

6

## Leaf cartoons

Why not collect some fallen leaves to draw around and create your own Downs creatures?



7

## Intrepid travellers

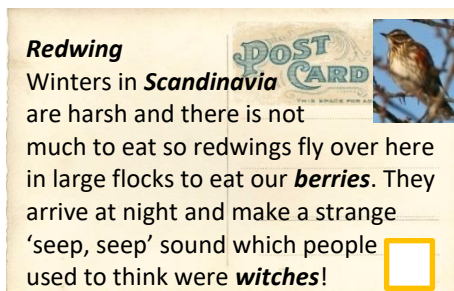
Not all of the birds on the Downs stay here for the whole year. Keep your eyes to the skies to spot them as they begin and end their long, long journeys and tick them off your list.



Off to Africa!



Visiting for winter!



# The Downs Autumn Family Trail

For adults and their children to enjoy between August and October

The Downs are a beautiful and fascinating place in autumn! Enjoy our fun activities as you follow the trail map – but **BEWARE!** Autumn is a fickle time and you may not see everything all at once!



Things to bring!

- ☒ an adult
- ☒ sensible, comfy shoes
- ☒ warm and waterproof clothes
- ☒ drink and snack
- ☒ pencil

1

## Bonkers for conkers!



Under the horse chestnut trees opposite the Water Tower, look for a fallen conker. Carefully open the spikey case - you have just given birth to a conker! The conker has a pattern like a fingerprint. Can you find two conkers with the same pattern?

If there are no conkers, then find some leaves. Look at the end of the stalk – it looks like a horse shoe! Can you make a mini trail in the mud?

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



The Downs Committee

University of BRISTOL



Bristol Zoological Society



Forestry England

## 2 Nature spotters

Can you spot these signs of autumn? Keep your eyes open and mark them off when you see them. Remember not to eat anything, no matter how tasty it looks!



☐ blackberries



☐ leaf miners



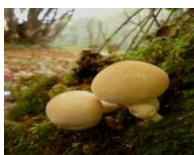
☐ holly berries



☐ hawthorn berries



☐ butterfly



☐ mushroom



☐ rosehips



☐ elder berries



## 3 How the hawthorn got its twist

No one quite knows how this hawthorn tree got its mysterious twisted trunk. What do you think? Write notes for your story then tell it to your audience!



## 4 Sounds of the Downs

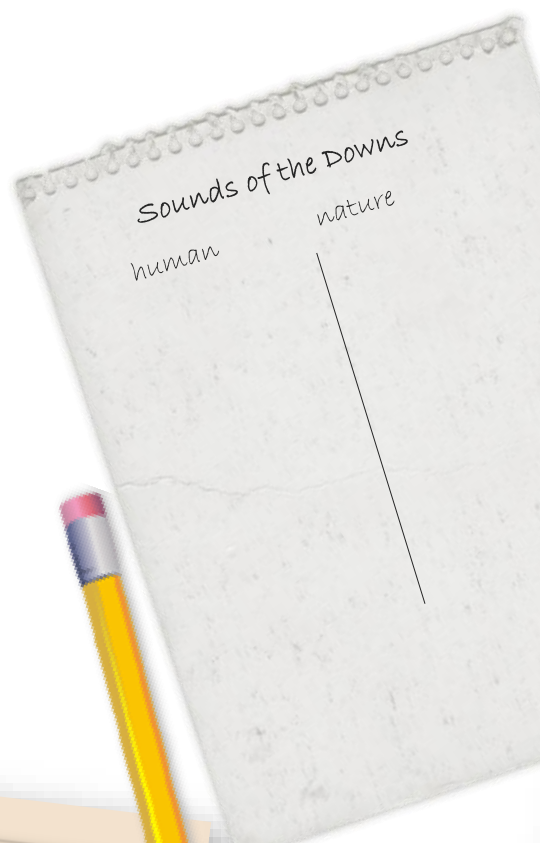
Look out for a ring of five trees, this is an excellent place to play 'Sounds of the Downs'.

Sit quietly 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?

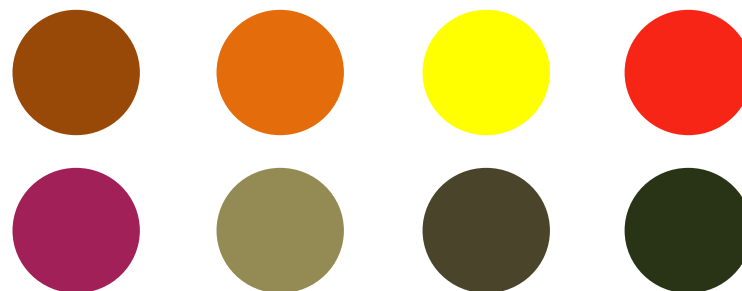
Can you divide them into 'human sounds' and 'nature sounds'?

Which are there more of?



## 5 Leaf rainbow bingo!

As you walk down the avenue of trees you will see lots of different coloured leaves. Mark off the different colours as you see them. Can you tick off a line? Or even get a full house by spotting all of them?





2

## Nature spotters

Keep an eye out for this bright pink berry. It belongs to the poisonous spindle bush, the leaves of which used to be ground up and used to get rid of head lice!

**Please show them to your child but do not touch these berries!**



3

## How the hawthorn got its twist

This tree could have been trained to grow like this by one of the previous Downs Rangers. Or perhaps it was a hungry giant, arguing families, magic spells and other such fancies! Encourage your child to create, practice and act out their story.

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## Sounds of the Downs

Two minutes of silence can feel like a long time - keep going for as long as your child is interested! Listen out for the animals in the zoo. You can often hear the lions and the gibbons from here. Did you hear anything else that was unexpected?

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## Leaf rainbow bingo!

This is an excellent opportunity to encourage your children to find interesting ways to describe the colours they see. Ask your children to compare using **like** or **as** – ‘*bright yellow like the sun*’ – and add describing words – ‘*deep fiery red*’. Start them off with a few simple examples of your own and then build up sentences.

6

## Leaf cartoons

Look for interesting shaped leaves on the ground. When you get home, why not look on the internet or in any books that you have to find out the type of tree your leaves came from?

7

## Intrepid travellers

Swifts and swallows migrate at the end of August. Look for the boomerang shaped wings of the swift and the long forked tail of the swallow. Swifts are much larger than swallows. Redwings arrive at the end of October. Look for them in the tops of bushes with lots of berries in them. Quite often you can hear birds. Go to [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk) and search for the birds by name to hear their calls.

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



# Autumn 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 two hours. The trail begins at The Downs Café (pictured) 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! Watch out for bikes on the cycle path in front of the



## Supporting your child on the Autumn 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!



## Bonkers for conkers!

Conkers appear around the end of August. If you are doing this trail in October then it is unlikely that you will find any conkers so you will have to do the leaf activity instead.

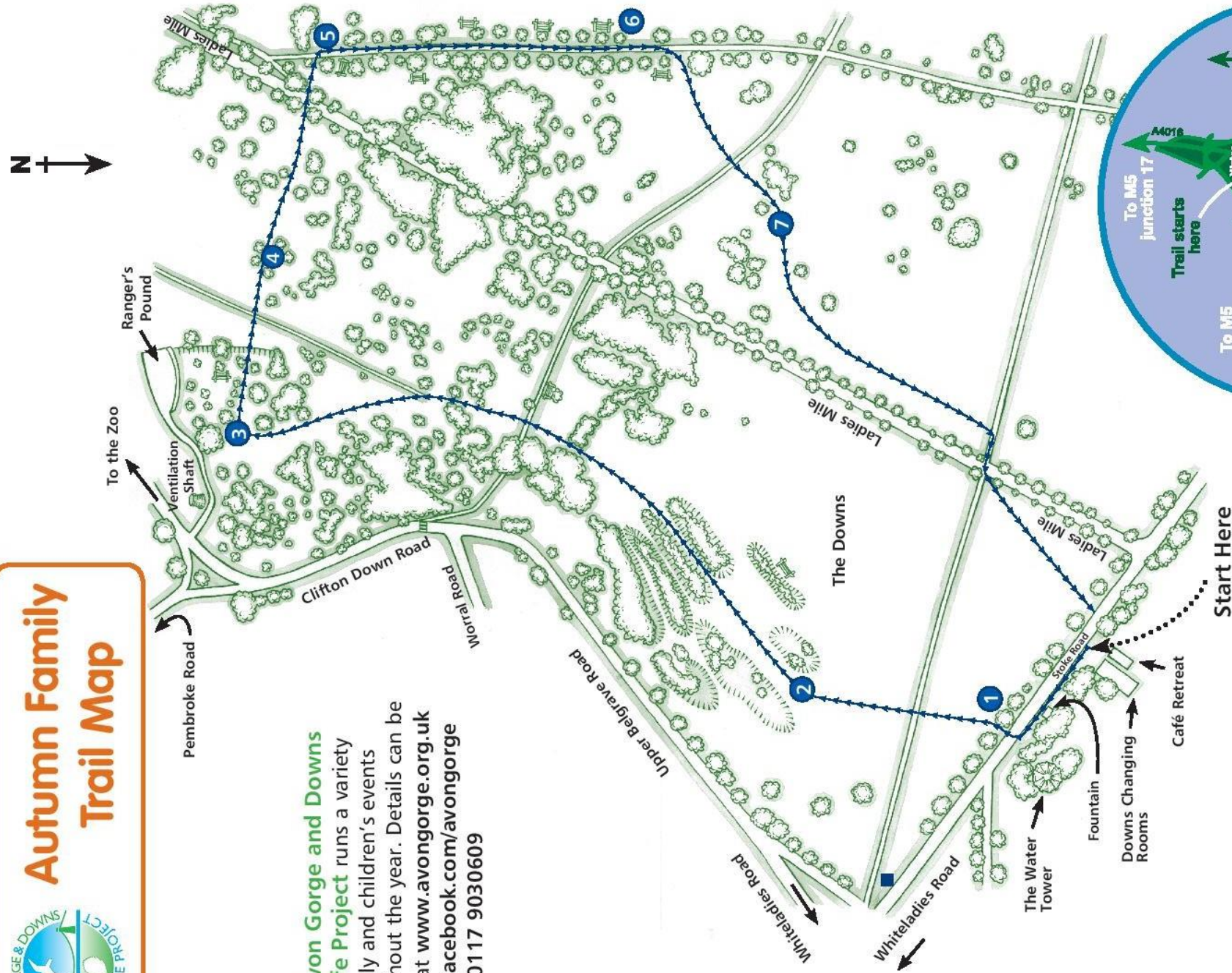
**Did you know?** Horse chestnut trees are not native to the British Isles. They were introduced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century from the Balkans\*. No one is quite sure why they are called *horse* chestnut but they were once fed to horses as a stimulant and to make their coats shine.

The World Conker Championships are held in England every October! Why not collect some conkers to take home and then get practising!

\* most of the former Yugoslavian states, plus Albania, Bulgaria and Greece

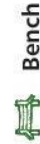
# **Autumn Family Trail Map**

**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

Autumn trail



Bench



Slope (lip of old quarry)



Quarry



Pedestrian crossing



Bus Stop

**Start Here**

## 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.

