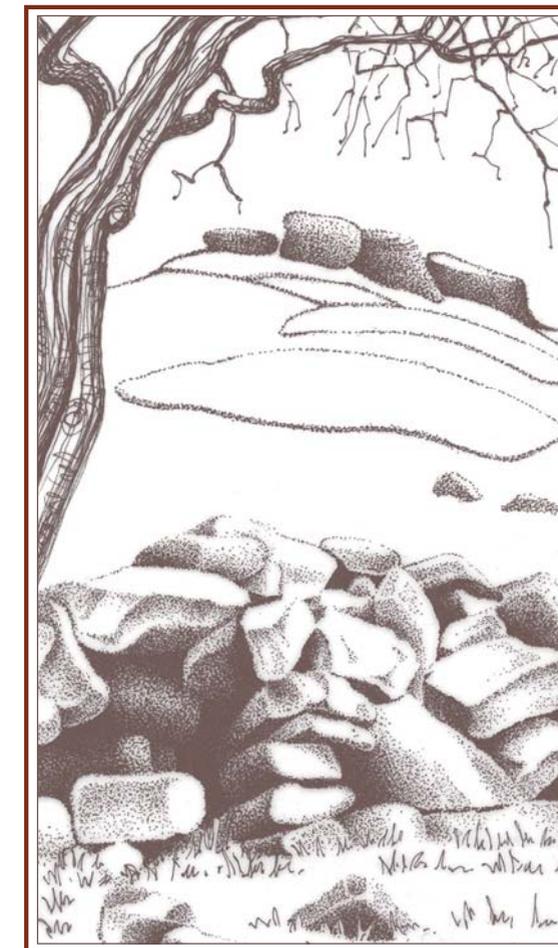


The Western Edges

A WALK AROUND BIDDULPH



Enjoy the Walk

The route is 10½ miles (17 km) long. Allow at least 5 hours to complete the walk, adding time for stops. The area is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 258: Stoke-on-Trent & Newcastle-under-Lyme plus Explorer Map 268: Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton.

Grit and Coal

Biddulph nestles in a broad valley between long ridges formed by two bands of harder rock within the shales and coal measures which underlie the area. The first of these is the Chatsworth Grit which outcrops along the Mow Cop-Congleton Edge ridge and again at Troughstone Hill. It has been extensively quarried for use as millstones and for building. Overlying the grit and separated from it by a layer of softer shales, is the rough rock which forms the spectacular edges at Wickenstones and Knypersley Rocks. It is also quarried at Hurst Quarry for refractory sand.

The name 'Biddulph' derives from the Old English term 'by the diggins' – whether this is a reference to the quarrying of the gritstone or to the mining of coal is unclear.

Coal was formerly worked on a modest scale at a number of mines on the slopes to the west of the town. Spoil heaps can still be seen around The Falls. From here, coal was loaded onto trams and drawn down to the coal wharf where it was loaded onto the trains of the North Staffordshire Railway. This railway closed in 1969 and is now used as a link for walkers and horseriders between Congleton and Biddulph.

Biddulph under the ice

The landscape we know today emerged at the close of the last Ice Age some 15,000 years ago as the ice retreated northwards across Cheshire.

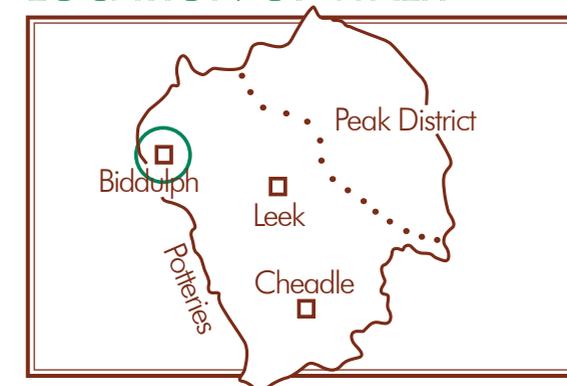
A legacy of the Ice Ages is the thick covering of clay, sand and gravel deposited by the icesheets over much of the lower ground.

Meltwaters from the ice, in escaping southwards into the Trent have cut deep channels such as the valley now occupied by the serpentine reservoirs at Knypersley.

How to get there

Follow Station Road north from Biddulph town centre until Halls Road is reached. Turn left. The old station car park lies off Smokies Way on the left.

LOCATION OF WALK



Remember, these paths cross private land.
Please follow the Countryside Code:

- Be safe plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

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Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ
Telephone: 0345 605 3010
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*Map correct at time of going to press
please check our website for diversions and updates
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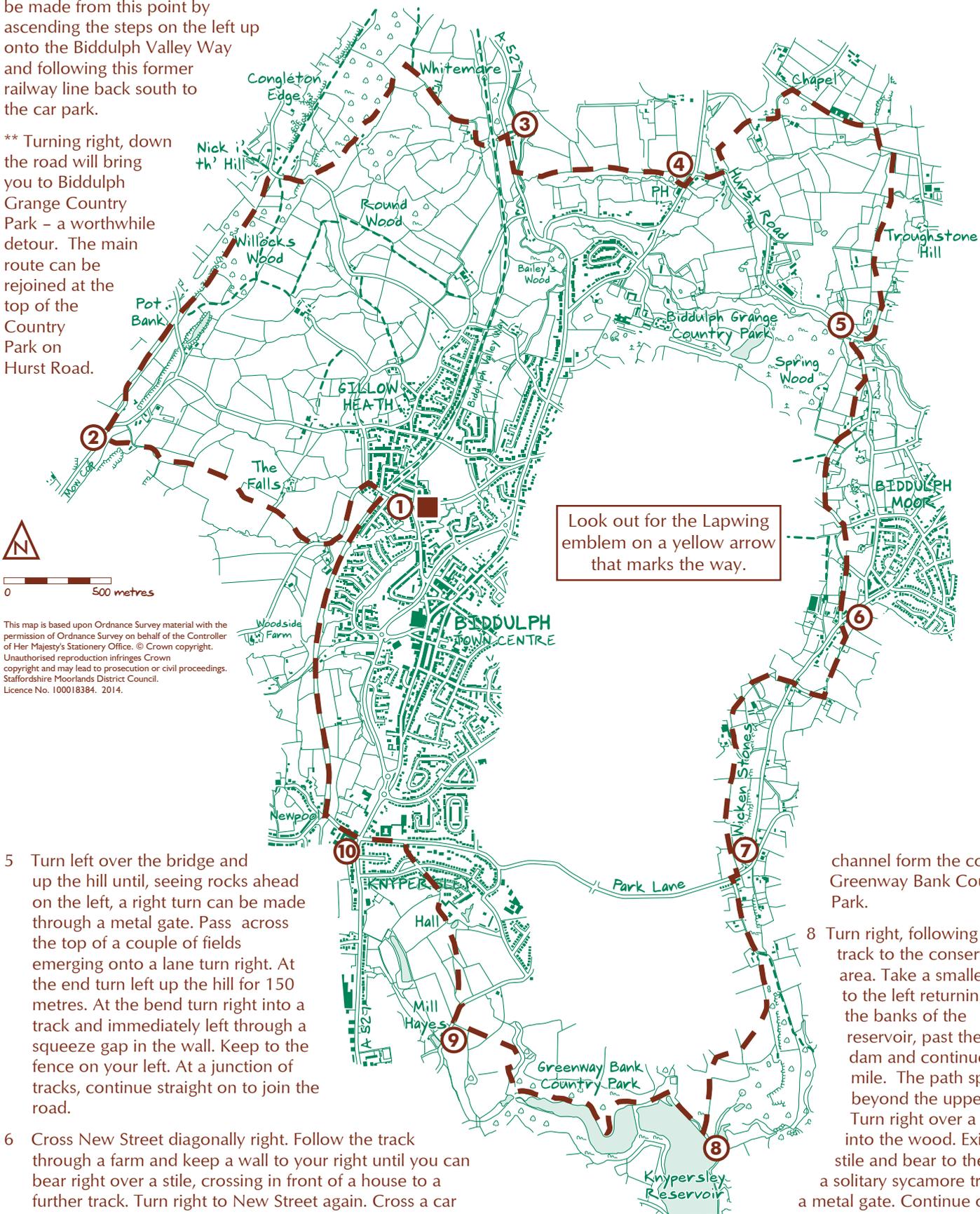
The walk is described from the Old Station car park off Halls Road, north of Biddulph town centre.

- 1 Turn left out of the car park up Halls Road and then left again along Akemoor Lane. After 400 yards leave the road through a kissing gate on your right. Follow the old tramway between the spoil heap and the hedge. Continue up this line through five fields to a farm track. Immediately after the house, cross a stile on left and head for far corner of field. Follow wall on your right to the road running along the ridge of Mow Cop.
- 2 Turn right along the ridge. In the dip where the road leaves the ridge, take the track along the crest of the hill through Willocks Wood to another road at Nick i' th' Hill. Turn right and where the metalled road turns left, take the rough track down towards a house. Do not bear right here but follow the obvious path ahead through the wood and into a field. The path curves right and down to a farm track. Go down through Whitmore Farm, eventually passing under the old railway* to the busy Congleton Road.

* A return to the start of the walk can be made from this point by ascending the steps on the left up onto the Biddulph Valley Way and following this former railway line back south to the car park.

** Turning right, down the road will bring you to Biddulph Grange Country Park – a worthwhile detour. The main route can be rejoined at the top of the Country Park on Hurst Road.

- 3 Turn right and then left after 100 yards through a kissing gate and over Biddulph Brook. Continue up the hill with the wood edge on your right through a series of curious concrete stiles. Enter the wood by a track. Pass to the right of a pond and then up steps onto Grange Road**.
4. By the Talbot Arms turn left on to Grange Road for 70m then right on to Hurst Road. Continue along Hurst Road for 150m then take a track left to a kissing gate at the end. Bear right, directly up the field. Cross a drive, up steps and into the wood. Turn left up a tarmac drive, beyond steep section, to the road. Turn right at Biddulph Park Methodist Chapel. After ½ mile the road turns first sharp right then sharp left. Some 80 yards beyond turn right through a metal gate beside double gates. Follow the wall on your left towards Troughstone Hill. Where the wall turns left, continue straight on to a stile. Turn right along a quarry track, forking right where it splits. Through a wall, the track climbs slightly with a wall on your left. Turn right through the kissing gate at the drive down to Hurst Road.



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- 5 Turn left over the bridge and up the hill until, seeing rocks ahead on the left, a right turn can be made through a metal gate. Pass across the top of a couple of fields emerging onto a lane turn right. At the end turn left up the hill for 150 metres. At the bend turn right into a track and immediately left through a squeeze gap in the wall. Keep to the fence on your left. At a junction of tracks, continue straight on to join the road.

- 6 Cross New Street diagonally right. Follow the track through a farm and keep a wall to your right until you can bear right over a stile, crossing in front of a house to a further track. Turn right to New Street again. Cross a car park, down the field to a stile and bear left. Bear left again to a stone step stile in the wall to the right of the farm buildings. Over the wall bear left and over another stile. Descend rightwards to Wickenstones Farm. Continue along the track behind buildings and then through a field gate to right alongside a gate. Cross the field to the uppermost of the two farm gates. Keep along the top of next two fields and cross a third onto Park Lane.
- 7 Cross into Lodge Barn Road. Eventually the metalled road bends left. Go straight on between stone gateposts for a further 250 yards on a ridge amongst trees. Through a stile on the right by a field entrance head down and keep the fence line on your left. Cross another stile, head directly down the field to cross a metal gate under an ash tree. Keep left along fence to a path on the banks of Knypersley Reservoir. These lakes sitting in a former glacial meltwater

channel form the core of Greenway Bank Country Park.

- 8 Turn right, following the track to the conservation area. Take a smaller path to the left returning to the banks of the reservoir, past the upper dam and continue for ½ mile. The path splits beyond the upper lake. Turn right over a stile into the wood. Exit via a stile and bear to the left of a solitary sycamore tree for a metal gate. Continue over and straight on across fields.

Around corner of field and follow hedge on your left to Mill Hayes Road.

- 9 Turn right for 100 metres and pass through a metal gate on your left. Follow obvious path up through two fields – a playing field appears on the right. Over stile beside Knypersley Hall, keeping left along the track to emerge onto Harlech Road. Continue across Conway Road, through a ginnel to Park Lane. Turn left and continue to traffic lights.
- 10 Cross into Newpool Road and continue to bridge over old railway. You are now standing on the main British east-west watershed. Water flows north from here into the River Dane and so to the Irish Sea. The headstreams of the River Trent flow southwards and then east to the North Sea. Turn right along the railway and return after 1 mile/1½ km to the start.