

In the hedge look for the heavily veined leaves of the **wayfaring tree** which has clusters of creamy white flowers in June and black berries in late summer.

Large **oaks** (standards) can be seen amongst the coppiced **hazel** wood. This centuries old type of '**coppice with standards**' was once at the heart of woodland economy. The damp soil in this part encourages **pendulous sedge** and typical woodland plants like **bluebells, violets** and the scarce **herb-paris**.

You are now in the area of the old Common of Poorwood. For many centuries Powerstock locals held rights to graze their animals and gather firewood on the unenclosed land, until 1867 when they lost their rights. Find out what changes to the Common followed, on the reverse of this leaflet in the first paragraph.

This area is part of the Common where the Trust uses low level grazing to keep the grass at varying heights - a fine balance is required to suit woodland, grassland and wildlife. Hardy native cattle, able to cope with the difficult terrain, are left to graze through November to May.

On sunny days grassland butterflies fly here: **meadow brown, ringlet, and small heath**, and also the orange-brown **silver-washed fritillary**, a woodland butterfly which seeks nectar flowers in the hedges and fields.

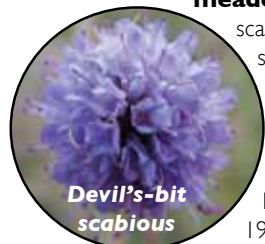
Follow the edge of the field, enjoy a fine view of Eggardon Hill in front of you.



Silver-washed fritillary

Go left through the gate and take the main forest track which eventually takes you back to the car park. Much clearing of conifers has taken place along the track and hazel has been coppiced.

- Where the track levels out you will see the results of conifer clearing which has allowed areas to re-establish into flourishing grasslands full of special plants such as **devil's-bit scabious, meadow sweet** and **heather**. The scabious is vital to the caterpillars of the scarce **marsh fritillary** butterfly, now seriously declined in Britain.



Devil's-bit scabious

At this point you can return down the track to the car park or turn left to the pond and the disused 19th century Suffolk type brickworks

with an information panel giving lots of detail. The nearby pond has a range of waterloving plants, the most noticeable being the three leaved **bogbean**. All three native species of **newt** are found here and summer visitors will see numerous damselflies and dragonflies like **emperor dragonfly** and **four spotted** and **broad-bodied chasers**.



Brick kiln remains



Broad-bodied chaser

VISITOR INFORMATION

LOCATION:

Map ref SY 547974

Situated about 3 miles west of Maiden Newton village, the reserve entrance/parking area lies adjacent to a disused railway bridge on a minor road parallel to and about a mile west of the A356, connecting the B3163 with the A35.

ACCESS:

Generally good with wide clear paths.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Beware of ticks, especially in long grass, bracken and scrub.
- Cattle are present on the reserve all year round - keep your dog under close control at all times.

BEST TIME TO VISIT:

Interest at any time, but best in spring and summer.

REFRESHMENTS/TOILETS/ACCOMMODATION

Approx. 2 miles away lies the Visitor Centre for DWT nature reserve, Kingcombe Meadows. Here you will find parking, a small visitors centre, toilets, accommodation & a café, **open February to end of November** - Friday to Sunday 10am - 4pm & during school holidays.

How to get there: On leaving the car park at Powerstock Common turn left, passing under the disused railway bridge. Take the first turning right into a narrow lane & after a short distance turn right again into Clift Lane. At the next T-junction turn left & follow the road for approx. half a mile into the hamlet of Lower Kingcombe, The Kingcombe Centre is signposted on your right.

Come for a walk on
**Powerstock
Common
Nature reserve
Nature Trail**

Part of a
nationwide network
of Wildlife Trusts

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

Powerstock Common nature reserve includes part of the ancient Common of Poorwood which became Poorstock Royal Forest after King John purchased the Manor and nearby Deer Park at Nettlecombe in 1208.

The impact of historical changes has helped form a fascinating mixture of natural habitats. In the mid 1800s the grazing rights (in existence for hundreds of years) of local people were removed and the loss of grazing animals led to tree regeneration across the old Common. Further changes came about during the 1914/18 war when large trees were felled and transported via the now disused railway. Charcoal burners cleared much of the higher ground in the 1950s and in the late 1960s the Forestry Commission planted the open fields to the north and replanted parts of the old common with spruce and Scots pine.



The nature reserve you see today is the result of thousands of man hours worked over several decades, by DWT staff and volunteers, to clear the dense blocks of conifer plantation. We hope you enjoy this very special part of west Dorset now buzzing with wildlife and home to ponds, ancient trees, grasslands, old coppice and many signs of man's impact on the landscape, including part of the disused Bridport to Maiden Newton railway line.



Bird's-foot trefoil

If you have time, walk to the highest point on the reserve and enjoy the panoramic view towards the coastline.

This leaflet follows the **LONG TRAIL** - the **SHORT TRAIL** follows the **RED** arrows and starts from the same point but turns left rather than passing through the gap onto the railway track. This will take you through grassland and woodland, past the remains of a disused brick kiln and close to several interesting new ponds before leading back onto the main forest track.

• LONG TRAIL

From the car park walk up the forest track and follow the green arrows. Turn right off the forest track and pass through the gate and onto the disused railway cutting. The line closed in 1975 and since then has become a wonderful place to see displays of wildflowers and insects.

• **THE RAILWAY CUTTING** The calcareous soil of the railway cutting is home to chalk-loving plants like **catsear**, **dyer's greenweed**, **bird's-foot trefoil** and **spotted orchids** during June. In spring **cowslips** appear and during August the track is lined with **wild marjoram**.

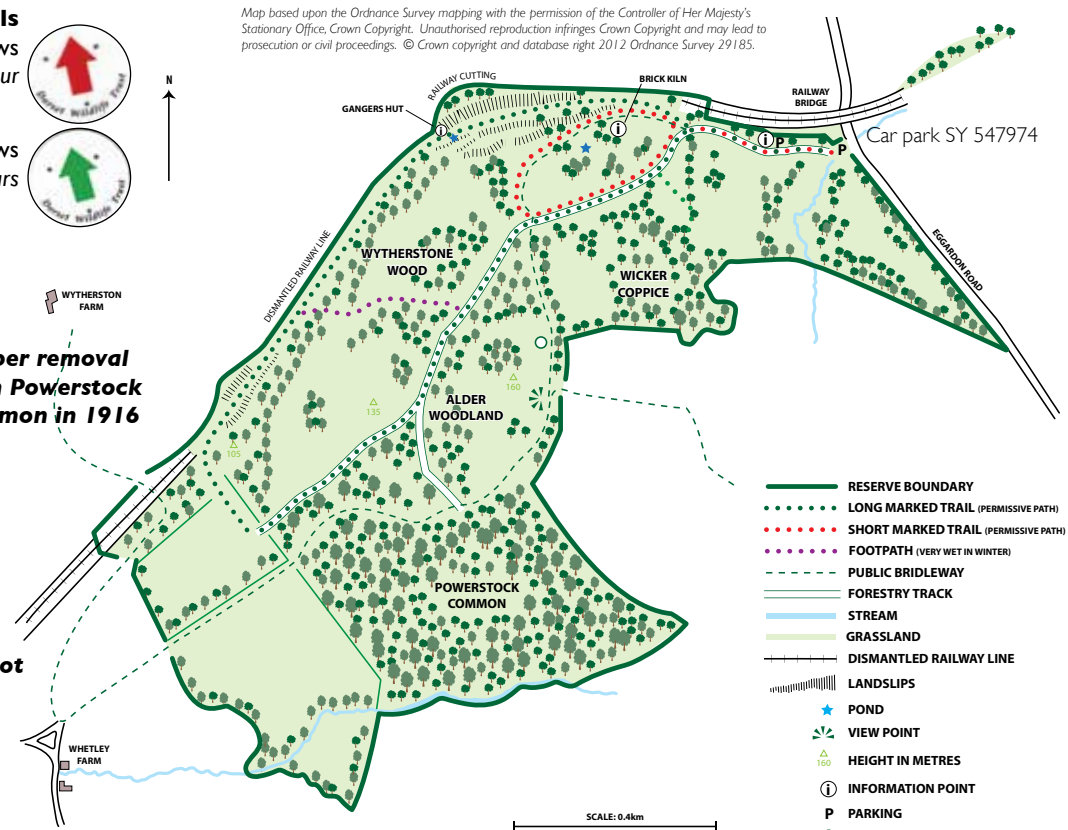
There are **2** marked trails

SHORT TRAIL - marked with red arrows
- approx. one hour

LONG TRAIL - marked with green arrows
- approx. 2 hours



Timber removal from Powerstock Common in 1916



- RESERVE BOUNDARY
- LONG MARKED TRAIL (PERMISSIVE PATH)
- SHORT MARKED TRAIL (PERMISSIVE PATH)
- FOOTPATH (VERY WET IN WINTER)
- PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY
- FORESTRY TRACK
- STREAM
- GRASSLAND
- DISMANTLED RAILWAY LINE
- LANDSLIPS
- POND
- VIEW POINT
- HEIGHT IN METRES
- INFORMATION POINT
- PARKING
- TUMULUS

SCALE: 0.4km

Marbled white and **meadow brown** butterflies breed in the tall grasslands and **common blue**, **grizzled** and **large skipper** butterflies frequent the cutting. If you are lucky you may find the rare **marsh fritillary** - careful grazing maintains the unimproved grassland to encourage many species.



Crab apples

Summer time along the disused railway cutting

The ancient hazel coppice next to the track is full of woodland life: **speckled wood** butterflies can be seen throughout the spring and summer in the dappled sunlight **dog's mercury** and **wood avens** cover the woodland floor. **Ramsons** fill the air with garlic scent in



Former railway ganger's hut



Marsh fritillary



Chiffchaff

Look out for relics of the long-gone railway - old metal fence posts, gates, strainers and bridges and the one time 'ganger's' hut for railway workers is still here, now a summer roost for bats.

• **ALONG THE DISUSED RAILWAY LINE** Further along the track you pass under a mixed woodland of **hazel**, **ash**, **alder**, **field maple**, **crab apple**, **hawthorn** and **oak**. In the damper parts **horsetails** line the path.

the spring while **blackbirds**, **blackcaps**, **wrens** and **chiffchaffs** can be heard throughout the woodland.

• The track opens up onto an area of well drained gravel - a favourite place for waste ground-loving plants like **teasel**, **mouse ear** and **wild strawberry**.