would have been part of the route from Hungerford to Andover dating back to Saxon and medieval times. It also linked Ham with the ancient drove road running along what was previously called the Inkpen Ridgeway, now part of the Test Way and Wayfarer's Walk, which ran to Upavon. In previous centuries there was a winch and pulley system at the top of the holloway to assist horse-drawn carts in negotiating the steep gradient.

The reserve is a mass of wild flowers including cowslips in the Spring. More particularly, from May to June, there is a profusion of orchids: Common Twayblade, Common Spotted, Fragrant and Pyramidal. Later in July the scarce Musk Orchid and the Burnt Orchid also make their appearance. Blues and other butterflies frequent the reserve which is noted for the Duke of Burgundy Fritillary. The view from the top of the reserve looking north-west is spectacular.

Visitors are requested to stay on the pathway along the spine of the reserve to avoid damaging the wild flowers. It is not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs. Dogs on leads are welcome. There is no parking place as such.

