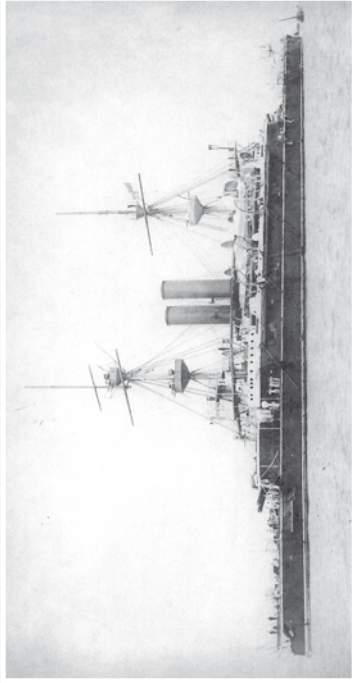


History from the Rodwell Trail

The southern section of the Rodwell Trail runs alongside Portland Harbour one of the great construction projects undertaken by Victorian Engineers to enclose the anchorage at Portland Roads to make the finest deep water harbour in Europe. This was achieved by placing 6,000,000 tons of Portland stone on the sea bed from the Isle of Portland east and north towards Weymouth for a distance of 1½ miles. The foundation stone was laid on the 25th July 1849 and completed on 29th July 1872.



HMS Hood prior to sinking in 1914

With the advent of the torpedo as a standard naval weapon there was a worry that ships in the harbour would be vulnerable to attack from Weymouth Bay and so it was decided to completely enclose the harbour by building two more arms to the north to link with the shore at Weymouth. The new arms were completed in 1903 and the original south entrance blocked in 1914 by scuttling the redundant battleship HMS Hood.

At the south end of the Rodwell Trail the "father" of the underwater torpedo, Robert Whitehead, built his factory in 1891 which continued to make those fearsome weapons until 1993 when it was closed to make way for harbour side housing.



Whitehead's Torpedo Factory

The Royal Navy dominated the harbour for 150 years before leaving in 1996 making way for its transition to a busy civilian port and water sports centre. In 2012 it will be the venue for the sailing events of the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

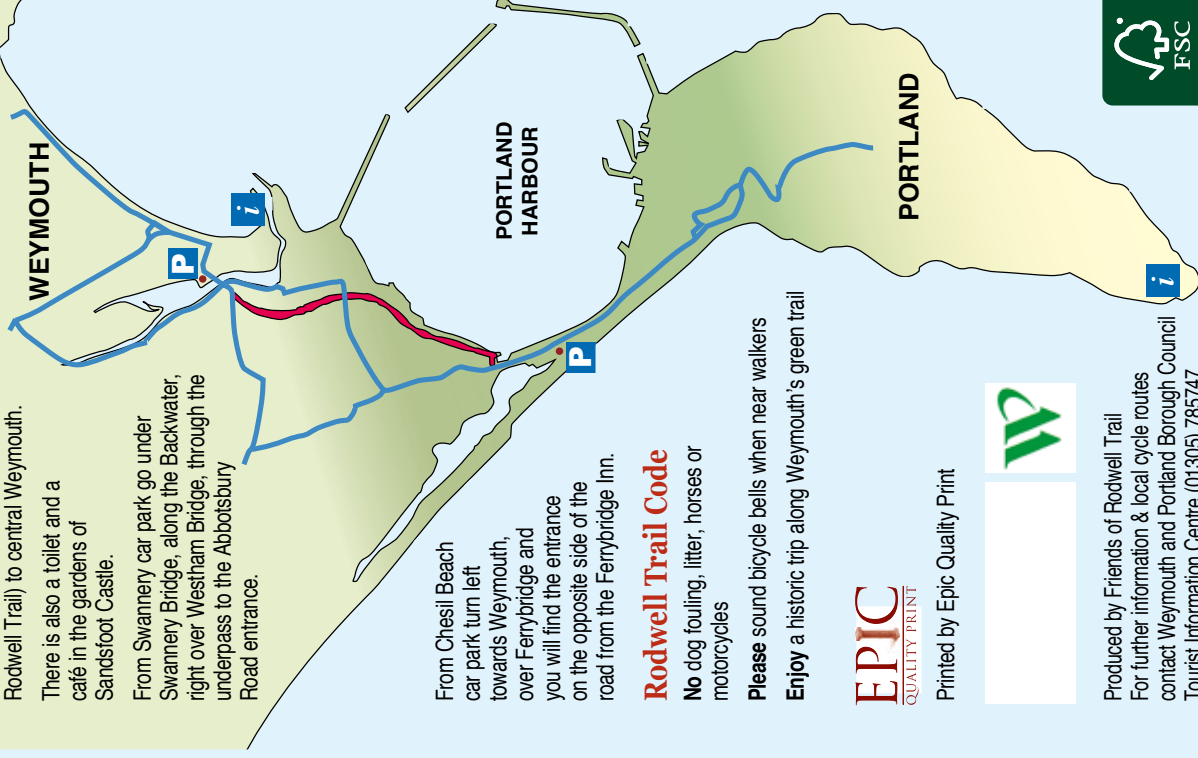
Location

The Rodwell Trail runs from Abbotsbury Road, near the centre of Weymouth, south to Ferrybridge where the lagoon behind Chesil Bank, The Fleet with its nature reserve, joins Portland Harbour. For part of the way it follows the Jurassic Coast and an area of Special Scientific Interest.

Car parks with public toilets and refreshments are close by just 6-7 minutes walk from either end. Buses travel frequently between Ferrybridge (south end of the Rodwell Trail) to central Weymouth.

There is also a toilet and a café in the gardens of Sandsfoot Castle.

From Swannery car park go under Swannery Bridge, along the Backwater, right over Westham Bridge, through the underpass to the Abbotsbury Road entrance.



From Chesil Beach car park turn left towards Weymouth, over Ferrybridge and you will find the entrance on the opposite side of the road from the Ferrybridge Inn.

Rodwell Trail Code

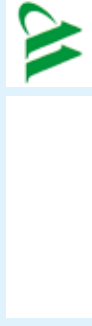
No dog fouling, litter, horses or motorcycles

Please sound bicycle bells when near walkers

Enjoy a historic trip along Weymouth's green trail

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Tourist Information Centre (01305) 785747

Website: www.weymouth.gov.uk/leisure/openspaces/rodwelltrail
www.rodwelltrail.org.uk



The Rodwell Trail

From Rail to Trail

Step back in time along a historic
2¼ mile Walk/Cycle Way between
Weymouth and Ferrybridge



The Rodwell Trail

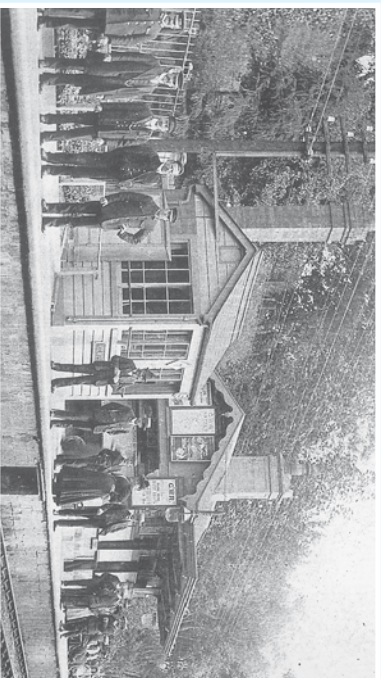
The Rodwell Trail is a popular green link used by cyclists and walkers between Weymouth and Ferrybridge following the course of the old Weymouth to Portland Railway with links to the South West Coast Path and the Isle of Portland.



Stretching for 3.4 km it is an hour's level walk each way. Wheelchair and pushchair friendly, it is suitable for all ages, although some access points can be steep except at Ferrybridge, Parr Way and Dover/Dundee Roads. Please note that Newstead, Wyke and Buxton Road entrances are not suitable for wheelchairs.



Weymouth and Portland Railway



The Rodwell Trail follows the track of the old railway built in 1865 to carry passengers and Portland stone between Weymouth and Portland. It was extended in 1878 into the Royal Navy Dockyards and later in 1891 to serve Whitehead's torpedo factory at Ferrybridge complete with it's own siding and a 1,000 foot pier with its own narrow gauge railway track out into Portland Harbour.

The line was a mixed gauge worked jointly by the London & South Western Railway and the Great Western Railway until 1874 when it was converted to standard gauge.

In 1870 the first intermediate station at Rodwell was opened. The line continued to improve with the addition of new halts at Westham and Wyke Regis in 1909 and a new stop at Sandsfoot Castle Halt in 1932. The railway continued to serve the community until 9 April 1965.



Nature on the Rodwell Trail

Westham Halt to Rodwell Station



In the spring and autumn watch out for migrating birds passing through, such as whitethroats and warblers. The Small White butterfly can

be seen in numbers in early summer and again in the

autumn. The brambles are a favourite place for Gatekeeper butterflies. In the autumn you can hear the Great Green Bush cricket chirping in the undergrowth.



Rodwell Station to Sandsfoot Halt



This area is darker and enjoyed by the more secretive animals, such as frogs, badgers and foxes. You may spy a

when fitting

around in the undergrowth. In the more open area past Buxton Road bridge look out for butterflies such as Red Admiral and Peacock reclining on the buddleia flowers.



Sandsfoot Halt to Wyke Regis Halt



In winter look across Portland Harbour, you may well see Merganser ducks, Slovenian grebes and Great Northern Divers. In the plant "Little Robin", that grows along the track, you may also be

lucky and see the female "Wasp Spider" with its

distinctive yellow and black abdomen. On the concrete around the old Wyke Regis Halt you may see common lizards basking in the sun on a summer's day.



FRIENDS of RODWELL TRAIL



View of Weymouth Harbour from the Rodwell Trail



Wyke Tunnel



Rodwell Station



Looking out across Portland Harbour



Ferrybridge



Littlefield Crossing



The Embankment



The Cutting



Henry VIII's ruined castle and Sandsfoot Gardens



Buxton Road Bridge



Near Sandsfoot Halt



Access Points

- A** Abbotsbury Road
- B** Ilchester Road
- C** Salisbury Road
- D** Newstead Road
- E** Prince of Wales Road
- F** Wyke Road
- G** Buxton Road
- H** Clearmont Road
- I** Old Castle Road
- J** Parr Way
- K** Rylands Lane
- L** Douglas Road
- M** Dundee/Dover Road
- N** Osprey Road
- O** Whitehead Drive
- P** Ferrybridge



View of Portland Harbour from the Rodwell Trail

Plan of the Rodwell Trail

Approximate scale = 1 : 8,000 or 2 inches = ¼ mile