

SWANBROOK VALLEY

THE SWANBROOK VALLEY FROM WOODSETTON TO UPPER GORNAL

This footpath follows the initial section of the Swanbrook from near its source on England's central watershed as it flows down the valley from Upper Gornal past High Arcal School and Woodsetton on its way to join the rivers Tame and Trent and onward to the North sea.

At Woodsetton towards the bottom of the valley, the brook flows into Parkes Hall pool, a 19th century reservoir built to supply water but now used by fishermen. The pool is reputedly built on the site of Parkes Hall, a medieval Manor House owned by a family of some importance in earlier times.

The Common Pipistrelle is one of the UK's most common bat species. It is small and found in a wide range of habitats including farmland, woodlands, suburban and urban habitats.



Rejoice at the sight of the once common House Sparrow, for it is now much rarer.

The Whitethroat is a very active bird, flitting in and out of cover, flicking its tail.



YOU ARE HERE



Like the Stonechat the Ring Ouzel is an occasional visitor during the migration period. Also found on Wren's nest and Sedgley Beacon.



The Grey Wagtail likes running water, feeds on insects, and can be found close to the brook.



The Buzzard is the UK's commonest and most widespread bird of prey. Still great to see one hunting above the valley.



Only the male has a Blackcap, the females are chestnut brown. Wonderful song.

The Woodsetton section of this footpath forms part of the Limestone Walk to Dudley town, following alongside Parkes Hall Pool across Parkes Hall Road and then over Mons Hill and across the internationally renowned Wren's Nest National Nature and Geological Reserve to Dudley town, Priory ruins and Castle.

In the opposite direction, this path then leads across Tipton Road to Parkes Lane and onwards to Turl's Hill and Sedgley beacon to the Wolverhampton boundary.

At the top of the hill beyond High Arcal School the path crosses the Ten Acres parkland, where many birds may be seen, and traces of original ridge and furrow medieval land tilling techniques can still be observed at certain times of the year when the sun is low.

For many years the green corridor down the Swanbrook Valley was reserved as the route for the Dudley Northern bypass, but in the 1990s the southern route for the Town bypass was chosen instead, leaving this pleasant green corridor for our quiet enjoyment.



Linnets prefer areas of rough ground with cover and feed on seeds and insects.

Stonechats are seen perching on the top of plant stems.



The Swanbrook Valley is an important green space providing a corridor that links Turl's Hill with the Wren's Nest through which animal species can move.

