

Spring Trail

- 5 At the top of the track turn left onto a small public road that climbs uphill briefly with Dorset Wildlife Trust's Hendover Coppice on the right. This **Ancient Woodland** has been coppiced for thousands of years. The endangered hazel dormouse lives mainly in the trees here.

You will see many wildflowers; these are ancient woodland indicators.



- 6 Turn left at the road junction and walk down the steep hill. On the right is **Friary Land** that Hilfield acquired in 2016 where we will be working to create a 'wildlife corridor'. For now our sheep graze here. The lambs are born in autumn when they can eat their fill in the camping field.

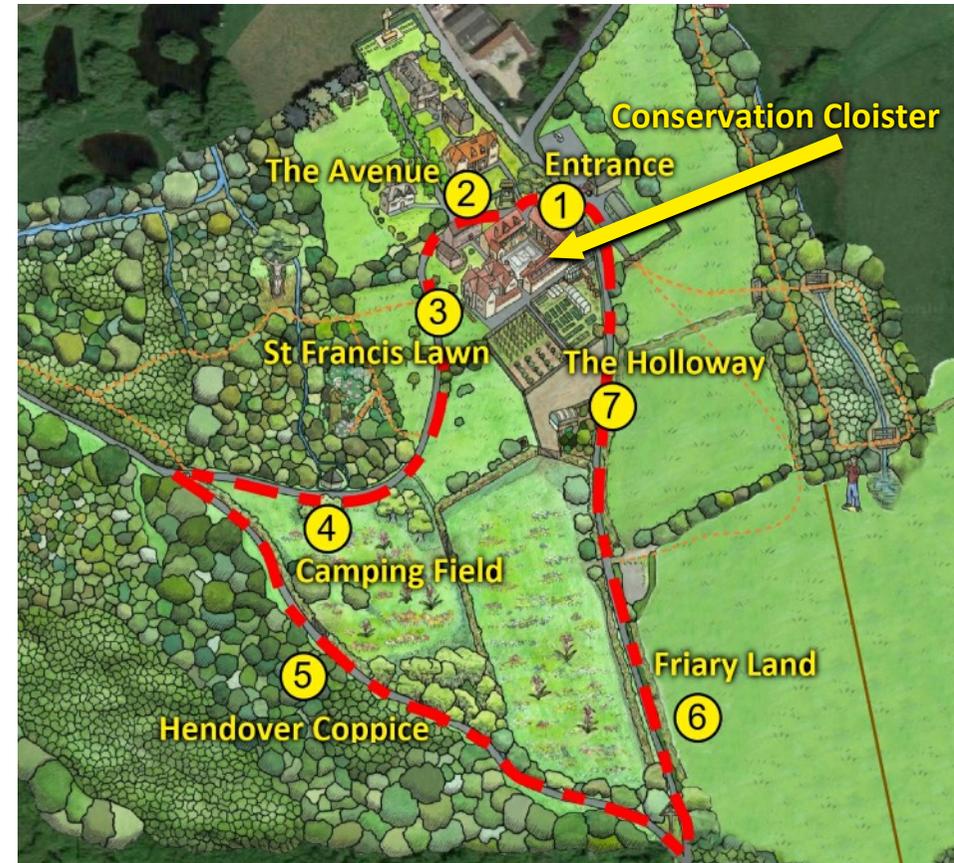


- 7 The road becomes a sunken lane or '**Holloway**' and is possibly 1,500 years old. See the underlying geology; touch the greensand formed in prehistoric seas. Notice the badger workings.



Please return this trail to the Conservation Cloister when you've finished. Map your sightings and keep in touch with Hilfield's Facebook Conservation Group page, and website: www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk

Hilfield Friary Trails



This trail follows our 'Triangle Route'. It's paved and the length is 2/3 of a mile. Spring is a season of great change so whatever date you visit the trail will be different.

Follow the numbers in yellow circles on the map that match the numbers in the text.

You might like to borrow a wildflower guide from the Conservation Cloister by the Chapel in the Courtyard.

Enjoy!



1 At the top of the Avenue
 Begin at the 'German Oak'. During March the leaf buds swell and in April the yellow-brown-green leaves burst out, and by May they are summer-green. You might see male catkins in clusters distributing pollen. The female flowers are on the same tree in separate clusters but are more difficult to spot.

Look out for oak galls (or oak apples) that enclose the larvae of the gall wasp.

Walk to the Canticle Garden on the left, follow its path and taste the herbs beginning to grow.

Many wild plants can be eaten such as wild garlic and young hawthorn and nettle leaves. Visit www.wildfooduk.com to find out more.

2 At the top of The Avenue you can see many of our native wildflower species grow strongly in April and May. We manage the verges to promote their growth and mow in late summer when the seeds have set.

You can leave a small patch of of your garden un-mown and see what emerges.



3 Walk to 'St Francis' Lawn' and look at the many species of trees bursting into leaf at different times.

The Brimstone butterfly can be spotted in March; the male is bright yellow. In April you might see an Orange Tip or a Tortoiseshell.

The pollen spores of the Horsetail emerges in March and is followed in May by its bristly stems.

Continue to the **Camping Field**. In late spring/early summer this transforms into our beautiful wildflower meadow.

On the way you can see, hear and smell nature in all its glory.

Look out for many bird species and listen to their songs. You can add what you see to our sightings board at the Conservation Cloister. Visit www.british-birdsongs.uk to identify species.

In mid-April you can smell the buds and leaves of the balsam poplar.

