

Lawn Parks

Introduction

'The Lawn' originally had a natural spring that flowed from the top of the hill. This made the site perfect for settlement, and Stone Age, Bronze Age, Saxon and Roman remains have been found. The early 15th Century manor house was replaced with a fine mansion by the Goddard family in the 18th Century. During this period the whole parkland was landscaped and the ice house and gazebo, Italian sunken garden and the ornamental lakes were built. The Goddards changed the name of the site from 'Swindon House' to 'The Lawn' in 1830.

The death of Fitzroy Goddard in 1927 marked the end of 369-year occupation by the family. By 1934 the servants and ground staff had all left and the mansion was left unoccupied until the war office requisitioned it for the accommodation of American troops. In 1946 Swindon Corporation purchased the site for £18,000. The house had deteriorated after the war so much that it was declared unsafe and was demolished in 1952. The remains of the Italian sunken garden adjacent to the site of the former mansion are all that can be seen today.

Routes Around the Park

There are a number of surfaced paths around the park suitable for wheelchair users. These offer views of all the park's features and habitats including its woodland, parkland, meadows and lakes. The park also has several cycle routes which cross its open parkland.

The Wet Wood

The Wet Wood is 2.5 hectares (6.25 acres) and first appears in an estate survey in 1763. This woodland area is mostly made up of sycamore and ash. The ground flora is botanically rich and provides an important wetland habitat.

Bruddel Wood

Bruddel Wood is 1.7 hectares (4.25 acres) and contains native species such as oak, ash and beech. It was planted between 1763 and 1888 and is a long-established semi-natural woodland. The wood supports a healthy understorey, ground flora (including bluebells), and a variety of woodland birds and animals. The name 'Bruddel' comes from blood well or fludwell, due to the area being poorly drained.

Ornamental Trees

The parkland contains a varied collection of tree species ranging from yew, walnut and oak to unusual imports such as wellingtonia, monkey puzzle and medlar. For more information about these magnificent trees, pick up a 'Lawn Ancient Tree Trail' leaflet.

The Meadows

The meadows were once fields for grazing cattle and also show evidence of an ancient field system. They are now managed as a hay meadow and the variety of wild flowers and grasses attract a myriad of insects and butterflies in the summer months.