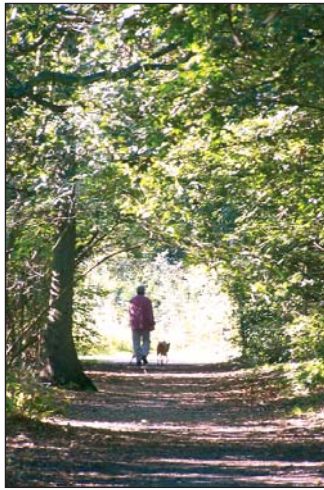


Welcome

Belhus Woods Country Park has a rich mix of woodland, grassland and lakes. You can fish, play games, picnic, cycle and horseride here, or just sit by tranquil waters and wander through the dappled light of the woodland.



The Park's Past

The park was once part of the Belhus estate owned by the Barrett-Lennard family.



Remnants of the 18th century Park, laid out by Capability Brown and Richard Woods can still be seen; 'The Shrubbery' and 'Long Pond' were created in 1770 and are now cut by the M25. A stench pipe disguised as a Tudor chimney also survives in the south of the Park.



Working Woodlands

The ancient woodlands have changed little in shape and size since at least 1777, but since then significant extra planting has created new areas.



The woodlands are home to rich communities of wildlife and the Ranger Service manages them traditionally for both timber and wildlife. Timber from Running Water Wood is used for thatching and hurdle making, with the hazel plots cut on a regular eight year cycle. This ancient management practice, called coppicing, benefits the wildlife by increasing the amount of sun light reaching the woodland floor allowing seeds to germinate and plants to thrive. Early purple orchids, graceful ragged robins and a sea of bluebells, all grow which in turn provide nectar and shelter for insects and butterflies.

Grassland and Open Space

Belhus has all types of grassland from mown grass kept short for picnics to tall swards ideal for grassland butterflies and sky larks. Lake margins and adjacent fields provide ideal sites for family games, while the hay meadows are seas of green, rich with colonies of plants and insects.



Water

Past gravel extraction on the site created a series of lakes, they now provide the visitor with a place to relax by, pleasant waterside walks and also for anglers – good quality coarse fishing. Two lakes have been set aside as conservation areas and are havens for wildlife, but you can see a variety of wildfowl on most of the lakes.



Within the woodlands there are a number of small ponds, these were created in the past through the action of clay extraction. The clay from these would have been dug by hand and the clay used for brick making. The ponds are now the home of amphibians such as great crested newts, frogs and toads; insects including damselflies and water beetles and much more!

Running Water brook is home to a colony of water voles, known as Ratty in wind in the willows, these small mammals were once common, but are now endangered through loss of habitat and the introduction of mink.

Site Facilities

Information is available from the Visitor Centre and it has a shop selling light refreshments and gifts. The Ranger Service also organises guided walks and activities, volunteer tasks and Ranger led school visits.

Details of events and activities are listed on the web site.

To organise a school visit contact our Environmental Education Officer on 01245 435869 to discuss your requirements.

Day tickets for fishing are available on the bank with provision for less able anglers. The Park also has associated clubs which meet on site. These include the West Essex Bowmen archery club, the Docklands and East London Model Engineering Society (model steam trains), the Ockendon Rhinos Junior Football Club and the Grays Thurrock Model Boat Club.

Opening times:

Park open daily from 8am until dusk. (Check entrance boards for daily lock up times).

Pay and Display Car Park charges apply at all times. Parking is free for disabled drivers displaying a blue badge.

Visitor Centre Open:

10am until 5pm weekends and bank holidays, Wednesdays 1pm until 4pm April to October only.



How to find us



By road: The Park is situated off the Romford Road which connects Aveley to Upminster and is approximately 3 miles north of Lakeside and the Dartford Tunnel.

By bus: Service 373 from Grays to Romford passes the park, where there is a request stop, every half hour.

By rail: Upminster station is about 3 miles from the park.

Contact details:

Belhus Woods Country Park, Romford Road, Aveley, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 4XJ

Web:

www.essexcc.gov.uk/belhuswoods

Email: country.parks@essexcc.gov.uk

Belhus Woods Country Park Ranger Service:
01708 865628

Essex Contact Centre: 0845 603 7624

Woodland Trust: 01476 581135

Forestry Commission: 01708 641880



The information contained in this leaflet can be made available in alternative formats: large print, Braille, audio tape or disk. We can also translate this information into other languages.

Published June 2006. © Essex County Council



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Printed on 75% recycled paper

Belhus Woods Country Park

A tranquil haven of woodland and water



one of our 9 Parks and Open Spaces



Essex County Council