

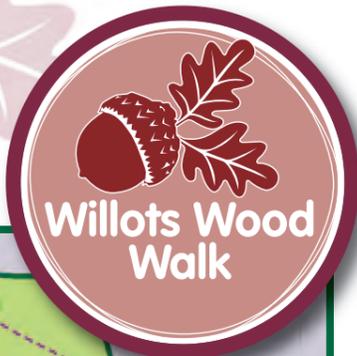
Start on Ford Hayes Lane, Bentilee, on the Bentilee Valley Greenway (Grid Ref. SJ 921 460)

| | Length of route | Time required | Difficulty of walk |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Green Route | 1.0 miles | 20 minutes | Easy |
| Purple Route | 2.0 miles | 40 minutes | Moderate |
| Orange Route | 3.2 miles | 70 minutes | Moderate |

Willot's Wood is deciduous woodland which has been in existence for at least 100 years, and probably much longer. In the past there has been localised coal mining in this part of the country park. The underlying geology here is carboniferous coal measures which were formed approximately 300 million years ago in a swampy environment.

The **Short (Green) Route** follows a section of greenway before entering the country park and then takes a circular route around the wood. The **Medium (Purple) Route** goes uphill to a part of the Country Park known as Maiden Castle. From here there are excellent views back over Stoke-on-Trent

and beyond. The **Long (Orange) Route** takes you across Hulme Road to the visitor centre and toilet facilities, before returning via the edge of the main canyon and Amphitheatre. After re-crossing Hulme road and passing the golf course the route joins a path which was once a tram route taking coal from the northern edge of the park to the Adderley Green mineral line.



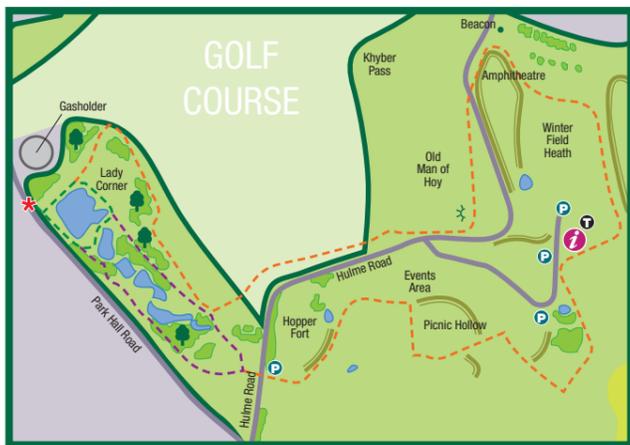
Start on Park Hall Road, Adderley Green, by the gas holder (Grid Ref SJ 922 448)

| | Length of route | Time required | Difficulty of walk |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Green Route | 0.25 miles | 15 minutes | Easy |
| Purple Route | 0.7 miles | 30 minutes | Moderate |
| Orange Route | 2.5 miles | 105 minutes | Moderate |

During the mid-20th century the ponds in this part of the Country Park (known as Lady Corner) were settling pools for the outwash from the sand and gravel quarrying works. Since the development of the Country Park in the late 1970s this area has developed into a wetland habitat with a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

The **Short (Green) Route** is simply a gentle stroll around Lady Corner fishing pool. The longer **Medium (Purple) Route** will take you round the wetland area allowing you to see several pools. These are separated by dense stands of

willow and alder, which provide habitat for a variety of bird life. The **Long (Orange) Route** takes you across Hulme road and up to the visitor centre and toilet facilities via Hopper Fort, where the quarried materials were loaded onto wagons, and Picnic Hollow. On the way back you will pass the main canyon at the heart of the NNR with its nationally important exposures of sandstone and pebble beds. Coming back to the western side of Hulme Road via the Amphitheatre you will pass a 'trig point' from where the whole of Stoke-on-Trent can be viewed.



Start just off A520, opposite Weston Heights, on Bolton Gate Car Park (Grid Ref SJ 937 446)

| | Length of route | Time required | Difficulty of walk |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Green Route | 0.8 miles | 15 minutes | Easy |
| Purple Route | 1.5 miles | 25 minutes | Moderate |
| Orange Route | 2.0 miles | 40 minutes | Moderate |

The main areas of pine tree woodland at Park Hall Country Park are found in this south-east corner of the park. This area is known as Bolton Gate- named after the farm which utilised the ground in this area prior to large-scale quarrying operations in the mid 20th century.

The **Short (Green) Route** follows a circular path around the eastern edge of Pump Tree Wood and part of Skinners Canyon. The **Medium (Purple) Route** takes you along the eastern perimeter of the park, following around the outside of

Skinners Canyon. It returns via the heathland areas around Top Pool and a high point on the park with views over the Staffordshire Moorlands, before following a straight path through pine woodland back to Bolton Gate Pool. The **Long (Orange) Route** follows further along the perimeter of the country park before heading through the heathland to the visitor centre and toilet facilities. As the walk returns to Bolton Gate it passes through the wildflower meadows and the top of Ox-Iron Wood.



Start on Parkhall Road, Weston Coyney, opposite Parkhall Primary School (Grid Ref SJ 932 440)

| | Length of route | Time required | Difficulty of walk |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Green Route | 0.5 miles | 20 minutes | Easy |
| Purple Route | 1.0 miles | 40 minutes | Moderate |
| Orange Route | 1.6 miles | 70 minutes | Moderate |

Park Hall Hills are a prominent feature of the local landscape. The hills, and most of the rest of the country park, are a major outcrop of relatively hard Triassic sandstone rock which rises high above the surrounding glacially-eroded Carboniferous mudstones and coal measures.

The **Short (Green) Route** follows a circular route at the base of the hills, which cuts through an area of oak copses and heathland. The **Medium (Purple) Route** initially runs parallel to Park Hall Road,

before taking you uphill around the crest of the hills. As you look back down towards the road note the heather and gorse on the hillsides, which are characteristic species of lowland heath. The **Long (Orange) Route** takes you behind the hills through the reclaimed quarry area on to the visitor centre and toilet facilities. It returns via the coniferous plantation of Ox-Iron Wood and the wildflower meadows and takes in panoramic views towards the Wrekin and North Wales.



Park Hall Country Park covers an area of over 135 hectares and has a varied landscape of sandstone canyons, open heathland, hay meadows, deciduous and coniferous woodland and wetland areas. Just under one third of the Country Park is designated as a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve, which is known as Hulme Quarry.

The whole site is owned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and managed by the City Council's countryside staff.



For more information about Park Hall Country Park and Hulme Quarry National Nature Reserve or our programme of public events, environmental education activities and volunteering opportunities please contact: Park Hall Country Park Visitor Centre, Hulme Road, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent on **01782 331889** OS grid reference of visitor centre: **SJ930447**

Alternatively, please visit the websites of City of Stoke-on-Trent Council: www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure/countryside/country-parks/ and Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nnr/1008720.aspx.



The waymarked walks and this accompanying leaflet have been funded through Natural Connections - a project aimed at reconnecting communities to nature.

Park Hall Country Park & Hulme Quarry National Nature Reserve

Waymarked Walks



KEY

- Short Routes
- Medium Routes
- Long Routes
- * Start Points for Walks
- i Visitor Centre
- T Toilet Facilities
- P Car park
- 👁 Viewpoints
- Wildflower Meadows
- 🌳 Deciduous Woodland
- 🌲 Coniferous Woodland
- 💧 Ponds/Pools
- Canyons
- Hillside



Willot's wood

The deciduous woodland of Willot's Wood contains a wide variety of native British trees. Common oak, silver birch and, in the wetter areas, alder are the dominant large trees, whilst the understory is composed of species such as hazel, hawthorn, rowan and holly. In springtime much of the woodland floor is carpeted in the deep violet-blue, sweet-scented flowers of the bluebell. In the past the wood's timber has been a valuable resource for the local community, being used to make hurdles and charcoal, and also collected for firewood.



View of the main canyon

This canyon, sometimes known as the 'Play Canyon', is the focal point of Hulme Quarry National Nature Reserve. The National Nature Reserve, which covers a total area of approximately 40 hectares and is located entirely within the country park boundary, consists of a series of canyons that were created by quarrying activities in the mid-20th century. The canyons contain nationally important exposures of red sandstone and pebble beds, which were deposited between 250 and 215 million years ago. At this time, during the Triassic period, Great Britain was situated just north of the equator in hot desert latitudes. The visible geology is the product of flash flood deposits in a desert environment. In addition to the geological interest the quarry is also host to a variety of bird life, including little owls and kestrels, which can regularly be seen on the rock faces.

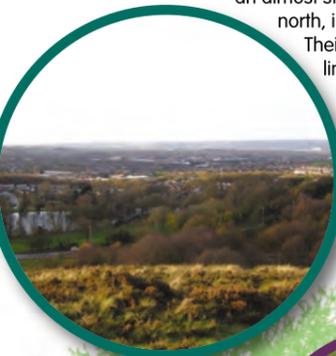


The pools at Lady Corner

There are a variety of different aquatic habitats at Lady Corner. The largest is a fishing pool which supports fish such as carp and tench and waterfowl such as swans, mallard ducks and moorhens. The shallower pools support large populations of small insects such as water scorpion, great diving beetle, and numerous species of dragonfly and damselfly nymph. The pools are also an excellent breeding habitat for amphibians, including common frog, common toad and smooth newt.

View of Stoke-on-Trent from viewpoint above golf course

From the viewpoint above the golf course you have an excellent view of Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding area. Note the way that the towns of Hanley, Burslem, Tunstall and Kidsgrove lie in an almost straight line, south to north, in the valley bottom. Their locations follow the line of the underlying coal measures, the mining of which was a major reason for the towns' development.



Park Hall Hill

Take a moment to enjoy the panoramic views from the top of the hills. Noteworthy features include Park Hall Lake, which was once the fishing lake to the hall near by, and St James' Church in Normacott, a grade 2 listed building dating from 1834. Further in the distance look over the Trentham estate to the Wrekin, a large hill near to Telford, which is a prominent point often visible on the horizon.

Wildflower meadow in bloom

Behind the hills are the wildflower meadows, which can be seen at their most colourful during June and July. These contain a rich diversity of plant species including yellow rattle, pignut, orchids, clover, birds-foot trefoil, common sorrel and numerous grass species. These flowers provide a valuable nectar source for species such as butterflies, moths and bees. In high summer butterfly species that can be spotted in and around the hay meadows include meadow brown, small copper, small heath, gatekeeper, common blue and small skipper. The meadows are also an excellent habitat for small mammals, which, in turn, provide a food source for the owls that roost in the coniferous woodlands.



Ox-Iron and Pump Tree Woods

Plantations of pine trees were planted during the 1960s as screens to mask the sand and gravel quarrying activities that took place at that time. Since then the original trees have matured and set seed, resulting in colonisation of the sandy ground within the previously quarried areas. The mature pine woods offer roosts for both long-eared owls and tawny owls, which can often be heard calling on summer evenings just before nightfall. The owls are able to fly silently over the surrounding meadows in search of small mammals, such as voles, which are their main source of food.



Conserving lowland heathland

Common heather, also known as ling, is the main plant species found within the country park's heathland areas. During early autumn the landscape is given a vibrant flash of colour when the heather is covered in tiny pale purple flowers. In the late 1700s large tracts of Staffordshire were covered with this type of lowland heathland vegetation, but more than 90% of this was lost in the following 200 years. There are a number of plants and animals which are specially adapted to live on lowland heathlands and are dependant on this habitat for their survival. It is, therefore, extremely important that we protect and enhance our remaining heathlands, such as those at Park Hall. Careful management is required, including cutting the heather periodically to promote fresh vigorous growth and removing some self-set trees which would otherwise shade-out the heather plants.

Children from a number of local schools took part in the development of these waymarked routes. St. Maria Goretti and Maple Court Primary both worked on the Willot's Wood Walk, Gladstone Primary 'adopted' the Wetland Walk and Weston Coyney Junior School were involved with both the Pine Tree Walk and Park Hall Hills Walk.

Please note: As a result of the country park's terrain there are sections of steep inclines and rough tracks on all of the purple and orange routes. Consequently users of manual wheelchairs and child buggies may have difficulty with these tracks. However, the shorter green routes are generally level with few, if any, substantial inclines. Despite the site topography every effort is made to encourage all-ability access. Please do not hesitate to call the visitor centre prior to your visit if you wish to discuss any particular aspect of these routes or other paths on the country park.