

A thriving nature reserve in Shirehampton



Additional photography: Ruth Coleman

Welcome to Lamplighter's Marsh



Just follow the Yellow Brick Road ...

Discover a mosaic of wildlife habitats beside the foot path that has become known to local people as the 'Yellow Brick Road'.

Take a picnic and see the ever-changing River Avon. You may also like to play games on The Daisy Field and admire the fruit trees in the Community Orchard. You might just like to take some time out to enjoy nature on your doorstep.

Lamplighter's Marsh, with its unusual and locally rare species, is recognised as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The reserve is managed by Bristol City Council in partnership with the local community.

See the map inside to find out more about the wonderful wildlife of Lamplighter's Marsh.

► **The nationally rare, but locally abundant Viper's bugloss – a grassland plant providing food for insects.**



Shire Stitches

▼ *It is thought that Joseph Swetnam - a tinman, gave the area its name in the 1760s. Joseph's wealth came from contracts to light oil lamps. He named his splendid house Lamplighter's Hall. Later, as a hostelry, the old building was a fashionable and well known place to visit.*



Early history

As low-lying land by the river, the reserve was used as grazing marsh from the Palaeolithic era until recent decades.

The nearby streetname, West Town Road, remembers a small brick-making village that occupied part of the site in the 18th century.

The Severn Beach railway line runs across the present site. It dates from 1865 and links Avonmouth with the centre of Bristol.

How to get there

Lamplighter's Marsh lies between the A4 (Portway) and the River Avon between Bristol and Avonmouth. Grid ref: ST 524 767

On foot: There are several pedestrian entrances. The Yellow Brick Road is wheelchair/buggy-friendly.

By bike: For cycle routes visit www.betterbybike.info/get-around

By bus: Details from Traveline South West 0871 200 2233 or visit www.traveline.info

By train: Easily accessed from Shirehampton Railway Station. 08457 48 49 50 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk

By car: Take turn for Shirehampton Railway Station. Park at old Lamplighter's pub or at the Park & Ride.

Contacts

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Local schools and community groups have been busy celebrating their local nature reserve. Here's a sample of what they have been doing to explore the history and natural heritage of this fascinating site.

School and community



Shire Stitches

Ruth Worsley

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Modern history

At the start of World War I, a vast 'remount' depot was set up at Shirehampton to import, train and send horses on active service.

After World War II, part of the area was used as a landfill site. When this closed down in 1976, the area's regeneration began.

By 2003, the conservation value of the site had been recognised. Shire Greens started habitat management works, footpaths, fencing and other improvements working with Bristol City Council.

In 2010, Lamplighter's Marsh became a local nature reserve.

◀ **The shoe of a war-horse found buried in a local garden.**

Background: map of part of the remount depot overlaid on a modern map. The paddocks are coloured green.



What to look out for along the Yellow Brick Road ...

Lamplighter's Marsh lies at the mouth of the Severn Estuary – on the flood plain of the River Avon just above high water level. The site is about one km long.

The slightly alkaline soils give rise to semi-natural habitats including scrub, grassland and salt marsh that support particular wildlife communities that are unusual in this region.

▼ The common blue butterfly takes nectar from flowers across the reserve.



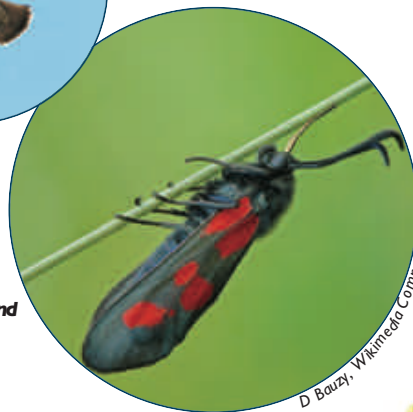
P Eeles, UKbutterflies.co.uk

O Wolters



◀ Look out for the buzzards soaring above you. They are searching for small mammals, birds and carrion to eat.

▶ The narrow-bordered five spot burnet is attracted to grassland flowers.



D Buzzy, Wikimedia Commons

The Marsh

The original Lamplighter's 'Marsh' (currently in private ownership), supports a large population of common reed and other wetland plants.

Trees and hedge

This woodland strip and the roadside hedgerow are important for nesting birds such as wren, blackbird, chaffinch and blackcap.

The Daisy Field

This former land fill site was raised by tipping and capping. Despite this, the site now hosts several species of grassland wildflower species such as Bee orchid and Ox-eye daisy.



▲ Bee-orchid

Sedum world

Colonies of sedum and notable grassland plants such as Viper's bugloss are abundant in summer near the broken-up remnants of the old railway line. They create a good habitat for the shy slow worm.



Xavier Schmit

Map key

- Main access points
- Yellow Brick Road
- Seats/picnic table
- Viewpoints
- Bus stops
- Station
- Parking



Coastal birds



Gordon James



Eileen Bown



Richard Bartz, Wikimedia Commons