

*The Way for the*



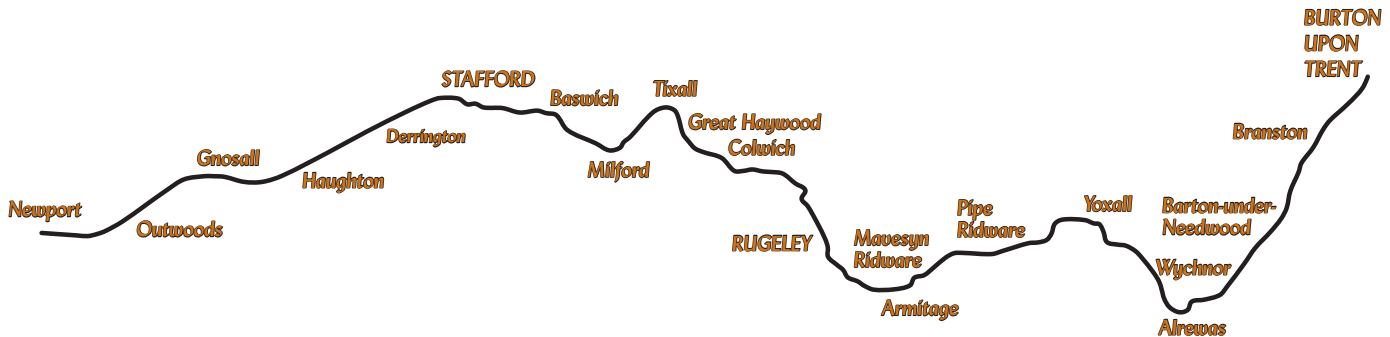
**MILLENNIUM**

# The Way for the MILLENNIUM

This long-distance footpath was established by Staffordshire County Council to mark the Millennium. The Way for the Millennium spans the width of the County for 65 kilometres, running from Newport in the west, to Burton upon Trent in the east. The route is based wholly on public rights of way, the Stafford to Newport Greenway or canal towpaths, for which permission has been granted by British Waterways.

The Way for the Millennium complements the Staffordshire Way which is a long-distance footpath running north to south across the County. Unlike the Staffordshire Way, which is solely for walkers, parts of the Way for the Millennium are available to horseriders and cyclists.

HAPPY WALKING!



*“To mark the millennium, Staffordshire County Council has established another major recreational path, known as the Way for the Millennium. The route, which spans the width of the County for approximately 65 kilometres from Newport in the west to Burton upon Trent in the east, will complement the Staffordshire Way. The Staffordshire Way was the first and another popular major recreational path in the County running from Mow Cop in the north to Kinver in the south.*

*The Way for the Millennium, which is approximately half the length of the Staffordshire Way, is based wholly on public rights of way, a disused railway line, canal towpaths or paths on which access has been granted. However, the Way for the Millennium has not been established as just another challenge for the long distant hiker. Easy accessibility for as many people as possible was an essential factor in determining the route and, with no steep gradients, unlike the Staffordshire Way, it is hoped that the route will appeal to and will be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. The Way for the Millennium explores some of Staffordshire’s loveliest scenery as well as linking several interesting towns and villages.*

*In conjunction with its policies for enhancing the quality of life and for promoting wider access to the countryside, the County Council intends to maintain and promote the Way for the Millennium in keeping with its status as a major recreational path and hopes that the Way can be used in conjunction with adjoining public paths to provide short circular walks.*

*The simple maps and comprehensive notes that appear later in this book have been designed so that anyone can follow the route without difficulty. Whilst no specialist equipment is necessary for any part of the Way, some paths, particularly the Stafford Newport Greenway and those on the eastern outskirts of Stafford, may be wet during winter months. The wearing of stout shoes or boots is, therefore, recommended. The Way itself has been signposted and waymarked to reassure the walker that he/she is on the right path. The waymarks take the form of a red arrowhead on a white background (see opposite).*

*The route maps and notes also indicate some adjoining public paths and places of interest which you may wish to visit en route. Reference is made to car parking facilities*

*and toilets wherever available. Please note that part of the Way for the Millennium is across private farmland where the walker must not linger or stray from the path and where great care must be taken not to cause damage, particularly to crops, or to worry livestock.*

*Without the co-operation of landowners and assistance from British Waterways, the Way for the Millennium could not have been created. The County Council wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Countryside Agency and all of the people who have been involved in establishing the Way and its continuing improvement.*

*Grateful thanks are also extended to all of the Parish and District Councils who have contributed to this guide book".*

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in an oval shape. The signature reads "JAMES Muir".

*J. Muir  
Leader of Cultural and Recreational Services Committee*



# Contents

## The route

1 - Newport to Gnosall	1
2 - Gnosall to Stafford	5
3 - Stafford to Great Haywood & Shugborough	9
4 - Great Haywood & Shugborough to Mavesyn Ridware	13
5 - Mavesyn Ridware to Pipe Ridware and Morrey	19
6 - Wychnor Bridges to Shobnall and Burton upon Trent	22

## Route maps

1 - Outwoods to Gnosall	29
2 - Gnosall to Stafford	31
3 - Stafford to Great Haywood & Shugborough	35
4 - Great Haywood & Shugborough to Mavesyn Ridware	38
5 - Mavesyn Ridware to Pipe Ridware	41
6 - Pipe Ridware to Yoxall	43
7 - Yoxall to Wychnor Bridges	47
8 - Wychnor Bridges to Shobnall	51

# The Way for the MILLENNIUM

From Newport to Stafford, passing through the villages of Gnosall, Haughton and Derrington, the Way for the Millennium follows the route of the Stafford Newport Greenway.

## **PART ONE - Newport to Gnosall**

The Greenway forms part of the former Wellington to Stafford Railway which was built in 1849 by the Shropshire Union Railway Company. Trains both passenger and goods, ran from Stafford to Newport and then to Wellington and beyond; the line being an important link between the Midlands and Wales.

The line was well used by people living in outlying villages to travel to work places in Stafford or Newport etc., as well as carrying freight, coal and supplies, for shops and local businesses

The line was used for 115 years until 1964 when the last steam engine plied its way along the line carrying

a wreath to mourn its passing. It was replaced by the new more efficient diesel. However, the diesel's reign was short-lived. Not many months after, the line itself was closed under the "Beeching Axe" (Dr. Beeching the then Chairman of British Rail) along with many such other lines throughout the country. The bridges and the Old Station Site at Haughton (now the site of the present car park) are all that is left to remind us of an era.

The Greenway passes through farmland and open country, which, with its hedges and fields, provide a habitat for wildlife. Birds such as Fieldfares, Redwings, Mistlethrushes and Finches feed on the fields and hedgerows and on the Greenway.

In the trees and undergrowth can be seen seasonal, passage, resident and breeding birds. As well as the commoner Chaffinch, Blackbird, Thrush, Bluetits, Robin, other birds to be seen include Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch and Whitethroat, Meadow Pipit and even Green Woodpecker.



The Greenway itself, however, because of the influence of the limestone ballast and because the vegetation has been allowed to flourish, also provides a unique habitat in the area for many plants, flowers, birds, butterflies, insects and small mammals. The Greenway is now one of the best areas for butterflies in Staffordshire because of the rich growth of plants and wildflowers.

Approximately 1.5 kilometres north of the Way for the Millennium between Newport and Gnosall lies Aqualate Mere National Nature Reserve, which is a component of the Midlands Meres and Mosses RAMSAR ( post-glacial lakes and peatlands ) and as such is of international importance. Aqualate also supports a heronry ( a breeding colony of grey herons in the U.K.) of national importance. Flights of ducks and occasional herons may also be seen passing overhead.

At Gnosall, the Way for the Millennium crosses the Shropshire Union Canal. It is important to remember the origins of these man-made waterways, now so important for recreation.

The Shropshire Union Canal, originally known as the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction, was constructed between 1827 - 1835. It was the last major work to be undertaken by its originator and engineer “Thomas Telford”, and marked the end of major canal development in Britain.

Linking the Midlands by a direct route to Ellesmere Port on the Mersey, it was an attempt to show that an improved canal could compete with a railway. With the emphasis on speed of conveyance, the canal is characterised by its straightness, with high embankments, deep cuttings and locks grouped together in flights.

The construction of the canal was fraught with difficulties. Costs of purchasing the land rose dramatically during construction. Several landlords who refused to allow the canal through their land necessitated expensive deviations from the intended route at Shelmore, near Gnosall in Staffordshire and Nantwich in Cheshire. Repeated slippages of embankments and cuttings at one stage threatened abandonment, but work continued and

on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1835 the first boat navigated the 39 miles from Autherley Junction on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to the Nantwich basin on the Chester Canal.

The canal continued to work profitably throughout the 19th Century up to the 1914-18 war, but from then on went into rapid decline. In 1922, it was, together with the rest of the Shropshire Union network, bought out entirely by the London North Western Railway (L.N.W.R.). The canal remained open despite continual decline and an Act was passed in 1944 to close it. Nationalised in 1947, it continued to carry commercial traffic up to the late 1960s. Since then, however, the canal has grown in popularity as a pleasure cruising waterway. In 1968, it was declared a “ Cruising Waterway “ which assures its maintenance by British Waterways.

For those interested in natural history, it is well worth noting that canals also provide a sanctuary for a wide variety of plants and animals, some of which are becoming rare elsewhere. Much of the wildlife value of canals is due to the unusual combination of

different habitats within a very narrow strip of land. The first of these habitats is the hedgerow, usually planted when the canals were first built to keep livestock off the towpath.

Today these mature hedgerows have become home to a wide range of plants and animals and are very different from the hawthorn strips originally planted.

The canal channel itself is the most important habitat, providing a home for many different species of animal and plant. At the margins there may be reedy fringes which merge with the marshy strip of the towpath. The reedy plants here are important for aquatic insects and fish. They are often used by nesting waterbirds and waterside animals, particularly on the opposite side of the canal to the towpath.

The open water of the central canal channel is yet a different habitat, with a wide range of pondweeds, aquatic insects and fish. This combination of habitat strips in such a narrow corridor gives canals a unique “biodiversity”, further enhanced in places by

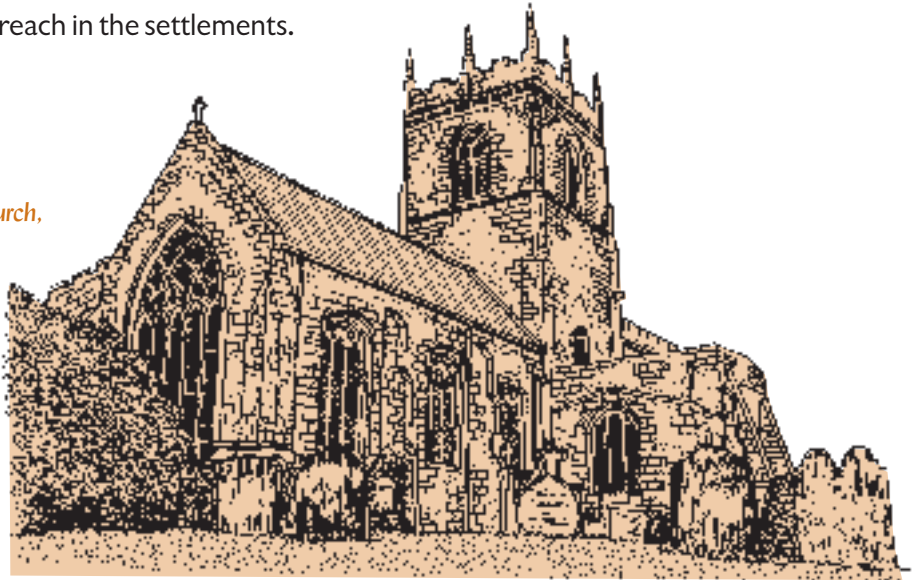


cuttings, embankments and water supply reservoirs.

A landmark in the centre of Gnosall well worth a visit is St. Lawrence's Church. The Church was founded as an ecclesiastical centre some time in the 9th or 10th Centuries. A community of priests was based at the Church. These priests would travel to the surrounding country and preach in the settlements.

The Church was rebuilt in the 12th Century, with a fine central tower over a crossing, and subsequently remodelled and extended in the 13th and 14th Centuries.

*St. Lawrence's Church,  
Gnosall*



## **PART TWO – Gnosall to Stafford**

From Gnosall, the Way for the Millennium continues along the Stafford Newport Greenway, passing through the villages of Haughton and Derrington, to the outskirts of Stafford.

The small car park for Greenway users at Station Road, Haughton is the site of the old goods yard and Station. The stones around the car park are the ones used in the platform and the sections of sleepers are those used on the line. The waiting room and ticket office were under the bridge and the evidence of these buildings can still be seen.

On approaching the outskirts of Derrington, the landmarks of Berry Ring may be seen from the Way. Berry Ring is approximately 1 ½ kilometres to the south of the Way and is a small hillfort standing on a low hill with commanding views to the north, south and west. It consists of a flat area, some 3 hectares in area, surrounded by a single bank and ditch. It was probably built some time during the first millennium B.C., although when the territory of the Cornovii

was occupied by the Roman army in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D., it would probably have been abandoned.

Shortly before reaching the village of Derrington, two more notable buildings immediately adjacent to the Way for the Millennium are Stallbrook Hall, a Grade II Listed Building, and Crossing Cottage. Several new barn conversions can be seen; behind these is Stallbrook Hall. This was originally a moated house and it is the oldest building in Derrington dating back to the early 14th Century. It was part of the manor of Lord Stafford, as was Derrington, although it stood within Seighford parish. It belonged to the Bowyer`s of Knypersley. The last member of the Bowyer family died in 1593 and in the latter end of Charles II`s reign, it was sold owing to the fact that there was no male heir. It fell into disrepair and the present owner has now restored Stallbrook to its former glory during the last two to three years.

There was once a level crossing at Crossing Cottage and some of the original gates can still be seen. The

cottage deeds go back as far as 1823. It was originally a very small building with one living room and one bedroom, but over the years the cottage has been extended.

The Red Lion public house, also situated immediately adjacent to the Greenway, started life as two dwelling houses in about 1834 and has been in continuous use since.

Shortly after passing the Red Lion, there are two areas available for public enjoyment, a "Millennium Green" on the left of the Greenway and a short distance beyond this a "Wood-On-Your-Doorstep" on the right. Both these areas have been purchased during 1999, using funding from many sources including the National Lottery via the Millennium Commission, but also with financial support from many of the villagers. The Millennium Green has been acquired by a charitable trust (Derrington Millennium Green Trust) on behalf of the villagers. On it the Trustees have created two wildflower meadows, a community orchard, a copse designed to encourage an increase in wildlife and they have

cleaned out and greatly extended a pond which was very badly polluted. There is also a rural amphitheatre. The object of the Green is to provide an area for villagers and visitors to use for informal recreation, play or other leisure time activity, a meeting area or place for community events. One of its main aims is to provide an area where people can enjoy nature and wildlife at first hand. It will be some years before the Green has fully matured but already it is showing signs of being well worth a visit.

The land for the Wood has been acquired by the Woodland Trust and during the year 2000 will be planted up with some 18,000 native broadleaf trees and is to be known as "Dudda's Wood". This area too will be open to all local inhabitants and visitors in perpetuity. At the time of writing this article, negotiations are underway with both the County Council and one of the local landowners to provide permissive access points from the Greenway into the wood, and also out onto one of the footpaths leading from the village up to Stafford Castle. Dudda is the original name of the hamlet according to the local historians.

There will be a figure of eight nature walk through both the Green and the Wood and having enjoyed this, visitors are strongly recommended to take the extension which is to be waymarked up to Stafford Castle which will have dominated the visitors' skyline since reaching the village.

Stafford Castle proudly overlooks the County town. Stafford Castle had deteriorated and held little value or esteem until the 1960s, when it was acquired by Stafford Borough Council. Considered by many to be a Victorian folly, little was known of the existence of an historic Castle until excavations and clearance of undergrowth and trees revealed 11th Century origins. It was discovered to have the unusual feature of two baileys and it is believed the largest motte (mound) in the country. Fieldwork between the Castle and the A.518 has also revealed the site of a deserted, mediaeval village. The Castle can be reached by leaving at the access after St. Matthews Church. This Church was built in 1847 by Charles Smith Royds who lived in nearby Aston Hall and owned considerable amounts of land in the Derrington area.

Once at the Castle, take advantage of the Castle walks around the grounds. Then walk due north heading towards Doxey Church until you come to a signpost indicating a left turn back into Dudda's Wood and Derrington, or straight on for a return onto the Greenway close to the church at Doxey.



*The High House,  
Stafford*

### **PART THREE - Stafford to Great Haywood and Shugborough**

The county town of Stafford owes its origins to the Saxon campaigns against the Danes in the 10th Century. In AD 913 Aethelfleda, sister of Edward the Elder, King of Wessex, led an army into Danish held lands north of Watling Street (the modern A.5) and established three fortified sites or burhs. One of these burhs was on the site now occupied by Stafford town centre. With the River Sow to the west and south and an extensive marshy area to the east, it provided an excellent defensive site. The security offered by this stronghold attracted settlers from the surrounding area. A large ecclesiastical centre, similar to that at Gnosall, was established on the site in the centre of the burh. Later in the 10th Century counties were established as the main sub-division of the new Kingdom of England. Stafford was the obvious candidate to serve as the county town and the County took on the name of the town.

The town prospered, becoming a commercial and administrative centre. By the 14th Century, the

town could boast two friaries. The defences of the town were a combination of timber and stone and the date of replacing the timber sections with stone is not known. By 1610, a picture map drawn by Speed shows that part of the timber defences had been replaced with a stone wall. After the Norman conquest, the Saxon ecclesiastical centre was transformed into the Collegiate Church of St. Mary, which is situated just to the west of the main street named Greengate Street. The Norman church had a fine central tower. This church has been much extended and altered. The Church of St. Chad's in Greengate Street was originally 12th Century and the nave arcades have survived together with some sumptuous carving on the crossing arches. The Church was extensively restored by Sir George Gilbert Scott in the 19th Century. Other notable features of the town include the Ancient High House, a recently restored three storeyed 16th Century timber framed house on the western side of Greengate Street and the imposing late 18th Century building on the east side of the Market Square. The latter is the former courthouse, which now acts as the Art Gallery and Library.

From the eastern outskirts of Stafford, the Way for the Millennium follows the towpath of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal to its junction with the Trent and Mersey canal, at Great Haywood, where it also joins the Staffordshire Way for part of its length.

Both the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and the Trent and Mersey canals were engineered by James Brindley, the greatest of the early canal pioneers and were part of his 'Grand Cross' design for canals linking the River Mersey with the Rivers Thames, Trent and Severn.

The Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal was built between the years 1766 and 1772 to link the industries of the Black Country with the Rivers Severn and Trent and was the only canal that Brindley lived to see completed. Like the other canals of the 'Grand Cross', the Staffordshire and Worcestershire was an immediate success, providing for both local and long haul transport.

This section of the Way along the canal towpath to Great Haywood provides an enjoyable walk, with extensive views across open countryside and many places of interest to note and visit en route.

At St. Thomas' bridge, where Baswich Lane crosses the canal, there is a labyrinth of waterways. Here, where the River Sow meets the River Penk, there is the channel of the Sow navigation, a canal link to the Sow, which was earlier navigable to the centre of Stafford. The labyrinth of waterways is completed by the millstream and tailrace for St. Thomas Priory Mill. The Priory was founded within a few years of Thomas Beckett's murder in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. In 1182 Bishop Peche resigned his See at Lichfield and became a Canon at the Priory, dying there later the same year. The Priory was dissolved in 1538, and became the home of the Fowlers, a Roman Catholic family.

Occasional, more extensive views open out to the north across the flood plain of the River Sow, bounded by river terraces marked by stands of young and mature trees. The model farm of

Brancote is seen on the higher ground, built by Thomas Hartshorne, Surveyor of Highways, as a joint venture with Viscount Ingestre in 1848, to replace the much earlier farm down by the river. All that remains of the original farm is the pond. In 1851, Brancote was the site of the early manufacture of condensed milk for sale to shipping companies in small tins. To the south looking towards Walton village, the distinctive chevron-ornamented spire of the Church can be seen.

At Milford, the attractive, convoluted ‘turnover’ bridge (No. 105) returns the towpath to the other side of the canal, onto the riverside embankment, towards Milford Aqueduct. This aqueduct, which spans the River Sow to carry the canal to the south side of the valley, is mainly built of Tixall stone.

The aqueduct is thought to be near the original Mill Ford, from which Milford derives its name. This could well be the site of the original Mill at Tixall, mentioned in a court case of 1343, when the mill pool and timbers were vandalised. After about 1500, corn from Tixall was milled at the Aston’s Mill

in Haywood or Colwich.

There were several stone quarries in Tixall Park and the stone was used mainly locally until the advent of the canal. Then in 1781 it was used for the battlements and balustrades of John Gwyn’s bridge over the Severn at Worcester, for St. George’s Church in Birmingham, St. George’s Church in Wolverhampton as well as the repair of both St. Mary’s Church in Stafford and Lichfield Cathedral. It was also considered for use in rebuilding the Houses of Parliament in 1839.

The wharf where the stone was loaded for transport along the canal may be seen by Tixall Lock and bridge No. 106.

To the north of the towpath at Tixall, is Tixall Gatehouse, built by Sir Walter Aston in circa 1580 to complement the then adjacent Elizabethan Hall built by his father in circa 1555. The Gatehouse was restored by the Landmark Trust in 1977 and is used as holiday accommodation.





At Broad Water (Tixall Wide or Tixall Broad), the canal widens to resemble a broad lake. Thomas Clifford of Tixall Hall is said to have been prepared to tolerate the canal, provided that it did not spoil his view from the Hall. Thus almost a mile of waterway had to be specially landscaped to appear as a lake when viewed from the Hall.

Thomas Clifford from Ugbrooke in Devon married the daughter of the fifth Lord Aston and began building a new mansion at Tixall in the 1770s, as the original Elizabethan hall had been partly demolished. The work was completed by his son, Sir Thomas Hugh Clifford, who inherited estates at Burton Constable in Yorkshire. His son, Sir Thomas Aston Clifford Constable, changed his name and moved to the new Yorkshire estates, putting Tixall estate up for sale in 1833. It was eventually bought by the neighbouring Earl Talbot of Ingestre in 1844-5. The mansion at Tixall was demolished in 1926, having been used as an assembly point at the start of the first World War for the Staffordshire Territorials. Apart from the Gatehouse, only the following remain: the 18th Century mews, now converted for

private residential use; the remains of the estate kennels, now used as a farm; the walled garden, now a private garden; the stone Dairy Bridge over the walk to the walled garden; and a stone obelisk erected in 1776 at the road junction.

The brick built home farm now converted to residential use and the adjacent restored octagonal stone lodge, (Bottle Lodge), are both visible from the towpath by Tixall Wide.

Approaching Great Haywood, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal joins with the Trent and Mersey Canal at Haywood Junction. Haywood Junction still retains its corn mill and associated housing and formerly had a wharf. The corn mill used to obtain its water supply from the River Trent as a result of which Brindley had to construct two stone aqueducts over the tailrace and over the river itself. The roving bridge at Haywood Junction carries the towpath of the Trent and Mersey Canal over the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal.

The Trent and Mersey Canal, which provided a link between the Rivers Trent and Mersey, was the first major canal in England. Josiah Wedgwood was one of the projects keenest supporters. His industry needed to import raw materials and to carry its fragile finished products to the ports without damage, something, which the roads of the day could not manage. Brindley christened the Trent and Mersey Canal project 'The Grand Trunk Canal', because he envisaged it providing the backbone for a whole network of branch canals. The canal was authorised in 1766 and by June 1770 was opened from Derwent Mouth to Shugborough. The whole canal was not completed until 1777 due largely to the enormous task of excavating the one and two third mile Harecastle Tunnel in North Staffordshire. Brindley did not live to see the canal completed, but by 1790 a waterway system existed that linked the four main rivers of England and at the heart of that system, was his Grand Trunk Canal.



*Tixall Gatehouse*

## **PART FOUR -Great Haywood and Shugborough to Mavesyn Ridware**

Great Haywood originated as development along the London to Liverpool Road, which now bypasses the village. The Clifford Arms public house in the village stands on the site of a posting house for coaches. But the village's strongest links are with the Anson family and their home, Shugborough Hall, which can be viewed along this stretch from the canal towpath.

Great Haywood is linked with Shugborough Park by a superb structure, Essex Bridge. This 17th Century packhorse bridge takes its name from the Earl of Essex who built it. Originally the bridge is believed to have had over forty arches; only fourteen remain, but it is still the longest packhorse bridge in England. Over Essex Bridge, Shugborough Hall, in its magnificent parkland setting, soon comes into full view. The house, which is of various dates, has been the seat of the Anson family since 1624. The Ansons were later to receive the title 'Earls of Lichfield' and the fifth Earl, photographer Patrick Lichfield, lived

in the house until his death. Shugborough was remodelled in the 1760s by the architect 'Athenian' Stuart for Thomas Anson, brother of George Anson, the famous Admiral who circumnavigated the world in his ship 'The Centurion'. Stuart earned his nickname through his reproduction of Greek antiquities. A number of such works can be seen in the grounds and perhaps the most striking is the Triumphal Arch (after Hadrian's Arch in Athens) which commemorates Admiral Anson and his wife. Between 1790 and 1806 the house was altered in the Regency style by Samuel Wyatt. It was Wyatt who conceived the superb portico that you see from the drive, each column being slate-clad timber

Shugborough is now owned by the National Trust and is managed by the County Council. The mansion house and grounds are open to the public and the house, now fully restored, contains a fine collection of 18th Century French and English furniture and portraits by Reynolds. The former stable block and kitchen wing now house the County Museum, which is open all year and portrays many aspects of Staffordshire's social, local and

domestic history. Of particular interest are the state coach of the Earl of Shrewsbury, a domestic brew house and reconstructed school room and village shop. Shugborough also has a live 'farm' museum. Not only does it have a collection of farm machinery and implements and a working water mill producing flour and bread made in the original brick bread oven, but it also preserves historic breeds of livestock, some of which are now rare, such as the Tamworth pig and Bagot Goat.

The railway came to Shugborough in 1847 but its effect was minimised by putting the line in a cutting and a tunnel. The design of the tunnel portals acknowledge their special setting. The one that you see from the drive has an Egyptian theme, whilst the western one is 'mediaeval'. To the east, the bridge over the former Lichfield Drive is built in classical style. The walk along the drive enables you to view the fine examples of large open grown oaks, sycamores, limes and horse chestnuts that contribute so much to the park's beauty. The Hall itself is surrounded by fine trees, both broadleaves and evergreen, whilst the main drive from Milford

passes through mature woodland with magnificent specimens of oak, beech, sycamore, sweet chestnut, Scots pine, larch and some fine young Wellingtonias. The County Council operates a system of selective felling and replanting to ensure that the character of both park and woodland are preserved.

Shugborough Park lies within the northern boundary of Cannock Chase. This unique area of about 26 square miles, designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958, owes its survival as an open space mainly to the fact that much of its soil is poor quality for agriculture. Today it is a gravelly plateau ranging from 250 to 800 feet above sea level. After many centuries as a hunting preserve its natural forest cover was almost entirely removed for industrial purposes. Now, the dominant landscape feature is the man-made forests of Forestry Commission plantations. The Commission manage 6,700 acres for commercial timber production, chiefly of Scots and Corsican pines. The County Council owns and manages over 2,500 acres of public access land, which, since 1973, has been designated as a country park.

The canal towpath from Great Haywood to Little Haywood and Colwich beyond provides a beautiful 1.5 mile walk. On the one side are steep wooded slopes of beech and oak, whilst on the other you glimpse between trees and across hedgerows, over the water meadows of the meandering Trent to the hills of Cannock Chase beyond.



*Great Haywood Junction*

Colwich and Little Haywood are two small villages lying in the valley of the River Trent where the canal, road and railway come together as they skirt both

the river's floodplain and the upland mass of Cannock Chase. The spread of development along the old A 51 road has linked the two settlements although both villages have retained their individual and markedly different characters.

As you reach Colwich, the Church of St. Michael's and All Angels can be seen from the canal. The church contains numerous family memorials, but its finest possessions are the monuments belonging to the Anson and Wolseley families who established their great houses and landscaped parks nearby. In the reign of Richard I, the land of Colwich Parish was held by the Colwich family. Possession later passed to the Bishop of Lichfield before becoming inseparably connected to the Anson and Wolseley families.

Colwich is the junction of two historic railway routes. Firstly, the Trent Valley Railway, which crosses the canal, was opened in 1847 between Tamworth and Stafford. Its purpose was to shorten the journey time between London and Lancashire and its construction enhanced the importance of Stafford as

a railway centre. Two years later, a second line struck north from Colwich to Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield. This route was part of the famous North Stafford Railway Company, “The Knotty”. The story of this small company with its Staffordshire Knot emblem and crimson livery, is one of constant struggle to resist the takeover ambitions of the big railway companies. The Knotty founded in 1845, succeeded in preserving its independence until the general amalgamation of the railways in 1923.



*St. Mary's Abbey, Little Haywood*

With the coming of the railway, Colwich and Little Haywood enjoyed a spate of rapid building. Of particular note, standing in a prominent, elevated position is the Grade II listed former railway station house in Colwich, which dates back to 1848. Two rows of railway cottages can be seen nearby, which epitomise the domestic architecture of this period.

From Colwich, the canal runs close to, and at times alongside the River Trent, and past Wolseley Warehouse Cottages. These canalside cottages have undergone considerable modernisation. The cottages were associated with warehousing (now demolished) and a former wharf.

Mature trees flank the canal through which Bishton Hall, an imposing Georgian House can be glimpsed across the canal side cricket ground.

From Bishton, the Way continues along the canal, past Taft Farm, an attractive Victorian farmhouse, onto Taft bridge and then Wharf Cottage. Shortly after Wharf Cottage, the canal takes a sharp bend to the southwest, to the Wolseley Road Pumping

Station, a 19th century building and Brindley Bank Wharf.

Aptly named, Brindley Bank is an attractive area of trees at the bend in the canal. It is known as the Wharf, although, there is no evidence of any buildings on the site at any time. It was here that the body of Christina Collins was found in 1839.

Mrs. Collins had set out to travel by canal, from Liverpool to join her husband in London. Somewhere between Colwich and Rugeley, she was attacked by the boat's crew and pushed into the canal to drown. The captain and a crewmember were convicted of murder and hanged at Stafford.

Local folklore reports that her screams can still be heard along the steps from the Wharf to Wolseley Road. They are now known as The Bloody Steps and access may be gained from the canal towpath.

The playing fields and church of St. Augustine's are both important features along the canal towpath. Adjacent to Church Croft House are the 13th and

14th century remains of the first St. Augustine's church (now the Old Chancel). Across the road, there is the Church of St. Augustine's, built in 1823, and churchyard. In the churchyard is a tombstone to John Parsons Cook. The simple inscription gives a date, 1855, and the statement, "his life was taken away". The facts behind that relate to one of the most sensational murder trials of the mid-19th century. William Palmer, a Rugeley doctor, born in 1824 and educated at the local grammar school, was found guilty after a 12 day hearing, of poisoning Cook, a bookmaker, to whom he owed money. Palmer was executed in public in Stafford.

At Rugeley Wharf, the now derelict wharf buildings date from the early 19th century and were built for use as a tannery. Some of the original buildings remain; extensions of the early 1900's covered a much larger site but these were demolished in 1972 and the site is now occupied by the Magistrate's Courts and the fire station. The canal agent's house was built in 1829 and subsequently used as the tannery offices between 1947 and 1966. It then fell into disuse and in 1979 was restored to residential



use. At the Wharf, the canal narrows slightly where there was once a lock. This provided a point where boats were weighed. A path leads from the towpath to the town, via a bridge. To the south of the bridge are a number of historical features including the old mill. Built in 1863, the building was used as a corn mill. Although greatly changed since then, the gable which fronts the canal still has a date plaque and the remains of the steam powered lifting gears.

From the outskirts of Rugeley, the Way passes into the industrial landscape of Brereton, dominated by the towers of the Power Station and onto Spode House and Hawkesyard Priory. Spode House is a large country house set in attractive grounds situated to the south of the canal and an early example of the Gothic Revival style. Built in 1760, it was extended in 1840 for the widow of Josiah Spode III, who founded a Dominican Priory alongside.

Hawkesyard Priory was also built in Gothic Style between 1900 and 1913 for a new foundation of Dominican Friars. The original plan was never completed and the monks vacated the priory in the 1980s. The crenellations, turrets, pinnacles and

chimneys of both the Priory and the House combine to produce impressive elevations to the south and the east. The House and Church are Grade II listed buildings of special architectural and historic interest.

From the open parkland surrounding Spode House and Hawkesyard Priory, the Way continues to Armitage, where it leaves the canal towpath. Two more notable features along this short stretch are the former Armitage Tunnel and the Church of St. John at Armitage. Where the A513 Rugeley to Alrewas road passes over the canal, is a short sandstone cutting, which is all that remains of Armitage Tunnel. The 130-metre tunnel was the earliest example and the only one to incorporate a towpath. The roof of the tunnel was removed in 1971 due to mining subsidence and was replaced by the present road bridge.

Further on the canal cuts through a sandstone knoll on top of which stands the attractive parish church of St. John, a Grade II listed building. The building, with the exception of the tower originally dated from the 12th & 13th century and was rebuilt by Henry Ward of Stafford in 1844.

## ***PART FIVE - Mavesyn Ridware to Pipe Ridware and Morrey***

After leaving the canal towpath at Armitage, the next 14 kilometres of the Way for the Millennium follows public rights of way across arable farmland, passing through the villages of Mavesyn Ridware, Pipe Ridware, Yoxall and Wychnor where it rejoins the towpath of the Trent and Mersey canal.



*Timber framed barn,  
Mavesyn Ridware*

The small settlement of Mavesyn Ridware contains a number of interesting buildings, including a timber framed barn believed to date from the 17th Century, a 13th Century church and gatehouse. Although the ground floor is in brick, the gatehouse was once part of the mediaeval residence of the Malvoisin family. The original residence of the 12th or 13th Century consisted of a hall, where the lord would have lived, and a number of outbuildings. These stood on a platform surrounded by a water-filled moat, producing what is known as a moated site. Access to the platform would have been across a bridge. An early 18th Century farmhouse has replaced the hall and outbuildings and the moat has been filled in. The gatehouse has been tree ring dated to 1392.

About 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  kilometres east of Pipe Ridware, the Way for the Millennium crosses the River Blithe via a bridge donated by South Staffs Water. The Way then passes through Morrey before reaching the village of Yoxall.



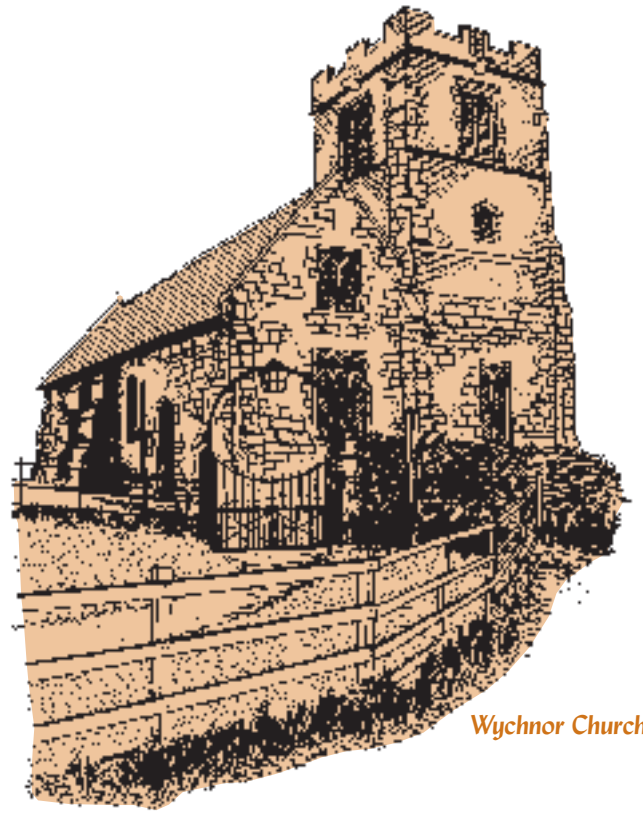
*Pipe Ridware Theatre*

Yoxall is a large village, about 11 kilometres north of Lichfield, in the subsidiary valley of the River Swarbour on the north side of the broad Trent plain.

Little about the village history has been published, but it is known that, besides being the home of Izaak Walton's wife, Yoxall produced two writers, both clerics, the Reverends Thomas Gisbourne and John Riland, who were actively concerned during the first half of the 19th Century with the problem of slavery. Yoxall is another village containing a number of interesting buildings. These include several timber-framed cottages, some of which may date from the 14th Century, a number of fine late 18th Century farmhouses in red brick and the parish church of St. Peter, which stands at the junction of King Street with Victoria Street. The earliest surviving portions of the Church date from the 12th and 14th Centuries. The Church was reopened by the Bishop of Lichfield in April, 1868 after being extensively restored by Henry Woodyer in 1866 - 1868.

One of the attractions of Staffordshire is the great diversity of its countryside. In contrast to the moorland hills of the north-east and the rolling pastures of the centre and south is the level plain of the River Trent where it approaches the eastern edge of the County. In this plain, just a short distance

to the south of the Way for the Millennium, lies the large village of Alrewas. Alrewas has a number of timber-framed cottages and a 12th Century church. The charmingly situated cottage property, intriguing, winding, narrow village lanes and water in the form of the river, millstream and canal shape the most attractive characteristics of Alrewas. The River Trent which runs only 375 metres from Main Street is not only a barrier, but was formerly a source of power. There is likely to have been a watermill at Alrewas since the early middle ages and although the present flour mills date only from the 19th Century, they occupy the site of a large cotton mill that flourished towards the end of the 18th Century. With the possible exception of Betley in the north of the County, Alrewas more than any other village in Staffordshire perpetuates a 16th Century appearance in its ancient centre. Many of the buildings have retained large parts of their exposed half-timbering and even the original form of roof covering, thatch, is in tact.



*Wychnor Church*

## ***PART SIX - Wychnor Bridges to Shobnall and Burton upon Trent***

The Way for the Millennium rejoins the canal towpath at the site of the Wychnor Deserted Village. There was a settlement at Wychnor at the time of the Domesday Book. The only structures standing today are the church, 12th Century in origin, two farms, a barn and a couple of cottages. Observation of the fields to the west and north of the church reveals “ humps and bumps “ indicating the location of a number of houses and their gardens, several roads and trackways and part of the mediaeval field system.

From Wychnor Bridges, the Way for the Millennium follows the canal towpath. The canal runs for some distance alongside the A38. One of the original canal cast iron mileposts is situated between the Catholme and Mill Bridges. To the west lies the historic village of Barton-under-Needwood. Originally a small farming community, it has developed during the latter half of the 20th century into a large village. The name 'Barton' is Saxon, and comes from "Bertone",

which means grain field, barley store or rickyard and in this case it is the demesne farm beneath the forest of Needwood.

The village is attractive and has managed to retain its character despite the new developments. One of its main features is the number of large Victorian mansions that survive and give an air of elegance to the street scenes. Georgian, half-timbered and Regency houses also remain, as does the Tudor manor house of Blakenhall in the south west of the parish and a fifteenth century building in Brookside Road with its fine brick chimney and old leaded glass. The parish church of St. James is, because of its historical and ecclesiastical merit, a building of national importance.

The towpath passes the three-storey Wharf house at Barton Turns, an 18th century Grade II listed building. It was once the Three Crowns Inn, built after the completion of the canal (i.e. post 1770) to cater for canal cargoes, horses and barges. Lady Hardy of Dunstall commissioned St. James Mission Chapel, erected in 1880 at Barton Turns, as a

memorial for her son, Lieutenant Henry John Hardy of the Rifle Brigade, who died at Landmans Drift in Natal on 4 October 1879 during the Zulu War. The building is now used as a Playschool Nursery. Barton Turns was also the site of a Rope Works, established in 1850, and a Gas works, which was established in 1871. A Marina is planned after completion of gravel extraction. The area has been landscaped with lakeside walks as part of the National Forest.

North of Barton Turns the towpath crosses a roving bridge, a Grade II listed structure, which allowed the boat horse to cross the canal without having to disengage the towrope from the narrowboat.

The towpath continues past Branston Water Park which has been developed by East Staffordshire Borough Council for recreation and nature conservation. The landscape around the 40 acre lake has many features: a canal, lake, meadow, reedbed, hedgerows and woodland, all providing food, shelter and homes for a variety of wildlife. The reedbed is particularly special as it is one of the largest in Staffordshire and with the willow, together

called fenn carr, is rich in birds and insects. There is also a visitor centre, picnic benches, children's play area, car parking and toilets at the Water Park.

Shortly after passing Branston Water Park, the Bass Millennium Woodland may be seen on the northern side of the towpath. This 21ha woodland site was planted in 1996 with a mixture of native broadleaf trees and some commercial conifer species with grant-aid through the National Forest Tender Scheme.

Before reaching Shobnall Fields Leisure Complex, the Way for the Millennium passes through Shobnall Marina. The basin is all that remains of the Bond End or Shobnall Branch Canal, which linked the canal at Shobnall to the River Trent at Bond End, and was used by the breweries until it went out of use in 1870. It is now the base for Jannell Cruisers.

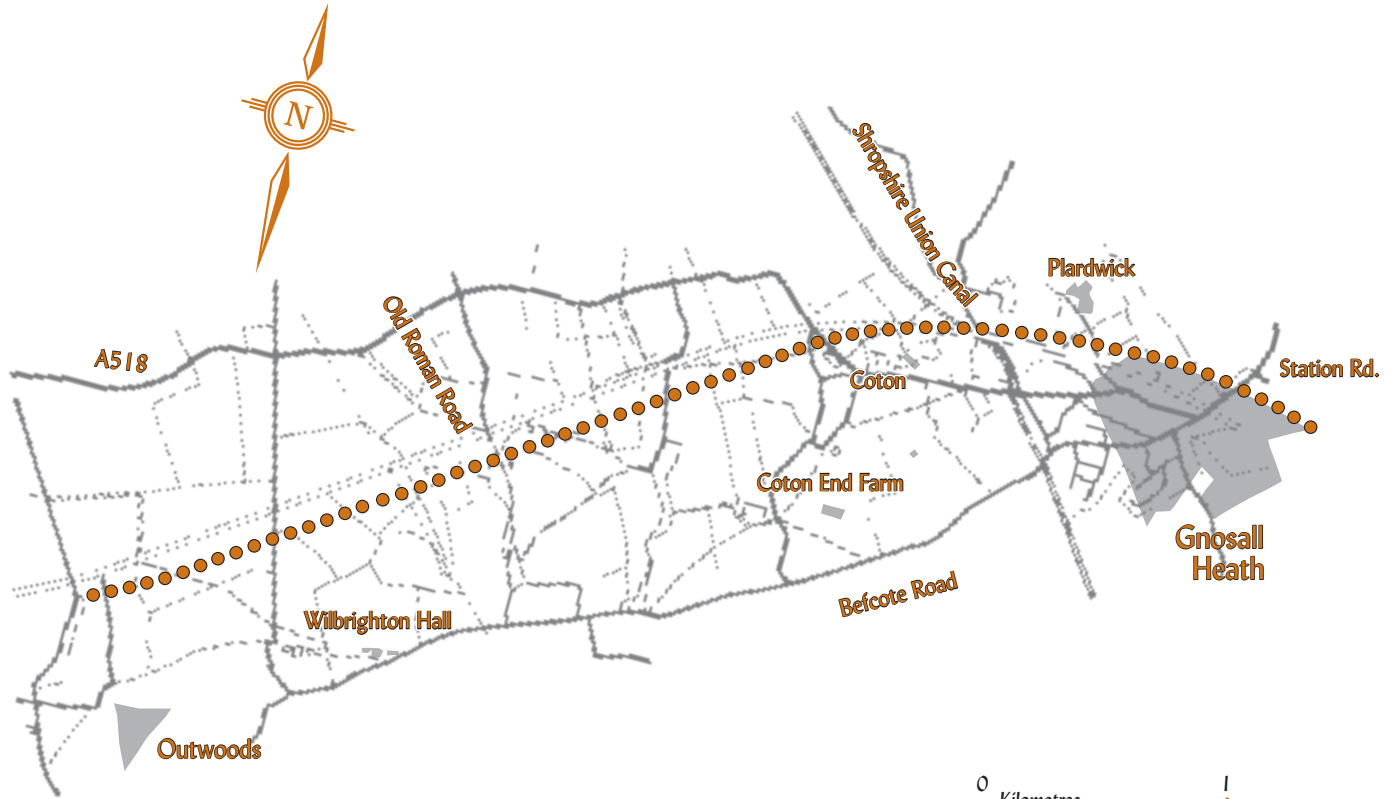
Shobnall Fields Leisure Complex is a major outdoor sports and leisure facility. A wide range of facilities are provided including an athletics track, all-weather pitch, football pitches, tennis courts, a play area and

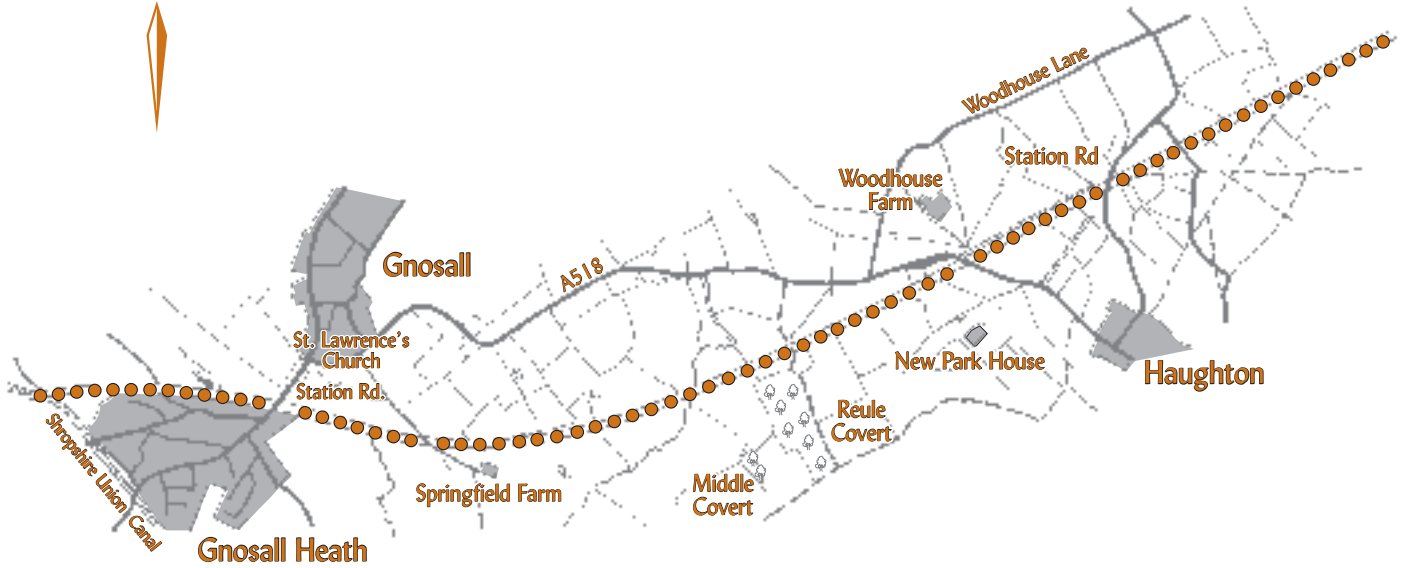
during the summer, paddling pool, crazy golf, pitch and putt, bowls and a picnic area.

The town of Burton upon Trent is nearby. Burton upon Trent owes its origins to an abbey and a bridge over the Trent. Tradition links the Benedictine monastery at Burton with the retreat of the 7th Century St. Modwen on an island in the Trent. In fact, the abbey was founded around AD 1002. It was a wealthy foundation owning considerable property both in the locality and beyond. The monks added to their wealth by encouraging a market on land they owned just outside the abbey walls, thus allowing the town to flourish. A quarter of a mile downstream is the site of the mediaeval bridge. There was a timber bridge in the 11th Century, spanning the river between a series of islands. This was replaced by a stone structure. By the 17th Century, this busy, narrow and winding crossing had become notorious. It was not until 1859 that the bridge was replaced by the wider and straighter crossing that spans the river today.

The monks at Burton brewed their own beer and brewing continued after the dissolution, taking advantage of the quality of the water from local wells. The brewing industry did not become important, however, until the Trent was made navigable as far as Burton at the end of the 17th century. This enabled enterprising brewers, such as William Worthington, to export their beer to the Baltic where it became highly fashionable. At the end of the 18th century, the Baltic trade was disrupted by the wars with France. This led businessmen, like Bass and Allsop, to develop the domestic trade, using the canal system to send their product all over Britain, especially to London. The next development was the growth in the mid 19th century of the trade with India. A new, lighter beer was introduced, as opposed to traditional dark porter ale. This became very popular with British troops and civil servants in India. By the 1840`s Burton's breweries almost had a monopoly in the export of beer to India and many companies established elsewhere in Britain were opening breweries in the town. The successors to these Victorian breweries still dominate the town.







# The ROUTE

## 1. Outwoods to Gnosall (5 kilometres)

*(At the time of publication, the directions given for the route commence at Outwoods, 4 kilometres east of Newport. It is anticipated that the Way for the Millennium will be extended to join with the A.41 at Newport).*

**From the A.518 Stafford to Newport Road, take the lane signposted to Outwoods. About 750 metres along the lane, you will pass under a railway bridge. Access to the Stafford to Newport Greenway is via the steps at the side of the bridge.**

*(Limited parking is available immediately south of the bridge. A bench and litter bin are situated on the Greenway about 50 metres from the steps).*

**From Outwoods, keep on the Greenway heading towards Gnosall.**

*(At the next bridge, the relics of an old hydraulic ram may be seen.*

*The Crows Nest Picnic site is sited approximately 2 ½ metres along the Greenway. Car parking and a disabled ramp are available at the site. There are also several picnic benches sited along this route.*

*Access to the A.518 may be gained via the steps at Sandyhill Bridge. Alternatively, access to the canal towpath may be gained at the next bridge. The steps on your left lead down to the canal towpath. A public house is situated about 200 metres further along the towpath).*

**Continue along the Greenway passing by the sewage works and allotments, to Station Road in Gnosall.**

*(A public house and fish and chip shop are situated nearby. Limited parking is also available).*

**Cross Station Road and go through the wooden kissing gate and climb the steps up the embankment to return to the Greenway.**

## **2. Gnosall to Stafford (10 kilometres)**

**From Station Road, Gnosall, keep on the Greenway to Haughton.**

*(Although extensive drainage works have been carried out along this section of the Greenway, some areas may be muddy particularly during winter months and walkers are advised to wear stout footwear).*

*(There is a car parking area and picnic site at Station Road, Haughton. If you wish to visit the village of Haughton turn right as you leave the car park onto Station Road leading to the centre of the village where there are two public houses and shops).*

**From the car park at Haughton, continue along the Greenway to Derrington, passing Crossing Cottage on your left.**

*(If you wish to visit Derrington turn off the Greenway by the Red Lion public house and cross the car park. There is a shop in the centre of the village and car parking is available at both the public house and in the village).*

**From Derrington, continue along the Greenway, passing Derrington Millennium Green on your left, to Burleyfields on the outskirts of Stafford.**

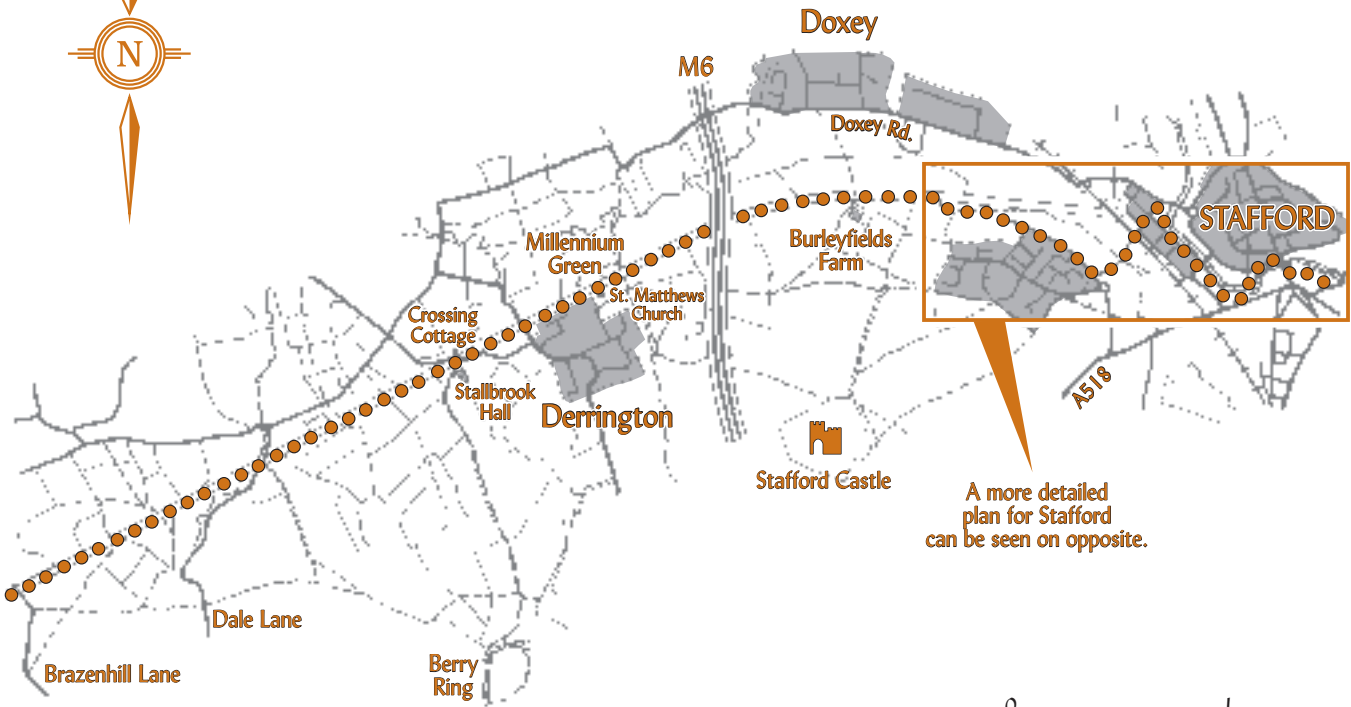
*(This section of the Greenway is a cycle track. There are picnic benches along this stretch of the route).*

**At Burleyfields Farm, take the public footpath on your right and follow the track until you reach the estate road.**

*(There is a car park here).*

**Continue left along the estate road and go straight ahead at the roundabout along Martin Drive.**

**Immediately before the next roundabout take the public footpath on your left through the industrial estate. Cross over the railway bridge immediately ahead and continue along Castle Street.**

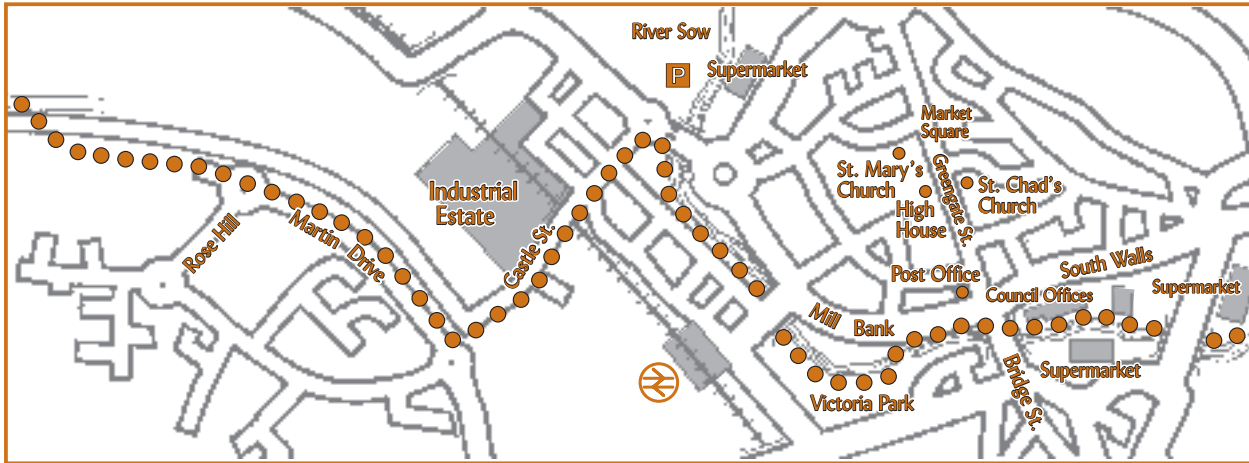


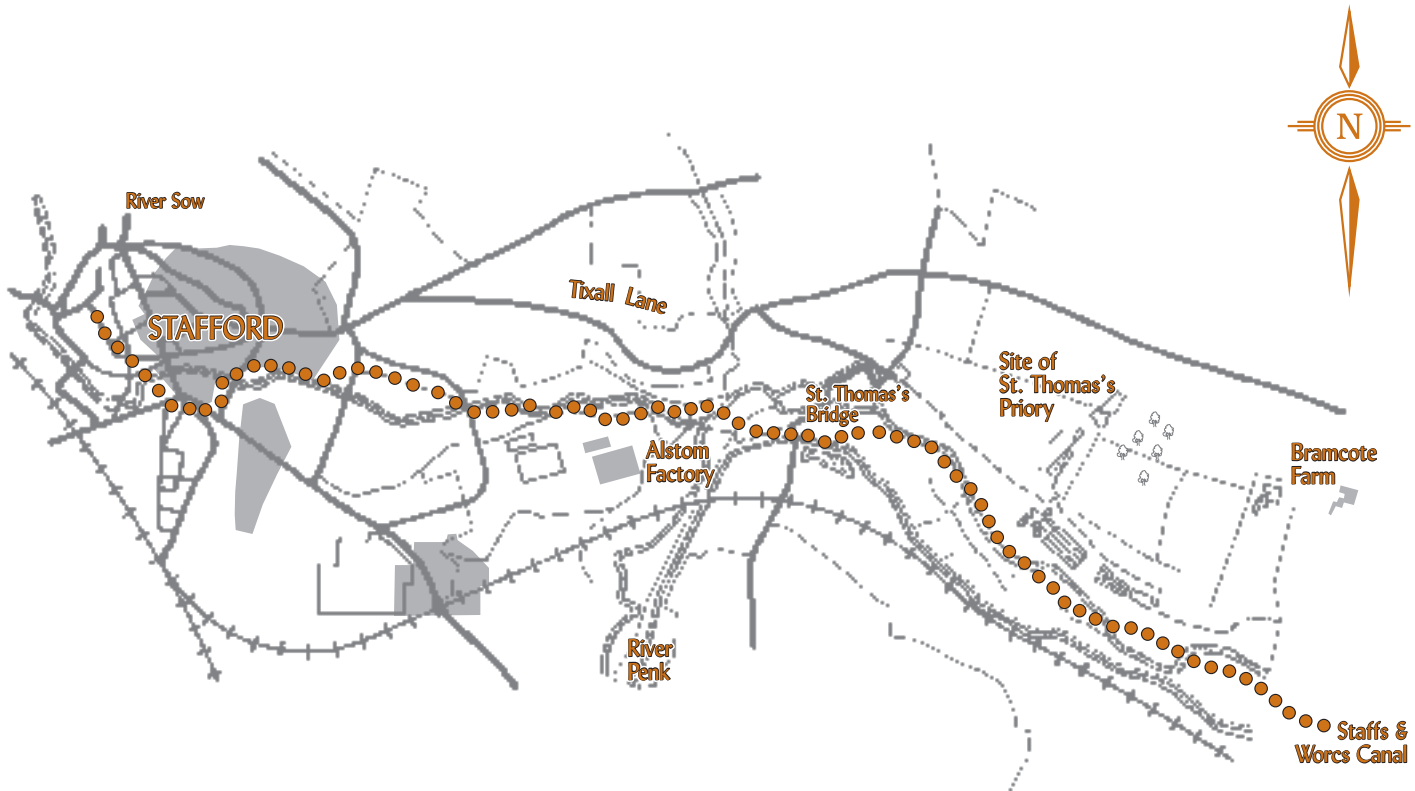
A more detailed plan for Stafford can be seen on opposite.



At the road junction turn right and ,after approximately 50 metres, take the public footpath on your right adjacent to the pedestrian crossing.

Follow the River Sow through Victoria Park and after you exit the Park, continue along Mill Bank past two public houses and the Post Office to Greengate Street and Stafford town centre.





### **3. Stafford to Great Haywood & Shugborough (8 kilometres)**

**In Stafford town centre, take the path on Greengate Bridge immediately adjacent to the River Sow and alongside the Stafford Borough Council offices.**

**After approximately 250 metres you will pass by the Riverside Recreation Centre on your left.**

**Keep alongside the River passing under the Queensway roadbridge and past the supermarket on your left.**

*(This path is also a cycle track).*

**After approximately 400 metres, pass under another roadbridge.**

*(The cycle track ends at this point).*

**At the next roadbridge, climb the ramp on**

**your left and cross over the road and take the public footpath on the right-hand side of the River Sow.**

**Keep alongside the River Sow, past the Alstom Factory on your right until you reach a metal footbridge. Cross the bridge and turn left heading towards the concrete bridge spanning the River Sow.**

*(This area is prone to flooding).*

**Cross over the bridge and bear right towards the fenceline.**

**Cross over both stiles and turn left along the canal towpath.**

*(The Way for the Millennium now follows the towpath of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to Shugborough and beyond).*

**Continue along the towpath to Bridge No. 105 at Milford and cross over the bridge to**



**continue along the towpath on the opposite side of the canal.**

*(There are shops nearby).*

**After a further 100 metres, the canal bends sharply to the left, cross over the aqueduct spanning the River Sow.**

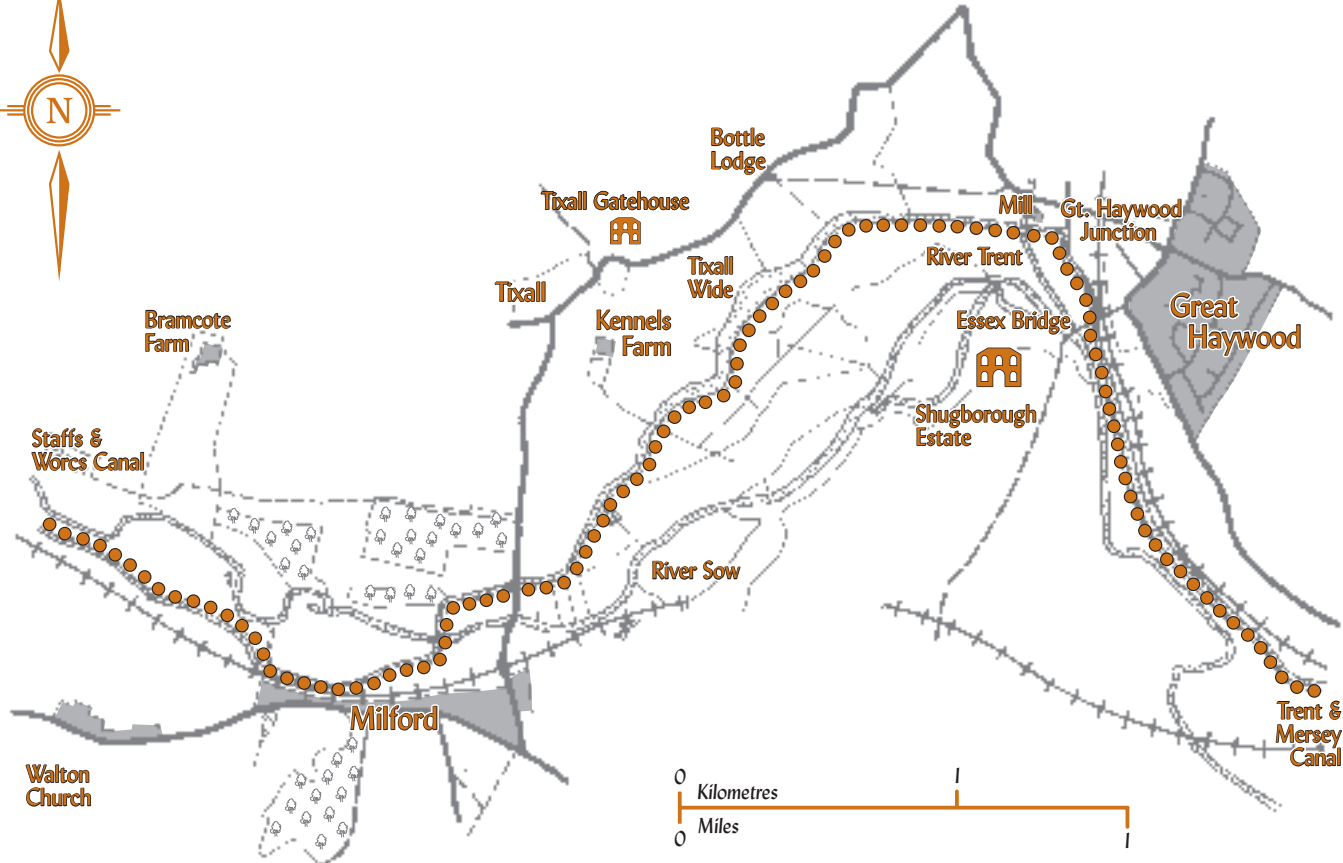
**Continue along the towpath passing Tixall Wide towards Great Haywood Junction.**

**Before reaching the Junction, cross over the aqueduct spanning the River Trent and past by the Old Toll House craft buildings on your right.**

**At the junction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and the Trent and Mersey Canals, turn right to follow the towpath.**

**After approximately 200 metres, you will reach Bridge No. 73.**

*(Access may be gained to the village of Great Haywood or to Shugborough Park and Essex Bridge from here. The Lockhouse Restaurant and Tea Rooms are on the opposite side of the canal).*



#### **4. Great Haywood & Shugborough to Mavesyn Ridware (12 ½ kilometres)**

**From Bridge No. 73 at Great Haywood, continue along the canal towpath passing by the villages of Little Haywood and Colwich.**

*(This stretch of the Way for the Millennium also coincides with the route of the Staffordshire Way).*

*(Access to Little Haywood and Colwich may be gained from Bridge No. 72).*

**After passing under Bridge No. 72 and by Wolseley Warehouse Cottages on the opposite side of the canal, continue ahead for 200 metres to Wolseley Bridge (Bridge No.70) and the A.51.**

*(Access to the Wolseley Arms Public House and Wolseley Park Garden Centre may be gained from here via the steps on the bridge. There is also an antique and craft centre nearby).*

**From Wolseley Bridge, follow the canal towpath, passing under Bridge No.69 and past Wharf Cottage on the opposite side of the canal, to Bridge No. 68. Cross over the bridge to continue along the towpath which is on the opposite side of the canal.**

**Continue along the towpath, passing through the outskirts of Rugeley and Brereton, towards the village of Armitage.**

*(Access to Rugeley Town Centre may be gained from either Bridge No. 67 or Bridge No. 66 at Leathermill Lane).*

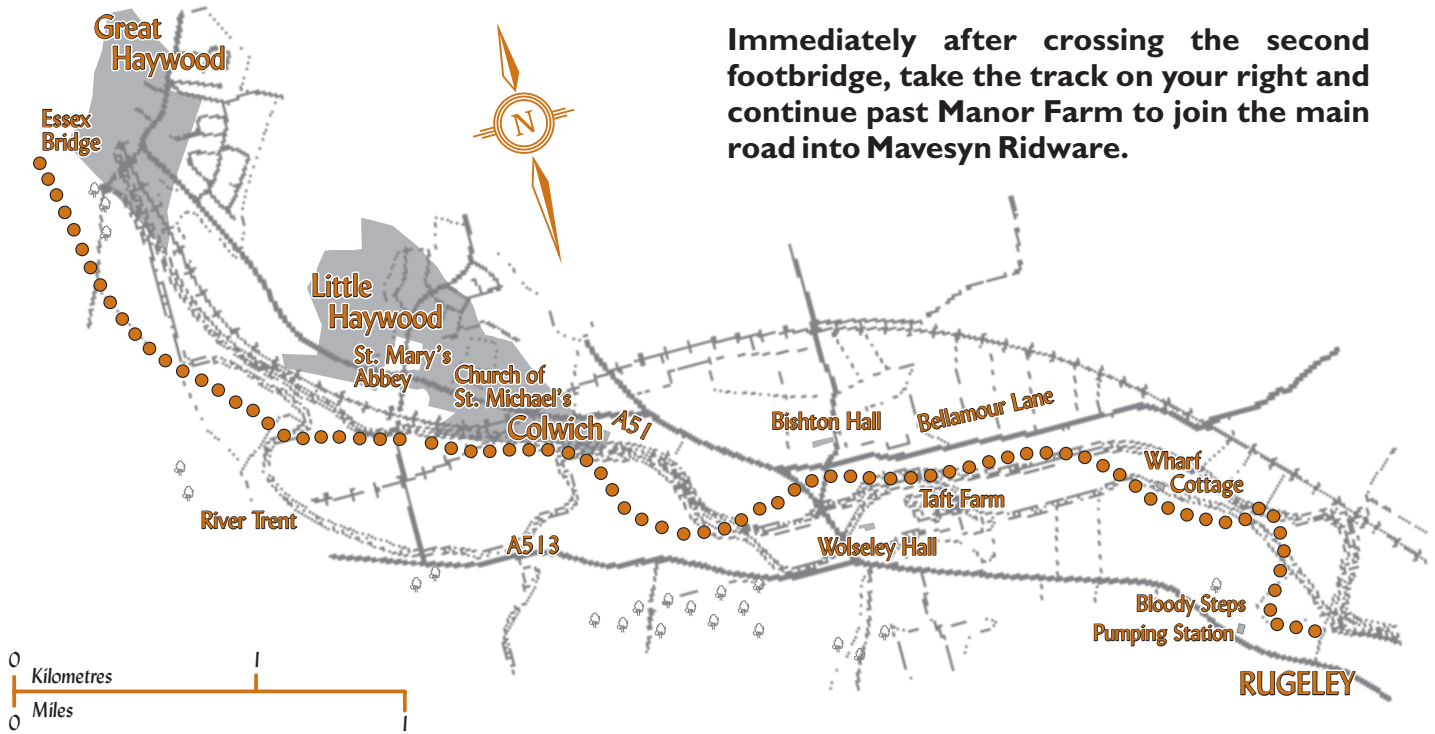
*(British Waterways have recently carried out works to this stretch of the canal and seating and interpretation panels have been provided).*

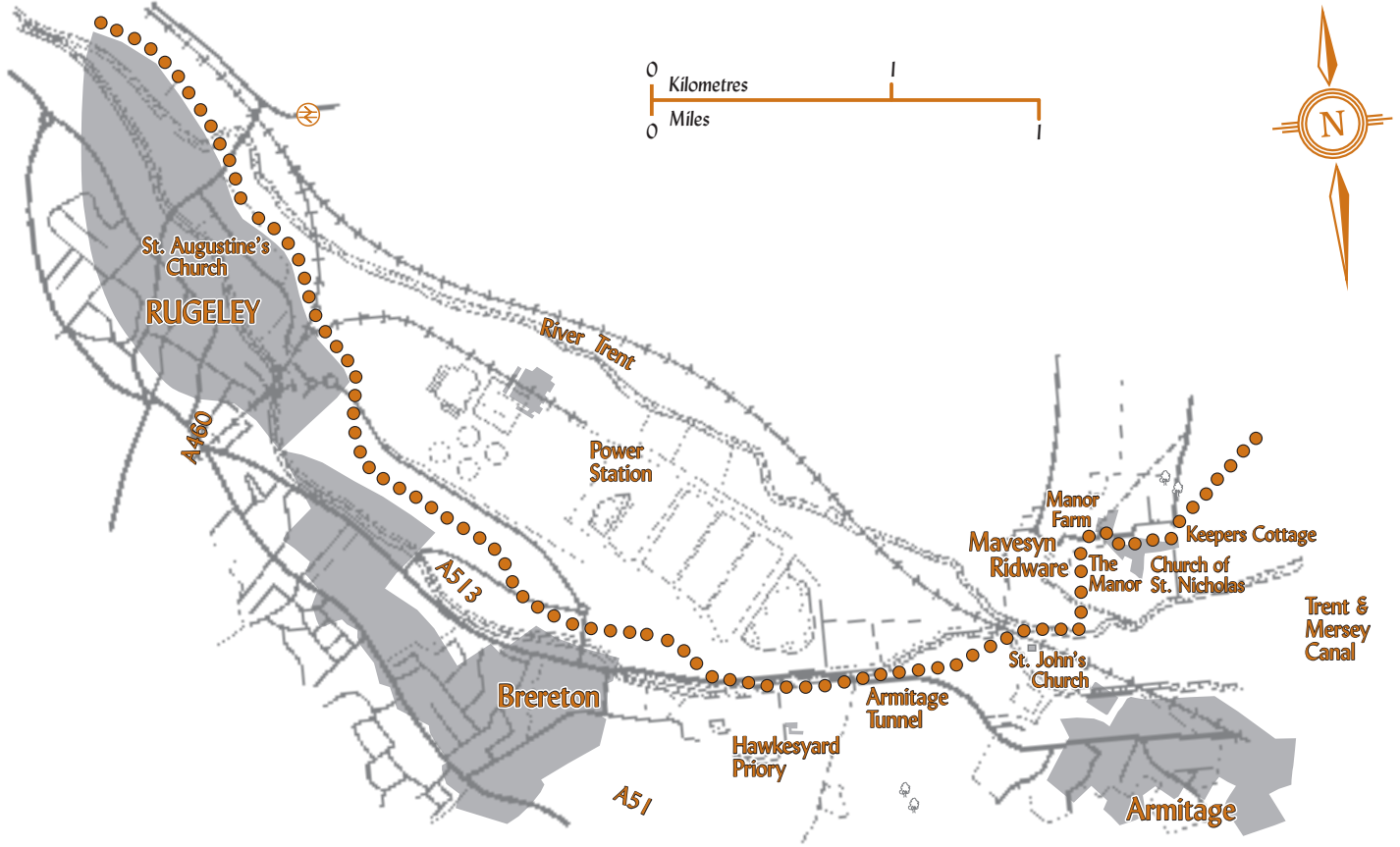
**After passing the Plum Pudding Inn and then the Church, both on the opposite side of the canal, take the public footpath on your left, which leads to Mavesyn Ridware.**

Immediately after taking the public footpath, you will pass under a railway

bridge and then cross a bridge over the River Trent. Continue along the field-edge and cross over two footbridges.

Immediately after crossing the second footbridge, take the track on your right and continue past Manor Farm to join the main road into Mavesyn Ridware.





40

## **5. Mavesyn Ridware to Pipe Ridware (1 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> kilometres)**

**At the junction with the main road in Mavesyn Ridware, turn right and continue past the Church of St. Nicholas on your right and Church Cottage on your left.**

**After 70 metres, take the track on your left by the triangular-shaped grassy area and follow the track to the gates at Keepers Cottage. Follow the track on the right-hand side of the gates and cross over the stile into the field.**

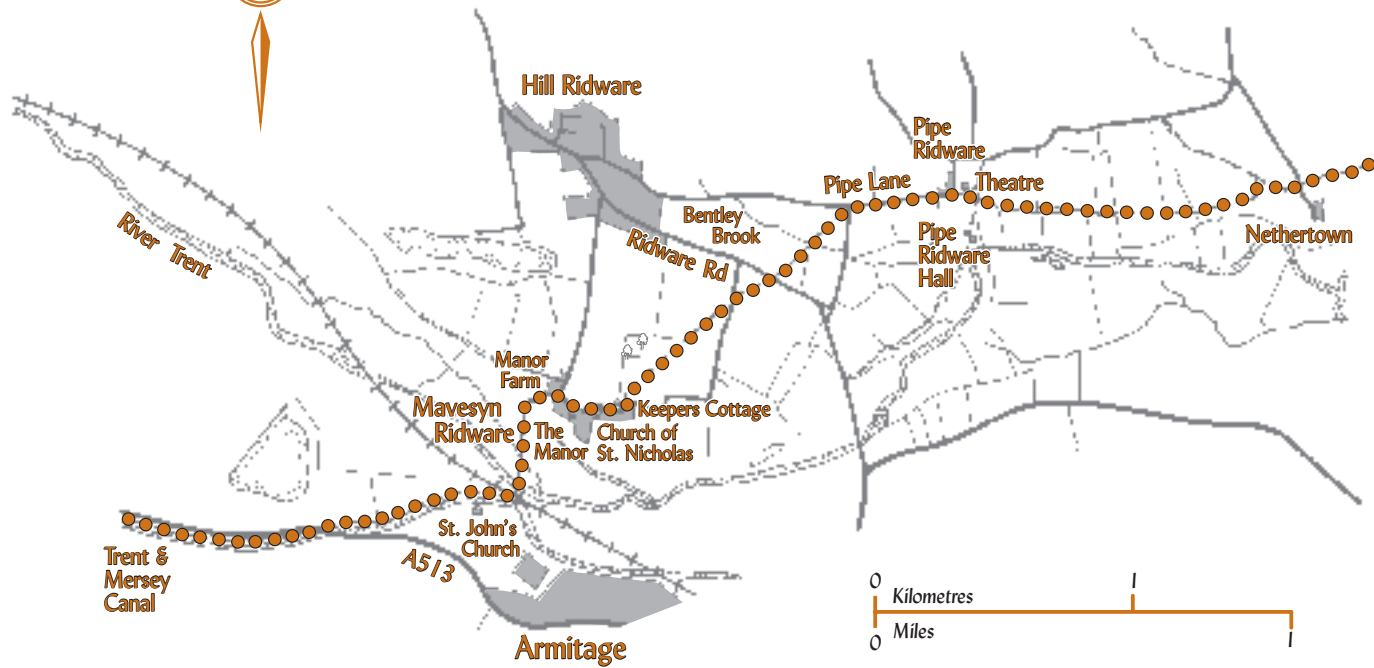
**Continue across the field in a generally north-easterly direction and cross over the stile onto the lane.**

**At the lane, turn left and after approximately 5 metres, cross over the stile on your right into the field.**

**Again, continue ahead in a generally north-easterly direction across the field and cross over the stile onto the main road. Follow the public footpath immediately opposite to the stile on the embankment and then cross over the footbridge across the Bentley Brook.**

**After crossing the Brook, head towards the right-hand corner of the field and onto Pipe Lane.**

**Follow the road for 400 metres into Pipe Ridware.**



## **6. Pipe Ridware to Yoxall (5 kilometres)**

**At the sharp left-hand bend in Pipe Ridware, cross over the stone stile in the right-hand corner of the boundary wall of the Pipe Ridware Theatre (formerly the Church).**

**Continue ahead to the stile in the post and rail fence and then bear left past the graveyard to the stile at the far left-hand corner of the boundary wall. Cross over the stile and follow the field-edge to the metal gate in the far right-hand corner of the next field.**

**Go through the gap in the hedgeline and continue across the next two fields to the footbridge to the right of the gate. Turn left along the track and after 50 metres, turn right by Luthburn Cottage and continue to the junction with the main road in Nethertown.**

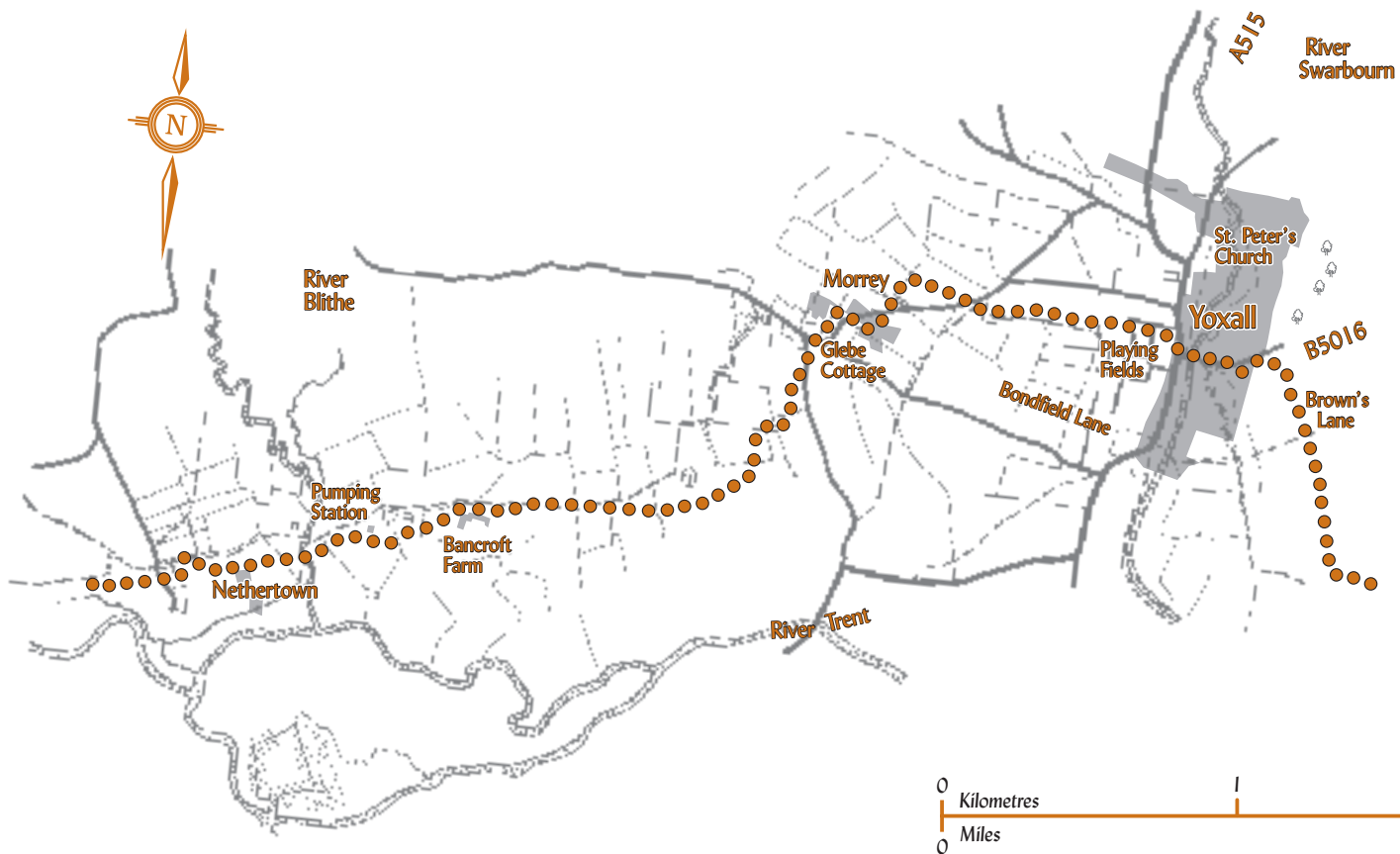
**Take the public footpath (Bancroft Lane) immediately opposite the junction and continue ahead along the field-edge, passing by the pumping station on your left, to the two stiles.**

**Continue across the next field to the metal footbridge. Follow the elevated sleeper path and then cross the field to the stile adjacent to the metal field gate.**

**Follow the headland to Bancroft Farm and then follow the waymarked path around the farm to the stile in the hedgerow.**

**Cross the next field keeping to the field-edge and cross over the footbridge. Continue in an easterly direction, crossing the farm accommodation bridge, to a gap in the hedgerow next to an old willow tree.**





## **7. Yoxall to Wychnor Bridges (6 kilometres)**

**In Yoxall, take the next turn on your right to Barton-under-Needwood (B.5016).**

**After approximately 30 metres, take the next public footpath (Brown's Lane) on your right. Continue ahead along the track crossing over two stiles and passing through a metal gate.**

**Cross over the next stile on your left and follow the field edge ahead across the next two fields to the stile.**

**Bear right in the next field to the stile and then continue ahead along the green lane to its junction with Meadow Lane.**

**Cross over the stile in the opposite hedgerow and follow the field-edge to the electricity pylon.**

**Go diagonally across the field between the oak trees to the fingerpost. Continue across the next field to the footbridge and stiles.**

**Climb the hill keeping the plantation on your right and cross over the stile into the woodland.**

**Follow the trail through the woodland to the next stile.**

**Bear right across the field and cross over the stream into the field.**

**Turn immediately left and follow the field-edge for approximately 100 metres to the stile. Continue along the woodland track, passing a barn on your right.**

**Exit the track by the fingerpost and continue ahead across the field to the stile and fingerpost.**

**Continue across the next field to a dog-leg in the opposite hedgerow and go through the field gate. Continue across the next field to the footbridge and stile.**

**Continue across the next field to the gate and turn left onto the green lane. Follow the green lane to the field gate next to the stables at Glebe Cottage.**

**Turn right and continue along the main road through the village of Morrey.**

**After passing Yew Tree Farm, take the public footpath on your left approximately 20 metres before the junction. Follow the path to the footbridge and then continue ahead to the field gate.**

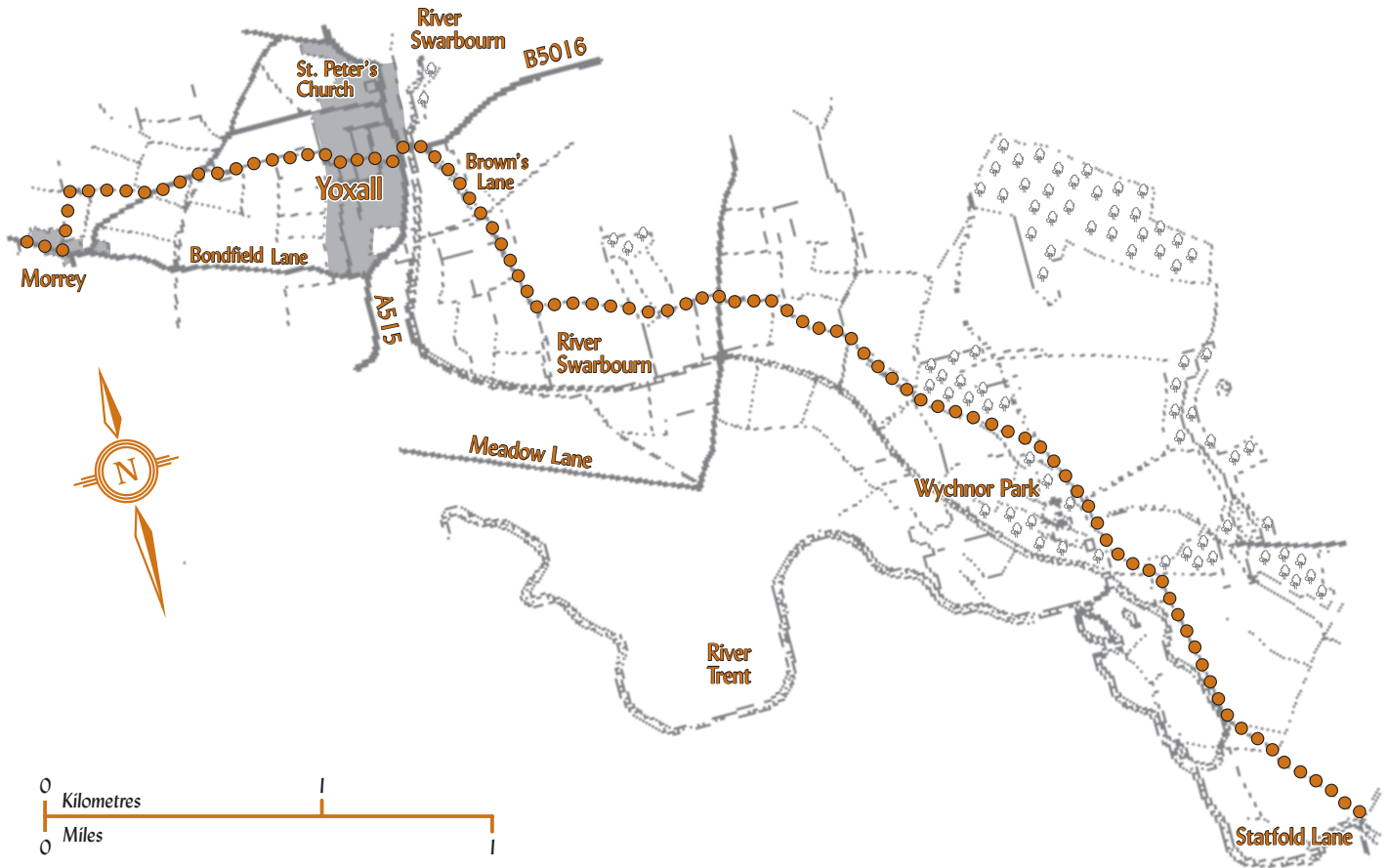
**Cross over the stile immediately on your right and continue ahead for approximately 100 metres, then bear slightly left to the stile in the far left-hand corner of the field.**

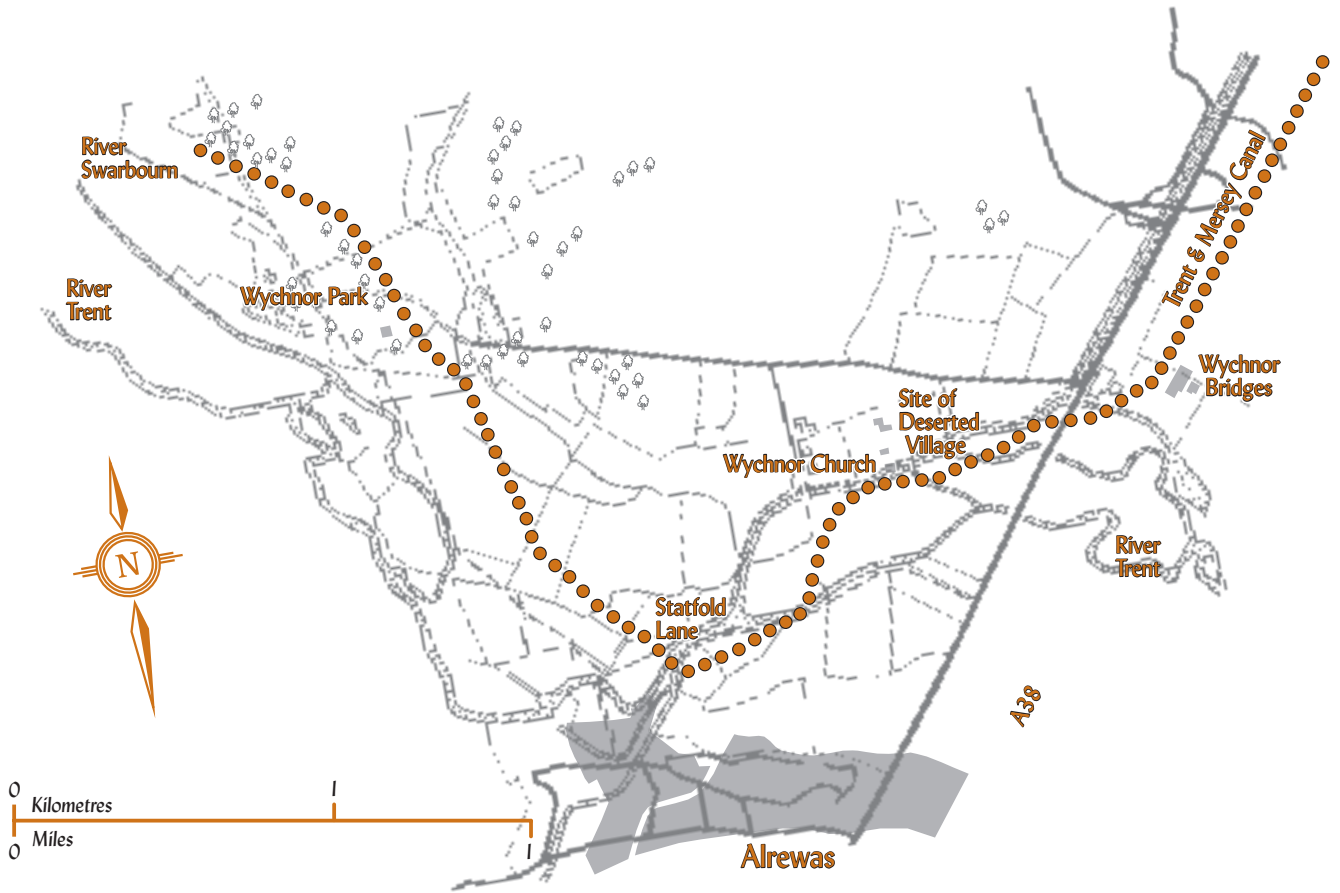
**Turn left and continue along the lane for approximately 100 metres to the field gate on your right. Cross the field to the stile and then continue ahead to the next stile.**

**Turn left and cross the field to a footbridge and stile in a post and rail fence.**

**Cross the playing fields to the housing estate and turn right to follow Ferrers Road to its junction with Bond End (A.515). Turn left at the junction towards the centre of Yoxall.**

*( There are several shops and public houses in Yoxall . Car parking is also available).*





**Take the left-hand fork along the driveway towards Wychnor Hall, passing Wychnor Hall Farm on your right.**

**Cross over the stile adjacent to the gates of Wychnor Hall onto the golf course and follow the track around the golf course and through the woodland for approximately 150 metres.**

**Exit the woodland, turn right and turn immediately left to follow the grassy track to the footbridge.**

**Continue ahead to a stile, keeping the River Swarbourn on your right.**

**Bear diagonally left across the field to a footbridge. Continue ahead, passing through a gap in the hedgeline, to the footbridge in the next field.**

**Turn immediately left and follow the field-edge to the stile at Statfold Lane.**

**Cross over the stile on the opposite side of the lane and bear left across the field to the stile.**

**Cross over the stile and continue along the canal towpath to Bridge No.43 at Wychnor Bridges.**







## **8. Wychnor Bridges to Shobnall (9 kilometres)**

**At Bridge No. 43 at Wychnor Bridges cross over the bridge to continue along the towpath.**

*(There is a fast-food restaurant and two public houses at Barton Turns and at Branston, immediately adjacent to the canal towpath).*

**Continue along the canal towpath to Shobnall marina, crossing over Bridges No.36 and 35 en route.**

**At Shobnall Marina, take the steps on the bridge to Shobnall Road.**

**Turn left along Shobnall Road for approximately 150 metres.**

**Shobnall Fields Leisure Complex is situated on your right.**

