

Nine Walks Around The Biddulph Valley



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Most reasonably fit adults should find these walks to be leisurely or of moderate difficulty.

We've taken care to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this guide, however no responsibility can be accepted for errors or omissions. If you feel some information is incorrect or details have changed, please let us know.

WELCOME TO THE BIDDULPH VALLEY

Situated north of Stoke on Trent, close to the Cheshire border, the Biddulph Valley offers a wealth of interest for the intrepid walker to discover.

Its rich history includes remnants of Civil War conflict and the landscaped estates of the great landed families of the nineteenth century. Although predominantly pastoral and agricultural in character, the valley is also home to numerous wooded cloughs and striking rocky escarpments.

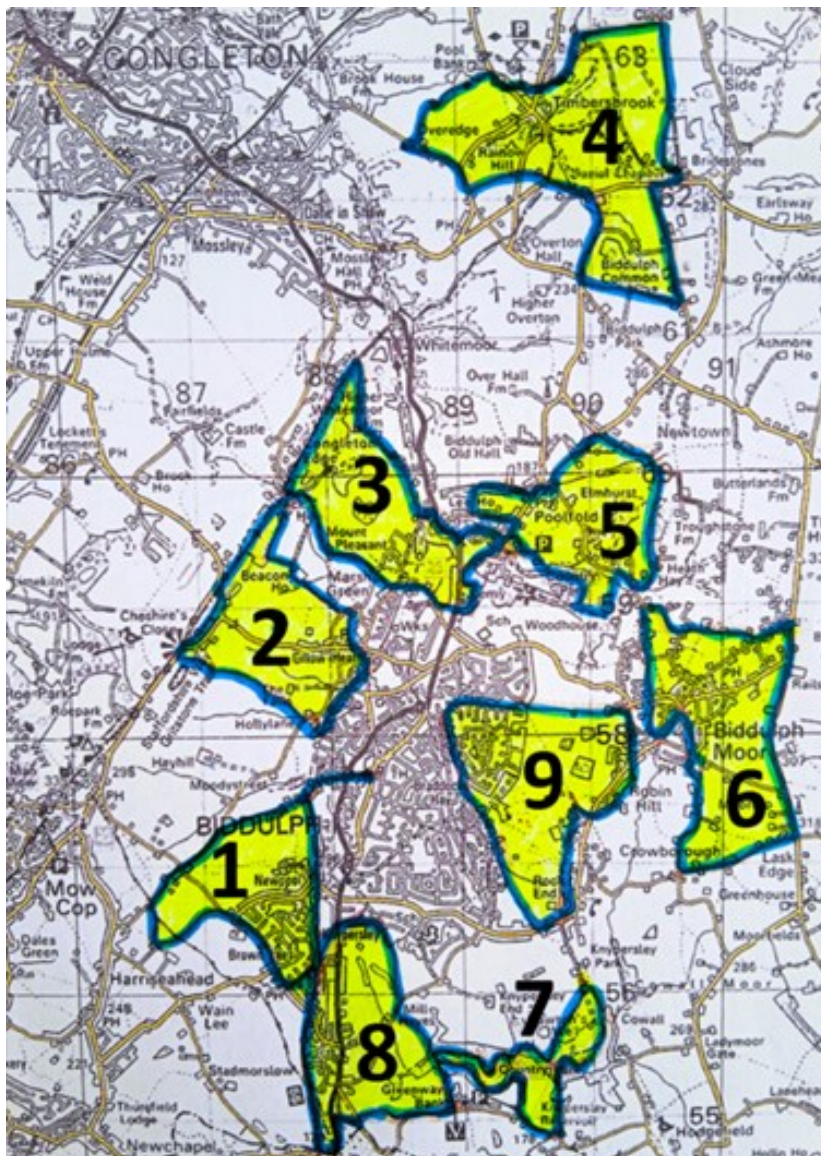
The area's geology once made it a centre of industrial development, with coal mines, iron and steel works, and reservoirs that fed the national canal network. Though the industry has long since disappeared, it has left a lasting legacy in the form of the splendid Biddulph Valley Way, a multi-use trail linking Congleton in the north with The Potteries in the south. There are also extensive walking opportunities around Biddulph Grange Country Park (formerly part of the Biddulph Grange estate), Greenway Bank Country Park and Knypersley Reservoir.

The valley marks an important geographical watershed: waters flow westwards to join the River Mersey and the Irish Sea, and eastwards along the River Trent to the Humber and the North Sea. From the high ground to the east, tremendous views can be enjoyed. On a clear day, the panorama stretches as far as the Shropshire Hills, Wales, Liverpool, the hills north of Manchester and the western fringes of the Peak District.

The principal settlement in the valley is the town of Biddulph (formerly known as Bradley Green), which now encompasses the suburbs of Gillow Heath, Biddulph Park, Knypersley and Brown Lees. Also within the parish is the distinctive village of Biddulph Moor.

Visitors will find a wide range of facilities, as well as the world-famous National Trust gardens at Biddulph Grange to explore.

NINE WALKS OVERVIEW MAP



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to 'Nine Walks Around the Biddulph Valley', a collection of routes created to help you explore the rich landscapes, heritage and viewpoints of this distinctive corner of North Staffordshire.

Developed as a partnership project between **Biddulph Town Council** and **Biddulph Ramblers**, these walks showcase the remarkable variety of countryside surrounding the town.

The Biddulph Valley is a place where town and countryside meet. Within a short distance from the town centre, you can find peaceful farmland, wooded valleys, reservoirs alive with wildlife and hilltops with views stretching for miles. Many of these paths follow in the footsteps of generations past, from estate workers and miners to families out for a Sunday stroll. Today they remain places to walk, talk, reflect and reconnect. The walks invite you to discover hidden corners and enjoy the unique character of the valley, and appreciate its rich heritage and natural beauty along the way.

We hope these walks encourage you to step outside, explore and experience the valley on foot. These walks can include stiles, steep sections and uneven terrain. Biddulph Ramblers volunteers are working with Staffordshire County Council to improve access across local pathways and it is intended that the more difficult sections of terrain, notably over stiles, will become easier with time. Conditions can change quickly, and surfaces may be slippery and muddy. Please exercise caution at all times. **By undertaking these walks, you acknowledge that you are responsible for your own safety.**

The inspiration for this booklet came from Eddie Dawson, who passed away in February 2026. Eddie was a founder member of Biddulph Ramblers in 1997 and it was always his passion to create a book of local walks. This will be his legacy.

We'd like to extend our thanks to all who have contributed to bring this project to life.

WALK 1

BIDDULPH TOWN CENTRE TO STONE TROUGH

Distance: 4.1 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Biddulph Town Hall

Nearest Postcode: ST8 6AR

What3words: estuaries.toads.committee

From **Biddulph Town Hall**, head down past Sainsburys (W), continuing past the mini roundabout to the main road roundabout. Look to your left and cross at the pedestrian crossing, then proceed along Wharf Road (W). At the metal bridge and underpass, turn left to join the **Biddulph Valley Way**—then turn left again (S) onto the trail.

Follow National Cycle Route 55 signs (S), for about 1 mile, passing under a road bridge. Continue on Route 55 before turning right (W) opposite the entrance to **Newpool Meadows Village Green** (**N.B turn left (E) to link to Walk 8**).

At the road, turn left (S), then right (NW) at the T-junction. After passing the post office, turn right (NE) past the former Brown Lees Primitive Methodist Chapel, then left (NW) along Tower Hill Road.

Continue along Tower Hill Road past the junction with Newpool Road. The road becomes narrow with no footpath, so take care. After about 100 metres, on the corner at a right-hand bend, turn left (W) onto a public footpath into a field.

Cross four fields, then turn right onto a track. After a few yards, turn left up the bank, cross a stile, and continue across two small fields. Turn right (N) just before the buildings by Stone Trough. After 50 metres, cross a stile and turn right (N) at the path junction. Cross another stile and continue up to the road. Turn right (NE), then cross at the crossroads into Akesmore Lane.

After approximately 400 metres, take the metal gate and footpath on the right (NE) into the valley. Head towards the farm buildings; at the corner of the fencing, continue down alongside the fence. Pass through another metal gate and continue with the hedging on your right. Go through a further metal gate and follow the tractor track to another metal gate, just left of a building, to reach a farm access track. Follow this track down to and across the Biddulph Valley Way (**N.B. turn left here (N) to link to Walk 2**). Continue onto Wharf Road and retrace your steps to return to the town centre.

Biddulph Town Hall



In the early 1960s, the leaders of Biddulph Urban District Council took the decision to demolish their existing offices and construct a modern Town Hall on the same site. The new building, designed in the contemporary style of the period using concrete and glass, was officially opened on the 18 March 1966 by Councillor Leonard Jackson, J.P., Chairman of the Council.

Decorative railings were added in 2002, celebrating Biddulph's industrial heritage. The designs incorporate symbolic motifs reflecting the town's past: a bow representing Selectus and the textile industry; a miners wheel for coal mining; an anvil for iron and steel production; a plough for agriculture; and ivy leaves as a decorative flourish linking town and countryside.



In 2025 the space in front of the Town Hall was transformed into a more accessible, welcoming and flexible community area. At its heart stands the balance rope pulley wheel from Victoria Colliery, originally installed outside the Town Hall in 1983. The wheel has been carefully restored and elevated on a plinth, giving it greater visibility and prominence as a tribute to Biddulph's mining heritage. Beneath the wheel, a curved memorial wall incorporates 256 engraved bricks commemorating individuals connected with the town's mining history.

Biddulph Valley Way

Opened in 1860, originally built to transport coal and iron ore from the local mines to The Potteries and beyond. The former North Staffordshire Railway offered a limited passenger service, primarily for miners, which ceased in 1926. The last freight train passed through Biddulph in 1968.



Today the route forms part of the National Cycle Route 55 and is a popular traffic free trail for walkers, cyclists and horseback riders. Stretching approximately 10 miles (16km), the trail passes through a varied and picturesque landscape.

You'll encounter small copses, embankments, cuttings, hedgerows and ditches which provide valuable habitats for a wide variety of wildlife.

From elevated sections, there are striking views across the Peak District, Congleton Edge, Mow Cop and even the distant Pennines.

Newpool Meadows Village Green

Newpool Meadows was originally part of the Knypersley Estate and was once known as Newpool Lake, which held the largest expanse of water in the area before the construction of the Serpentine and Knypersley Reservoirs.



Today it is a small, marshy site, providing an important habitat for wildlife, including amphibians such as frogs and insects like dragonflies and damselflies. The site enjoys village green status.

WALK 2

BIDDULPH STATION TO NICK I' TH' HILL

Distance: 3.4 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Smokies Way Car Park, Gillow Heath

Nearest Postcode: ST8 6BU

What3words: copies. stammer.unit

From the **Smokies Way** car park, descend the steps, turn left, then immediately left (SW) onto the Biddulph Valley Way (**N.B. continue on (SW) to link to Walk 1**). The site of the old **Biddulph Station** is on your left.

After approximately 400 metres, turn right (NW) onto the footpath to the thatched, black and white **Whitehouse Cottage**. From here there are views towards **Mow Cop**, Biddulph Moor, Rock End and the Troughstones.

Continue past Whitehouse Cottage along the lane. At the road, turn left (W) and then right (NW) onto a public footpath. Follow the track uphill. At the tarmacked driveway to Wellhouse Farm, turn left (W) onto the public footpath. On reaching the road turn right (NE).

100 metres past the road junction turn right (E) onto a cottage driveway. Walk between the beech hedge and the low wall. At the footpath junction, turn left (NE). At the road, turn left (N). At the road junction, take the path on your right and follow the Gritstone Trail along the ridgeline (NE).

On reaching the road at Nick i' th' Hill, take the footpath on the right heading south towards woodland (**N.B. continue along the road (E) to link to Walk 3**).

Exit Willocks Wood over a stile and follow the edge of the field. At the track turn right (SE). Pass through the farmyard and at the end of the track turn left (E).

After approximately 100 metres, just before a house, turn right (S) onto a public footpath over Gillow Heath. At the road, turn left (E).

After 150 metres, take the footpath on the right (S). Cross the footbridge, then take the steps down to the Biddulph Valley Way.

Turn left (SW) and follow the trail back to the car park.

Smokies Way

It's said that Smokies Way was named after a horse that resided on the field before it was developed for housing.

Biddulph Station

The Biddulph Valley Railway was financed and built by the North Staffordshire Railway Company, opening to mineral traffic in 1859. The line ran for just over 15 miles between Stoke and Congleton, serving numerous collieries, ironworks and a sand wharf.



The first sod for the line was ceremonially cut on the 27 April 1858 by John Bateman of Knypersley Hall, a key figure in the valley's industrial history. Originally known as Gillow Heath, the station was renamed Biddulph in May 1897.

The station featured a high signal box, allowing the signalman to see up Halls Road before opening the gates. Five station houses accommodated railway staff, with the larger central house occupied by the station master. Facilities included a small waiting room, a toilet, platform and stables for horses.



Today the station building is privately owned, but the platform on the opposite side remains. Reclaimed blue bull-nosed bricks have been carefully reinstated using traditional methods to restore the platform edge, preserving a tangible link to the valley's railway heritage.

Whitehouse Cottage

A sixteenth-century Grade II listed cruck-framed cottage, widely regarded as the oldest inhabited house in the area. It retains its thatched roof, outer walls of wattle and daub with painted brick infill, and its traditional ground plan featuring opposing entrances. Today the cottage remains a private home.



Mow Cop Castle

A striking folly perched on a ridge in the parish of Odd Rode, overlooking the Biddulph Valley. Built in 1754 by Randle Wilbraham of nearby Rode Hall, it was designed as an elaborate summerhouse and remains a prominent landmark in the area.



The ridge itself is a notable boundary, marking the divide between Cheshire and Staffordshire, the dioceses of Chester and Lichfield, and even the ecclesiastical provinces of Canterbury and York.

The surrounding area was once nationally renowned for the quarrying of high-quality millstones, known as querns, used in water mills. Archaeological excavations at Mow Cop have uncovered querns dating back to the Iron Age.

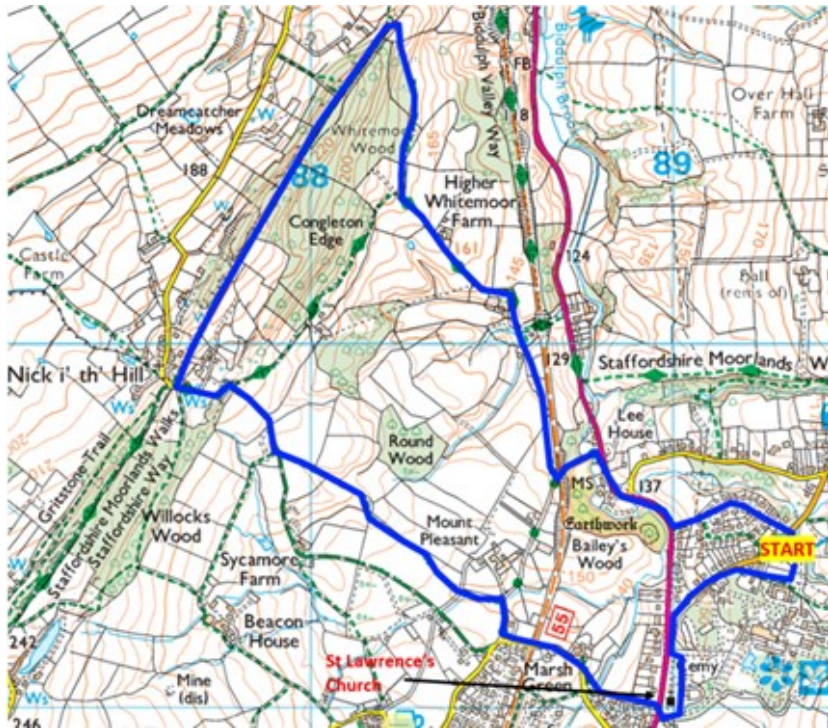
In 1937 the castle was gifted to the National Trust, the same year that over 10,000 Methodists gathered on the hill to commemorate the first Primitive Methodist camp meeting held at Mow Cop, a pivotal event in the history of the movement.

Today Mow Cop Castle remains a popular destination, offering dramatic views across the valley.

WALK 3

BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK TO CONGLETON EDGE

Distance: 4.2 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Biddulph Grange Country Park Car Park

Nearest Postcode: ST7 7XU

What3words: gives. squirts.shared

From **Biddulph Grange Country Park** car park, follow the pedestrian signs to the Country Park. Before reaching the kissing gate, bear right (SW) by the low bench, then right (NW) again. Pass through the gate and continue down the driveway (NW), passing the **Bateman Almshouses**, opposite which is the **Spring Head Basin**. At the road, turn left (SW), and at the main road, turn left (S). Turn left (E) into the Biddulph Town Burial Ground. Follow the tarmac driveway to the roundabout, then turn right (S) towards the two shelters. Turn right (SW) just beyond the shelters and follow **The Bateman Walk** through the woodland and past **St Lawrence's Church**. At the end of the Walk, go through the archway and, at the main road, turn right (N), cross the road and enter the public footpath (W) opposite. Cross over Biddulph Brook and, before reaching the road, turn immediately right (N) onto the public footpath. Follow the path up the hill onto the road and cross over the Biddulph Valley Way. As the road bends to the left, turn down a road to the right (N) and take the footpath on your left (W). Follow the path uphill, crossing a footbridge and two stiles. Go straight ahead through a gap stile and a wooden stile, across three fields. After a stile at the end of the footpath, turn right (NW) onto a bridleway, and continue uphill. On reaching a track, turn left (W) **(N.B. after 150 metres take the footpath on your left (S) to join Walk 2)**. Continue to the footpath junction at Nick l' th' Hill, then turn right (NE) up steps to follow the path along Congleton Edge (anyone suffering from vertigo should take particular care in the early section of the Congleton Edge path).

Exit the woodland and turn immediately right (S) between two large trees. Cross over the stile on the right and follow the main path (S) through the motorbike trials site to join a track which passes through Higher Whitemoor Farm. Follow the lane down and, by the entrance to Lower Whitemoor Farm, take the footpath (S) just to the right of the old shed. Cross several fields and stiles, then, on reaching a track, turn left (NE) and cross the Biddulph Valley Way. At the main road, turn right (S). Cross over the entrance to Fold Lane and, after 175 metres, take the footpath on the left (E).

At the road, turn left (NE). At the T-junction, turn right (SW) to return to the car park.

Biddulph Grange Country Park

A 73 acre haven of woodland, meadows and a large lake, featuring a restored 1904 stone boat house and a series of ponds.



The park was originally part of the grand Biddulph Grange Estate of James Bateman, a notable Victorian horticulturist.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of marked circular walks. Much of the site is woodland, including the Spring Wood, an ancient and semi-natural woodland with a mature canopy of oak, ash, sycamore, beech, chestnut, Scots pine and larch. The rich habitat supports a wide range of wildlife.

The restored Visitor Centre, 'The Hideaway', is built on the site of the Grange Estate workshop, where timber was cut using a water-powered saw installed for Robert Heath in 1903.



In August 2020 management of the centre, including the café, was taken over by Biddulph Town Council to provide a base for a local business. The Town Council is committed to ensuring the Visitor Centre continues to attract visitors, serving both as a valuable resource for local residents and an engaging destination for tourists exploring the area.

Bateman Almshouses

The Bateman Almshouses are Grade II listed and are believed to have been built by the Heath family in the mid-1800s.

Spring Head Basin

A Grade II listed drinking fountain in stone and in Neo-Norman style, believed to have been erected in the first half of the 19th century. It was placed over the site of a spring and water was piped up to the mouth and into the trough below.

The Bateman Walk

The path behind St Lawrence's was once the private 'Lime Walk', created in the 19th century by James Bateman to allow his family to attend church from his Biddulph Grange Estate.



Today the walk is divided by a locked gate, with the northern section lying within the National Trust's Biddulph Grange Garden.

On Heritage Open Days, the gates are opened, enabling visitors to recreate the route James Bateman used. The site is maintained by Biddulph Town Council and the Rotary Club of Biddulph.

St Lawrence's Parish Church

A church has been situated on this site since 1190 AD. During the siege of Biddulph Old Hall during the Civil War, the parish church suffered extensive damage. It was largely rebuilt in 1534 and later extended in 1835.



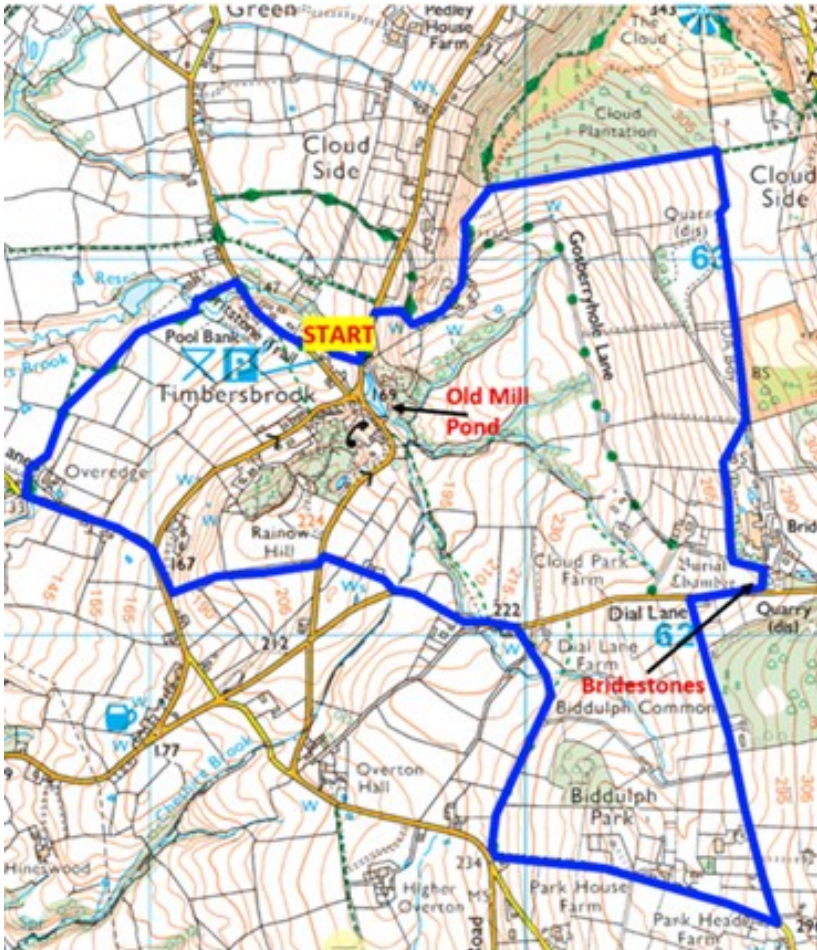
Unveiled and dedicated in the churchyard on the 4 June 1921, at 4pm, by the Right Reverend Bishop Taylor Smith, C.B., C.V.O., D.D. (Chaplain General to the Forces) is a First World War Memorial, with the names of seventy local men who died in the war from Biddulph and the surrounding district. Three further names were added to the memorial at a later date.

The memorial is made from Cornish granite and takes the form of a Celtic wheel-head cross adorned with a knot-work design.

WALK 4

TIMBERSBROOK AND THE BRIDESTONES

Distance: 4.8 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Timbersbrook Picnic Area Car Park

Nearest Postcode: CW12 3PP

What3words: [contracts.thigh.flinch](https://www.what3words.com/)

From **Timbersbrook Picnic Area** car park, walk through the picnic area, go up the steps, and turn left along the road. (Opposite the steps is the old **Mill Pond**). At the first fingerpost, turn right and climb steeply through woodland via a series of steps. At the track, turn right, past Folly Cottage (on the right). After approximately 100 metres, take the track up to the left (NE), passing the National Trust sign for '**The Cloud**'. At the junction, bear left and continue upwards, curving right to a wooden gate and gap. Turn right and follow the path along the edge of the woodland. Where the path leaves the wood, turn right (S) between fields and along to and over an imposing wooden stile. From here, there are views over the Biddulph Valley and the **Cheshire Plain**. Turn left and continue through two fields to a metal kissing gate. Cross the farm track, go through a metal gate, and follow a diagonal track across the field to another metal gate and into the woodland.

Continue through the wood to a farm track, turn right, then go through a metal kissing gate and turn left along the field edge. Pass the **Bridestones** (on the left), then turn right down the track to the road. Turn right, then left (SE) up Pines Lane. Continue to the top, then turn right at the fingerpost opposite High House, passing Park Head Farm buildings. Follow the track down, cross a stile, and continue down the field to another stile on the right. Cross the stile and descend between a low stone wall and fence, continuing along the field edge to the road. Turn right (N) and follow the track to its end at Dial Lane. Turn left (NW) and follow the road until it turns left. Turn right at the fingerpost through a gate, head towards the building, and take the narrow grassy path uphill between the house and a well. At the road, turn left, then almost opposite turn right at the fingerpost. Cross two wooden stiles to Rainow Hill. Keep left and descend to the road. Turn right, then shortly after turn left (NW) down Brookhouse Lane. Pass the first house on the right, then take the first stone stile on the right in the dip, joining onto **The Gritstone Trail** as you do so. Cross another stone stile, cross the farm track and footpaths (NE) over several fields to the road.

Turn right and walk back along the road to the car park.

Timbersbrook Picnic Area

The picnic area was once the site of the Silver Springs Bleaching and Dye Works, established in the early 1900s. Its tall 114 foot chimney was a prominent landmark, visible for miles around.

At its peak Silver Springs employed over 200 people. The factory's main work was to take rolls of unfinished cloth, mostly from Manchester warehouses, and bleach and dye them in a variety of colours and finishes. The finished textiles were then returned to Manchester or exported abroad, with thousands, if not millions of yards of black cloth shipped to China from Timbersbrook. The factory closed in 1961.

In 1980 Congleton Council cleared the site and transformed it into the picnic area.

Mill Pond

The Mill Pond was once a vital part of the local silk mill industry with water from Timbers Brook providing the power needed to run the mill.

Today while the industrial activity has long since ceased, the pool has taken on a new life as an important breeding habitat for toads, supporting local wildlife and adding to the valley's natural heritage.

The Gritstone Trail

A challenging 35 mile (56 km) route stretching from Disley to Kidsgrove, the trail passes along sections of the Biddulph Valley Way and through Timbersbrook Picnic Area.

The trail takes its name from gritstone, a hard sandstone once quarried extensively in the region for building materials. This route offers walkers and cyclists both a test of endurance and a chance to experience the beauty of the area.

The Cloud

A heath-covered hill, crisscrossed with a network of walking paths. Its summit, marked by a trig point, offers a perfect photo opportunity and spectacular 360 degree views across Congleton, Macclesfield, Holmes Chapel and Greater Manchester.

At 343 metres (1,125 ft) it is one of the highest hills in the area. On a clear day, landmarks such as Jodrell Bank and Mow Cop can be easily seen. A metal plaque at the summit provides directions and distances to a variety of local and national points of interest.

Cheshire Plain

Stretching from the Mersey Valley in the north to the Shropshire Hills in the south. The area is primarily used for dairy farming which has shaped its characteristic patchwork of enclosed fields bordered by hedgerows, creating the quintessential rural appearance of Cheshire.

Bridestones

The remains of an ancient chambered tomb dating from the Neolithic period (c. 3500-2400 BC).

Archaeologists believe that the tomb served as a communal burial site for between 10 and 50 people.



The site was named 'Breitha' or Broadstones by the Vikings, who reportedly excavated the long barrow in search of treasure.

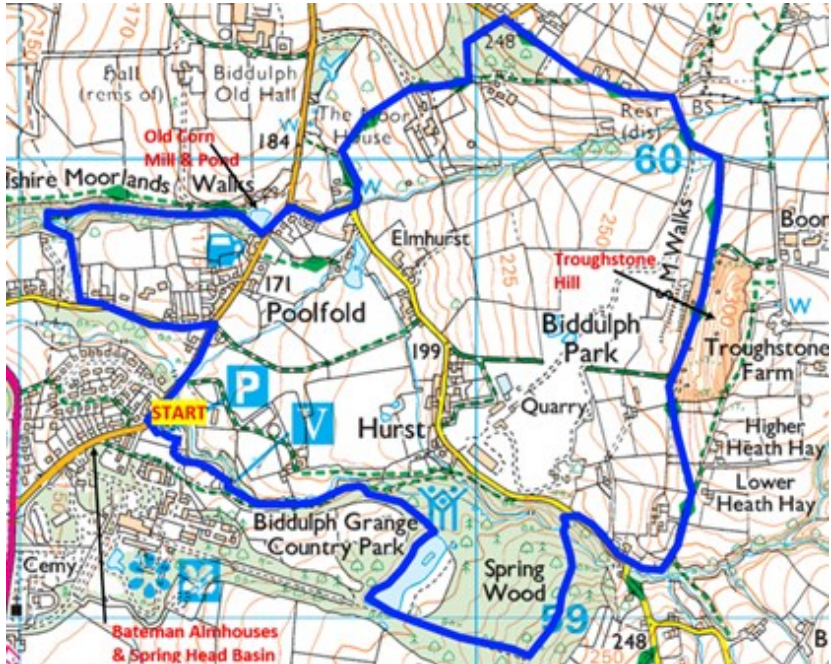
The tomb has significantly altered over the centuries. In 1764 many stones were removed to help construct the nearby turnpike road, and others were used later in local buildings.

The site is protected as a scheduled ancient monument, preserving its remarkable history.

WALK 5

BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK AND THE TROUGHSTONES

Distance: 3.1 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Biddulph Grange Country Park Car Park

Nearest Postcode: ST8 7XU

What3words: gives.squirts.shared

From Biddulph Grange Country Park car park, walk down to the main road, **Grange Road**, and turn right (NE) **(N.B. from the car park follow the pedestrian signs to the Country Park to follow Walk 3)**.

Turn left (W) into Fold Lane. After approximately 600 metres, turn right (N) onto a path into the **Clough Woodland**. Cross the footbridge and follow the path upstream.

Biddulph Old Hall is not visible, but lies just to the north. Pass under an archway, go up the stone steps, bear right (SE), then at the path junction turn left (E). Continue past **Biddulph Corn Mill and Pond**.

On reaching the road, turn left (NE), then right (E) onto Hurst Road. After approximately 150 metres, at the second corner turn left (N) onto a track. At the end of this track, bear right (NE) uphill across a field. Cross a driveway and continue uphill through woodland.

At the track junction, bear left up to a road junction. Turn right along a narrow track, passing the former Biddulph Park Methodist Church and the 'no through road' sign, following the tarmac track as it bends right and then left. Go through the metal gates on the right and cross fields to reach the base of the **Troughstones**. Cross the wall and turn right (S). Continue along the path with a stone wall to your right, then upwards with a stone wall on your left.

On reaching a driveway, turn right (S). At the road, turn right (NW) **(N.B. turn left (S) and over the road bridge to join Walk 6)**. After approximately 300 metres, turn left (SW) through a gap in the stone wall into **Spring Wood**. Descend the steps, cross the footbridge, and climb the steps. At the top, turn left (S) and follow the Himalayan Walk. At the far path junction turn right (W) downhill. At the bottom, follow the path clockwise around the lake, along the woodland edge. At the lake noticeboard, turn left (NW), down the steps.

Continue downhill past the Hideaway Café and toilets, returning to the car park.

Grange Road

Part of the original turnpike route established in 1770, linking Tunstall and Bosley, Grange Road was once the main route between Biddulph and Congleton until around 1820.

Clough Woodland

The Clough was once an important route linking Biddulph Old Hall and Biddulph Grange, used by the Bateman and Heath families during Victorian times. The Batemans enhanced the landscape by planting Scots pine, hornbeam and evergreen oak, shaping much of the woodland character seen today. Around the turn of the millennium the area was further enriched with the planting of more than 300 native trees. Today the Clough provides an excellent habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna. In spring, the woodland floor is carpeted with bluebells, red campion, wood sorrel and wood anemone. The area is also home to wildlife including rabbits, foxes, owls, buzzards and bats.

Biddulph Old Hall

Its origins can be traced back to as late as 1425-30. During the Civil War, the Royalist Francis Biddulph and his family came under attack from Cromwell's troops, first by muskets from Congleton Edge, and later by cannon fire,



including a large shot from a cannon known as 'Roaring Meg'.

The family was forced to flee the Hall and were imprisoned in Stafford and Shrewsbury. Tragically, much of Francis Biddulph's family succumbed to plague, though he survived until 1668 and is buried in St Lawrence's parish churchyard.

In 2004 Biddulph Old Hall was bought by Nigel Daly and Brian Vowles, alongside Nigel's brother David, after the building had fallen into a poor state of repair. Together they have restored the Hall, developed the gardens and invited visitors to experience the site through open days and charity events.

Biddulph Corn Mill and Pond

Believed to have pre-dated the construction of Biddulph Old Hall in the 16th century.

The water-powered mill was fed by the mill pond, which draws water from a stream rising on Biddulph Park and a leat from the Grange Park Estate.



In the early 20th century, the mill was operated by Mr Thomas Walley, a farmer and miller, who lived on the site with his wife and family in Mill Cottage.

The mill continued in use until the 1920s, after which it fell into disuse and was eventually demolished in the late 1940s, leaving behind only traces of its historic presence by the pond.

Troughstones

A striking millstone grit tor, offering an impressive natural viewpoint over the surrounding landscape. Parts of the formation have been altered by historical quarrying, but it still stands as a dramatic feature.



Spring Wood

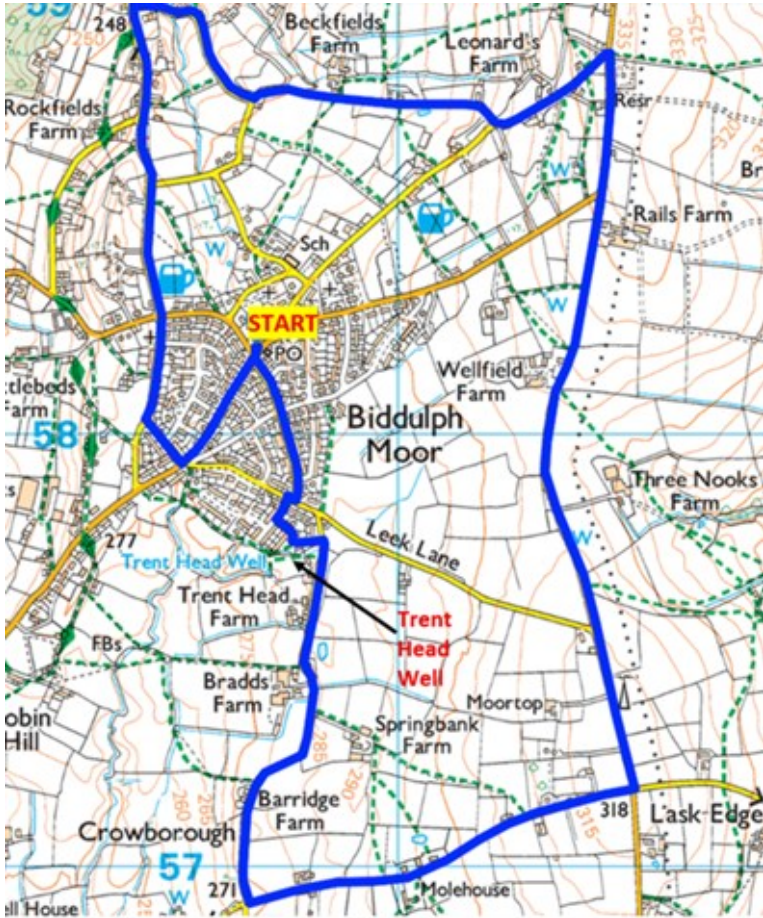
An ancient semi-natural woodland consisting of a mature canopy of oak, ash, sycamore, beech, chestnut, Scots pine and larch. The woodland supports a rich variety of wildlife, including several species of bat such as Pipistrelle, Whiskered/Brandt's, Daubenton's and Noctule bats.

In spring, the woodland floor is carpeted with English bluebells, while autumn brings a diverse display of fungi.

WALK 6

BIDDULPH MOOR—COUNTRY LANES

Distance: 4.3 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Biddulph Moor Village Green

Nearest Postcode: ST8 7HZ

What3words: longingly. robots.parked

From **Biddulph Moor Village Green**, pass the Rose & Crown Public House and head down New Street (SW). Turn right (NW) onto Cottage Lane (**N.B. continue down New Street (SW) to join Walk 9**). Turn right (N) onto Chapel Lane.

At Hill Top Methodist Church, cross the road and continue onto 'Over the Hill' (N).

After first passing Dam Lane on the right and then 'Under the Hill' on the left, continue downhill, with views of the Troughstones ahead. Take the next turn right (E) onto Eliases Lane (**N.B. continue on (N) to join Walk 5**). Follow the lane uphill as it becomes Stanways Lane, then turn left (NE). Continue climbing to the junction with Hot Lane and turn left (NE). At Top Road, turn right (S).

Continue along Top Road into Lask Edge Road. After passing Rudyard Road and Leek Lane, turn right (W) into Crowborough Road. From here there are wide-ranging views towards Mow Cop and The Cloud and, on a clear day, as far as Greater Manchester, **Jodrell Bank Observatory** and even the Welsh Mountains.

Continue down Crowborough Road to a crossroads, then turn right (N) onto Barrage Road. As you re-enter the village, walk past the 30mph signs and shortly afterwards, turn left beside the first building onto a fingerposted grassy public footpath.

At the road, turn right (N) (**N.B. for the Trent Head Well continue a few metres along the grassy track to the left, over a stile into the field where the Trent Head Well is situated. Anyone wishing to walk the Trent Valley Way footpath from Biddulph Moor would start from this Trent Head Well**).

At the end of the road, turn right (N), then at the end cross over into Wraggs Lane. Follow Wraggs Lane to the end to return to the Village Green opposite.

Biddulph Moor

In the early 19th century Biddulph Moor was divided between three parishes: Horton, Greenway Moor and Bradley Green. Over time it became known simply as Greenway Moor, and later, as Biddulph Moor, the name it retains today.

The Moor lies at the southern end of the Pennine Range, stretching from Troughstones to Baileys Hill and Wickenstone Rocks. Standing at nearly 1,000 feet above sea level, the village enjoys superb panoramic views across Biddulph and the surrounding countryside. On a clear day the Welsh mountains can be seen on the horizon.

Village Green

In the centre of Biddulph Moor, well used by residents for functions throughout the year. Biddulph Moor Community Association maintain the garden at the village green and organise the annual Well Dressing each June. The tableau is displayed on the green with entertainment and refreshments at the village hall.

Jodrell Bank Observatory

A UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to the UK's largest radio telescope. Owned and managed by the University of Manchester, it is a world-leading centre for scientific research. The observatory was established in 1945 by Sir Bernard Lovell, a radio astronomer at the university, who began investigating cosmic rays following his work on radar during the Second World War. Its most iconic structure is the Lovell Telescope, a landmark of modern science and engineering, which continues to play a vital role in astronomical research and the exploration of the universe.



Photo Credit: Matthew Stubbs

Trent Head Well

The Trent Head marks the spring that forms the source of the River Trent, the third longest river in England at approximately 185 miles. From its upland beginnings here, the river flows eastward across the Midlands before joining the River Humber near Hull on the east coast.

In the 1930s a stone well structure was built around the spring. The present edifice was erected in 1935 by Biddulph Urban District Council to formally mark this important geographical point.

The well holds particular historical significance for the village and is the inspiration for Biddulph Moor's annual Well

Dressing, although the celebration now takes place on the village green as the well site itself is not suitable for the event.



The tradition of blessing wells and water supplies dates back to Celtic times, or possibly even earlier. Intricate pictures are created using natural materials such as flower petals, moss, seeds, beans and cones, carefully pressed into clay to form colourful and symbolic designs.

Trent Valley Way

The Trent Head Well marks the start of a 185 mile long distance path following the course of the river through Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire to its outflow into the Humber estuary.

The Biddulph section is waymarked down to Knypersley Reservoir; Walk 7 in this booklet includes the lower stretches.

WALK 7

GREENWAY BANK COUNTRY PARK

Distance: 3.6 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Greenway Bank Country Park Lower Car Park

Nearest Postcode: ST8 7QY

What3words: bypassed.valley.cobbles

From **Greenway Bank Country Park** lower car park, take the path into the Country Park.

As the path turns sharply to the right, take the left fork downhill (W) and follow the path beside the **Serpentine Lake** for approximately 800 metres to a footbridge **(N.B. turn left (S) just before the footbridge to join Walk 8)**.

Cross over the footbridge, and continue on the lakeside path to its junction with the **Knypersley Reservoir** path, then turn left (E).

Follow this path, then take the stepped, sloping path on the left (SE). Turn left (NE) over the stone bridge, then left again over a stile onto a public footpath.

Cross several fields and, on reaching a track, turn left (N) **(N.B. carry on this track (N) to join Walk 9)**. Just before a gate, turn right (SE) onto a footpath.

Before the path crosses a wall, bear slightly right (S) and pass through a gap in the wall to re-enter the Country Park.

At the path junction, turn left (SE) to follow the Waterfall Walk. After reaching the waterfall, continue along the path beside the leat.

At the junction signed for **Gawton's Well** and **Gawton's Stone**, continue straight ahead, keeping alongside the leat.

After passing the **Warder's Tower**, turn left down the steps to rejoin the main reservoir path, crossing over the bridge.

On reaching the road, turn right (NW) and follow it back to the car park.

Greenway Bank Country Park

Once part of the historic Knypersley Hall estate, the park spans 114 acres of picturesque parkland. Visitors can enjoy peaceful woodland walks that wind around the tranquil Serpentine Lake and Knypersley Reservoir.

The park's two lakes were created by Hugh Henshall Williamson, owner of the estate and brother-in-law of the renowned 18th century engineer, James Brindley. The upper lake, formed in 1781, is fed by the River Trent via a leat from Knypersley. The larger lake, Knypersley Reservoir, was established in 1828 to supply water to the Caldon Canal.

Today the park is celebrated for its impressive woodland canopy, which is recognised in the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

Serpentine Lake

Created around 1781, the lake is believed to be one of the earliest reservoirs in the UK. Covering approximately 20 acres, it feeds into the lower Knypersley Reservoir.



Knypersley Reservoir

Constructed between 1825 and 1828 to supply water to the Caldon Canal, alongside Stanley Pool and Rudyard Lake. It is the only reservoir situated along the course of the River Trent. The weir at the southern end of the reservoir regulates the flow of approximately six million litres of water into the Caldon Canal each day, while a further one and a half million litres are released into the River Trent. Today, the reservoir is a popular habitat for wildlife and a favourite haunt of coots, tufted ducks and great crested grebes.



Gawton's Well

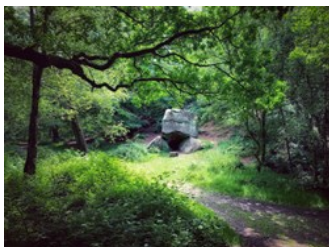
The waters of this natural spring are said to possess healing properties. According to local legend, Gawton (or Gorton) a servant at Knypersley Hall, fell victim to the plague and was forced to leave the estate when he became ill.



Seeking refuge, he took shelter in a cave near Knypersley Reservoir. Each day he bathed in the spring's waters and drank from its clear source. Remarkably, he recovered, and the spring has since been known as Gawton's Well, a place long associated with healing and hope.

Gawton's Stone

According to local legend, a plague victim once took shelter beneath this stone, using the cave as his home. Over time, the stone has become associated with mystery and folklore, and some believe it holds a magical aura.



Warder's Tower

A three-storey octagonal tower built in 1828 for John Bateman as a gamekeeper's lodge for the Knypersley Hall Estate.



From this vantage point, the keeper could help protect the herd of deer introduced into the park, as well as the many ducks on the lakes, from poachers.

The Harrison family lived in the tower in the 1830s, and it remained a residence until it was last occupied in the 1950s.

WALK 8

GREENWAY BANK COUNTRY PARK TO KNYPERSLEY

Distance: 3.4 miles. Direction: clockwise

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Starting Point: Greenway Bank Country Park Upper Car Park

Nearest Postcode: ST8 7QX

What3words: congested. wide.ascendant

From Greenway Bank Country Park upper car park, walk to the road and turn right (W). After approximately 400 metres, turn right (W) onto a path into the woods.

At the end of the path, turn left, then immediately right down Bemersley Road to the main road. Turn left (S), cross over, and continue past the **Butterfly Garden**. At the junction, turn right (SW), passing the welcome sign for Brindley Ford. Follow the road as it curves to the right, then turn right (N) onto the cycleway (Biddulph Valley Way). **Black Bull Station** was just north of Brindley Ford on the Biddulph Valley line. **Victoria Colliery** was behind and to the right of the station.

Follow the Biddulph Valley Way for approximately one mile, crossing Brown Lees Road. On reaching Newpool Meadows Village Green, turn right (E) (**N.B. turn left (W) to join Walk 1**). Turn down to your left and follow the main path diagonally (NE) across the meadow.

At the far end of the meadow, turn right (E) and follow the path up to the main road. Cross the road and continue along Conway Road (E).

Turn right (SE) into Harlech Drive. Continue and **Knypersley Hall** is straight ahead. Bear right (S) onto a track.

Follow the public footpath (S), descending diagonally across fields. At the road, turn right (SW), then after approximately 100 metres, turn left (SE) onto a public footpath.

Continue across fields, before crossing a stile into the woodland of **Greenway Bank Country Park**.

At the interpretive panel, turn right (S) (**N.B. turn left (NE) to join Walk 7**).

Cross the footbridge, bear left (SE), then right (S), and follow the path uphill to return to the car park.

Butterfly Garden

A small woodland area adjacent to the A527 on the town's southern boundary, marking the entrance to Biddulph from Brindley Ford.



The garden, previously maintained by Biddulph in Bloom, is now owned and maintained by Biddulph Town Council.

Black Bull Station

The station was opened in 1864 by the North Staffordshire Railway on their Biddulph Valley line. The line was primarily used to transport coal and ironstone from the collieries and ironworks that once lined the Biddulph valley.

Victoria Colliery

The Victoria Colliery, known locally as 'The Bull' or 'Black Bull', stood behind and to the right of the station. It was one of the most significant coal mines in the region.



In the 1850s Robert Heath leased the mineral rights beneath the Knypersley Hall Estate from John Bateman and went on to develop the Biddulph Valley Colliery.

From 1860 to 1953, the colliery was at the heart of employment and community life in Biddulph.

In 1908 it employed over 1,100 men and boys; by 1953 this had risen to 1,580. Even as demand for coal declined, the site continued to employ around 600 workers until its closure on 28 July 1982.

Knypersley Hall

A Grade II listed building, the hall was the seat of Sir Francis Bowyer in the early 18th century before becoming the home of the Bateman family in the early 19th century.

The Bateman family, followed by Robert Heath, played a major role in the development of the Biddulph Valley during the Industrial Revolution. Ten years before John Bateman came to live at Knypersley in 1811, the population of Biddulph was 1,180. By 1851 it had risen to 2,263, and by 1871, fourteen years after Robert Heath began developing coal mining and ironmaking in the area, it had increased to 4,769.

By the mid 1870s Robert Heath had acquired the Knypersley and Grange Estates from the Bateman family, as well as the Greenway Bank Estate from the executors of Hugh Henshall Williamson.

Greenway Bank Country Park

Until the 1870s this area formed part of two country estates: Knypersley Hall and the Greenway Bank Estate. Today its ancient and semi-natural woodlands provide important habitats for a wide variety of wildlife and form part of a wider ecological corridor.

The landscape is diverse, featuring open water, deep sandstone gorges, and predominantly broad-leaved woodland, alongside areas of marshy grassland, swamp and acidic heath.

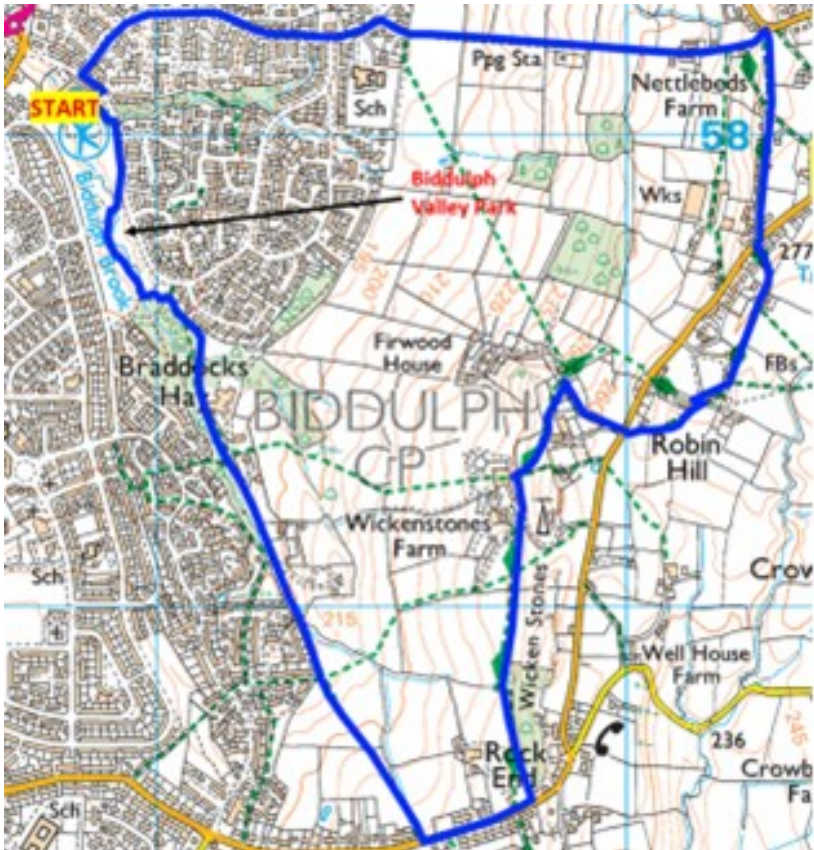
The park supports a rich variety of plant life, including ancient oak trees and seasonal wildflowers. In spring, drifts of bluebells create a particularly striking display.

Wildlife is abundant. Birdwatchers may spot kingfishers, herons and several species of warbler. Mammals such as badgers, foxes, squirrels and rabbits are also present, along with a range of amphibians and insects. Water voles have been recorded within the park, highlighting its importance as a wildlife habitat.

WALK 9

BIDDULPH VALLEY LEISURE CENTRE TO THE WICKENSTONES

Distance: 3.8 miles. Direction: clockwise



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Starting Point: Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre

Nearest Postcode: ST8 7HL

What3words: growl. clusters. utter

From **Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre** car park, walk up the steps beside the entrance. At the road, turn left (NW), then right (NE) into Pennine Way. Continue past Oxhey First school, then turn right (SE) into Firwood Road. At the end of the road, cross the stile and head uphill, keeping left. Continue across two fields to another stile, then follow the track between buildings. Just before reaching the road, take the footpath on the right (S) through a metal gate, following the line of telegraph poles to another metal gate **(N.B. walk on up the road (E) to join Walk 6)**.

At a stoned roadway on the left, continue straight ahead (S) to the road. Cross over to the right, then immediately turn left (SE) onto a track between two houses. Pass through two squeeze stiles and continue along the track, then through a stone squeeze stile into the field. After approximately 100 metres, turn right through a metal gate and pass farm buildings to a farm track. Immediately turn left, then take the path to the right alongside an evergreen hedge. Enter the field and follow the fence line to a stile, then cross another field to reach the road. Cross over onto the driveway for Little Wickenstones Farm (NW). Follow the track as it curves right, then take the footpath on the left (SW) just before the cattle grid. Cross two small fields, then a stone stile into a larger field and continue diagonally left to join a farm track above the farm. Turn left and continue towards

Wickenstone Rocks.

Go through the narrow metal stile ahead (S) and head towards the woodland. After crossing four fields, reach a road and turn right (SW) **(N.B. turn left (S) down the hill into Lodge Barn Road to join Walk 7)**. After approximately 300 metres, turn right (NW) onto a track beside a house. Cross two fields diagonally, then turn right (NW) just before a metal kissing gate. Continue alongside houses, around a corner, down steps, and through a metal gate to a tarmac driveway. Turn right along the driveway and, just after the tarmac ends, take the path on the left (NW) before the metal barrier gate. Follow the woodland path. At a fork, bear left (W), then right (NW) to cross a brook via a steel footbridge into **Biddulph Valley Park**. Turn right (N) and follow the path alongside the brook, crossing it again via another steel footbridge. At the road, turn left (N) and return to the leisure centre.

Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre

Located on Thames Drive, the leisure centre offers a range of facilities including a gym, group classes, a 25 metre swimming pool and a six-court sports hall. The D&G bus service (93) via Pennine Way stops conveniently outside the leisure centre entrance.

Wickenstone Rocks

A linear outcropping of gritstone on Biddulph Moor, said to have given James Bateman the inspiration for the rockwork at Biddulph Grange.



Biddulph Valley Park

Located to the north of Biddulph, between Thames Drive and Moorland Road, and just south of Biddulph Leisure Centre, Biddulph Valley Park is a welcoming green space at the heart of the community. It is widely used and enjoyed by neighbouring residents, primarily for recreation and informal leisure. The park includes a small community orchard and a children's play area. Orchards can provide a green haven in which to relax and wind down, and can also become an attractive habitat for insects, birds, bees and small mammals. It will take a few years for the community orchard to become productive, but then it will provide a supply of fresh fruit for anyone who wishes to and is able to pick the fruit for themselves.

Biddulph Brook flows through the site, rising near Wickenstone Rocks, and running along the valley before joining the River Dane at Congleton. Several areas within the park have been identified as being suitable for reduced mowing regimes, to enhance grassland habitats and support wildlife. Opportunities for additional tree planting have also been identified, helping to link existing tree lines and strengthen green corridors, and manage flood risk, while maintaining key views and accessibility. Planting along the brook's banks will focus on 'wet woodland' species, such as willow or alder, further enhancing biodiversity and the natural character of the park.

WALKING ADVICE

Walking is a simple, free, and effective way to improve your health.

Wear suitable footwear and clothing

Choose comfortable, sturdy shoes or boots with good grip, as paths can be muddy or slippery, especially after rain.

Suitable clothing prioritises comfort, safety and adaptability to changing weather, with a key emphasis on layering. Wearing multiple thin layers rather than one thick layer helps to regulate body temperature.

Be prepared

Take a waterproof coat and a drink to stay dry and hydrated. Carry a fully charged mobile phone and use apps such as 'what3words' for precise location tracking. The emergency services widely accept what3words during 999 calls, and it works offline, which is ideal in low coverage areas. The relevant Ordnance Survey (OS) map that covers all these walks is OS Explorer 268 (Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton). A compass is necessary if you wish to follow the bearings (ie N, S, NE, etc) included in the walk descriptions. The accompanying maps all orientate to the north.

Exercise caution

You may pass livestock on many of these walks. Keep out of their way and avoid disturbing them whenever possible.

Given that many stiles in Staffordshire are old or rickety, caution is essential to avoid falls, particularly in wet or muddy conditions.

Maintaining three points of contact (e.g. two feet and one hand, or one foot and two hands) will help avoid accidents.

Take your litter home

Litter in the countryside is a significant problem that harms wildlife, poses risks to livestock, and spoils the landscape. Leave no trace of your visit.

WALKING ADVICE

Dogs

Some of these walks are dog-friendly, but dogs should be kept under control and in sight at all times. Always clean up after your dog to prevent illness in people, livestock and wildlife, and dispose of waste responsibly.

Navigating fields with cattle is a common part of walking with dogs, but it requires caution, particularly as cattle can become protective or aggressive, especially when calves are present. You must control your dog so that it does not disturb or scare farm animals. If a farm animal chases you and your dog, it is safer for you to let your dog off the lead. Don't risk getting hurt trying to protect it.

Stick to the paths

Stay on marked footpaths to protect crops, wildlife and sensitive habitats, even if they are muddy. When walking on a road without a footpath, walk as much as possible on the right-hand side. This allows you to see approaching vehicles and take evasive action, if necessary, rather than relying on hearing traffic behind you. Keep close to the side of the road, walk in single file, and, if possible, wear bright or reflective clothing. If you encounter a blocked public right of way (such as a footpath or bridleway), you have the right to safely bypass the obstruction, but should do so responsibly. You may divert around the obstruction, but you must do so by the shortest safe route possible and return to the legal path as soon as possible. Blocked paths or other Public Rights of Way issues (such as difficult stiles or vegetation overgrowth) can be reported to the local Highway Authority, which has a legal duty to keep paths open.

Respect property

Respecting private property in the countryside means treating the land as a working environment and someone's home, not just as a recreational playground. The key to being a respectful visitor is to follow the Countryside Code by sticking to paths, leaving gates as you find them, and keeping dogs under control.

BIDDULPH RAMBLERS

A walk in the countryside chatting with friends and enjoying the beautiful scenery we have on our doorstep? Sounds interesting? Then come and join us at Biddulph Ramblers. We all value our physical and mental well-being and walking is a fantastic way to get fit and remain active, whatever your age or ability.



We organise and lead walks on Wednesdays and Sundays throughout the year, both local and further afield. As well as exploring the many paths and lanes of the Biddulph Valley, we venture regularly into the Peak District and even out to the Shropshire Hills, Wales and the Lakes. Our Wednesday walks alternate between shorter (4-5 miles) and medium routes (6-8 miles), while on Sundays, the walks extend to 8-10 miles.

During summer, as part of the Biddulph Festival, we also run short, local walks on Thursday evenings which are open to non-members.

Our walking programme includes day coach trips to interesting destinations, and coach or self-drive holidays for long weekends or up to a week. European trips are also arranged for smaller groups.

As you see, we are an active bunch and we would love to welcome you into our friendly world. To learn more about us and to view the walks and events we have in store currently, please visit our website at:

www.biddulphramblers.org.uk

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