

Tilgate Forest Trail

A great late summer walk with shady paths and the flowering purple heather

Start Point: Fishermen's Car Park, (just before the golf course) Tilgate Park

Distance/Duration: 3.5 miles/1.5 - 2 hours

Difficulty: Medium, undulating with some rough terrain. Can be very wet and muddy in places so sturdy footwear is recommended

Accessibility: Restricted, parts of the walk are along rough paths, so may not be suitable for wheelchairs but maybe passable for buggies. There are no stiles on the route.

Refreshments/Facilities: Café and toilets in Tilgate Park

Directions	Information
1. Head south from the car park and enter Tilgate Park. Turn left and then right following the path south with Tilgate Lake on your right.	
2. Continue straight on without crossing between Tilgate Lake and Silt Lake. After approximately 100m, turn left up the hill with the open area to your left. Continue up the hill until you reach the bridge crossing the M23 motorway to your right.	On your right is an area of lowland heathland being managed by the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership. Heathland is home to creatures such as the ground-nesting nightjar, adders and common lizards.
3. Cross over the motorway and enter Tilgate Forest. Passing through the gate continue straight on down the hill and pass under the power lines heading south until you reach the waymark just before the road. Turn right and walk up the hill.	The forest is managed by Forest Enterprise, which is responsible for the day to day management of the Forestry Commission Estate.
4. Continue straight along this track until reaching the open ride running under the power lines. Turn left and follow path running under the lines. At the next junction turn right and keep bearing right.	Keep an eye out for Roe deer, which are common in the forest. On sunny summer days look out for a basking adder or grass snake.
5. Go straight across at the waymark post underneath the power lines and follow the path straight on down the steep hill.	You pass through an area of lowland heathland characterized by heather. This is a rare and vulnerable habitat once far more common in this area.
6. Continue up the hill and bear right at the top on to the surfaced track and cross the M23 motorway. Continue along the surfaced track. Approximately 50m after the junction with another surfaced track on the right, turn right into the Pinetum.	The Pinetum has a wide range of conifers from all over the world such as Corsican pine and the deciduous larch
7. Continue along the path, bearing left where the path forks towards the pond. Cross the bridge and turn left on to the surfaced pathway through the Peace Garden.	
8. Turn right and follow pathway between the two lakes. Follow the path around to the left and continue back to the car park with Tilgate lake on your left.	