Calke Park wildlife walk

Ticknall, Derbyshire DE73 7LE

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Easy

DISTANCE
1.5 miles (2.5km)

TIME
30 minutes

OS MAP
Landranger 128

Contact

01332 863822
calkeabbey@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

National Trust

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

As well as a grand Baroque mansion with a large natural history collection, Calke has secret walled gardens and a parkland, much of which is a National Nature Reserve. The park is a rich and varied landscape of grassland, ponds and wood pasture – one of the rarest habitats in Europe. You'll also find majestic veteran trees and some great 'bug'-watching sites. There are no public roads at Calke so it's perfect for a peaceful walk.

Terrain

Circular walk with stepped and stoned paths, kissing gates and a stile. Enquire at property for more accessible routes.

Things to see

Red deer

Red deer inhabit the estate. See males locking horns, calling females and scent-marking during the autumn rut.

Wildlife

Spot yellow archangel and bluebells in the woodlands, and self-heal and sheep's sorrel in the grasslands. Birds of prey such as hobby, buzzard and the occasional red kite may be seen, as well as woodland birds such as woodpeckers, tree creepers, nuthatch, starling and tits. Over half of the UK's 16 bat species have been recorded here, and the rough grassland is home to voles, shrews, wood mice, weasels and stoats. Badgers make their homes in the woods along with over 350 types of beetles which thrive on the dead wood. Watch out for the wasp beetle that mimics a wasp in order to avoid being preyed upon.

Ancient trees

Calke's oldest tree, an oak known as the Old Man of Calke, is over 1,000 years old. Veteran trees sometimes have hollow trunks which can be seen when the main truck has broken and/or opened. Trees become hollow through a natural process of decay, not because they're dying, but to increase their stability. Also, notice the piles of dead wood around the estate that provide an important habitat for insects. The area around the trees is grazed and this benefits wildlife including many grassland flowers and fungi. The ancient trees support a huge diversity of insects and rare fungi such as the oak polypore. This is an island habitat for species that have survived since the last Ice Age.

Ticknall, Derbyshire DE73 7LE

Start/end

Start: Main overflow car park, grid ref: SK367226
End: Main overflow car park, grid ref: SK367226

How to get there

By bike: National Cycle Network traffic-free route, 5 miles (8km) away

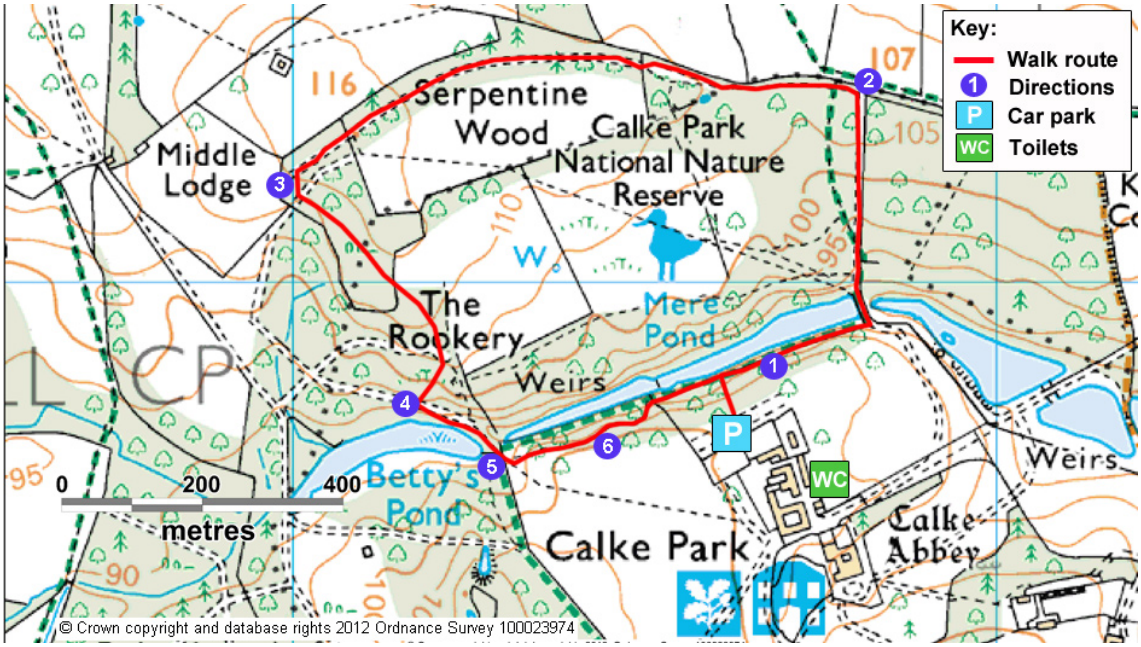
By bus: Number 69/A, Derby to Swadlincote (passing close to Derby), alight Ticknall then 1.5 mile (2.5km) walk through park to house

By train: Derby, 9.5 miles (15.2km); Burton-on-Trent, 10 miles (16km)

By car: 10 miles (16km) south of Derby on A514 at Ticknall. M42/A42 exit 13 and A50 Derby South

National Trust

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks



1. Begin at the main overflow car park and walk down the steps to the ponds. Look for dragonflies in the summer. Turn right and follow the deer fencing to the top of the hill, until it meets the old park boundary wall.

---

2. Turn left away from the deer fence and follow the path near the wall through the parkland and then along through the Serpentine Wood. This is a good place to see bluebells in spring. Also look for signs of badgers (paths, tracks and diggings).

---

3. Go through the kissing gate and follow the woodland path, which bears round to the left.

---

4. Come out of the wood into the Fisherman's car park. The oldest tree in the park, The Old Man of Calke, is a short way beyond the car park through the wooden gate.

---

5. Follow the stepped path down from the car park to Bettys Pond and go between the two ponds, then ascend the steps over the stile. A number of Calkes ancient trees (some over 400 years old) can be seen around Bettys Pond.

---

6. Follow the line of horse chestnuts all the way back to the starting car park.