



## An ancient story

As you walk back through the meadow towards the café there are two big ash tree on your left. Sit under them and enjoy this story.



Vikings believed that the Earth was once ruled by an ash tree on an island. This ash tree's trunk reached far, far up to the heavens and its long branches spread out over all of the countries in the world. A huge snake hid in the roots, and a great eagle lived in the top of the tree. A nimble squirrel would run up and down the tree carrying messages between the two. A magnificent deer would feed on the ash leaves. From its great antlers flowed the great rivers of the world. All the Viking gods would meet under the canopy of this ash tree whenever they had important decisions to make.

Which character in the story would you be?

Can you make up a story involving the ash tree and all of its characters?



## We love the Downs!

Look for some stones that look like little grave stones. They are called 'mere stones' and mark the boundary between Clifton Down and Durdham Down. Sit on the bench next to them and think of something on the Downs that makes you feel:



happy  
inspired  
excited

On your way  
back to cafe see  
how many  
mere stones  
you can count

[www.avongorge.org.uk](http://www.avongorge.org.uk)



Bristol Conservation  
& Science Foundation

The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project is a partnership of Bristol City Council, Bristol Zoo Gardens, Natural England, University of Bristol, the Society of Merchant Venturers, Downs Committee and BCSF.



# The Downs Summer Family Trail

For adults and their children to enjoy in June and July

The Downs are full of life in the summer, with the meadows in full bloom, young peregrines learning to hunt and lots of insect life to be found. Why not have a go at the activities on our trail and discover more about the Downs?



Things to bring!

- ☒ an adult
- ☒ sensible, comfy shoes
- ☒ drink and snack
- ☒ sun cream and hat
- ☒ pencil
- ☒ waterproof clothes if wet



## How do you feel?

'Texture' is the word we use to describe the way that something feels when you touch it with your fingers. As you walk along the trail, see how many things you can find that have different textures.

Look out for these textures:



hard



soft



squishy



rough



smooth



tickly



## 2 Sounds of the Downs

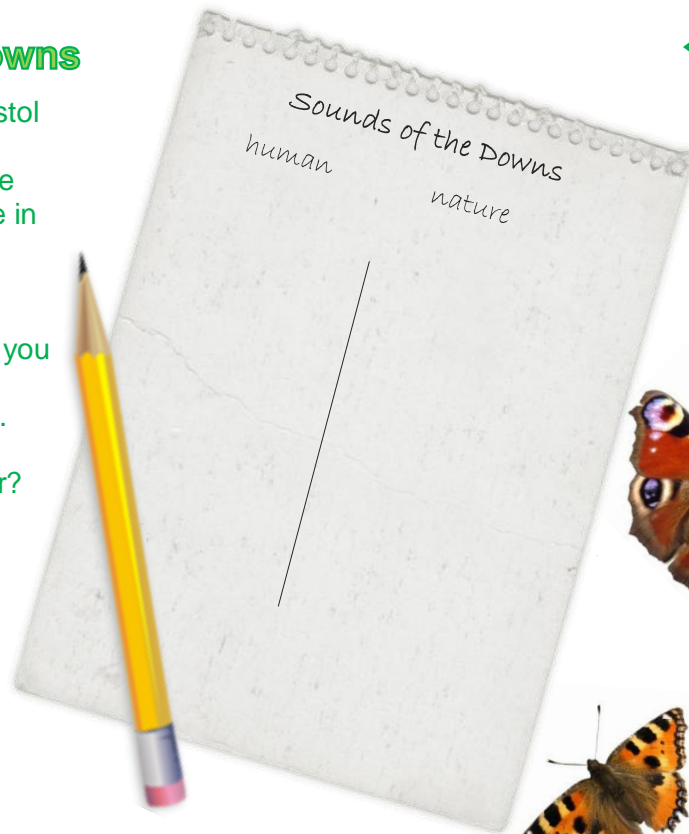
Look out for a group of four Bristol whitebeam trees near the road. These trees are only grow in the wild in Bristol and nowhere else in the whole world!

Sit quietly on the nearby bench and listen to the noises around you for two minutes. Each time you hear a new sound write it down.

How many sounds did you hear?

Can you divide them into 'human sounds' and 'nature sounds'?

Which are there more of?



## 3 Wildflower bingo

Can you spot these wildflowers growing in the meadow? Keep your eyes open and mark them off when you see them. Remember to leave the flowers where they are for both other insects to feed on and other people to enjoy.



☐ buttercup



☐ scabious



☐ bird's-foot trefoil



☐ goat's beard



☐ harebell



☐ oxeye daisy



☐ clover



☐ black knapweed

## 4 Beautiful butterflies

This is a good place for butterflies to drink nectar and lay their eggs on leaves. Mummy butterflies check the leaf is the one that their caterpillars will want to eat (they're very fussy!) by tasting it with her feet! How many can you see? Draw them in the space below.



Be quiet  
Move slowly  
Be respectful  
Look but don't touch

## 5 The fastest animal in the world!

Carefully cross the road to the Peregrine Watch Point. Use the information board to answer these questions:



What is the male peregrine falcon called?

What does the peregrine falcon use its beak for?

Why do they have strong chest muscles?

What are a peregrine falcon's feet called?

Peregrine falcons are the fastest animal in the world, diving from the sky at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour!

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## Wildflower bingo

There is a noticeboard at the far end of the meadow that has more information and illustrations about the wildflowers. These flowers will not be out at all the same time so don't be disappointed if you don't see them all. It is important to ensure that your child does not pick the flowers. Encourage them to think about why this is the case. You can talk about butterflies and bees that use the flowers for food, and the minibeasts that use them as their home. You can also talk about leaving them for other people to enjoy and that most of the flowers will eventually produce seeds so there will be more flowers next year.



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## Beautiful butterflies

Butterflies have to find the right plant as their caterpillars will only eat that plant. This is why a wide variety of plants and wildflowers is important. Butterflies have ears on their legs and can feel the vibrations of you moving through the grass, so you have to move carefully. Casting your shadow over them will also make them fly away. **Do not try to catch butterflies** as this will injure them. If you cannot see butterflies then look for other minibeasts in the long grass or in trees.

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## The fastest animal in the world!

If you look out across the Gorge you may be lucky enough to see a peregrine falcon, perhaps even two! Listen out for their slow, screeching call.

6

## An ancient story

These ash trees are two of the tallest trees that you will be able to see. It is very near to the wildflower noticeboard.



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## We love the Downs

These stones are called mere stones, one side is marked with CP (Clifton Parish) and the other with WP (Westbury Parish). These ancient boundaries were first recorded over a thousand years ago in 883.

**We hope you enjoyed the trail. Why not try out our other seasonal trails?**



# Summer Family Trail Notes for Adults

*A guide for grown-ups*



## Before you start

Once you embark upon this trail you could be out and about for up to 2 hours. The trail begins near the café and there are toilets situated on the other side of the Water Tower, a short walk from here. **BEWARE!** There are no other toilets once you start the trail!



## Supporting your child on the Summer Trail

This section is designed as a guide to enable you and your child or children to get the most out of the trail. We highly recommend reading this section through before you start the trail so you can stay one step ahead of your little ones!



## How do you feel?

Encourage your child to describe what they have found. Please don't pick any flowers and avoid touching any litter. Remind your child to watch out for dog mess.



## Sounds of the Downs






The Bristol whitebeam trees are situated near the curve in Circular Road and there is a small plaque where three of them are planted closer together. Look for the white undersides of the leaves, this is how the whitebeam gets its name. There is another whitebeam in this group that is not a Bristol whitebeam.



Look at the shape of the leaves on each tree. Which is the odd one out?

# **Summer Family Trail Map**

**The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project** runs a variety of family and children's events throughout the year. Details can be found at [www.avongorge.org.uk](http://www.avongorge.org.uk) or call 0117 9030609

- Key**
-  Summer trail
  -  Bench
  -  Information panel
  -  Merestone
  -  Bus Stop

## Toilets

The nearest public toilets can be found beside the Water Tower where there are baby changing facilities and toilets for disabled people.

## Safety

Please take care when crossing roads. Beware! Some sections of the trail can be muddy and slippery after it has rained.

