

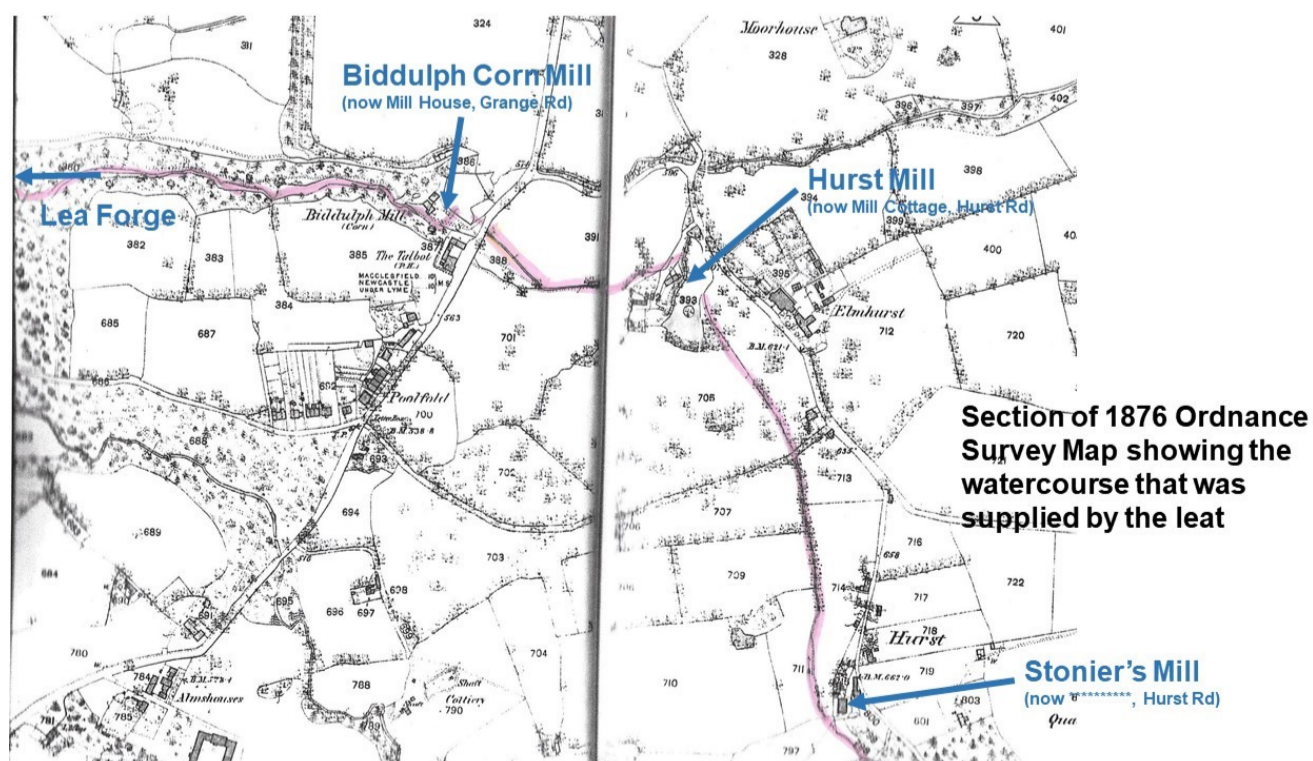
Site	Biddulph Grange Country Park (Parts of)
Grid Reference / Post Code	SJ899, 594; SJ 897, 597; SJ 895, 599
Brief Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Leat 2) Parts of Spring Wood and picnic area 3) Grazing field with public footpath running through it.

Criteria		
<p>Location <i>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</i></p>	√	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The leat's story starts at the weir towards the top of the Himalayan Walk in Biddulph Grange Country Park where there is a simple mechanism diverting water off the stream sourced from the moorlands. A further project is underway preparing to prepare an Interpretation Board to be installed at this point to tell the Leat's story. At the point where this important feature exits the Country Park it can be clearly seen from Hurst Road at various points. More importantly it can be viewed via footpaths 158, 36 and 89. <p>The Ordnance Survey Map of 1876 shows the route of the leat from within the confines of Biddulph Grange Country Park and onwards, exiting the Country Park at the Hurst Road entrance. It continues its course through fields running parallel with Hurst Road until it enters the Mill House pool on Grange Road. The leat had fallen into considerable disrepair within the Country Park and this year the Biddulph Grange Country Park Friends group raised the funding to have repair works carried out (supported by High Peak Borough Council & Staffordshire Moorlands District Council). Due to this work the integrity of this water source further downstream has been secured.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Accessible from local houses and the wider town and countryside via the footpath network. Visited by many from further afield. Serviced by a car park and visitors centre with toilets. Managed by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. 3) Accessed via gate near the Visitor Centre, going up to the Fishing Pool.
<p>Local Significance <i>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife.</i></p>	√	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Almost immediately after the Leat exits the Country Park we find the site of the first mill powered by the leat, Stonier's Mill (ref. Driven by the Dane by Tony Bonson Page 78). Records show that this mill was in existence in January 1813 and was mainly used for cotton spinning. It contained 1,248 throstle spindles which were turned by a powerful waterwheel. From here the leat courses through farmland running parallel to Hurst Road until it reaches Hurst Mill (now known as The Mill Cottage). Here it runs into the mill pool which is still in existence. In Driven by the Dane (page 81) Tony Bonson says it is thought that this mill dates back to the same period as Stonier's Mill since their water supply arrangements are interdependent. In 1840 this mill was listed as a silk mill. The mill was turned by a waterwheel with power sufficient to turn 250 dozen spindles. Water currently still exits the mill pool at Mill Cottage and continues its original course. From the Talbot carpark the original stone structure allowing the leat's onward journey can still be seen. The Mill House pool, originally constructed to serve Biddulph Corn Mill appears on numerous large scale maps from 1770 onwards. According to Tony Bonson in Driven by the Dane (page 84), this mill was also mentioned in a document confirming the Biddulph family's holdings in 1644. This mill was turned by a waterwheel 10ft in diameter and 2ft 6in wide. It powered up to two pairs of millstones and corn was still being milled there in the early 20th century. The watercourse then leaves the mill pool via a weir and continues its journey through a woodland area, The Clough. 2) History of the area: Biddulph Grange became the main house of James (1811-97) and Maria Bateman in 1840, the year after their marriage. Until then it had been Biddulph's vicarage house, and occupied the site of a medieval grange of Hulton Abbey. After their arrival at Biddulph the house was extended, conservatories added, and an ambitious garden and extensive pleasure grounds created. After 1849 the garden's development was a collaborative venture between the Batemans and Edward Cooke (1811-80), a painter, botanical engraver, and

		<p>enthusiastic amateur gardener. By the late 1860s the cost of maintaining the Biddulph gardens was proving beyond the Batemans' resources; in 1868 the house was passed to their son, who sold it three years later to Robert Heath, a leading Staffordshire industrialist. Gardens and house were maintained to a high standard and further altered, but in 1896 after the property had passed to Heath's son the house was largely destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt, in 1923 becoming a hospital in which use it remained until the 1980s. Alterations to house and gardens took place during that phase of the site's history, and there was increasing neglect and vandalism in the 1960s, but in 1988 when the National Trust acquired the main gardens their basic form and structure still remained and by the mid 1990s an extensive restoration was largely complete. The majority of the pleasure grounds and woodland were designated as a Country Park (managed by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council).</p> <p>A small park extended east of Biddulph Grange, principally embracing Spring Wood, which was managed from 1848 as Estate Woodland. A fishpond lies within the western part of the wood. From a wrought-iron screen and gates at the end of the Wellingtonia Avenue (within National Trust land) the Obelisk Walk runs 450m east through Spring Wood. The Obelisk Walk took its name from the optical illusion the steeply rising path created, when seen from the west, of a stone obelisk against a dark sky. A cave surmounted the top of the obelisk, which still stands today.</p> <p>Biodiversity: Spring Wood is an ancient and semi-natural woodland consisting of a mature canopy of oak, ash, sycamore, beech, chestnut, Scots pine and larch. A number of different bats have been recorded in this area including Pipistrelle bats, Whiskered / Brandt's bat, Daubenton's bat and the Noctule bat. English bluebells can be seen in the Spring and there is a wide diversity of fungi in the autumn.</p> <p>3) Accessed by public via public footpath. Local farmers have retained the right to graze cattle.</p> <p>Good level of wildlife observed and good visual attractiveness. Evidence of good informal use by dog-walkers, local scout group, etc.</p>
<p>Size, Scale <i>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</i></p>	<p>√</p>	<p>This is not an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>It is very local in character having played an essential role in Biddulph's industrial past.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Suitable for Local Green Space Designation</p>

Pictures:

1) The Leat



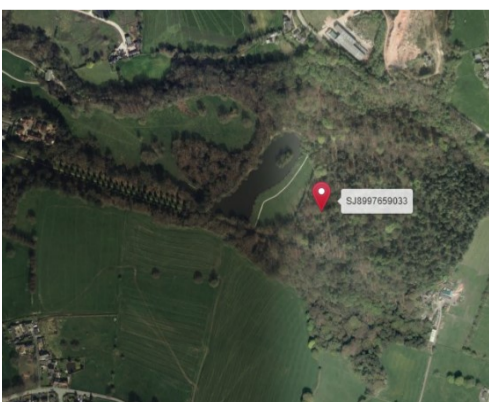


Leat exits the Mill Cottage Pool via a weir and continues under the driveway, through a field and alongside the Talbot pub carpark



The leat then passes under Grange Road via the stone tunnel and enters the Mill House Pool

2) Parts of Spring Wood and picnic area





3) Grazing field with public footpath running through it.



Map:

