**The Dragonfly Trail**

**1. Wet Meadow**
In front of you is a field which is a traditionally managed wet hay meadow. A wide range of plants are now re-occurring and it is particularly attractive just before its annual cut in July. Marsh marigolds are the first to bloom in spring followed by common knapweed, water horsetail and tubular water-dropwort. Watch out for birds of prey including sparrowhawk, kestrel and buzzard.

**2. Reen Teams**
Under the bridge here is a deep ditch, known locally as a “reen”, which is bemooned with inventavents. The reserve is exceptionally rich in water beetles including the great diving beetle and the great silver beetle. There are also many other insects such as frog-hoppers, reed beetles and weevils live in the brush, reed sweet-grass, water horsetail, woody nighshade and yellow iris along the banks. If you look carefully you can see forage on the mud whilst reeds also provide habitat for a wide range of plants including the snail-killing flies which parasitic snails. You will notice a pool of water to your right which supports a large crop of mosquito.

**3. Pleasant Pasture**
The field to your left is a rough pasture, full of sods and rushes. It is grazed in summer by cattle, which leave a coarse swatch with wet grasses and flowers such as lesser spearwort and greater bird’s-foot trefoil. In winter, these meadows are very good for common snipe and the occasional jack snipe.

**4. Dazzling Dragonflies**
On sunny days from spring through to autumn you will undoubtedly see several species of dragonflies and damselflies. You will notice the tail spikes of the purple loosestrife alongside the reen here during the warm months of the year.

**5. Butterfly Bonanza**
The field to your left is home to hundreds of butterflies that feed on the plants here. You will probably see the orange tip in spring, whilst meadow brown is the commonest species later in summer.

**6. Dazzling Dragonflies**
**7. Butterfly Bonanza**
**8. Reen Management**
The reens on the reserve are dredged every few years to maintain open water. Along recently cleaned reens a wide variety of plants can be seen including up to five different species of duckweed. Wild angelica and the poisonous hemlock water-dropwort are reen-side plants which provide an important source of nectar for insects.

**9. Reen Management**
**10. Otter Spotters**
Other tracks and sprints (drop-offs) are often found here — proof that they are active on the Marsh. Otters were driven to the brink of extinction in Britain, due mainly to past water pollution, but have now made a strong recovery.

**11. Living History**
If you look carefully you can see Marth church and Priory to your left and Lower Grange Farm in the distance to your right. It is said that the monks walked across the marsh between the farm and the priory everyday. There are probably as many broad-leaved trees for the very distinct line of sallow also called grey-barked willow are left. They are believed to have laid willow branches as a primitive board walk, which sprouted to give the long-established belt of willow we see today.

**12. Draining the Land**
The Romans made a drainage system here to increase agricultural productivity but the present layout of the reens is thought to date from drying out. You may spot a grey heron in the fields here.

**13. The Reeds**
These trees are cut right down to the base every few years, with the vigorous regrowth providing another supply of thin shoots a few years later.

**14. The Willow Walk**
As you walk along you will notice pollarded willows (but back at head height). They were used in the past to produce thin shoots for basket weaving and hurdles out of reach of grazing livestock. Pollards are great habitat for fungi and invertebrates such as the mink beetle – a stunning green-shongham beetle whose grubs bore into the branches of the willows.

**15. The Willow Walk**
To the right of the boardwalk is an area of coppiced willow. These trees are cut right down to the base every few years, with the vigorous regrowth providing another supply of thin shoots a few years later.

**16. Dazzling Dragonflies**
**17. The Reeds**
**18. The Reeds**
**19. Otter Spotters**
**20. The Reeds**
**21. Draining the Land**
**22. The Reeds**
**23. The Reeds**
**24. The Reeds**
**25. The Reeds**
**26. The Reeds**
**27. The Reeds**
**28. The Reeds**
**29. The Reeds**
**30. The Reeds**

**The Butterfly Trail**

**1. The Redbeds**
The dense stands of reeds and other tall fenland vegetation provide nest sites for sedge, red and Cetti’s warblers as well as reed buntings. Look out for the flowers of hemp agrimony and bitterns.

**2. The Reedbeds**
This butterfly meadow is a shady spot on a hot summers day and home to a family of foxes. It is dominated by crack willow along with alder, oyster and sallow. It provides habitat for scarce moths. Listen out for woodpeckers hammering on the trees here.

**3. Grazed Meadows**
Please walk close to the fence line to your left as there are a number of rare and sensitive plants in this field. The meadows here are rich in colour during the warmer months of the year. In spring you will see the pale pink lady’s smock, followed by knapweed, tormentil and meadow thistle later in the summer. The dampness also allows lesser spearwort, ragged robin (once a common wetland plant but easily lost when the land is fertilised and drained for agriculture), greater bird’s-foot trefoil and rushes to grow. This is also great place for looking at butterflies such as meadow brown, ringlet, green-veined white, orange tip, small copper, small skipper and common blue.

**4. Swarming Around**
A couple of pairs of mute swans now breed successfully on the reserve each year. A pair are frequently seen along this stretch of reen. Take care not to get too close! The more open grazing marsh beyond these fields is also very rich in wildlife, and Gwent Wildlife Trust is managing part of this area to encourage breeding lapwing.

When you’ve finished looking at this wonderful meadow go through the kissing gate and walk along the reen to join the Dragonfly Trail again at Point 9.

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**Magor Marsh Country Code**

- **Do not pick any flowers or fungi on the reserve.**
- **For your safety, keep to the marked paths and trails.**
- **Keep children under control – the water is deep!**
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**Cod Cefn Gwlad Cors Magwyr**

- **Paredfach a chasgu unhwyr, fydau new fflwyth y warchodfa.**
- **Er i chig defel a hir fun, cadwch a'r llywodraeth sydd wedi ei marcor.**
- **Cadeuch ddu a rholeith - maent â chan â derfynh.**
- **Gadeirch â gablud fel y casnodd yr ohrih.**
- **Ni chanameth â'i dddob â'i saith chwrsychodd y bywyd gyffredin.**

**The reserve is flat but there are steps and uneven ground in places, whilst some of the paths can be wet and marshy, so sturdy waterproof footwear is advised. The path and recycled plastic boardwalk from the centre allows wheelchair users to share the joys of the reserve up to the bird hide (follow trail posts 1-6).**

**Magor march warchodfa on wstad, on ddiwedd gwaiss a throsed waion menn mamau, a gwair tan i’i lwybru bododd ond ei wbl ac ei gorffyd, felly y ddiwylliant o ddechrau cadarn sy’n dat ddir.**

A copy of our events guide is available free of charge by phoning our head office on 01600 740600.