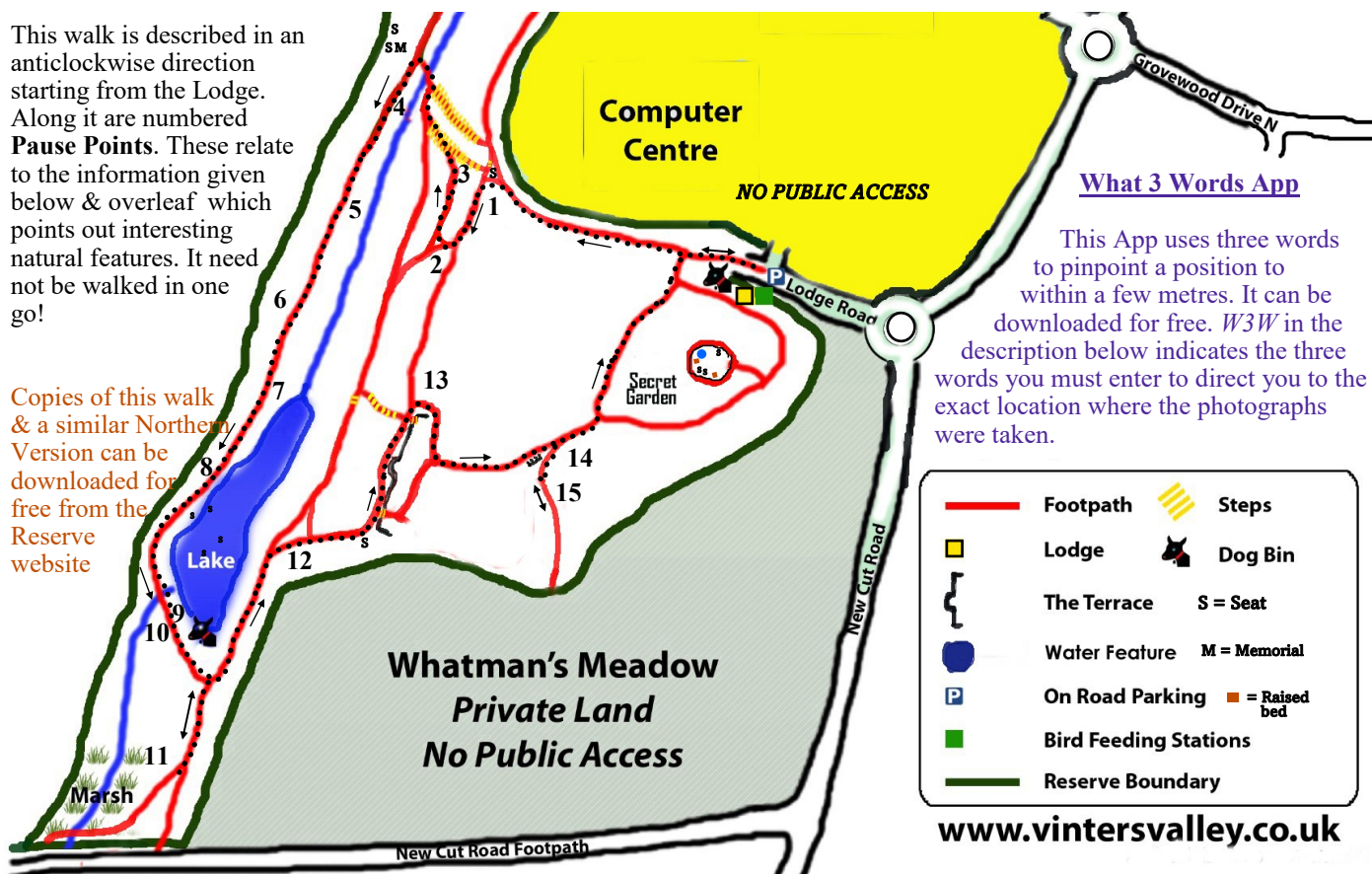


# A Winter Walk in Vinters Valley Nature Reserve.

## Southern Loop Jan.2026

This walk is described in an anticlockwise direction starting from the Lodge. Along it are numbered **Pause Points**. These relate to the information given below & overleaf which points out interesting natural features. It need not be walked in one go!

Copies of this walk & a similar Northern Version can be downloaded for free from the Reserve website



### What 3 Words App

This App uses three words to pinpoint a position to within a few metres. It can be downloaded for free. *W3W* in the description below indicates the three words you must enter to direct you to the exact location where the photographs were taken.

From the Lodge, walk down the track through the gate & continue ahead past the stone plaque & on until the track bears R where you turn L over a sunken bridge to a T junction with **Lime Tree Avenue 1**. Turn L again for 25m then bear R down the slope for a few metres before turning R again where in front of you are two **Coastal Redwood trees 2**. Carry on along this path for 10m & on your R is a **Norway Spruce 3**. Continue to the Staircase & turn L down it. At the bottom turn R for a few metres then L to cross the stream & reach a T junction with the Main Valley Path where you turn L again. Immediately on your L is a **Hazel 4**. Walk ahead towards the tall Spanish Fir tree on the RHS of the path, but before you reach it on your L are **Two Large Conifers 5**. Carry on walking past the **Spanish Fir 6** & in another 80m you arrive at the contorted **Holm Oak 7** on your L. Continue down the path & look for a large **Beech 8** on the RHS. Not far ahead you come to the lake where there is a **bird identification board 9**. On the opposite side of the path is a **Dogwood shrub 10**. Now carry on ahead past the junction leading back to the Lodge as far as the fallen **Oak & London Plane tree 11**. Retrace your steps to the junction & bear R. The path climbs & widens into a grove of **Yew Trees 12** where there is also a Walnut. Walk towards the RHS of the Terrace, climb the steps & turn L along the top. Just past the turning to the R & at the top of the steps there is a **Downy Birch** & behind it a **Cut Leaf Beech 13**. Return to the track & follow it to a junction just beyond the gravel bunkers where facing you is a large **Holm Oak 14**. Turn right for a few paces then look half L. Ahead is a magnificent **Scots Pine 15**. Retrace your steps to the junction & continue walking straight ahead to eventually reach the stone plaque & T junction with the path to Lodge Rd. Turn R back to the Lodge.

**1 Lime Tree Avenue.** (*W3W action.degree.wading*) Look down the avenue & you will see the nearest trees have lots of suckers growing round the base of their trunk whereas those further down do not. This is because those with bristly bases are hybrids between a Small Leaf Lime & a Large Leaf Lime but those without the bristles (suckers) are Large Leaf Lime

**2 Coastal Redwood Trees** (*W3W bubble.enjoy.bits*). The bark of these is thick & fibrous to protect against the wildfires common in their native habitat of Western California. Look at their horizontally flattened needle arrangement which forms a diamond pattern along the twigs. No other conifer in the Reserve shows this.

**3 Norway Spruce** (*W3W error.famous.towers*). Commonly known as a Christmas Tree. Look at the needles which are stiffer, thinner & densely packed along the upper surface of the twig compared to the Coastal Redwood. The trunk is also a coppery red/brown with many pits quite unlike the fibrous Redwood.



Lime

Redwood



Norway Spruce



Redwood



**4 Hazel.** (W3W [spin.refuse.urgent](#)). This usually has a profusion of pollen-producing male catkins which appear as early as November. Can you find any of the more elusive female flowers ?



**5 Two conifers.** (W3W [harsh.dated.yappy](#)). Look left at the two conifers which have different outlines. The LH, more distant, one is an Atlas Cedar, native to the mountains of Morocco & Algeria but planted for ornament in the UK. It is one of only four species of *true cedar*, which are distinguished by the fact that their leaves are in dense whorls on short spur shoots. The dull grey bark



cracks into large plates. The nearest conifer is a Norway Spruce with a red/brown bark that is only lightly fissured. It looks greenish on this tree due to lichen & algal growth on it. The leaves also contrast with the cedar by not being in whorls or on spurs & are paler green.



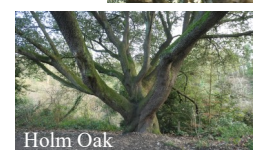
**6 Spanish Fir** (W3W [kind.oiled.waddled](#)) Introduced from an isolated group growing in the Sierra de Grazalema in Spain. In the wild the species is restricted & endangered although many are cultivated for ornament. Sadly the ivy obscures much of this specimen but the bottle-brush needle arrangement can be seen towards the left. There are two subspecies—the Spanish one & a Moroccan variety that grows at higher altitudes. Firs cones stand upright on the branch whereas in Pines the cones hang downwards. Pines also have longer more flexible needles.



**7 Holm Oak.** (W3W [bleak.flag.economics](#)) The multiple trunks on this tree probably came about due to the apical bud on the young seedling being damaged & so unable to produce a hormone which inhibits the growth of lateral shoots. These have then grown as if each was the main trunk.



**8 Beech.** (W3W [mole.lungs.new](#)) Look up the trunk at the numerous carbuncles & rounded regrowth of wood around branches that have been shed by the tree. As a tree grows in height its lower branches become shaded by the canopy above. These branches become ineffective & a drain on resources so the tree abscises them by the same method that leaves are dropped in autumn—an abscission zone forms at their base cutting off water. Keep an eye open as you walk round the Reserve as these scars are visible on most trees. Some are more ruthless at shedding branches than others.



**9 Bird identification board.** (W3W [safety.cattle.lend](#)) A pause here allows you to identify the common birds found on the lake. If there are gulls on the water, they are most likely to be Black Headed gulls although they won't have black heads at this time of year. Instead there is a dark black ear spot behind the eye & two short vertical grey markings. Just behind you is .....



**10 Dogwood.** (W3W [third.record.canopies](#)) The winter twigs on this shrub are dark red & contrast with the older smooth grey bark. Birds carry its seeds so you will find it in hedgerows everywhere. The name comes from the Old English 'dagwood' as it is a hard wood that was used for making daggers, skewers & arrows. A concoction made from the bark was also used to treat dogs suffering from 'mange' caused by mites burrowing into their skin



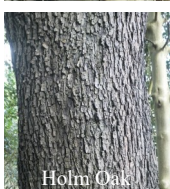
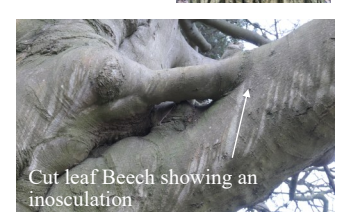
**11 Oak & London Plane tree** (W3W [cute.maybe.studio](#)). On your R is a London Plane with a barrel shaped base & distorted bark indicating an internal infection that has stimulated extra growth to isolate it. Look up & you will see branches that have lost all their bark & are dead. Two distinct woodpecker holes can be seen in one. The tree is obviously in distress & may not last long. Opposite is a fallen oak with intact roots & still alive. The ground was softened by prolonged rainfall & the unbalanced weight of the branches caused it to fall over the path (now diverted). More heavier branches grew on this side because they received more light over the path & were not shaded by the London Plane.



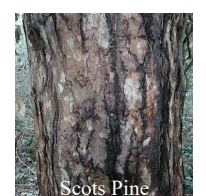
**12 Yew Trees** (W3W [puzzle.slot.ally](#)) Long-lived conifers with long flattened needles but the trunk is irregular & has dark red areas below the flaking bark. Their wood was used to make longbows & as an expensive veneer. They are poisonous to humans & livestock. Amongst these Yews is a single **Walnut** (W3W [chief.lived.trails](#)) which can be distinguished by its deeply fissured grey bark. Up it you can see many scars of shed branches up the trunk. They are sometimes called 'Southern Eyes'.



**13 Downy Birch** (W3W [lush.barn.pillow](#)) Stands on the RHS of the path with its typical inverted horseshoe markings up the trunk. These are quite unlike the black diamonds on Silver Birch trees. To the right of this is a large **Cut Leaf Beech** (W3W [froze.slot.glow](#)). Look up at the contorted trunk & particularly on the RHS, several areas where two branches have rubbed against each other & fused together (inosculation) often leaving gaps between.



**14. Holm Oak.** (W3W [riders.penny.margin](#)) Unlike that seen earlier, the trunk is not twisted & is undivided. The bark is very dark with shallow fissures that eventually form squarish scales. The wood is very hard & strong. The Romans used it to make cart wheels.



**15 Scots Pine** (W3W [dance.lobby.curiosity](#)) This giant of a tree has the typical grey brown fissures & scales on its trunk but they look more orange/red higher up. If you were tall enough to see them, the needles are in pairs.