



Downe Audio Trail: Activity Sheet

Welcome to Downe. These activities complement the Downe Audio Trail, and it is recommended that you undertake them as you listen to each track, but they can also be done on their own. A map and directions are also available as a separate PDF and these will help you find your way from one stop to another.



www.darwinatdowne.co.uk



Activities



1 St Mary the Virgin Church

The Darwin family regularly worshipped at this church and are remembered here. There is a sundial dedicated to Darwin on the south wall of the church tower, can you spot it?

Charles Darwin's wife Emma and brother Erasmus are buried in the east part of the churchyard can you find their gravestones?

Can you find any other connections to Darwin in the churchyard such as the grave of two of Darwin's children?

Notes:

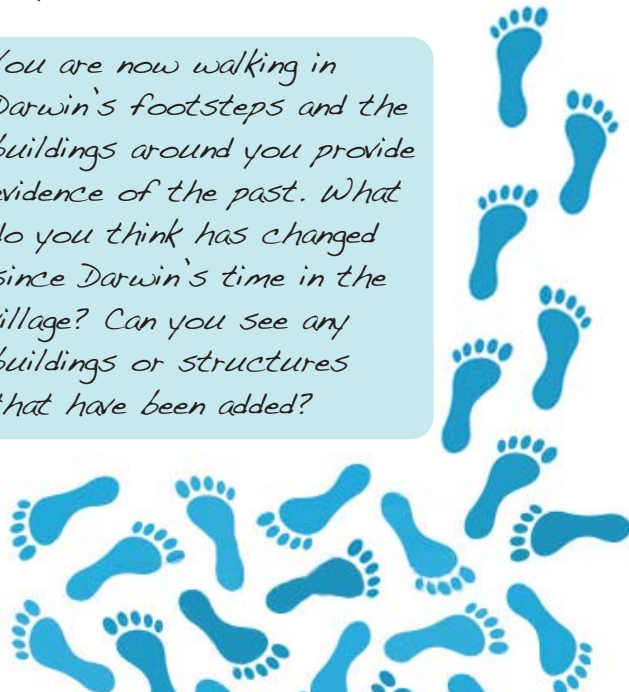
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2 Downe Village

The historic village of Downe lies between two wooded valleys on the North Downs. Its name was first recorded in 1283 and derives from the old English word 'dun' meaning a hill.

It appealed to Darwin because it seemed far from the bustling city of London, yet it was still only 16 miles away so that he felt that he wouldn't turn into a Kentish hog'. He loved the scenery, the peace and the many footpaths that intersected the fields.

You are now walking in Darwin's footsteps and the buildings around you provide evidence of the past. What do you think has changed since Darwin's time in the village? Can you see any buildings or structures that have been added?



3 Boundary Oak trees

Darwin first began collecting beetle specimens as a child and remained a passionate beetle collector throughout his life.

Today it is believed that there are more than 300,000 beetle species, with thousands yet to be discovered and that one in every four living things are beetles.

Having lived on the earth for nearly 300 million years, why do you think beetles have been so successful?



4 Hedgerow

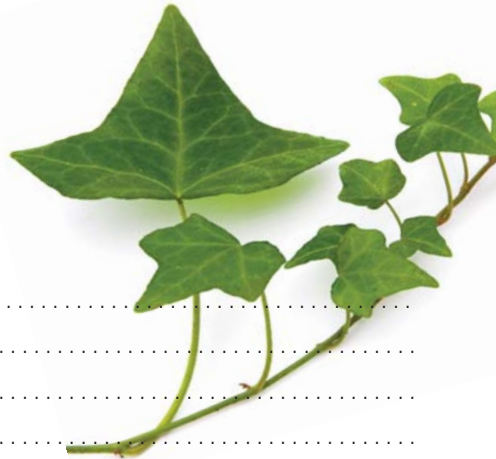
Darwin was fascinated by the movement of climbing plants and once wrote that

'the adaptations of climbing plants are as beautiful as those of orchids for ensuring cross-fertilisation'.

He gathered together many varieties and studied them and finally published 'The Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants' in 1865. He divided the plants into different categories: leaf climbers, tendril bearers, hook climbers, spiral twiners and root climbers.

Look for climbing plants in the hedgerow and along the rest of your walk. Which category would you put them in?

Notes:



5 Down House

As with most wealthy Victorian families the Darwins lived by a set daily routine and up to 10 servants worked in Down House at any one time. The family were very kind to their staff and in return they were loyal and devoted to the Darwins.

Imagine you are their gardener, cook, butler or housemaid, what do you think your routine would be? And what would you have done in your spare time?

Notes:



6 Darwin's theories and ideas

Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection as set out in 'On the Origins of Species' in 1859 was revolutionary and controversial. It transformed scientific and wider public thinking.

But why wasn't everybody persuaded? What do you think the responses were to Darwin's theory?



7 Meadow



Britain's butterflies like those around the meadows and woodland of Down House have dramatically declined across the country since Darwin's time, but locally they still do well. Butterflies react to the smallest changes in temperature and are a good indicator of how the British climate is changing. Some species have responded, thrived and spread whilst others have dwindled.



What factors do you think affect butterfly numbers and where they are found? How might they adapt?



8 The Sand Walk

Charles Darwin walked along his 'thinking path' every day and it is a place connected with his thoughts. He contemplated many theories and ideas here and it provided opportunities for further observation and experiments. It is now protected and managed by English Heritage and can only be walked along by paying visitors to Down House.

*Why do you think it is so important to preserve such a legacy?
What problems do you think are faced in protecting this area?*

Notes:



The country code can be found at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

9 Great Pucklands Meadow

Charles Darwin wandered this meadow recording at random the different plants he found and their features. 142 species were found and it is clear he was thrilled to identify and name Sweet Vernal Grass (whose latin name is Anthoxanthum odoratum). Following Darwin's method and keeping to the footpath,

Can you identify six different grass species? You don't need to name them but how do you know they are different, what features separate them?

Recent surveys have recorded more than the 142 plant species Darwin found. Why do you think the numbers have increased?

Notes: