

Adderbury Lakes

Local Nature Reserve



History

Adderbury House, the large house situated at the entrance to Lake Walk, dates from the 17th century. In the late 1700s Duke of Buccleuch made extensive changes to Adderbury House and its grounds. Demolishing 90 cottages in the process, he commissioned the iconic landscape gardener Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to redesign the park and gardens. Brown's original plan included "a fine serpentine stream" which was rejected by the Duke; but in the early to mid 1800s, the then owner of Adderbury House, William Hunt Chamberlain, created the Lakes as you see them today.

In 1939, at the beginning of World War 2, Adderbury House was requisitioned by the War Office, then in 1948 the house and park were taken over by Oxfordshire County Council. While the House was used as sheltered accommodation, the lakes area was neglected and became overgrown.



Approval for work to reclaim the lakes was given in 1983. The work, jointly funded by Oxfordshire County Council and the Community Programme, was completed in 1985.

In 2000, Adderbury Parish Council purchased the Lakes from Oxfordshire County Council, and they are now managed by the Parish Council and a committee of local volunteers as a registered Local Nature Reserve.

In 2012 a programme of re-furbishing the Lakes began with de-silting the main Lake, felling some trees and replanting. Sections of the original fencing, constructed from old narrow-gauge railway lines from the ironstone quarry, were replaced. Path work and bridge repairs allowed better access to the lower lake and in 2018, the icehouse was cleared, so the full extent of the well was revealed, and the stonework repaired. A new door and some bat bricks were fitted to allow bats to roost inside



Icehouse - This was built about 1800; about the same time as the one at Aynhoe Park. Icehouses were used for hundreds of years as early refrigerators; the Aynhoe one was used certainly up to the 1920s. Each winter the egg shaped interior was lined with straw and ice. Game shot

on the estate would be kept around the sides and the purer ice would be put in the centre. This would be used for summer drinks and medical purposes.

Source of the Lakes – Very close to the East End entrance, beside Longwall path, is the collecting point for about five springs which rise in the land to the north of it. These springs are the main source of water for the lakes and they continue to flow even in the driest of summers, albeit as a trickle.



Trees – The oldest and by far the largest tree in the lakes area is an oriental plane; around 180 years old and can be found between the

path and the first Lake. Various types of maple, sycamore, beech, ash, yew, hazel and willow also grow across the site.

Plants – The reclamation has allowed a wide range of wild flowers to re-emerge in their appropriate season including snowdrops, bluebells, cotton thistle, creeping ivy, dead nettle, foxglove, forget-me-not, ransomes (wild garlic), guelder rose, herb robert, meadow cranesbill, marsh marigold, primrose, Queen Anne's lace, rosebay willowherb,

Leaflet designed by Rachel Moffat

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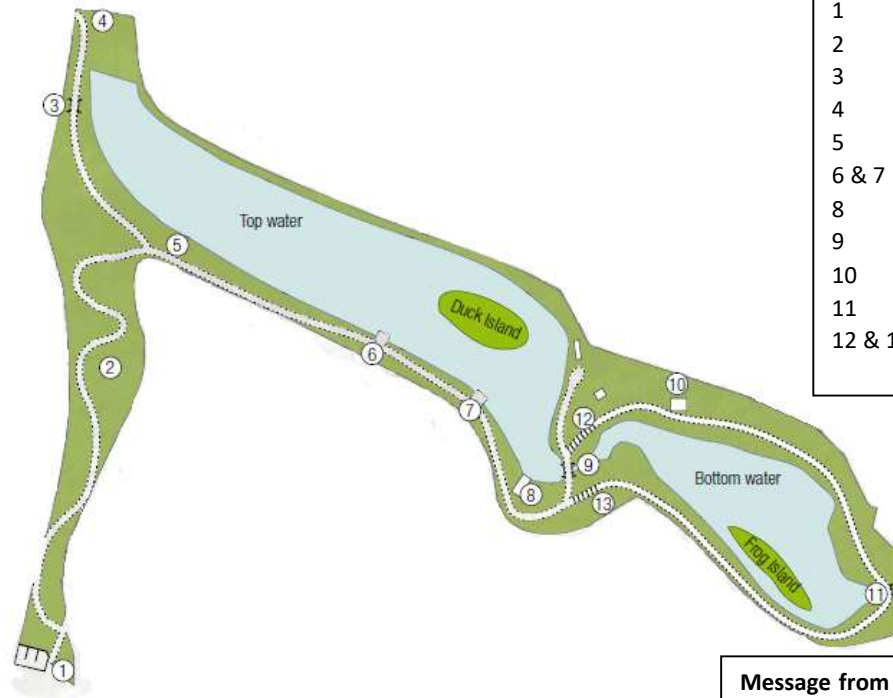
speedwell, flag Iris, wild strawberry and the lovely little wood anemone (nemorosa). Some bamboo plants can be found near the second lake, this is a legacy from pre-war days when this lake was an ornamental water-garden.

Fish – In the past these lakes would have been stocked with carp, roach, tench and perch. **Fishing is not permitted** as this is a Nature Reserve.

Wildlife – Look for squirrels, rabbits, voles, mice, and moles. On summer evenings bats (mainly pipistrelle) can be seen and special roosting boxes have been put up for them. In the winter there are sometimes signs of muntjac deer; originally from Asia they are only 18” high when fully grown. In the field adjacent to the lakes there is sometimes a herd of roe deer. Over the year a variety of butterflies, dragonflies and delicate little damselflies can often be seen (and regular visitors enjoy looking out for the grass snake who slithers along the banks).



Birds – The lakes are well used by the local bird life. The mallard ducks make up the bulk of the waterfowl population, along with two or three pairs of moorhens. A kingfisher may be seen; usually in the early morning or during a sunny afternoon. One regular visitor is a heron, which frequently comes fishing and can be seen near Duck Island. Tree creepers, nuthatch, wrens, woodpeckers, robins, goldfinches and other woodland and garden birds are often seen. Nest boxes have been placed to encourage breeding.



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| 1 | Lake Walk entrance & parking |
| 2 | Icehouse |
| 3 | Source |
| 4 | East End / Long Wall entrance |
| 5 | Oriental Plane Tree |
| 6 & 7 | Viewing platforms |
| 8 | Boathouse |
| 9 | Waterfall |
| 10 | Shelter |
| 11 | Sluice |
| 12 & 13 | Steps/slope to bottom lake |

The Adderbury Lakes Management Group would be grateful if visitors would inform them of any plant or animal of special interest found at Adderbury Lakes.

A contact number and list of species already discovered can be found at www.adderbury.org via the Adderbury Lakes page.

Message from the Adderbury Lakes Management Group

Adderbury Lakes is a designated Local Nature Reserve. It is owned by Adderbury Parish Council and maintained by a local volunteer group. It is situated in a quiet residential area and there are only three parking spaces. There is no public right of way and the Parish Council reserve the right to close the Lakes at short notice, such as because of high winds or work by contractors. Visitors are requested to respect the Countryside Code and be mindful of residents in Lake Walk. Please note that dogs **must** be kept on a lead, **no cycling** is allowed, and **no picnics or barbecues** are permitted. There are deep waters and boggy areas, and children should always be supervised. **Please do not** feed the ducks bread; oats make a good alternative and **take all your litter home.**