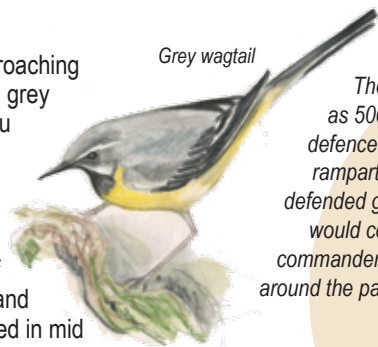


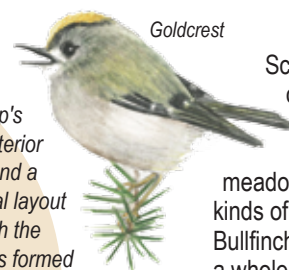
Walk on down the track past the Lôn Lodges and approaching the river quietly, pause awhile in case the water loving grey wagtails or kingfishers await you or even an otter if you are really lucky. Look for shoals of little minnows and overhead all summer long perhaps some of the sand martins that nest in the river banks nearby.

Soon the path begins to skirt a grassy field, the first of many that provide grazing for sheep and cattle alike, and from which a harvest of hay and silage is cut and stored in mid summer, the staple winter feed for all the stock.



Grey wagtail

The Roman camp would have housed as many as 5000 men for maybe one single night. The camp's defences consisted of deep V-shaped ditches with interior ramparts topped with a palisade of wooden stakes and a defended gateway at each of the four sides. The internal would consist of a grid pattern, divided by streets with the commander's pavilion in the centre. Orderly rows of tents formed around the pavilion, eight men would form a contubernium, sharing a tent and taking it in turns for guard duty.



Goldcrest



Badger

Fox

Sculptural clumps of ferns are a feature of such lanes and between can be found dog-violets, wild strawberries, greater stitchwort, herb-robert, bitter-vetch, betony, meadowsweet and greater bird's-foot-trefoil. How many different kinds of plants can you spot? - a hundred is quite possible. Bullfinches and goldcrests may be seen here too while on the farm as a whole over 80 bird species have been seen. Butterflies include the delightful orange-tip that lays its eggs on the Jack-by-the-hedge plants that are scattered along the lane.

To follow the **river route** simply bear right before the gate and follow the field edge with the river on your left. Keep an eye for evidence of badger and fox activity - footprints, diggings and droppings and anywhere along the route a brown hare or rabbit, usually running off!

The wooded banks of the river are comprised of many old trees of oak, alder, willow and hazel with occasional downy birch and rowan - home to a wide variety of birds including treecreepers, nuthatches and woodpeckers throughout the year and spotted and pied flycatchers in spring and summer.

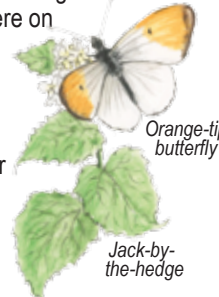


Tree creeper

The high steep, sheer and crumbly banks at one point (see map) provide a nesting place for sand martins. **Take special care here as there is quite a drop** down to the river below and **small potholes on the bank top**. Downstream from here it is well worth exploring the magical riverside woodland and river edges in search of wildlife.

The next spot of historical interest is reached in the vicinity of the bridge (see map). Here, a pool 20 metres up stream was for many decades the site of much plunging and splashing, until that is c.1970 when the practice of washing sheep prior to shearing ceased. Flocks of forty or so noisy sheep would be penned here on the banks prior to being plunged into the pool.

Cross the bridge and skirt the left side of the field ahead. The Lodges are now in sight. A grassy and thistly bank on your left, like other field edges on the farm, provides a home for small skipper and meadow brown butterflies, grasshoppers and a variety of moths.



Orange-tip butterfly

Jack-by-the-hedge

We do hope that you have enjoyed this walk and that it inspires you to walk the Upper Farm Trail - if you haven't already done so.

Depending on the season, stock may be grazing the fields along the walk. The cattle are of varying breeds including; Charolais, Welsh Black, Hereford, Belgium Blue cross Friesian, Limousin and the rare breed of White Park. The herd of cows is run with a Charolais bull that will produce a mix of pure bred Charolais and cross bred calves. These calves are reared on the farm until they are sold for breeding or the beef market.



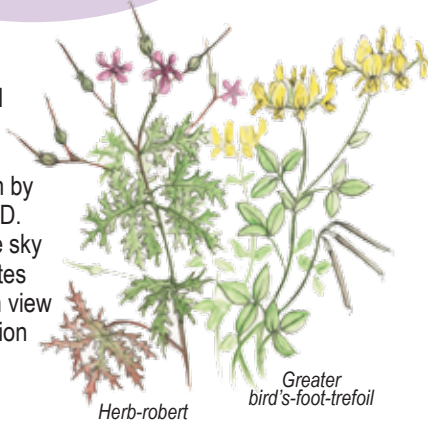
Charolais



Welsh ewe

The farm's flock of sheep is mainly of a native breed - Welsh Hill type. Other hardy upland breeds include; Beulah and Speckled Faced Mountain, Badger Face and Swaledale. These female ewes are run with Blue Faced Leicester rams to produce the lowland flock of Welsh Mules. The lambs are born in the Spring between March and May and are reared on the farm. The female lambs are kept for future Autumn breeding ewe sales and the male lambs are sold for "Welsh Lamb" in the market.

The route takes you up to a knoll towards the top of the field. This hillock lies within a large Roman marching camp measuring 370m by 260m dating to the 1st century AD. From this vantage point scan the sky and landscape. Buzzards, red kites and other large birds are often in view and with some imagination a legion of Roman soldiers can be seen approaching over a nearby hill!



Herb-robert

Greater bird's-foot-trefoil

March on to the first bench and onwards past a line of some very old and age sculptured veteran downy birch trees and along hedgerows of hazel, blackthorn and dog rose until, through a small gate a seat offers a resting place, under alder trees, to view the pond and its surrounds. Mallards, Canada geese and snipe can be seen from here at any time of year. Sit awhile.

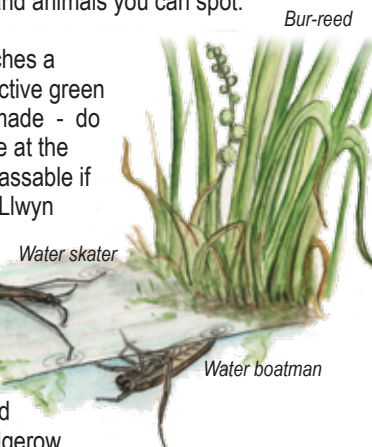
On down to the pond, closer inspection reveals the water-weeds, bur-reeds and marsh plants that have rapidly colonized this relatively newly made pond. Large and small dragonflies and dainty damselflies, frogs, newts and all sorts of water beetles, bugs, water-skaters and boatmen have found the pool to their liking, seemingly having arrived from nowhere. Take time to gaze into the water and see what plants and animals you can spot.

Onwards the marked way soon reaches a gateway that leads onto a very attractive green lane. Here, a decision needs to be made - do we follow the green lane (taking care at the river stepping stones - possibly impassable if river in flood) that leads to the leafy Llwyn Lane or do we follow the route that follows the river?

The green lane and **LLwyn Lane route** provide a delightful experience as the lanes are of ancient origin and fringed with intimate mixtures of hedgerow trees and shrubs, roses and hedge-bank plants.



Snipe



Bur-reed

Water skater

Water boatman