

Mendip Hills AONB



TRAIL TYPE

Walking

GRADE

Moderate

DISTANCE

12km (7½ miles)

TIME

2½-3½ hours

OS MAP

Explorer 153: Weston-super-Mare & Bleadon Hill;

Landranger 182: Weston-super-Mare

CONTACT

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FACILITIES

Pub in Bleadon: Queens Arms.

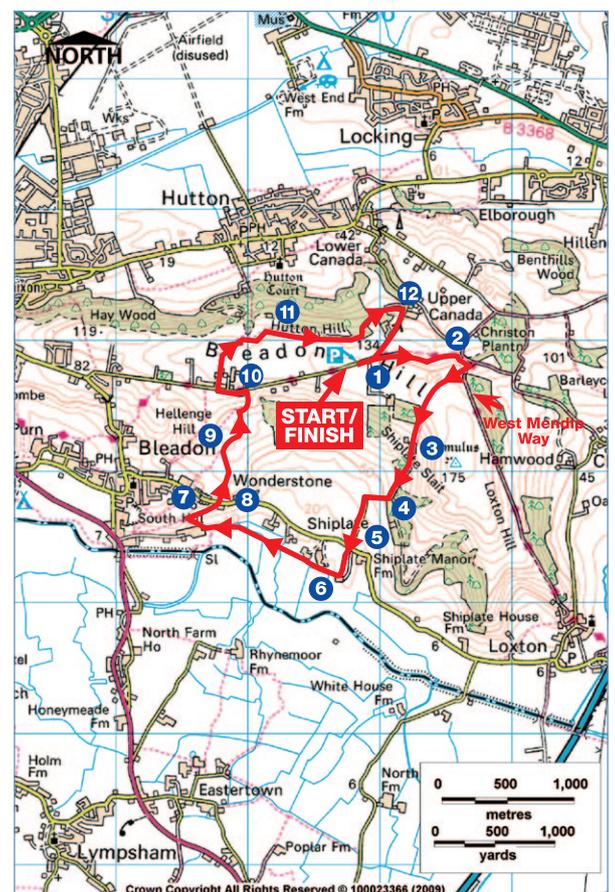
Post office with shop and café in Bleadon.

Bleadon Hill

Limestone grassland is found over thin mineral soils on calcareous rock like limestone. These unimproved grasslands (they've never been ploughed, drained or fertilised for agriculture) are characteristic of the southern scarp of the Mendips. The poor quality of these thin soils and the steep, rocky terrain has saved them for wildlife because they are not worth cultivating. Instead they have been used for centuries for grazing which has helped to keep the turf short. Bleadon Hill is a mosaic of turf, scrub and woodland characterised by hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble. The grassland is a home to a variety of plants such as sheep's fescue, meadow oat-grass, the rare crested hair-grass, Somerset hair-grass and dwarf sedge, which is nationally scarce. Herbaceous plants such as salad burnet, small scabious and wild thyme, common spotted orchid, pyramidal orchid and bee orchid and the rare spring cinquefoil are also found here. It is small plants like these which tend to do best here, thanks to the thin soil and the exposed terrain, the tendency for the soil to dry out in summer and the tight grazing by sheep and rabbits. The grassland is also home to many insects. Overhead, the majestic buzzard can be seen spiralling on the thermal air currents. These grasslands are nationally rare which is why Bleadon Hill and neighbouring Shiplate Slait have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



Mendip Hills AONB Unit



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START/END

Bleadon Hill car park,
OS Grid Ref ST 358 578

HOW TO GET THERE

BY BIKE

Bleadon is 1 mile off
Sustrans National Cycle
Route 33
www.sustrans.org.uk

BY BUS

Service 83 Worlebury to
Weston-super-Mare to
Bleadon stops ½ mile
from point 8 on the walk
route

BY CAR

Bleadon is signposted
off the A370 south of
Weston-super-Mare

DIRECTIONS & INFORMATION

Waymarking: Look for the waymarkers wherever there are stiles, gates or changes of direction.

From the car park on Bleadon Hill, follow lane eastward and take
bridleway **(1)** towards Christon Plantation.

(2) Turn right, then right again and follow the bridleway down Shiplate
Slait **(3)**. Do not bear left down the West Mendip Way bridleway.

Turn right on to track **(4)** and bear left towards the road near Shiplate
Manor Farm **(5)**.

Cross the main road onto the footpath and bear right, westward **(6)**,
towards Southhill Farm and Bleadon.

Enter the farmyard, turning right before footpath sign on wall and pick
up the path on South Hill **(7)**.

Cross the main road towards Wonderstone **(8)** and head up Hellenge
Hill **(9)** until you meet the lane at the top of Bleadon Hill **(10)**.

Go left along the lane, then right through the houses, and bear right
along the eastward footpath through the fields along Hutton Hill **(11)**.

Walk through the woods at the end until you join the lane at Upper
Canada **(12)**.

Turn sharp right (south-west), and walk back up the lane towards the
car park.

What to see near Bleadon Hill & Shiplate Slait

- Superb views of the Somerset Levels Moors and coast
- Brent Knoll
- Saxon manorial boundary

