

The Newcastle Way

Walk from



Mow Cop



to



Market Drayton



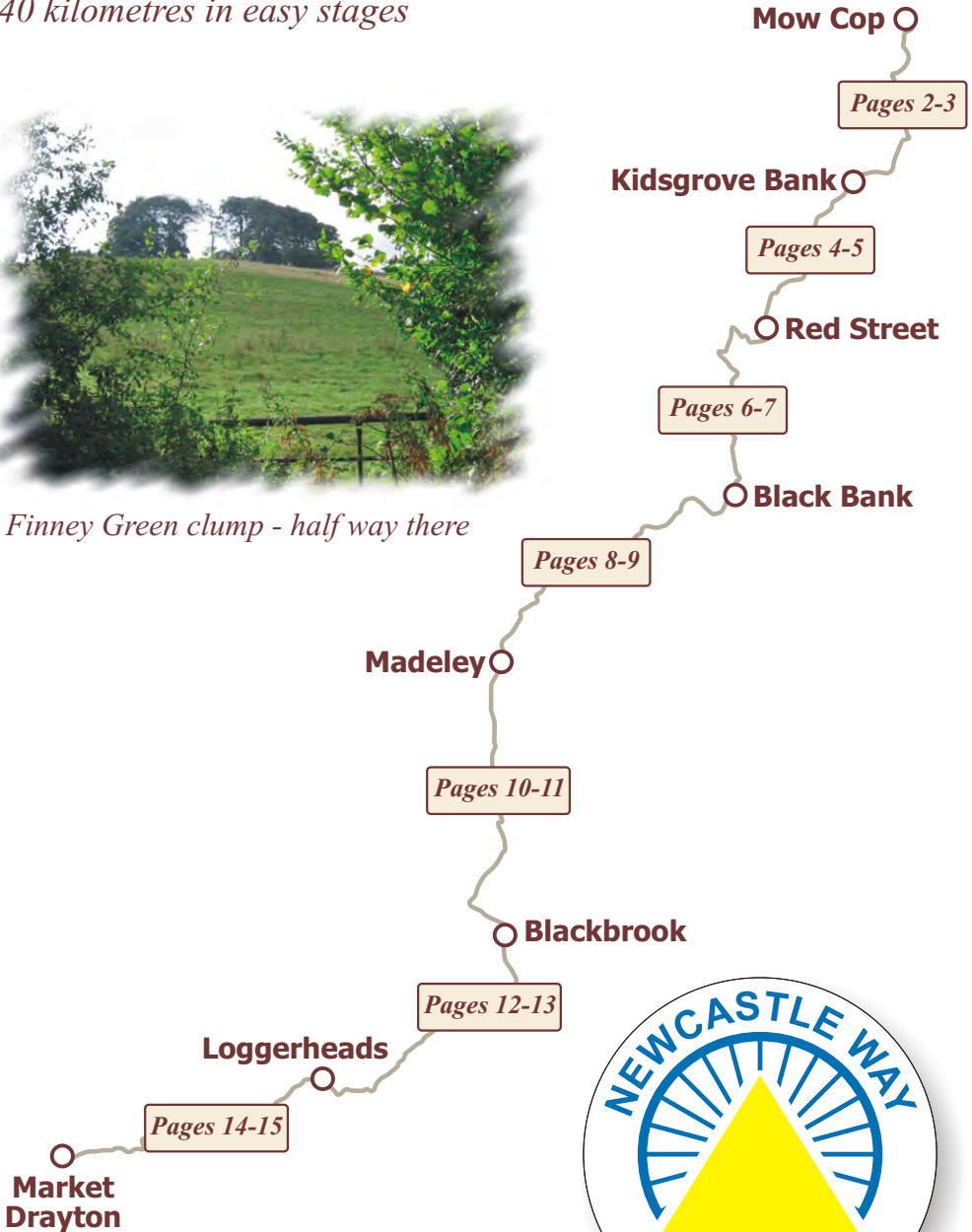
Staffordshire
County Council

The Newcastle Way

40 kilometres in easy stages



Finney Green clump - half way there



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Introduction: ironstone, coal and clay.

The Newcastle Way is a long distance walking route on public rights of way through the Borough of Newcastle under-Lyme. It links the Staffordshire Way at Mow Cop with the Shropshire Union Canal towpath at Market Drayton, a distance of approximately 40km (25 miles) on the map. To follow the whole route using Ordnance Survey maps you will need 1:25000 scale Explorer sheets 258 The Potteries and Newcastle, 243 Market Drayton, and 257 Whitchurch.

Changing Landscape.

This is a fascinating walk at any time of year, with challenging terrain and a constantly changing landscape. From rough moorland scenery around Mow Cop the Way passes through the relics of coal mining, iron furnaces and brick making to rich farming country around Madeley. Then it's up along the sandstone ridges of Maer and Ashley and across the wide open spaces of Blore Heath to Alington and the 'Shroppie'. Along the route the landmarks on the horizon start to become very familiar, with frequent views into Cheshire, west to the Shropshire Hills and south as far as Cannock Chase.

Walk in easy stages.

In this booklet the Newcastle Way has been divided into seven sections for ease of reference and for those who would prefer to walk the route in easy stages. Each section will be a good half day's walk for most people. Although the distance may not seem long the twists and turns and ups and downs mean that sections can take at least three hours with a few stops to take in the view along the way.

Waymarked Route.

Look out for the Newcastle Way discs with blue pit wheel symbol and yellow arrow. The route has also been waymarked throughout with oak signposts.

Mow Cop to Kidsgrove Bank

Length 5km.

Descending from the heathery slopes of Mow Cop, the start of the Newcastle Way blends regeneration with the older landscape of mining and industrial heritage.

1. Start at Mow Cop Castle, 18th century folly and place of pilgrimage. From car park walk over ridge below cliff, and down track on south side of rocks behind cottage.

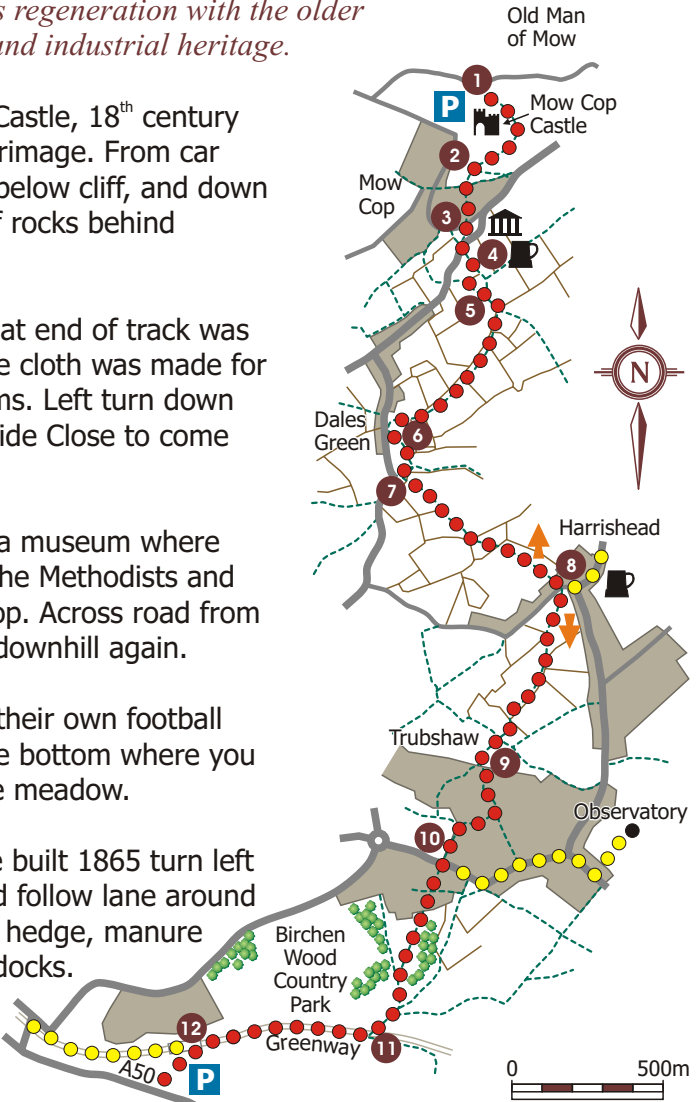
2. Tall stone building at end of track was the fustian mill where cloth was made for WW1 soldiers' uniforms. Left turn down steps and across Hillside Close to come out on Chapel Bank.

3. Old chapel is now a museum where you can learn about the Methodists and the history of Mow Cop. Across road from museum follow path downhill again.

4. The Ash Inn have their own football field with a stile at the bottom where you turn right through the meadow.

5. At Foxfield Cottage built 1865 turn left down Fords Lane, and follow lane around to right past tall holly hedge, manure heaps and horse paddocks.

6. Path comes out at Dales Green where there is a sharp left turn before road across the little playing field then through two meadows to Red Hall Farm.



- Newcastle Way
- Detour
- Right of Way
- Field Boundary
- ▲ View
- P Car Park
- ⌚ Museum
- 🍺 Public House

7. Facing towards farm buildings take right hand of two tracks slightly uphill, then head across the fields and up bank towards line of houses at top (Harriseahead). Looking back as you go up bank there's a good view of Mow Cop.

8. For detour to the Nag's Head, break here. To continue, cross Harriseahead Lane for view of two church spires on horizon, Newchapel (nearest one) and Goldenhill. Head for far corner of field.

9. At new housing estate cross Lark Avenue and a few yards along path goes left between houses and past the end of Wild Goose Avenue!



Castle, Mow Cop

10. Detour up Pennyfields Road to see the Newchapel Observatory, (500m), with exhibition and planetarium. Otherwise cross over, down alley and into Birchenwood Country Park.



Chapel Bank, Mow Cop

11. Go down bank onto greenway and carry on past rusty coloured pond and stone buttresses, relics of coal and ironworking days.

12. Uphill off greenway before tunnel and across grass to come out on Kidsgrove Bank by skate park. OR to continue into Kidsgrove walk through the impressive tunnel and carry on along greenway to town centre.

Kidsgrove Bank to Red Street

Length - 4km.

This is a short section, mainly woodland and water so good on a hot day. With detours to see the Harecastle Tunnel and Bath Pool Park it could become about 7 km.

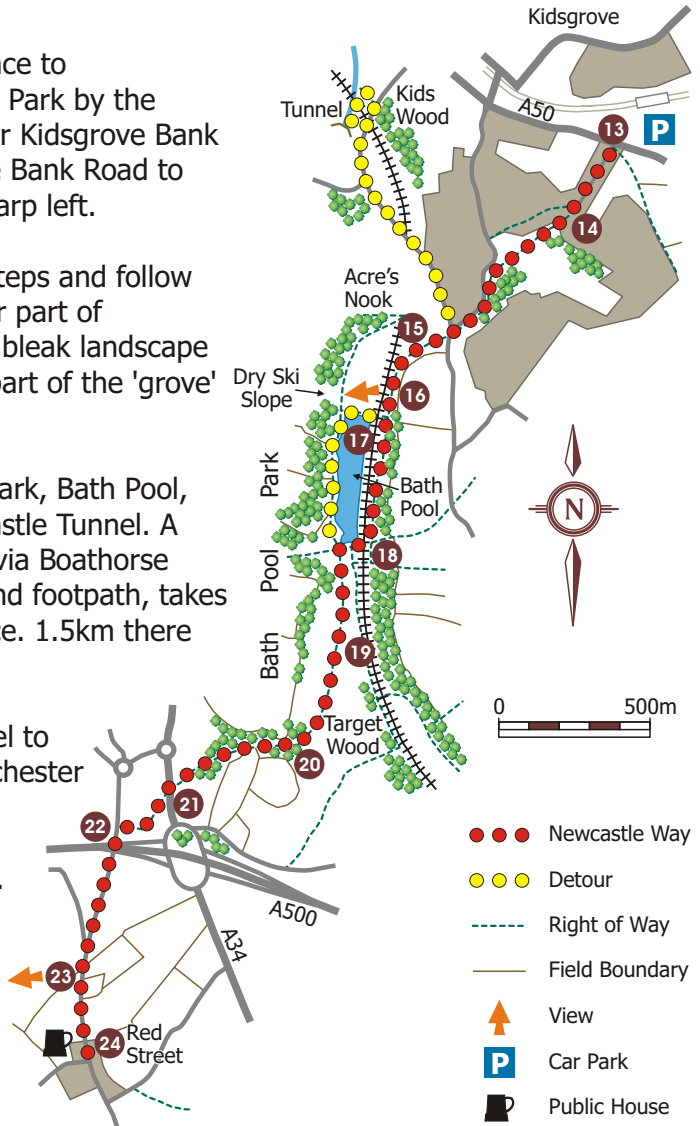
13. Start from entrance to Birchenwood Country Park by the skate park. Cross over Kidsgrove Bank and walk along Stone Bank Road to where road bends sharp left.

14. Go down steep steps and follow track through another part of Birchenwood, once a bleak landscape of quarries but now part of the 'grove' in Kidsgrove.

15. Acres Nook car park, Bath Pool, directly above Harecastle Tunnel. A diversion from here, via Boathorse Road, First Avenue and footpath, takes you to tunnel entrance. 1.5km there and back.

16. Track runs parallel to main London to Manchester railway line. Dry ski slope can be seen on hillside through trees.

17. Cross footbridge here to view woods and waterfowl of Bath Pool, once a reservoir. Was it used to fill the boilers of passing steam engines?



- 18.** Over this bridge to the right is a picnic spot by lake with willows and water lilies. Way continues into wood across corner of meadow (previously a golf driving range, now maintained as wetland habitat).
- 19.** Path continues through woodland past disused quarries and remains of old industrial site, now overgrown.
- 20.** Target Wood, used to be a rifle range as name suggests. Brilliant bluebells in Spring, very shady pool. Paths can be muddy going uphill to main road (A 34).
- 21.** Across A34 you will see 'Little Chef' on corner. Go through grounds of Travelodge to far corner and through little wood, to come out on Talke Road.
- 22.** Cross over Talke Road and then across A500 via road bridge, and uphill along pavement.
- 23.** View of Wedgwood's monument and in the distance looking West, Beeston Castle and Peckforton Hills, (the Cheshire sandstone ridge).
- 24.** At the top of the hill you will reach the Crown Inn in the village of Red Street. Regular buses from here to Chesterton and Newcastle.



Harecastle Tunnel entrance

Red Street to Black Bank

Length - 5km.

This section takes us from the windy heights of Red Street down into Apedale Country Park and up to another high spot at Black Bank, on the ridge between Apedale and Silverdale.

25. From the Crown Inn at Red Street carry on through village, turn right at the little green by Water Street. Follow tarmac path, then cross grass and through small coppice.

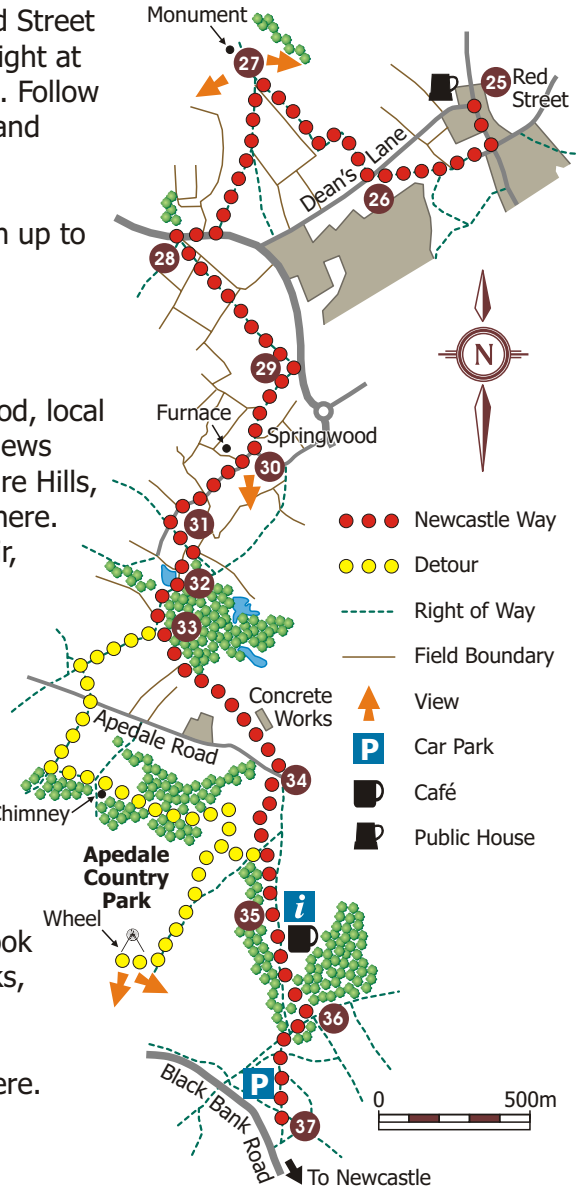
26. Cross Deans Lane, carry on up to the monument with two white reservoir buildings on your left.

27. Red Street Monument commemorates John Wedgwood, local Victorian mine owner. Great views across Cheshire Plain, Shropshire Hills, also Wrekin can be seen from here. Head back to right of reservoir, cross road at Bignall Hill.

28. Look for stile into field at corner of little wood. Follow path via hedgerows and footbridge in dip.

29. Right turn behind houses at Robin Hood Farm.

30. By Springwood Cottages look out for Partridge Nest Ironworks, 18th century blast furnace and listed building (in garden). View of Apedale Wheel from here.



- 31.** Down track (Springwood Lane) look for stile on left in hedge. Cross field to Burley Shales, remains of Burley Pit mound, now a wood (again!).
- 32.** Take path through edge of wood and around Springwood Pool to avoid flooding.
- 33.** Detour can be taken from here to view the Heathcote monument (Watermills Chimney) in Watermills Wood.
- 34.** Past concrete works cross Apedale Road with grassy hillside of Country Park ahead. Take a detour from here to see Apedale Wheel (straight ahead uphill but out of site) or Watermills Chimney (in woods). Way continues south through Apedale Country Park.
- 35.** Apedale Heritage Centre, Mine and Café, open daily. Mine and museum tours by arrangement. Also narrow gauge railway museum under development.
- 36.** Right turn uphill to Black Bank for views over Apedale and Potteries. For buses from Chesterton turn left up Loomer Road (15 minutes walk to High Street).
- 37.** Staffordshire County Council's Energy Station education centre by Black Bank car park. The new centre looks to a future of green energy and environmental conservation. Proposed to open 2008.



Apedale Memorial Wheel

Black Bank to Madeley

Length - 7km.

Through the last of the coal measures in this section and down onto level farming countryside for a while.

38. From car park cross over Black Bank Rd and follow track OR for detour to Apedale Wheel and view point, follow track uphill within Country Park, rejoin Way at 39.

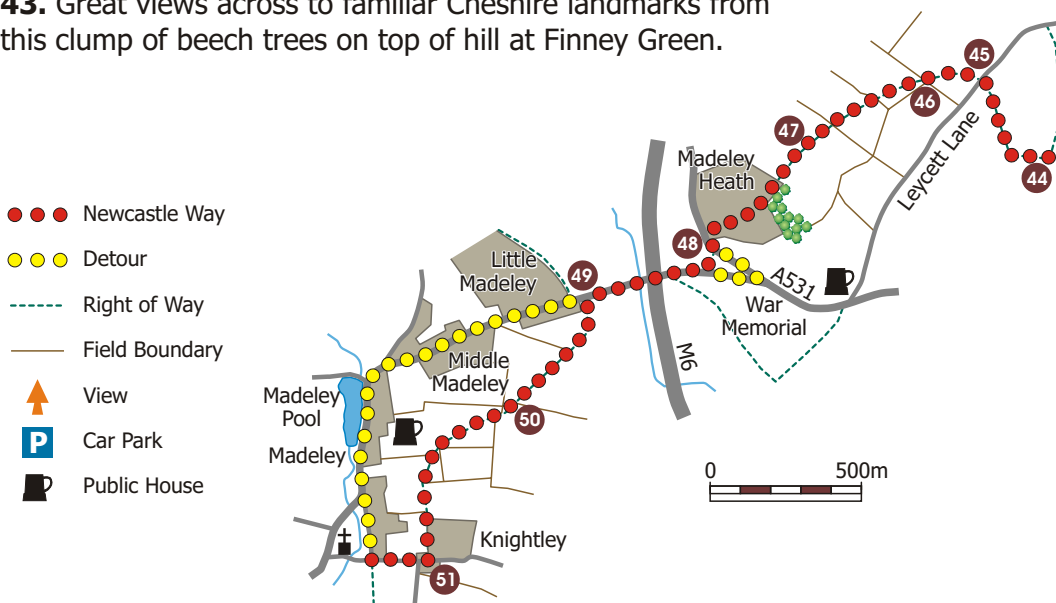
39. Views from here into the Silverdale Void, legacy of opencast coal mining in the 1980's, now a haven for birdlife. Ravens and peregrines have been seen.

40. Path skirts Silverdale Business Park (built on old Silverdale Colliery site) and miners' fishing pool, then uphill along Scot Hay Rd 400m.

41. Left turn off the road diagonally across field with friendly horses and duck pond (as seen summer 2006!)

42. Interesting wild area of big trees among old mining spoil heaps, part used as pasture. Path may be seasonally overgrown but keep straight on.

43. Great views across to familiar Cheshire landmarks from this clump of beech trees on top of hill at Finney Green.



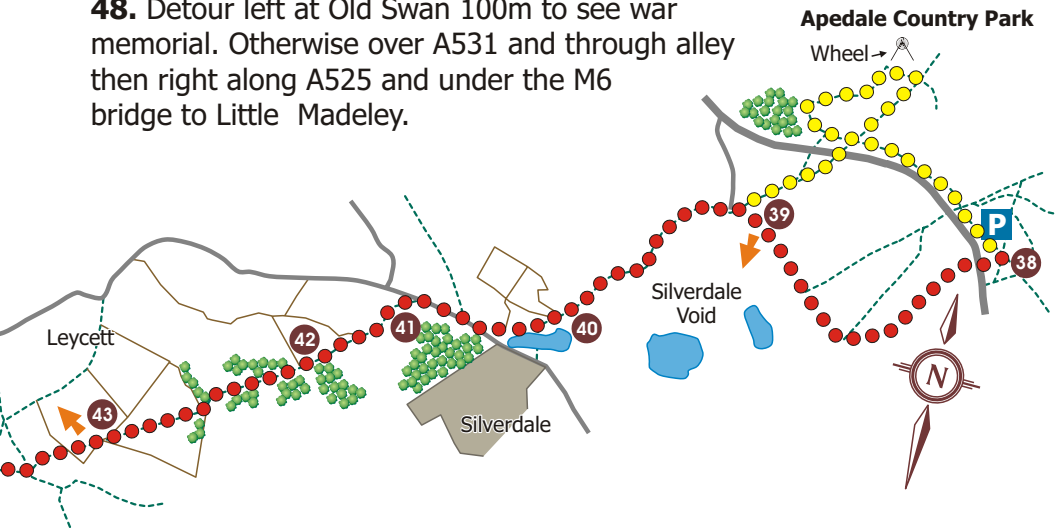
44. Go through farmyard and down lane. Methane extractors denote restored waste disposal site. Sharp turn to right across field to 'Park Terrace' cottages.

45. Cross over Leycett Lane and edge around the cricket field, or have a break to watch a match!

46. Through wood to rear of cottages, path may be overgrown in summer. Cross old railway line (good spot for blackberries), head to the right of old barn in field. End of coal, you're now in brick & tile country!

47. Big conifer woodland uphill on right is Walton's Wood. Way ahead passes along edge of Heath Wood, owned by Madeley Parish Council.

48. Detour left at Old Swan 100m to see war memorial. Otherwise over A531 and through alley then right along A525 and under the M6 bridge to Little Madeley.



49. Pause by East Lodge for a view across park with veteran oaks to Madeley Manor. Detour from here to village or continue via stile in hedge opposite lodge, through paddock and follow stiles across the fields.

50. Flat farmland here. Maer Hills can now be seen ahead (long wooded ridge with telecom tower on horizon). Carry on to old hedgerows with hazels and damsons.

51. Right at Knightley down Castle Lane to junction with Holborn. Straight ahead for Parish Church, or down The Holborn for Pool, Offley Arms, shops and buses.

Madeley to Blackbrook

Length - 6.5km.

Past the ruins of a moated manor house, over rolling farmland up to Maer Hills and through the pine forest.

52. From junction of Holborn and Castle Lane go up track behind walled garden of old rectory, then across field with parkland lime and copper beech.

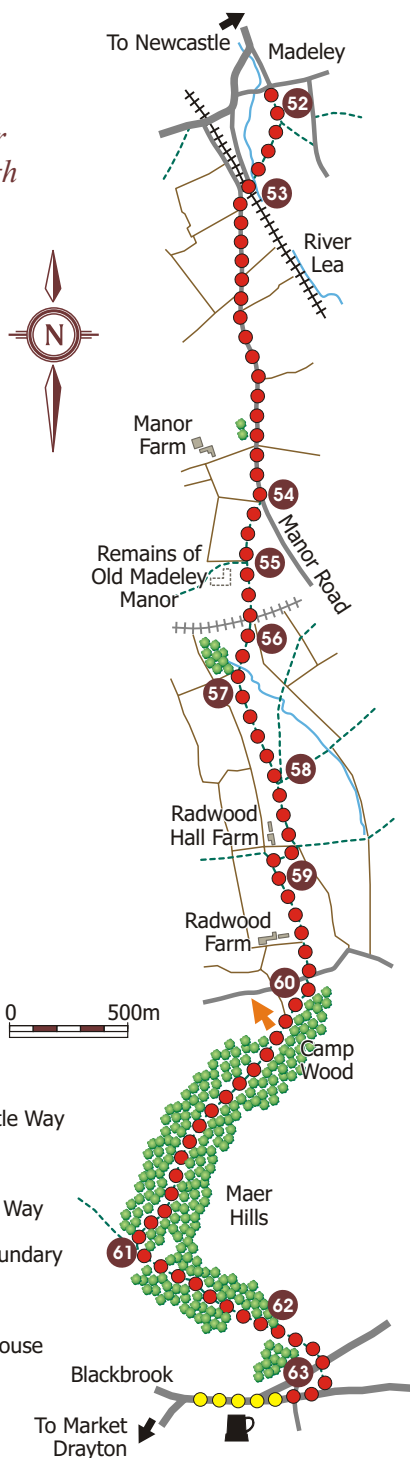
53. Cross River Lea, up onto bridge over railway (Stafford / Crewe) with view of allotments, then left along the lane for 1.5km, over hill past Manor Farm.

54. Look for stile in hedge on right, skirt around rim of old pit and downhill across field to water trough.

55. Through grove of large old ash and sycamore trees with site of old Madeley Manor on right. The moat still holds water and some stonework can be seen.

56. Cross bridge over line of abandoned Newcastle to Market Drayton railway, now overgrown. Cross field towards corner of wood. Buzzards often seen here.

57. Down into dip at corner of wood (a dried up field pond), up bank and cross large field taking a line via two big oaks standing alone about 100m apart.



58. Beware of hidden ditch by this stile where three footpaths meet. Carry on along hedge, skirting around Radwood Hall farmyard with sweet smells of silage and hedgerow plums in summer.

59. At corner of farm garden go down steps onto track and left past further extensive farm buildings then out onto Radwood Lane below pine forest.

60. Across lane and up another track and in a few moments you are on Maer Hills. Now a plantation, when Charles Darwin walked here in the 1820's this was heathland. Take a break to admire his view before starting downhill through pines & bilberries.

61. When you reach far side of the woods by garden with tennis court take a left through the pony paddock and then through abandoned sawmills to far corner of yard, then through forest again.

62. At corner of woods stile between tall holly bushes leads into cultivated field. Rock and pebbles in this area are evidence of ancient dunes and beaches.

63. Cross over the Newcastle road and in a few yards you reach the Nantwich road by the farm shop. Right turn takes you to continuation of the Newcastle Way along Wharmadine Lane, OR continue along main road for 'The Swan with Two Necks' and buses to Newcastle from opposite pub.



River Lea at Madeley



Maer Hills Pine

Blackbrook to Loggerheads

Length - 6km.

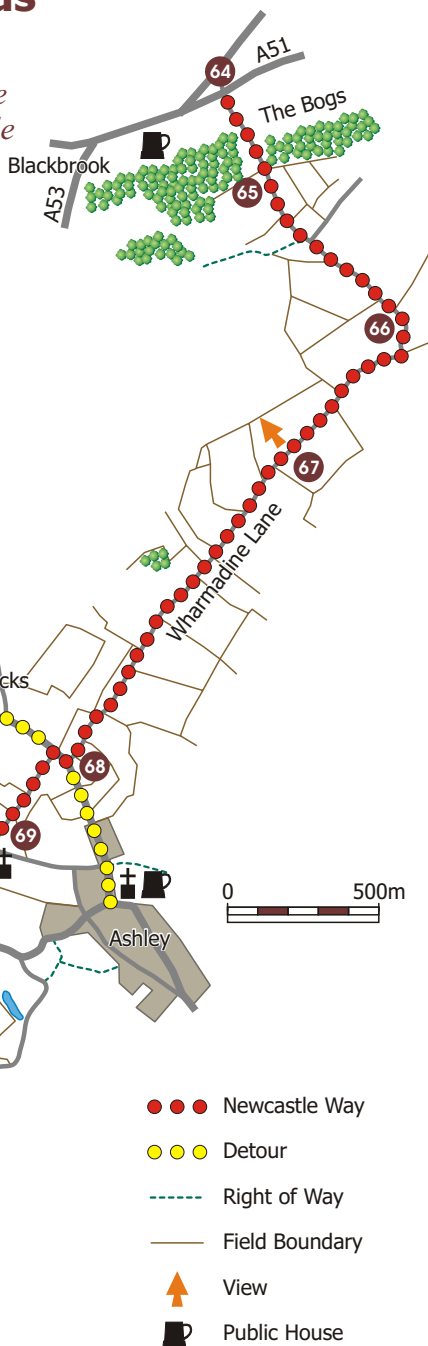
Follow Wharmadine Lane along sandstone ridge to Ashley, then down into Ashley Dale and up again to pinewoods and distant views from Ashley Heath.

64. Start at junction of Wharmadine Lane with A51 Nantwich Road, 200m from 'Swan with Two Necks'.

65. Channel under bridge drains area of low lying peaty ground known as 'The Bogs', once a wide mossy bog, now woodland and barley fields.

66. Lane runs uphill between hedged banks, good for hazelnuts and blackberries. Sharp bend to right by cottages.

67. Field gate at top of hill offers welcome rest from the tall hedgerows, with good views back towards Maer Hills.



68. Wharmadine Lane junction with Top Rock Road and Church Road. Left for Meynell Arms, Parish Church and 'Cottage of Content'. Right turn 250m to see rock exposure. To continue Way cross over and straight ahead along Elder Tree Lane.

69. Junction of Chapel Lane and School Lane. The Congregational Chapel built 1841 stands on the corner, one of Ashley's several non-conformist chapels built in the 19th century.

70. The Peel Arms stands by the little village green at the junction of Wesleyan Road and Chapel Lane.

71. Left turn via 'The Dale'. Way drops down into Ashley Dale, over the crossroads and up Back Lane on far side. Continue past California Farm to junction with Tinkers Lane.

72. At junction with Tinkers Lane go straight across and up through archway cut in holly bushes to higher ground with distant views to the south. Continue straight ahead through trees, over stile and through meadow, (can be boggy!).

73. Before gate onto Lovers Lane take stile through holly hedge on right. Go up meadow and around pond to come out at corner of field onto Pinewood Road. From here you can see Hanchurch Hills & on a clear day south as far as Pye Green Mast on Cannock Chase.

74. Green tunnel through laurels behind gardens takes you across Tower Road (unmade) and on to Pinewood Drive, which brings you out on the Eccleshall Road. Turn right past Hugo Meynell school. You are now on the other side of the ridge with views across Cheshire again.

75. Loggerheads Inn, garage, village shops and car park. Buses for Newcastle leave hourly from layby other side of roundabout.



View from Ashley Heath

Loggerheads to Market Drayton

Length - 6.5km.

Through a corner of Burnt Wood, across the breezy plains of Blore Heath and along shady tracks to the Shropshire Union Canal.

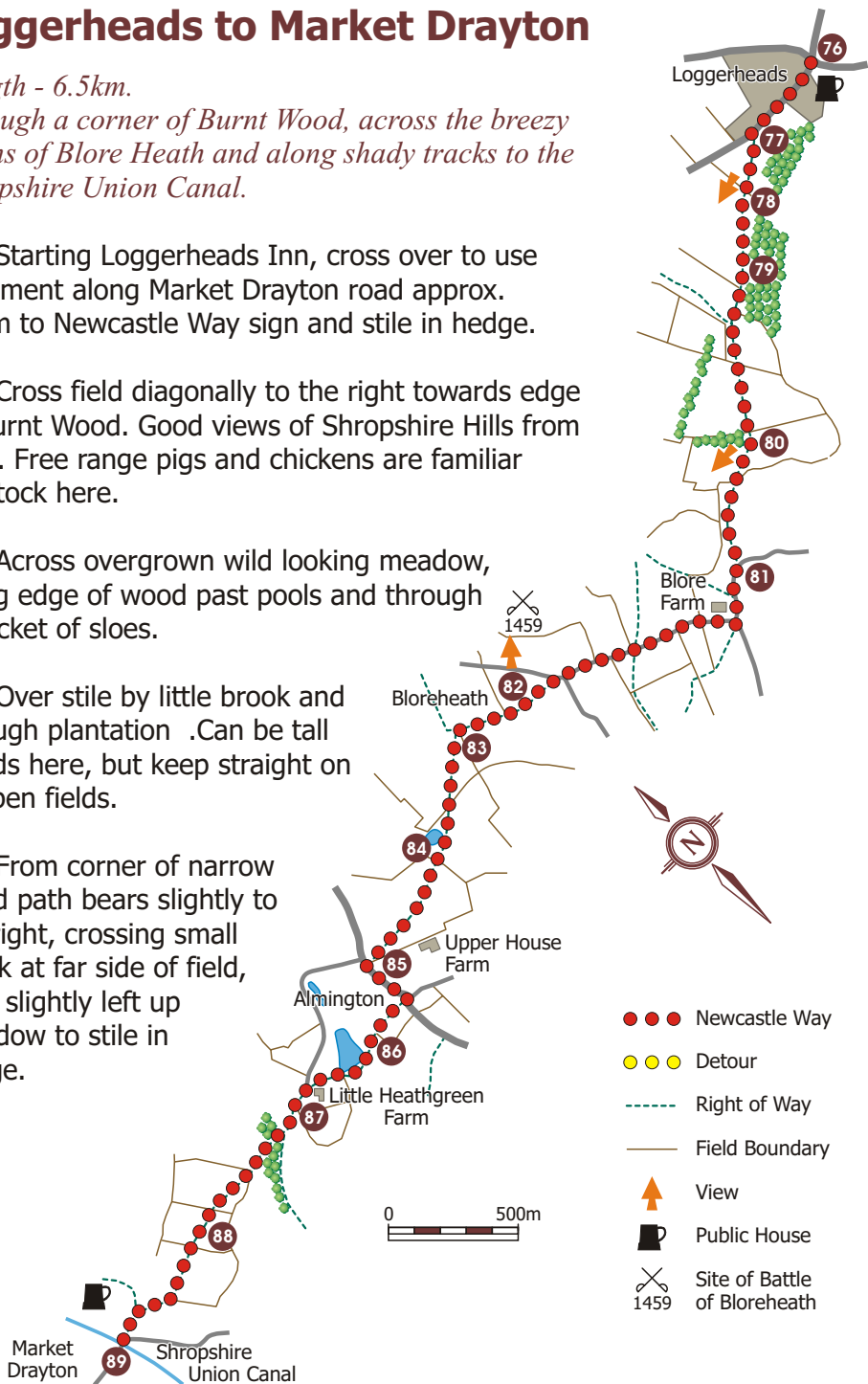
76. Starting Loggerheads Inn, cross over to use pavement along Market Drayton road approx. 400m to Newcastle Way sign and stile in hedge.



77. Cross field diagonally to the right towards edge of Burnt Wood. Good views of Shropshire Hills from here. Free range pigs and chickens are familiar livestock here.

78. Across overgrown wild looking meadow, along edge of wood past pools and through a thicket of sloes.

79. Over stile by little brook and through plantation. Can be tall weeds here, but keep straight on to open fields.

80. From corner of narrow wood path bears slightly to the right, crossing small brook at far side of field, then slightly left up meadow to stile in hedge.



- Newcastle Way
- Detour
- - - Right of Way
- Field Boundary
- ↑ View
-  Public House
-  Site of Battle of Bloreheath

- 81.** Look out for wild hops in hedge here. Turn right out of field and along Park Lane past Blore Farm. You are crossing what was once a wild stretch of Blore Heath.
- 82.** View of site of Battle of Blore Heath (1459). Audley's Cross in field by main road commemorates death of Lord Audley in battle. From junction of lanes path goes straight ahead along edge of field. Look out for badger excavations in the sandy banks.
- 83.** Past the cottage left turn off drive diagonally across the fields to Almington.
- 84.** Path follows farm gates across fields. Keep marsh and pinewood to your right and Upper House Farm on left.
- 85.** Down steep bank onto lane, left through village, right at handsome Almington Hall with walled garden.
- 86.** Past lake with swans, coots and reedbeds, over footbridge by little waterfall, and between gardens where path gets narrower before coming out on lane at Little Heathgreen Farm.
- 87.** Down the track and through Little Heath Green, once a heath perhaps but now a wood, with crabapple trees overhanging the path.
- 88.** Straight path across arable fields, not a maize maze, more of a maize motorway, made for a final spurt !
- 89.** Newcastle Way ends at the Shropshire Union Canal, County and Borough boundary. Go under archway and up steps for canal and wharf, OR straight up the lane (Berrisford Road) for Market Drayton shops and buses.

Some Places of Interest on or near to the route:

Mow Cop Museum, on Chapel Street
Newchapel Observatory and Natural Science Centre
Harecastle Tunnel (Trent and Mersey Canal, Kidsgrove)
Wedgwood Monument, Red Street
Partridge Nest Ironworks, Springwood
Apedale Mine and Heritage Centre
Apedale Energy Station education centre (proposed 2008)

Getting there.

In support of sustainable transport the sections have been organized so that each can be done by using the buses which run past the start and finish of each section. We thoroughly recommend this as a much more satisfying approach to doing the walk than having to rely on someone taking you to the start by car and picking you up from the finish. The authors have used all the buses in question and can vouch for their reliability and friendly drivers!

Buses.

The buses you will need all run from Newcastle bus station on the following routes:

34, 34A to Kidsgrove and Mow Cop via
Chesterton and Red Street.

85, 85A to Madeley and Crewe

64 to Market Drayton and Shrewsbury

Special thanks to Cllr. Nigel Jones of Newcastle Borough Council who had the original idea for a long distance walking route through the Borough of Newcastle, and did much of the leg work.



Partridge Nest Ironworks



Congregational Chapel, Ashley



Silverdale Void



Market Drayton Moorings



War Memorial, Madeley

The County Council has a wide range of further publications for walking in and enjoying the Staffordshire Countryside. For further information on these or to make comment please telephone:

(01785) 277264

or write to
Environment & Countryside Unit,
Development Services Directorate,
Riverway, Stafford. ST16 3TJ.
or go to the Staffordshire Web
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/e-land/



*Old Mill at
Madeley*



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