

# The Bourne Valley Greenway

To Broadstone (Gravel Hill) using Bridleway 23 and following Greenway signs until you reach the gate leading onto the road into the Crematorium

## Canford Heath

This is one of the largest heaths remaining in Dorset, with a wide range of heathland wildlife to be seen. Like all our heaths, active management is necessary to control the spread of trees and scrub, that would otherwise shade out the heather and gorse on which the specialist wildlife depends.

From the top of Canford Heath you can enjoy the heathland itself as well as extensive views of the surrounding area. By following the network of bridleways, it is also possible to reach Broadstone, whilst avoiding the busy roads.



- GREENWAY (WALK & CYCLE)
- OTHER CYCLE ROUTES

The Bourne Valley Greenway is wheelchair-friendly from the Lower Gardens through to Coy Pond. Beyond the Gardens there are plans to improve access, currently some sections remain unsuitable for most wheelchairs. The gradients on the route can be steep at road junctions (especially where it passes under the Wessex Way).

## Bourne Bottom

The heathland and other habitats in this area are particularly important for invertebrates. Grayling butterflies can commonly be seen on the dry heath and the valley mire is an important habitat for dragonflies including the rare Small Red Damselfly. It is also important for such plants as Bog Asphodel where many thousands in flower create a yellow swathe across the valley bottom.

The Bourne Stream Partnership created an area of wetland and reedbeds to improve the stream water quality that is affected by runoff from the busy Ringwood Road.

## Talbot Heath

This reserve is a fragment of a once extensive heath, which spread from Christchurch to Dorchester and beyond, and is dominated by heathers, gorses and some small trees. There are some Bronze Age burial mounds on the heath dating from 2200 - 800 BC.

## The Dawn Redwood

This species was thought to be extinct until its discovery in China in 1941. Beyond the Wessex Way there is a twin-stemmed specimen which, at chest height, has the largest trunk diameter of this species in Britain.

## Alder Hills Nature Reserve

The Dorset Wildlife Trust's Alder Hills Nature Reserve has developed from a flooded brickpit and forms a part of Talbot Heath. It is notable for rare Smooth Snakes, Sand Lizards, Dartford Warblers and nationally scarce dragonflies. If you are interested in the reserve, why don't you join a work party by contacting the reserve office on 01202 692033

## Coy Pond and Gardens

Coy Pond was created in 1888 when the railway embankment behind it was developed, its name being a reminder of its previous use as a decoy pond. It is home to Coots, Moorhens and Mallards as well as domesticated geese and ducks. Patient observers may spot the Grey Wagtail in the Gardens, and at least one pair of Moorhens appears to have made a home of the new ponds there.

## The Water Tower

Within the Upper Gardens is a Victorian water tower, built between 1883 and 1903 to supply water via a water wheel to an ornamental fountain. Although the wheel and fountain have long since disappeared, the tower still provides an attractive landmark as well as a roosting site for bats.

## The Lower, Central and Upper Gardens

Until the beginning of the 19th Century, this area comprised vegetated slopes and a marshy valley bottom. Development took place after 1840 and much of the original character and design layout from the early 1870s still remains.

