

Churchill Lane Trail Guide

Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes NNR

Under protection from the Ministry of Defence, English Nature and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the wildlife on this part of the coast has been allowed to thrive. The two trails described in this leaflet cover three habitats on the reserve; sand dunes, freshwater marsh and sea buckthorn scrub.

1. Oliver's trail

The first trail follows the public footpath along the back of the dunes. These old dune grasslands are managed by grazing, cutting and scrub clearance to encourage wild flowers such as ladies bedstraw, fairy flax and pyramidal orchids. Common lizards can be seen basking on the open sand and at dusk, barn and short-eared owls can be seen hunting over the marram grass.

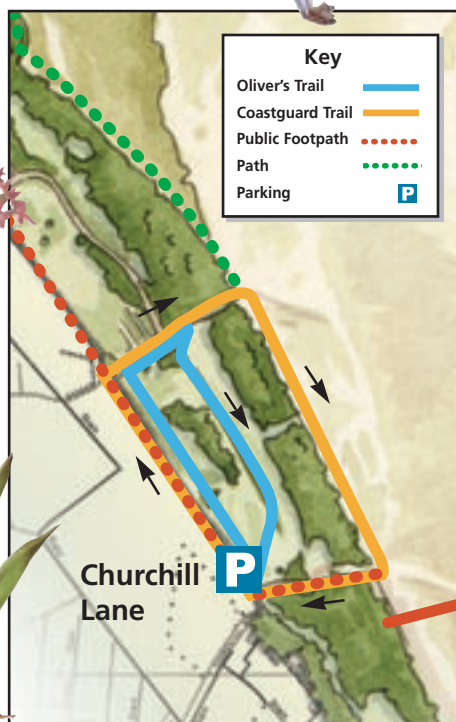
The trail cuts in to the dune grassland and then turns back through areas of freshwater marsh. These are naturally wet areas that have formed between the dune ridges. Displays of southern marsh orchids and yellow flags can be seen, and the scent of meadowsweet fills the air.



Barn owl



Pyramidal orchid



Like an oasis in the sand, the freshwater marsh is full of life. Toads, frogs and newts abound, and underneath the water dragonflies and damselflies live as nymphs until they are ready to crawl up a stem and emerge into the air as adults. Emperor dragonflies and four spotted chasers are amongst those to look out for.

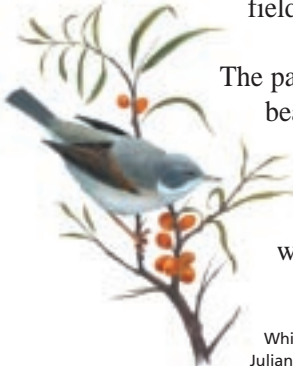
Yellow iris



2. Coastguard trail

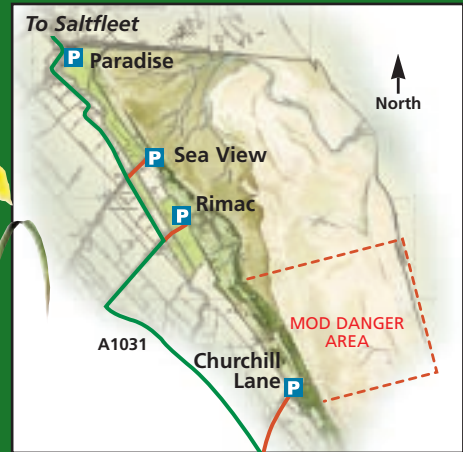
This trail follows the same route as trail 1, along the footpath which would have been the track used by the coastguard when carrying out patrols for smuggling. Instead of looping back through the marsh, continue out towards the beach, passing the RAF base. Up until the 1970's the beach was used as a bombing range and is still being cleared of unexploded munitions today.

Most of the foredunes are covered with dense sea buckthorn, hawthorn and elder scrub. This offers ideal nesting places for songbirds such as whitethroat, willow warbler and blackcap, and in winter, a wealth of food in the form of berries for visiting thrushes such as fieldfare and redwing.



The path leads out to the beach and back to the Churchill Lane entrance which is marked with a white flag pole.

Whitethroat on sea buckthorn.
Julian Smith



Getting there

Churchill Lane is located off of the A1031 north of Theddlethorpe St. Helen. There are bus services running Mon-Sat from Louth and Mablethorpe.

Walks Information

1. Oliver's Trail

Distance: 1km circuit - 30 minutes
Difficulty: Easy. Gentle slopes.
Features of interest: Freshwater marsh and dunes.

2. Coastguard Trail

Distance: 2km circuit - 50 minutes
Difficulty: Easy/medium. Gentle slopes, some soft sand.
Features of interest: Freshwater marsh, dunes and beach.

Map reference

OS Explorer 283 – Louth & Mablethorpe

- Please keep to the marked paths and keep dogs on a lead or under close control
- Please take notice of the MOD warning signs and flags and do not touch any suspicious metal objects

