The Lizard Trail

Attractive and diverse heathland circular walk – approximately 3 km/1 hour.

The Lizard Trail is about 3 km long and is marked by orange tipped posts along the entire route. It starts from the rear of the main car park and crosses the green. Bear right and look for the orange markers.

Bell heather. Its bright pink bell-like flowers are bigger than the smaller, pale flowers of the ling heather, also found on the heath.

The path’s rounded pebble-like stones are a relic from the time when Headley Heath was covered by sea. The North Downs were formed at the same time as the Alps following the last ice age.

The Pyramids. This area takes its name from pyramids of ammunition stores built by the Canadian army during the Second World War. From here you can look down to the bottom of Sixth Valley and up towards Middle Hill.

Walking across the open heath you will reach Brimmer Pond which is the only ancient pond on the heathland. In the spring and summer the pond comes alive with newts and frogs and many water plants. This is a great place to see dragon and damsel flies. The next pond along is called Hopeful Pond where the white flowers of water-crowfoot grow in the summer.

This open area of the heath is called Purley Plain. It was named after the pupils of Purley High School who helped clear the areas following a devastating fire in 1956. The flat area on the left of the path was created by removing nutrient rich top soil. Heather grows best in poor soil and these “scrapes” encourage more heather to grow. The scraped soil has been piled up into banks which bees and wasps nest in. All the humps and bumps you are walking over were the result of the WWII army exercises.

The characteristic squat oak trees of the heathland are great for climbing and for wildlife. Their leaves and acorns are essential for the lifecycle of many insects, birds and animals, however, they are not good for the heathland – like the birch trees, their growth needs to be controlled to protect the heathland habitat.

The path winds its way through thickets of spiky gorse. Yellow coconut smelling flowers turn into neat pods, which pop open in the heat and propel their seeds. It is important that we maintain some areas of dense scrub. Scrub provides a home for many insects and for rare ground nesting birds who depend upon the protection in the nesting season between April and September.

You are now approaching the end of the walk. Please come back again and see how Headley Heath changes with the seasons of the year.