

Welcome to Chudleigh Knighton Heath nature reserve



Slow going

Slow worms are one of the four kinds of reptile found on the Heath. Common lizards, adders and grass snakes are the others. Slow worms are legless lizards. Look for them as they bask in the sun, raising their body temperatures before they go off to hunt for slugs, worms and snails.

The history of the Heath

The Domesday Book of 1086 show the Heath as common land on which villagers grazed ponies and other animals. There used to be a stable and pound on part of the land and in 1839 this was rented by John Cator and Richard Sweetland who had the right to round up stray animals and charge a small fine for their release. If this wasn't paid, the animals became the property of the landowner, The Duke of Somerset.

Local people with commoners' rights could graze cattle, sheep and pigs here, as well as remove sods of turf for fuel and take small quantities of timber. At one time gorse from the Heath was used for packing ceramics and tiles made by Candy and Co at nearby Heathfield.

In the nineteenth century there were clay workings on part of the Heath. These were used by local people but eventually one of the earliest clay companies, Whiteway, Watts and Co took it over. In 1946 the clay quarry was used by Candy and Co and in 1964 it was sold to Watts, Blake and Bearne.

During World War II, American soldiers were billeted on the Heath in preparation for the D-Day landings in 1944. Fuel dumps were created and a searchlight was placed nearby. The remains of these are still visible today.

Welcome to the Ant Trail

This is a two-mile circular walk which should take around an hour to complete.

The Ant Trail explores Chudleigh Knighton Heath nature reserve – one of 50 wildlife havens cared for by Devon Wildlife Trust. It uses level paths but these may be muddy. Look out for the ant way markers which will guide you.

The Heath has a long history and is home to some special wildlife including a very special ant from which the trail gets its name.

Take a few moments to get to know this fascinating place before you start the walk.



There be dragons

The Heath is a good place to spot dragonflies and damselflies. Look for them around the nature reserve's ponds or resting on nearby reeds.



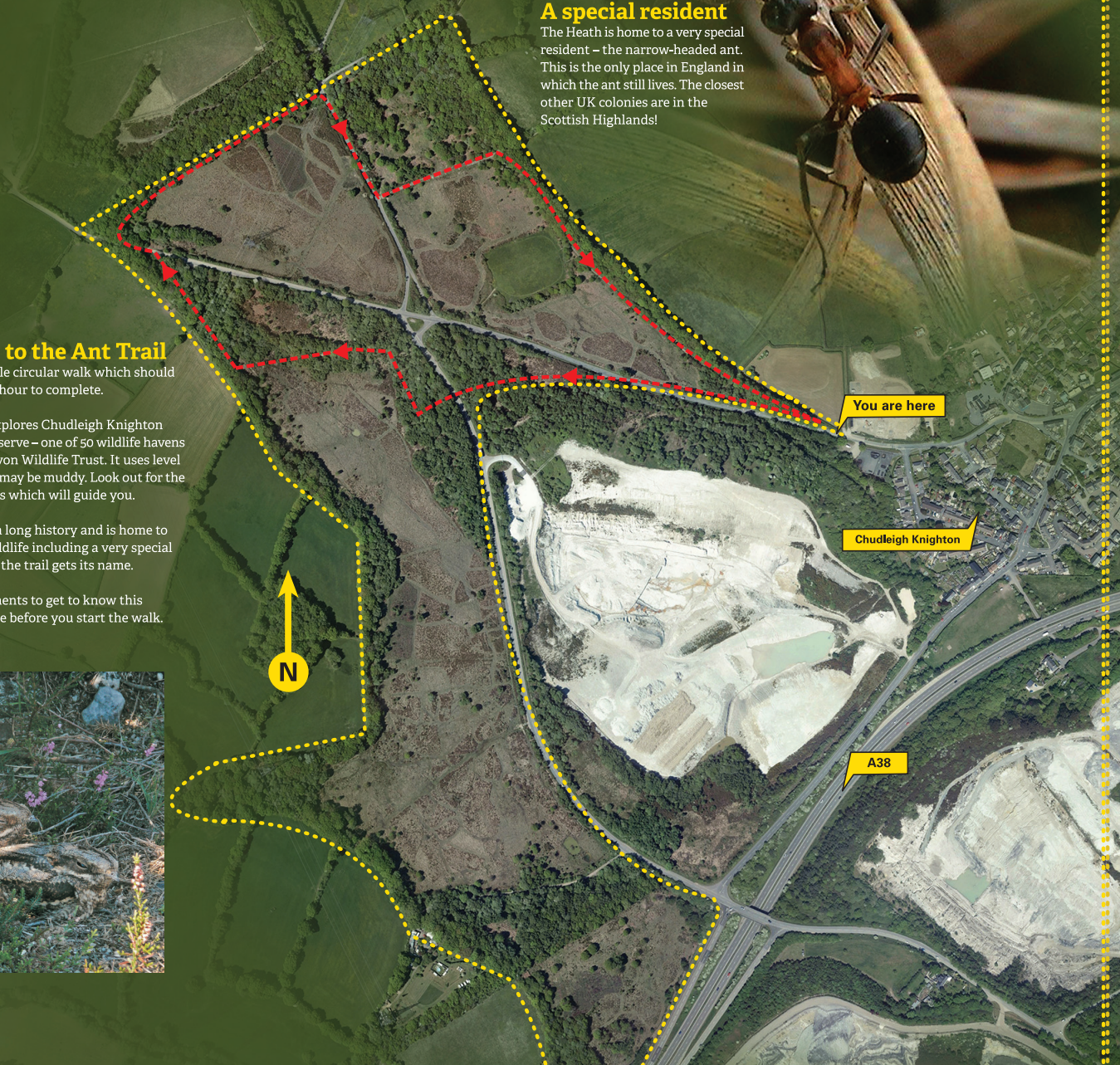
Night time noises

Each summer nightjars fly to the Heath from Africa. They come to breed and raise a family. Their wonderful camouflage makes them difficult to see during the day, but at night their weird churring calls can be heard across the nature reserve.

Chudleigh Knighton Heath is one of 50 nature reserves cared for by the Devon Wildlife Trust and its local volunteers. To support the charity's work for nature visit www.devonwildlifetrust.org

A special resident

The Heath is home to a very special resident – the narrow-headed ant. This is the only place in England in which the ant still lives. The closest other UK colonies are in the Scottish Highlands!



Key

- Nature reserve boundary
- Ant Trail

0 ——— 1 mile

Satellite photo courtesy of Google Earth Pro.

The Ant Trail project has been supported by