

air raid on the Horton Light Railway during World War II. The pond, completed in 1994, is now a valuable water habitat.

Grassland

Many of the fields in the park were, until recently, growing crops and a number of the fields were permanent pasture, used for grazing animals. The fields are now managed by cutting for hay or grazing with horses, cattle and sheep. The wildflower meadows in summer are of particular interest, as is the wet meadow, with sedges and rushes, in the southern meadow area.

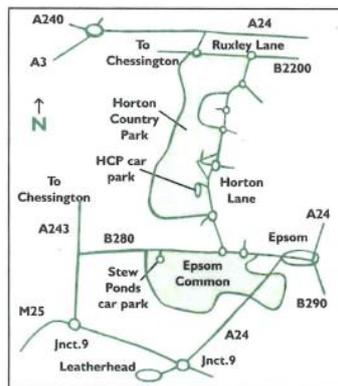
Hedgerows



The Country Park is crossed by a large number of hedgerows that act as a wildlife road network. This nationally threatened habitat contains a valuable collection of tree and other plant species that include hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, field maple, ash, oak, dog-rose, dogwood and wild cherry. The elm adds particular character to many of the hedges in the Country Park.

A shrub-like tree that is striking for its fruit in late summer and autumn, is the guelder-rose. With translucent ruby red, teardrop berries (that will induce vomiting if eaten!). Another is the spindle with its intriguing pink lanterns.

How to find us



For more information

about the Park or other countryside matters within Epsom & Ewell, contact us on

01372 732000 (24 hours)

or write to:

The Countryside Team,
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council,
Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, KT18 5BY
or email: contactus@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

For more information about Horton Country Park and other countryside sites in Epsom & Ewell visit

www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Version 2 - March 2009



Horton Country Park



Local Nature Reserve

is a rural landscape of fields, hedgerows, woods and ponds of great wildlife and historical interest



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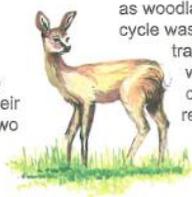
Horton Country Park covers an area of approximately 100 ha, part of which form the golf, farm and equestrian centres.

Facilities to Enjoy

- Countryside walks, events and activities
- Picnic area plus barbecue hire facility
- Large car park open all year round
- Disabled parking available
- Seats around the park
- Hard surfaced all weather tracks
- Information Centre

History within Horton Country Park

Horton was a medieval manor in the northwest of the parish of Epsom. Due to its predominant London clay soil it was (and is!) exceptionally wet and muddy in the winter. This gave rise to its dissatisfied tenants naming it 'Horton', which means 'dirty place'. In the 1890s the estate was brought by London County Council, who then set about developing a series of large psychiatric hospitals, innovative for their time, even having their own farms. Two of these farms, West Park farm and Long Grove farm, became surplus to the hospitals' needs in the latter



twentieth century and were purchased by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in 1973 to become Horton Country Park.

A Park for the Public

An extensive network of paths allows you to explore the Country Park. There is evidence all around of its past agricultural use. The wildlife of the park is varied and reflects the wide range of habitats present.



Woodland

There are 4 'ancient woods' in the park, each with their own character. This means that they have been continuously wooded since at least the Middle Ages.

In addition to these are many acres of new tree plantings, which are rapidly developing as woodland. In Butcher's Grove, a coppice cycle was restarted in 1984. Coppicing is the traditional means of managing woodland where a new area, called a cant, is cut each year. That area is then left to regrow and cut again after 7-15 years (depending on the predominant trees within it). Most of the cants in Butcher's Grove are grown for hazel

poles and are therefore on a 7-year rotation, because it is a fast growing, bushy tree. This type of management benefits spring time wild flowers and the display of bluebells in Pond Wood and Four Acre Wood is a very impressive sight.

Ponds

Currently there are 11 small ponds in the Country Park. Field Pond was probably a watering hole for cattle in the past. Despite its small size it is home to newts and a range of interesting aquatic plants. In the northern meadows of the Country Park a larger pond, known as Meadow Pond, was created in 1986 by damming a stream. In summer it is a popular feeding spot for swallows and swifts.

Dragonflies can be seen hovering over the margins of the pond and in the water there is a plethora of pond animals including water boatman, water scorpions, diving beetles, damselflies, frogs and toads. Yellow flag, reed mace, sedges, rushes and celery leaved buttercup can be found on the bankside.

Restoration work began in 1990 on the pond in Pond Wood, whose dam was breached by a bomb during an



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All around the park you will find heavy thickets of blackthorn in the hedges, carrying a wealth of juicy sloes in the autumn, but more impressive still are their bundles of white flowers in the very early spring. The flowers of the blackthorn come out before the leaves, while the hawthorn comes into leaf before it blossoms in May.

We maintain the hedges and woodland plantings with modern and traditional methods. This includes the layering of the hedge trees which enhances the wildlife value.

Footpaths and Horserides

There is a network of good footpaths and horserides, most with very gentle or no gradient. Many of the hard surfaced rides follow the route of the old Horton Light Railway, which was built to supply the hospital sites with coal for the boiler houses. The railway was dismantled in 1950, but it has left the park with a legacy of solid, all weather tracks, that are suitable for bicycles, horses and pedestrians.



Please remember we have farm animals on the site and therefore dogs must be kept under close control while walking in the park. In the

woods and meadows, we would encourage you to keep to the footpaths to avoid unnecessary disturbance to the wildlife.

Horseriders and cyclists are asked to keep to the waymarked hardsurfaced rides.

Birds and other Wildlife

Many birds can be found in the Country Park, including the Park's emblem, the green woodpecker. During the summer months the sound of willow warbler, chiff chaff and great tit can be heard. The migrant fieldfare and redwing visit during the winter. Snipe may be seen by Meadow Pond.

You may be lucky enough to catch the sight of a hunting kestrel, sparrowhawk or owl, over the meadows. The aptly named little owl flies during the day, while the much larger tawny owl only come out at night.



Other animals that live in the park include roe deer, foxes, water voles and a huge number of insects such as butterflies, beetles and crickets.

The Centres

The Farm, Golf and Equestrian Centres occupy sites within the Country Park, with their own separate management, to provide added facilities for visitors.

Horton Park Children's Farm can be found in the buildings that once comprised Long Grove Farm. It has a number of rare breeds and farm animals popular with children.



All ages are catered for with farmyard activities and both indoor and outdoor adventure playgrounds. It also has a tearoom and shop.

Equus Equestrian Centre is near the main entrance and provides a range of horse riding facilities including lessons, livery and riding in the Country Park.



Enthusiasts can watch a game of polo from the comfort of the club restaurant.

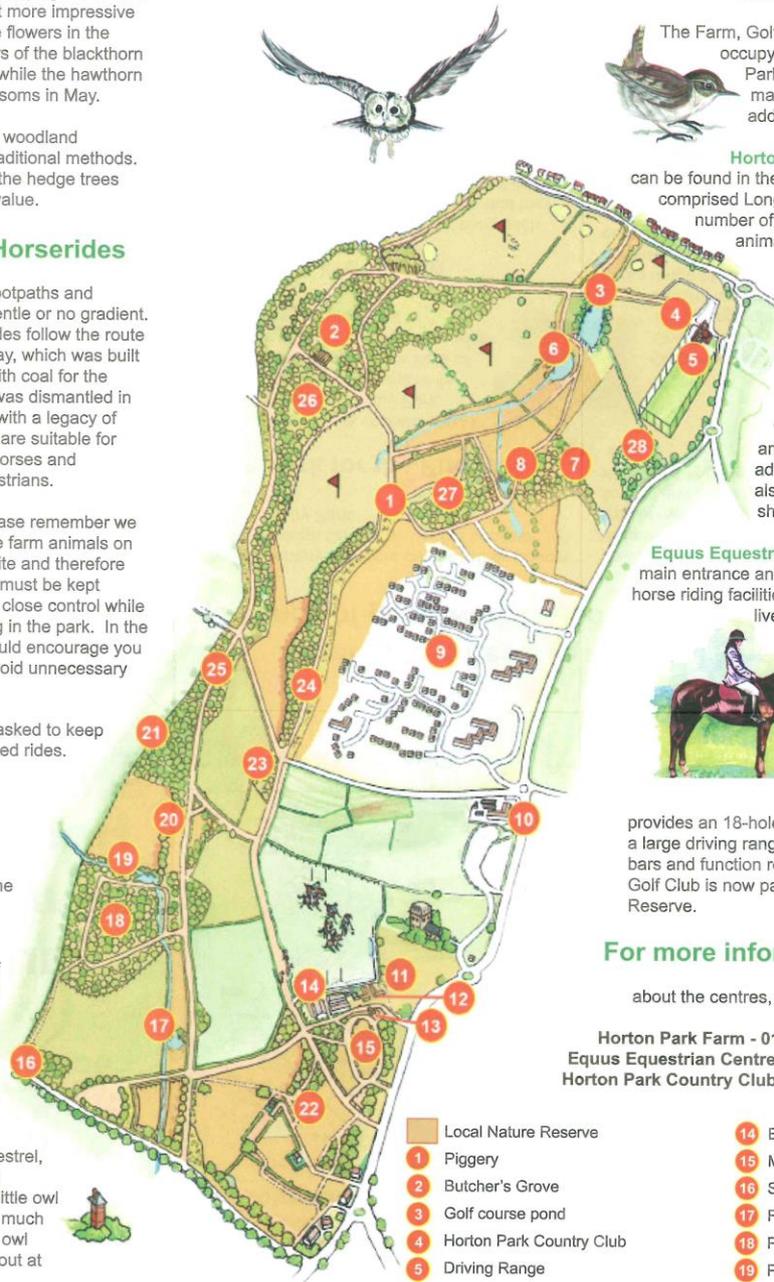
Horton Park Country Club

provides an 18-hole golf and 9-hole course, a large driving range, pro shop, restaurant, bars and function room for hire. The Golf Club is now part of the Local Nature Reserve.

For more information

about the centres, contact:

Horton Park Farm - 01372 743984
Equus Equestrian Centre - 01372 743084
Horton Park Country Club - 020 8393 8400



- Local Nature Reserve
- 1 Piggery
- 2 Butcher's Grove
- 3 Golf course pond
- 4 Horton Park Country Club
- 5 Driving Range
- 6 Meadow Pond
- 7 Great Wood
- 8 Orchard Pond
- 9 Clarendon Park former site of Long Grove Hospital until 1992
- 10 Horton Park Children's Farm
- 11 HCP Office and Information Centre
- 12 The Green Room
- 13 Toilets
- 14 Equus Equestrian Centre
- 15 Main Car Park & BBQ Sites
- 16 Stone's Copse
- 17 Field Pond
- 18 Pond Wood
- 19 Pond Wood Pond
- 20 Burnham's Grove
- 21 Four Acre Wood
- 22 Porter's Grove
- 23 Godbold's Copse
- 24 Hollymoor Grove
- 25 Sherwood Grove
- 26 Hendon Grove
- 27 Lambert's Wood
- 28 Tobin's Copse