

# Weston Woods

## level access path walk

This month *Life* tested out the recently completed level access path which winds through Weston Woods above Weston-super-Mare.



**Distance:** about one and a half miles (main entrance to hillfort)  
**Difficulty:** level path, which gently rises near the hillfort  
**Duration:** allow one and a half hours at a leisurely pace for a return journey

### How to get there

#### By car

Tarmac parking bays are found at the end of Worlebury Hill Road, Weston-super-Mare. Gate opens from 7.30am to 8pm.

#### By bus

ACL Travel number 83 runs every hour from Weston-super-Mare town centre to Worlebury Hill Road.

The path means families or those with mobility problems can enjoy the 130-hectare woodland, which dominates Weston-super-Mare's northern skyline. It was built using grants from the Forestry Commission and from developers' contributions to community facilities. The surface is made from limestone dust so it is not bumpy and fits in with the woodland.

The path is the latest in a series of improvements for Weston Woods, which has turned the area into a haven for families and dog walkers after the blight of anti-social behaviour in previous years.

From the main entrance, follow the path into the woods. Treks and bridleways lead off from this path for routes on foot or bike but these are more rocky and steep.

**A level path which winds its way through Weston Woods now makes this delightful hilltop retreat accessible to everyone.**

The compact gravel mobility path has been built to cater for parents with pushchairs or wheelchair users who would otherwise miss out on the nature reserve because of the bumpy stone tracks.

It has been built in several stages over the past few years and was finally completed in July. The linear one and a half mile path runs from the entrance to Weston Woods at the end of Worlebury Hill Road towards the hillfort.



### Things to look out for:

- Worlebury Iron Age hillfort
- large broadleaf trees
- the work of woodland volunteers
- wild fruits, flowers and insects.

If you continue along the main gravel path, there are benches on the way to sit and enjoy the peace. You will see plenty of wild flowers, along with berries and spiders weaving their webs between the leaves.

Conservation group BTCV undertakes projects in the woodland, including the Green Gym initiative which gives volunteers the chance to get fit by working outdoors and helping the environment.

Continue walking along the mobility path until it reaches the older stone path. If you turn left, this takes you to Worlebury Iron Age hillfort. The right-hand path is a route back to the main entrance which runs parallel to the gravel mobility path.

The hillfort is covered in plants and wildflowers but you can clearly see the large collapsed stone walls of the settlement. It was built 2,000 years ago and the grain storage pits give the perfect opportunity for young children to play hide and seek!

The site was excavated in the 1850s and the remains of about 100 people have been discovered. Some of the skeletons show evidence of violent deaths, such as sword cuts to the skull. This indicates the fort was attacked, possibly by the Romans.



### Things to remember

- Check the weather conditions before you leave
- Wear sensible shoes if you continue onto the rockier path
- Keep dogs under close control
- Always consider other people
- Take only photographs, leave only footprints

### Did you know?

- Weston Woods was once grassland, grazed for centuries until its Victorian landowner planted the area as conifer woodland in the 1830s.
- These trees were all cut down and used as timber for shoring up the trenches during the First World War.
- Woodland management started recently to try and reverse the problems that developed during the 20th century.
- Tree felling means the next generation of trees now has enough light to grow and a greater diversity of plants now exists, which has increased wildlife throughout the woodland.
- Weston Woods is recognised by the Forestry Stewardship Council for its sustainability.
- It has been given a Planting Places award by Sustainability Southwest.

For more active people who want to continue along the rocky path out of the woods, you can first stop off at the clearing on the right-hand side for fantastic views across Sand Bay. The path then follows steps which lead down towards Camp Road, near Prince Consort Gardens.

*The mobility path is officially opened by (left) John Flannigan, Trees and Countryside Officer, Cllr Ian Porter, Chairman of North Somerset Council, and Annie Maw, the High Sheriff of Somerset.*



Call Weston-super-Mare Tourist Information Centre on 01934 888 800 for details of local walks.