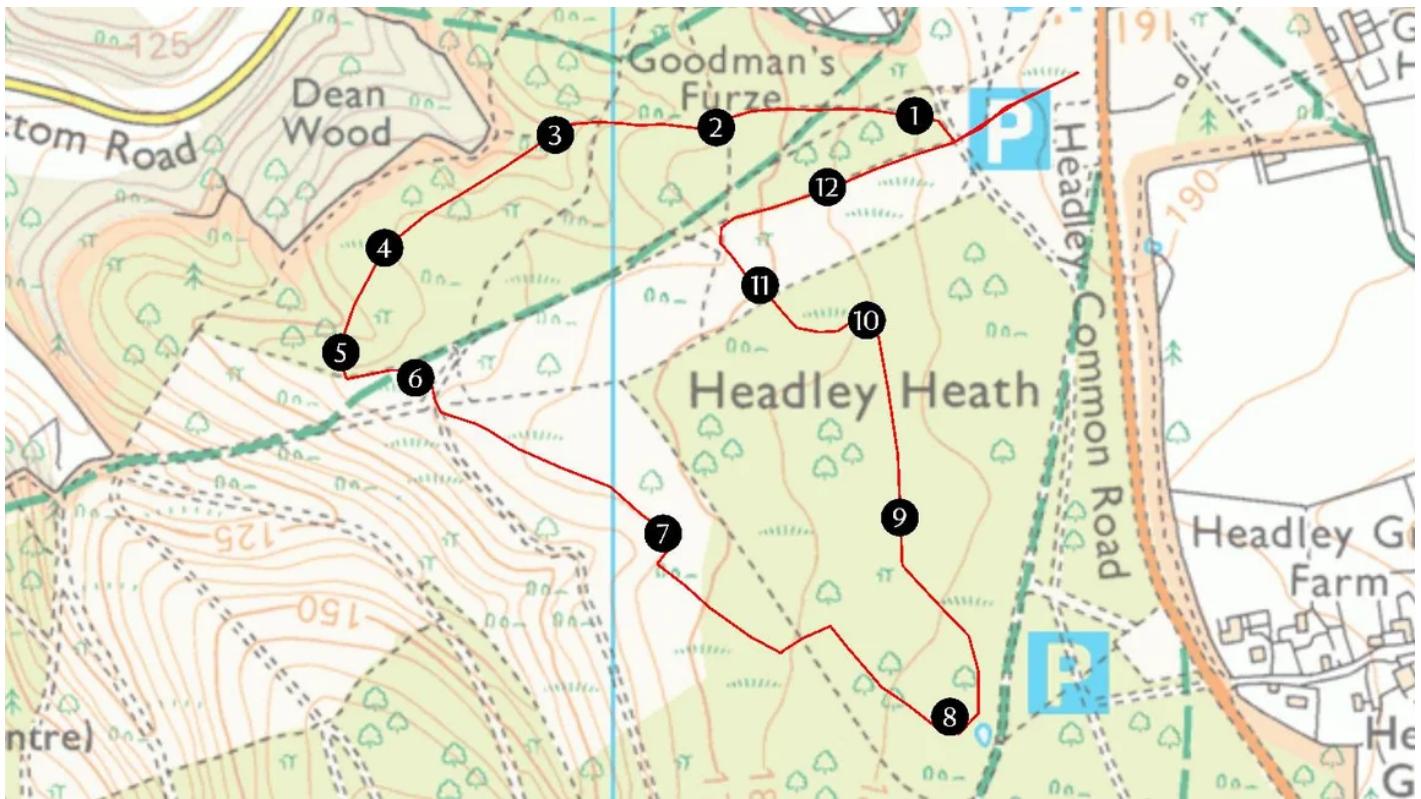


SURREY

## Headley Heath Lizard Trail

The Lizard Trail is a wonderful way to explore the rich array of flowers, birds, insects and animals that inhabit Headley Heath's rare environment of acid lowland heath and dry chalk downland.



### Information

**Address:** Headley Heath main car park opposite the cricket pitch

**OS map:** OS Explorer 146

**Activity:** Walking

**Easy:** Dogs welcome, under control around livestock.

**Dog friendly:** Dogs welcome, but please keep them under control around grazing livestock.

**Full trail:** Miles: 2 (km: 3.2)

**Short trail:** Miles: 1.9 (km: 3.04)

**Duration:** 1 hour - 1 hour 30 mins

### Total steps: 12

**Start point:** Headley Heath main car park, grid ref: TQ193546

1. This is a favourite spot of the Belted Galloway cattle who graze the whole of Headley Heath. They have a vital role in maintaining valuable habitats for the wildlife of the heathland. In ancient times, the heath environment was managed by the continual grazing of local animals - cattle, sheep, geese, horses. The Belted Galloways are very well suited to continue this tradition and have a calm temperament with people.
2. Birch trees grow quickly and will rapidly colonise areas of ground. We regularly cut them down so they don't overwhelm the heathland's other vegetation, which provides homes for insects, birds and mammals.
3. During the summer months foxgloves provide vital nectar for the bees. In autumn holly and rowan trees have berries to feed birds during the winter.
4. Dean Wood Heath. This area was devastated in the 1987 storm and the bracken grows quickly to cover the ground. We work hard to keep the bracken from shading less vigorous plants such as heather. The bright pink flowers of bell heather are bigger than the smaller, pale flowers of ling heather. Both varieties are native flowers and found on the heath.
5. The rounded pebble-like stones of the path are a relic from the time when Headley was covered by sea. The North Downs were formed at the same time as the Alps following the last ice age.
6. The Pyramids. The name for this area comes from the stacks of ammunition boxes created by the Canadian Royal Engineers during the Second World War. From this viewpoint you can look down to the bottom of Sixth valley and up towards Middle Hill. Nearby you can find wonderful wild orchids and butterflies - walk a little way down the steep stony track. Chalk loving plants such as potentillas, rock rose and St John's wort provide crucial food for the caterpillars of butterflies such as the fast flying Grizzled Skipper.

7. Aspen Pond is a beautiful, tranquil spot named after the aspen trees that grow here. Reed mace (also known as bulrushes) with its distinctive large seed heads, grows by the small island. We've built a bug hotel close to the pond to provide shelter for all sorts of insects and small animals. Over time it will slowly rot away.
8. Walking across the open heath you will reach Brimmer Pond which is an ancient pond on the heath. In the spring and summer the pond comes alive with newts and frogs and many water plants. This is a great place to spot dragon and damsel flies. The next pond along is called Hopeful Pond where the white flowers of water-crowfoot grow in the summer.
9. This open area of the heath is called Purley Plain. In 1956 the pupils of Purley High School helped to clear the area after a devastating fire. The flat area on the left was created by removing nutrient rich topsoil to encourage the native heather to cultivate on the poorer under soil. The scraped soil is piled up to form banks where bees and wasps nest. Some of the humps and bumps you can see in this areas were created as part of army exercises in the Second World War.
10. The characteristic squat oak trees of the heathland are great for climbing and for wildlife. Their leaves and acorns are essential in supporting the lifecycle of many insects, birds and animals. However they are not good for the heathland and so, like the birch, their growth and spread needs to be controlled to protect the heathland habitat.
11. The path winds its way through thickets of spiky gorse. The yellow coconut-smelling flowers turn into neat pods, which pop open in heat propelling the seeds outwards. It is important that we maintain some areas of dense scrub, which can provide shelter for insects and ground-nesting birds, such as the rare nightjars. They require protection between April and September as they mate and raise their young.
12. You are now approaching the end of the walk as you head back to the car park. Thank you for visiting and we hope that have enjoyed this stroll. Please come back again and see how Headley Heath changes with the seasons of the year.

End point: Headley Heath main car park, grid ref: TQ193546

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