

purging buckthorn, a shrub which occurs locally in hedges to the east side of Bingham. Buckthorn has clusters of white flowers in spring and black berries in late summer and autumn. It provides food for the brimstone butterflies, which are most often seen during May.

Green woodpeckers, which are seen more usually at the further end of the park, may visit the anthills that are found on the left. The disturbed soil allows feverfew, stoncrop and other annuals to gain a hold. Occasionally, greater spotted woodpeckers may be seen near to the pylons.

There are ash trees near the pylons. Beneath them in May and June the locally rare Smiths peppercress can be seen. This is a member of the peppercress family, related to cabbages. There are several other places on the embankment where this flower may now be found.

Pylons to Ash Grove

The embankment becomes high and windswept and takes us beyond the parish boundary. The grassland of the cooler, north bank has largely given way to scrub, whilst the south bank is mainly grass with clumps of blackthorn.

On the left there is a single specimen of wild privet, which is distinct from the more familiar garden privet that originates in Japan.

Skylarks, linnets and yellow hammers frequent the bushes all the year round

The well-drained old track bed continues to support knapweeds, hawkweeds, ox-eye daisies, and centaury, which give a spectacular show in July. The yellow flowering wild parsnip, can be seen in good numbers in late summer. Ground-hugging plants include black meddick and birds foot trefoil. Common blue butterflies and the small heath butterfly may be found a large numbers here in the shelter of the blackthorn and other shrubs. Though present in other parts of the park, they seem to fare best along here. Just beyond the hedge marking the parish boundary on the west, is a solitary, rare musk mallow, whilst further along, on both sides the embankment, horsetails are quite common. These are survivors from a group of plants that evolved before flowering plants. Fossils of them are found in the Coal Measures, formed 360 million years ago. Some children know horsetails as 'Lego Plants' as sections of the stems can be pulled apart and the fitted together again.

Water is not a feature of the park. Nevertheless, in late summer the occasional dragonfly may be seen here.

Near the Ash Grove fairy flax flowers in late summer. This

plant is characteristic of open, less improved grassland, conditions that are scarce in Nottinghamshire. The Ash Grove supports a number of species that can also be seen in the wooded area at the beginning of the park

Ash Grove to the River Smite

A high embankment continues to the bridge over the River Smite. Mostly it is wooded or scrubby, but accessible. Beyond the Smite the track is almost impassable.

Immediately beyond the Ash Grove, there is a clearing, where in spring a patch of ground ivy produces a mass of blue. Here also, and continuing up to the Smite, there is an abundance of creeping cinquefoil, a member of the rose family and closely related to wild strawberry. The cinquefoil flowers throughout the summer and is the food plant for one of our local rarities, the grizzled skipper. This butterfly is of particular interest in that Bingham is now virtually the furthest north it flies in the country. Both the flower and the butterfly may be seen anywhere from the end of the cutting to the River Smite, but the range of both has reduced considerably in recent years. Other butterflies, related to the grizzled skipper, but not under threat, include large Essex and small skippers.

A bridge over a farm track was removed some years ago, and recently installed steps have improved access to the final stretch of the park. The stinging nettles that grow in this area provide food for peacock and small tortoiseshell butterflies.

From the bridge over the Smite it is possible to see chubb in the river below, and occasionally a kingfisher will fly under the arches of the bridge. The buzzing call of willow tits can be heard in the adjacent scrub. These birds are now scarce in Nottinghamshire.

Bingham Heritage Trails Association was founded in 2000 with the aim of raising the level of public awareness of Bingham's heritage. The Association takes an holistic view of heritage, including geology, archaeology, history, the built environment and natural history of the parish of Bingham.

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Local Heritage *initiative*



The Linear Park Bingham

A brief guide
for a walk
from
Nottingham Road
to the
River Smite

Produced by the
**Bingham Heritage
Trails
Association**