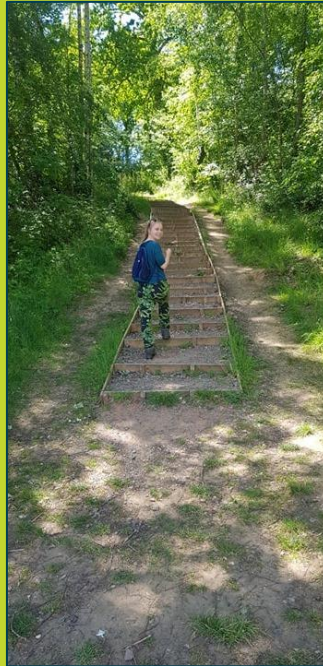


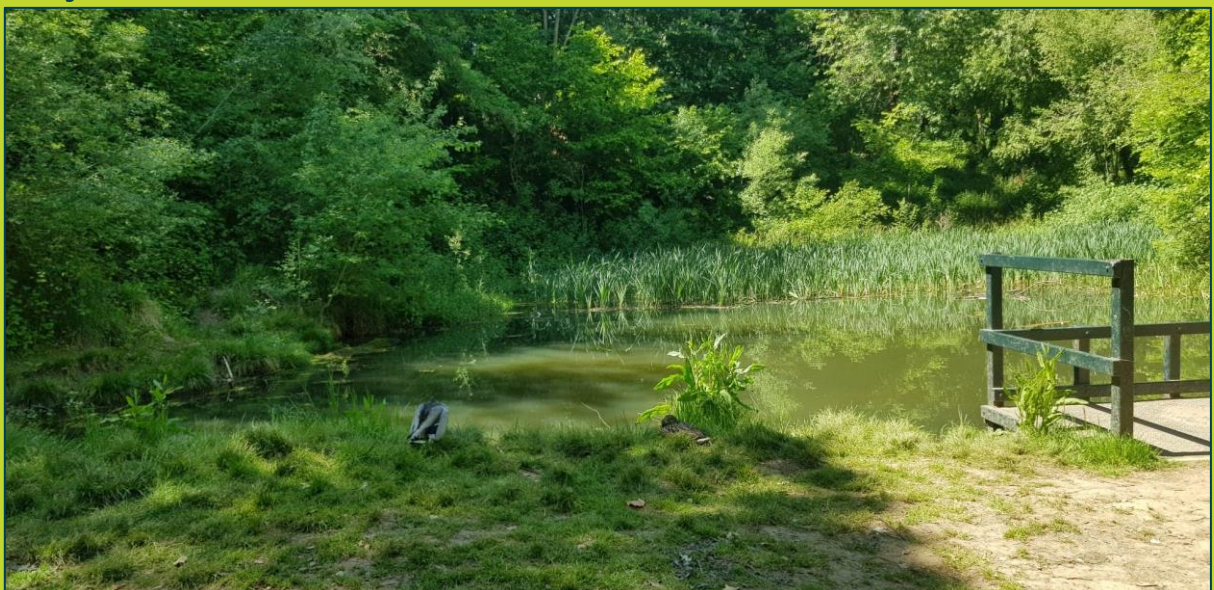
A Woodland Walk Around Lousehill Copse

Use this guide to explore Lousehill Copse, a peaceful and biodiverse woodland in Tilehurst, Reading. Whether you're able to walk around the area in person or if you're trying to get a feel for the woodland virtually, follow this walk to appreciate the natural beauty of Lousehill Copse.

1. Entering the woodland just off Tay Road (where Spey Road meets Tay Road) you will see an entrance with an enticing flight of steps. These steps were installed by our very own Biodiversity Action Team Volunteers. Enter the woodland between the silver birch trees and cherry trees.



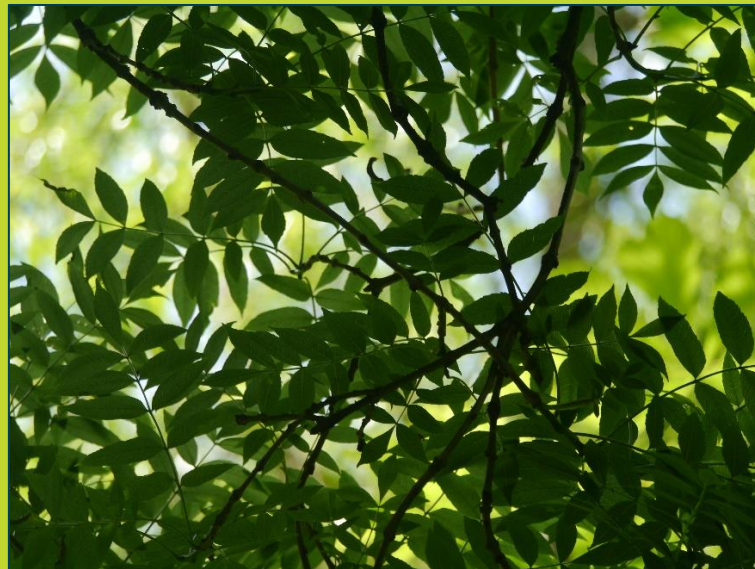
2. At the top of the steps the trees give way to a beautiful opening in the canopy and a pond with a pond dipping platform. This is a fantastic spot for watching wildlife, with mallard duck visitors in the day and Daubenton bats swooping over the pond at night. Residents of the pond include smooth newts. This is also a great spot for listening to the many birds here.



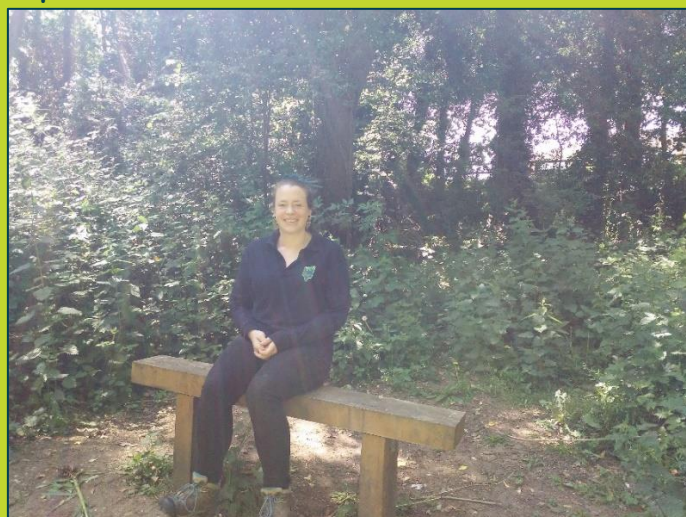
3. Continuing up around the pond to the left. Up two more fantastic flights of steps installed by TCV volunteers that have completely changed the accessibility for this once very steep and slippery path. Keep an eye out down to the right for some great views of the pond.



4. On the right of the path are several old large forked ash trees. Lousehill Copse is a very mixed woodland, but the older trees are predominantly oak and ash trees.



5. Stop and have a rest at the top of the hill as you take the path to the right. This bench was installed with help from Reading Outdoors Group. From this spot you have a fantastic view of the pond.



6. Look out along this path for yellow archangel on the woodland floor. This beautiful flower is often found in ancient woodlands and can also be found at Lousehill Copse.



7. You will then reach the 6-path crossroad. To explore the woodland, take any of these paths. We are going to go straight over.



8. On this section of the path keep an eye out on the woodland floor for woodland flora. On this walk we spotted Herb Robert and Jack By The Hedge, but you might spot something different - let us know what you see!



9. At the crossroads, take a swing down to the right.



10. Head down the slope to the board walk (also installed by superhero TCV volunteers). This area of the woodland is wet underfoot, and as a result, there are often interesting plant species to be found here. Looking down to the right you can also see the biggest tree in the woodland. It is an ancient oak tree at 4.5m in circumference.



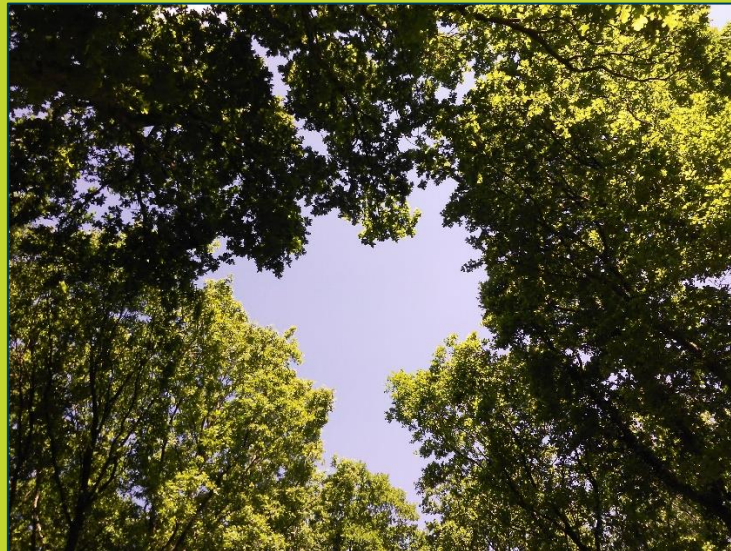
11. At this intersection we are going to be turning left. If you go right, you will head down the beech lined path.



12. As the canopy opens up, you will cross an ancient field boundary marked by a linear mound. Can you spot it? In this area there is a lot of fallen dead wood. It is a fantastic habitat for saproxylic insects.



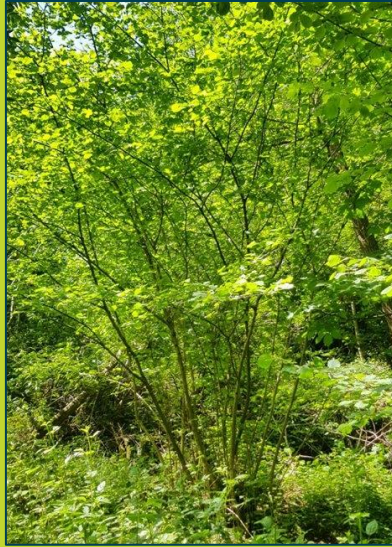
13. Glance up at the heart shaped gap in the canopy here. This is a great place to spot pipistrelle bats at dusk.



14. Carry on along the top path over the small bridge and you get to this awesome ivy arch. There is lots of ivy growing at Lousehill Copse and although often controversial, ivy does provide a great nesting habitat and food source for birds and bees later in the summer.



15. Further down the path on your right is an example of the coppicing that has been a long-term management technique used on the hazel in this woodland. Coppicing is the process of cutting down trees to let them regenerate from the bottom, producing more timber and creating more habitat niches in the woodland by allowing sunlight in.



16. Head through the lime trees at the end of the path. Take a right down the hill towards the meadow. Enjoy the lime lined path in this area of the woodland called comparts plantation.



17. If you want to do some more exploring, take the small foot bridge to the right into the forest school area where you will find some beautifully carved totem poles and in winter a small pond. Keep an eye out for bat boxes in this area.



18. As you are about to exit the woodland into the meadow, have a look at this tree on the left-hand side -- it has lots of veteran features and interesting insect holes and is a fantastic habitat!



19. At the end of the walk, you will enter the meadow, a great place for a picnic and to go butterfly spotting.

