



A circular walk of approximately one and three-quarter miles.

Mainly on surfaced footpaths, except for a short uphill section in Natterer's Wood.

Devised for the Christmas season of 2007 – you can enjoy the Woodland Ways circular walk at any time of the year. In fact it's a good way to watch the seasons change and our planting efforts grow. Have a go today!

In the early 1800's the original Moreton Hall country estate was owned by Sir John Symonds who lived in the house now occupied by Moreton Hall preparatory school. This walk includes features of the old estate.

Start from Community Centre carpark, walk past surgery on right, go through gate into Home Covert (A)

(A) Home Covert - probably planted in early 19th century to provide cover for pheasants. The covert has two craters made when a Rougham-based WW2 Flying Fortress crashed on take-off killing 5 of its 9-man crew in January 1945. Mainly mature sycamore trees and dense dog mercury ground cover, a haven for wildlife. Great spotted woodpeckers breed here. Maintained by Woodland Ways

Turn left out of Home Covert and go to end of tarmac path, turn left, and using pedestrian crossing turn left towards town into Mount Road Plantation.

Depending on the time of day you will be aware of the rookery across the road

Turn right along tarmac path towards Kingsworth Road and on to gateway on left into Natterer's Wood (B)

(B) Natterer's Wood - By 2150 Natterer's Wood will be a mature wood providing a significant wildlife habitat and also relaxation and play opportunities for local residents.

Designated urban greenspace in 1990s this could have been just another patch of grass but a new 7-hectare (17-acre) wood was planned at a public meeting in 2001. To create this wood Woodland Ways volunteers have planted thousands of tiny native trees and formed a bat-shaped flower meadow enclosed in a native hedge.

Passing through the gate, enjoy the wide Suffolk sky (perhaps a late-afternoon spectacular sunset). Evidence of an Iron Age settlement has been found over to the left and the whole site has probably been arable farmland for over 2000 years.

Take tarmac path through Natterer's Wood

At this high eastern end of the site the soil is typical glacially deposited heavy clay, the lower western end is chalk-rich loam. At the point where the soil changes a line of naturally occurring scrub has recently developed – plants include bramble, mahonia, buddleia, sycamore – providing cover for birds including wren, robin, goldfinch, chiffchaff, whitethroat.

Rest awhile on log bench overlooking bat-shaped wildflower meadow (C)

(C) New wildflower meadow is bat-shaped to celebrate bat conservation – typical grassland plants may include red bartsia, bee orchid, bird's foot trefoil. Typical grassland birds may include skylark, lapwing, kestrel, meadow pipit, wheatear, linnet. Typical butterflies – meadow brown, common blue, wall butterfly

Continue straight ahead down grass path with bat meadow on left to join Mount Road.

At this point you are closest to the chalk tunnels occupied by possibly eight species of bat including the Natterer's bat after which the wood is named, there is no public access to the site which is a SSSI. The tunnels and lime kiln were formed in early 1800's to extract lime for local building work.

Natterer's Wood has been designed and is managed by Woodland Ways so that it becomes ideal for bats – a mix of vegetation and habitats for rich invertebrate diversity, water features, a clear flyway in and out of the bat roost. The local council has reduced the impact of street lighting to maintain a darkened flyway at night. The bats are at present hibernating until springtime.

Cross over Mount Road into Shakers Lane (D)

(D) Ancient hedged lane used by pilgrims in middle ages. Shrub species include blackthorn, dogwood, hawthorn, barberry, ash and elm. Plants include Yellow Star of Bethlehem. Birds include tits, goldcrest, robin

At end of Shakers Lane turn left up Symonds Road (E)

(E) 30 year old bank of mixed acer and poplar trees on your right

Cross road at Moreton Hall School field gate, go over Symonds Road to Pond Covert

(F) Planted at same time as Home Covert (early 1800's) Pond Covert provided game cover for pheasants and ducks. The box hedging was planted by gamekeepers to provide dense evergreen cover specifically to attract pheasants. Now a patch of mixed woodland with sycamore, oak and ash. Ducks and coot are attracted by the pond. Please note - pond has been trashed by duck feeding. Note outdoor classroom created for the children of Sebert Wood School next door. If you're lucky you may hear a blackcap singing – a Pavarotti amongst songbirds.

Turn left out of Pond Covert and, using pedestrian crossing, recross Symonds Road and continue on to carpark on left (F)

There now – you've walked off the effect of that mince pie and don't you feel good!

For more feel-good factor join Woodland Ways today.