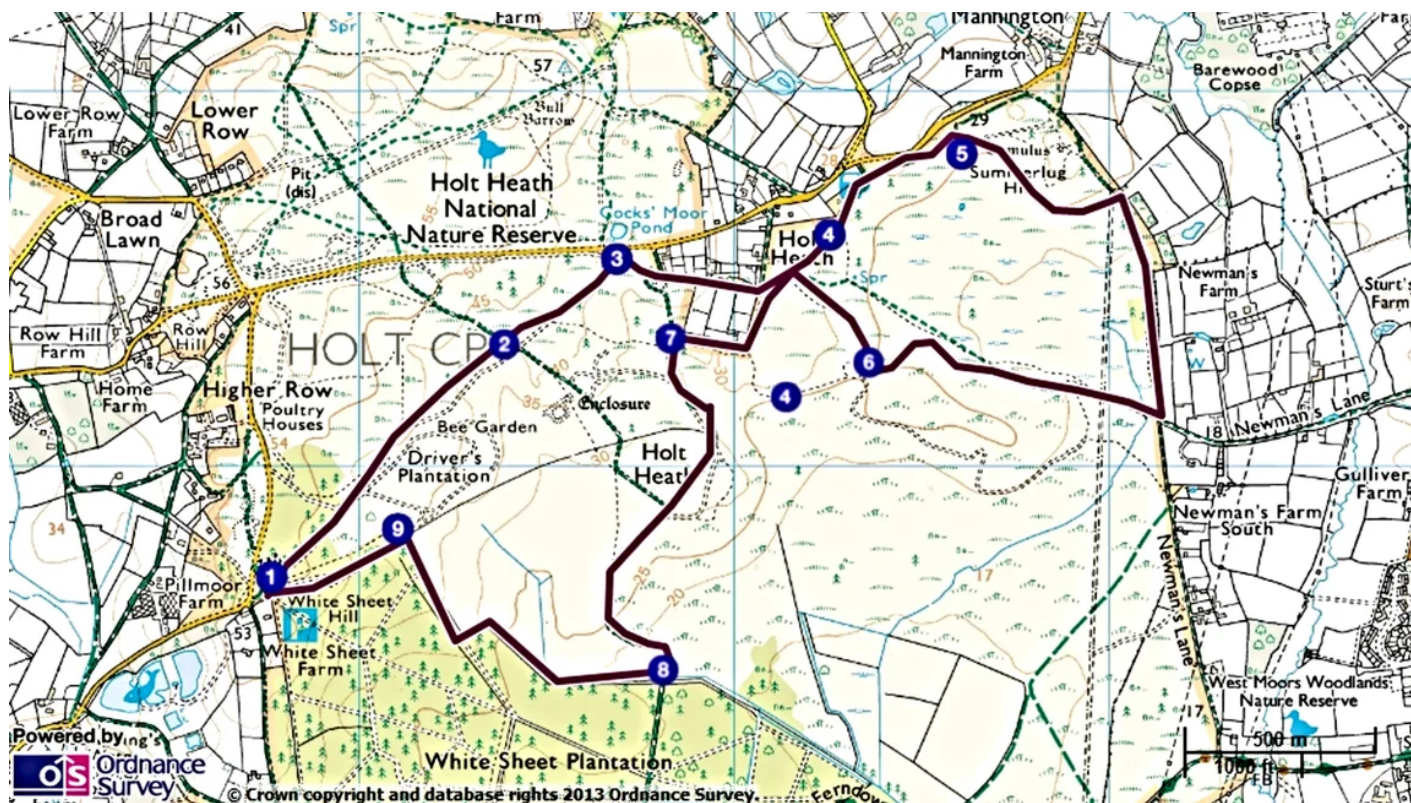


DORSET

Kingston Lacy walk at Holt Heath

The walk explores this important lowland heath, which is one of the largest areas of its type in Dorset. Acquired in the 1630s by Sir John Banks as part of Kingston Lacy's estate, it is now cared for by the National Trust. It's rich in flora and fauna, with plants including common heather, bell heather, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel, sundews and marsh gentian, large populations of Dartford warbler, stonechat, curlew and nightjar, and all six of Britain's reptile species.



Information

Address: White Sheet car park, Higher Row, Holt, Dorset BH21 7DB. Grid ref: SU048037.

OS map: OS Explorer 118 and OL22

Activity: Walking

Moderate: The bridleways and footpaths can become rutted and boardwalks can become slippery in wet conditions. Keep to the paths and tracks. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Keep dogs under effective control; grazing animals are used for land management.

Full trail: Miles: 6 (km: 9.6)

Duration: 3 hours

Terrain

The bridleways and footpaths can become rutted, with the eastern sector in part on elevated ground crossing the important heathland mire. Grazing of animals is part of the management of this rare habitat, so dogs should be kept under effective control. Stout footwear is recommended and boardwalks can become slippery in wet conditions. The lower-lying terrain can appear deceptively firm and you are advised to keep to the paths and tracks.

Total steps: 9

Start point: White Sheet car park, Dorset BH21 7DB. Grid ref: SU048037.

1. Leave White Sheet car park and enter the fenced area to the north through a gate into the plantation and past the noticeboard. Continue straight, ignoring a right fork. When you reach a T-junction with another path, turn right as directed by the waymarker.
2. The track passes beehives, cattle pens and a fenced area. Ignoring the gate on the right, continue straight ahead. On reaching a crossroads of paths, keep going straight.
3. On reaching a T-junction of paths by the road, turn right as directed by the waymarker. Follow the path and on reaching a fork you can carry straight on for the shorter route. To stay with the main walk, turn left here and almost immediately right to follow the bridleway between the paddocks.
4. On leaving the bridleway, go straight across the gravel track and enter the heath on the narrow dirt track, then left onto a wider sandy path. Ignoring the path almost immediately on your right, follow the edge of the heath in an easterly direction towards a small hill (Summerlug).
5. Skirt the bottom of the hill, keeping the open heath on your right where you might see some interesting birdlife. Turn right at the utility posts and follow the fence line through a wooded area, until you reach Newman's Lane, on a bend. Take a sharp right, following the footpath over a boardwalk. The cross-heath path continues over boggy ground.
6. Turn right at a pond and then left at the junction, briefly re-joining the outward track before veering left. In a short while you'll pass houses on the right, and go through a gate onto a permissive path. The ground varies from dry to wet heath with bogs or valley mires.

7. Turn left to re-join the shorter walk, carrying straight on towards the south, following the edge of the marshy land. Continue straight on as the bridleway turns off to the right.
8. The walk meanders down to the heath's southern edge, crossing a stream and through a gate. Turn immediately right on the track following the fence line and on meeting another track, turn right.
9. At the next public access gate, pass through and turn left, through another gate and return to the car park.

End point: White Sheet car park, Dorset BH21 7DB. Grid ref: SU048037.
