



## Location

Postcode SP4 6AJ

OS Map grid reference SU128349

The Devenish reserve is located in Little Durnford, in the Woodford valley about three miles to the north of Salisbury. From central Salisbury, drive north on the A345 and turn left on to Stratford Road. Continue past South Wilts Grammar School and through Stratford-sub-Castle. At junction at end of the village do not turn left over bridge but head straight on towards Little Durnford (do not turn right into Phillips Lane). Continue on this road for about two miles and you will see a small car park and reserve entrance on right.

**If using bus** - Regular bus services to central Salisbury. Visit [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets)

**If cycling** - Visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**Access** - Not suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs due to steep slopes and steps. Dogs on leads are welcome.

### Other reserves nearby

Little Langford Down, Langford Lakes, Cockey Down

**Harebell**  
Darin Smith



## About Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Our vision is to create a county rich in wildlife and to help people live sustainable lifestyles that protect the environment for the benefit of everyone.

We have more than 18,000 members, look after over 40 nature reserves, are supported by hundreds of volunteers, and work with local communities, schools, businesses and public bodies to achieve our aims. To do all this we rely on the support of our members.

If you would like to join us, or to find out about how you can help the environment please visit [www.wiltshirewildlife.org](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org)

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Front cover photo: Adonis blue butterfly, Dave Kilbey

A sustainable future for wildlife and people

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Nature reserves

# The Devenish



## The Devenish

The Devenish nature reserve is a wonderful mix of young woodland, mature beech woodland, chalk downland and meadow.

This variety is what makes it such a haven for wildlife, particularly for **wildflowers**, beetles, bugs and butterflies such as the **Adonis blue**.

**The walk to the top of the steep chalk downland slope is very rewarding with spectacular views of the Woodford Valley below.** Access to the top of the down is by 63 steps.

In total the reserve covers about 24 hectares. It is within hiking distance from central Salisbury and close to Old Sarum.

## History

It is likely that in the Middle Ages Little Durnford was a typical Wiltshire chalk downland manor, with open arable fields on the lower slopes and rough pasture on the higher downland.

The land around the manor was turned into **parkland** between 1740 and 1773, and the setting out of an avenue of trees across adjacent downland may have been part of this landscape design.

A map of 1817 suggests that the **beech avenue** existed but the land was neither enclosed nor cultivated. The entire reserve was rough downland except for two small areas of woodland and the beech avenue.

Between 1880 and 1920 the woodland was expanded for pheasant shooting.

The chalk downland part of the reserve was given to us by former landowner **Dorothy Bradshaw** (née Devenish) and her son Peter in 1989 and the woodland in 1996.

## Wildlife

Chalk grassland flowers make The Devenish really special and they reach their peak in early summer. They include **fragrant orchid**, clustered bellflower, harebell, common rock rose and devil's-bit scabious, which provide nectar for butterflies such as the meadow brown and **marbled white**.

Other butterflies at the reserve include **brown argus**, ringlet, **comma**, chalkhill blue, small white, green-veined white, orange-tip and small skipper.

**Birds seen and heard here include garden warbler, blackcap and great spotted woodpecker. Buzzard can be seen wheeling majestically overhead.**

The large beech trees along the road are several hundred years old and were once part of the beech avenue. Now they are dying and the decaying wood provides valuable habitat for many different **beetles**, flies, bugs and pseudoscorpions. One of the most spectacular beetles recorded here is the aptly-named **rhinoceros beetle**.

Woodbanks with old **hornbeam** trees run along the boundary with the woodland, which contains a mix of conifers and deciduous trees including beech, hazel, **silver birch**, larch and sycamore.

Volunteers help look after the reserve, carrying out tasks such as scrub control, coppicing and **ride management**; the maintenance of wide sunny corridors through the wood to encourage wildflowers and invertebrates.



**Comma butterfly**  
Amy Lewis



**Rhinoceros beetle**  
G Gallice



**Brown argus butterfly**  
Stephen Davis WWT



**Fragrant orchid**  
Darin Smith



**Hornbeam**  
Rob Large WWT



**Marbled white butterfly**  
Richard Ramsey



**Blackcap**  
Amy Lewis