

Pathways to the Priory

Walk information

Distance: approx 6 miles

Difficulty: easy-medium, depending on fitness levels. Some stiles, and paths can get muddy so wear suitable footwear.

Duration: allow 2 hours

Map: OS Explorer 153

Public toilets: Beach Road car park, Sand Bay

Cross the rhyes and fields of low-lying North Somerset to see a medieval monastery up close. This circular route is just a couple of miles — but worlds away — from busy Weston-super-Mare.

How to get there

Start at map ref: 331646 (OS 153)

Car: The walk starts at Beach Road car park, the middle car park along Sand Bay

Park at Beach Road car park, halfway along Sand Bay, and walk northwards past the tea shop, until you come to Sand Farm Lane on your right.

Walk to the end of this lane, go over a stile, and pass the unusual turreted Sand Farm.

Go carefully over the next stile, which is slightly wobbly, and follow the footpath as it runs between two fences. It is slightly overgrown here, so trousers are advised.

Turn the corner in the path and follow it behind the fence around the corner of the field.

Continue on the path and then go over the little wooden bridge. Turn right from the bridge and head across the field, towards a hedge on your right-hand side. There will be a gap in the hedge, and another wooden footbridge.

Go straight across the next field, towards another gap in the hedge, and another wooden footbridge.

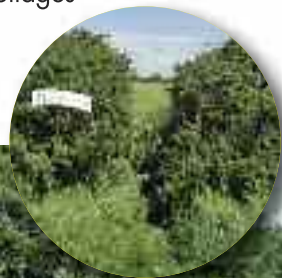
Head towards the farm building, and go over the next wooden footbridge. Continue along the edge of the field, go over the next wooden stile and through the farmer's gate on your right. Veer left over the field, towards the farm buildings and track. It can get muddy after rain, so wear suitable footwear.

Go over the wooden stile next to the metal gate, cross the rhyne, and continue straight ahead down the

grassy track with hedges and trees either side. This bridleway can get very muddy.

At the end you will come out onto Collum Lane. Turn left here and head towards Woodspring Priory.

To get into the priory grounds, go round the stone cottages at the end of the lane and through the metal gate.



Then cross a grassy field to get to the main building.

Woodspring Priory was founded in 1210 by William de Courtenay, who was the grandson of Reginald FitzUrse, one of Thomas à Becket's murderers.

The priory flourished in the 15th century when the tower, nave of the church, infirmary and a great barn were built.

In 1536, the priory was suppressed in the Dissolution and the church turned it into a house, with a chimney stack built up through the roof of the nave.

The Landmark Trust took over the care of the building in 1969 and it renovated parts which had been ravaged by time. It is now available to book as holiday accommodation but a museum is also open most Mondays and Fridays.

To continue the walk, you will need to retrace your steps back to the lane. From here, you could follow National Trust signposts and head up onto Middle Hope headland and complete a circular walk back to the top of Sand Bay beach, with stunning views across the estuary.

If you want to continue with the inland, countryside route, return back up Collum Lane, past the bridleway you were at earlier.

At a crossroads in the lane just past the house, take the right-hand track into a field. The path bends round to the left, so follow this through another gate and out into a field.



Head across the field, towards the top right corner. The footpath continues in the corner, through a metal gate which leads to a grassy path with trees either side.

This path becomes Foss Lane. At a fork in the path, take the right-hand route and continue along here, next to the rhyme.

At the next fork in the path, take the left-hand route, Elmsley Lane, past the nursery. Follow the lane as it winds round.

Continue ahead when the road meets Lower Norton Lane, then turn right onto Sand Lane. Traffic might be slightly heavier along here so take care, as there are no pavements, and cross the road where



necessary to remain as visible as possible to on-coming traffic.

This lane leads back towards the car park, and your starting point.

Woodspring Priory Museum is open most Mondays and Fridays (except Bank Holidays), between 10.30am and 3.30pm.

For more information call the **Landmark Trust: 01628 825 925**



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