
Walk 1 A walk from The National Forest Waterside Centre to Acresford

An ancient Triassic river, important aquifers and the coal-mining heritage

Distance: about 9.5 km (6 miles) Time: 2.5 hours

Park at Conkers Waterside Centre, Bath Yard, Moira [1][SK 30839 15589] and check the closure time of the car park. Walk back to the road, turn left and after about 100 m take the footpath on the right. Cross a field, go under the former railway bridge and stop for a moment to read the interpretation board detailing the history of Barrett Pool Woodland. The stretch of woodland is very short and you will soon come out into the grounds of a house. There is a pond on your left that can display a diverse range of bird life, and the house is on your right. Go round the entrance gate and out on to a road, turn right, and head along the paved road into Short Heath. [2][SK 30530 15024] Follow the road until you reach a sharp right-hand bend and then take the track straight ahead; after about 100 m, at Shortheath Farm, take the footpath on the left. This path is not clearly marked, so you will need to look out for the waymarker in the hedge.

Proceed down the hill and straight ahead through a gate in the middle of the next fence. The path looks as if it turns to the left here but you should turn slightly to your right and climb over a gate — there is no stile so take care. Proceed down the right-hand side of the hedge and across three fields to a stile, cross the bridge over Hooborough Brook and enter Lockharts Wood, a National Forest Tender Scheme site. An interpretation board provides details relating to the woodland. In the autumn you will be able to admire the colourful feature trees planted here, such as the beautiful red and scarlet oak, tulip trees and the rare wild service tree.

Go up the other side of the valley, on to a track and up on to a ridge just before some houses, following the waymarkers. Continue along the track, passing a waymarker on the left. At the end of the track, cross the end of a cul de sac passing houses and enter into the field [3][SK 31036 14117]. Here, take the footpath to the right, heading back downhill again. Crossing the field, head for the next waymarker and take the second footpath on your left, over a stile. Follow the path to the right alongside the woodland, and at the waymarker, follow the path into the woodland, down some steps. Shortly, you will come to a second flight of steps after which you will proceed along the river valley on a raised embankment. When you are out of the woodland, look out for the sandstone cliff just to the left of the main path and an interpretation board which explains the geology of the area. This area used to be a large pit extracting sand and gravel (as sandstone and conglomerate) from the Kidderminster Formation of the Sherwood Sandstone Group.

The footpath emerges at houses in Coopers Close in the small village of Acresford [4][SK 29826 13179]. Turn right here and walk along the A444 for a short distance then take a left turn at the Cricketts Inn and follow the paved road for a kilometre to Netherseal. In Netherseal, stop and look at St Peter's Church [5][SK 28881 12886]. This was built of Triassic Bromsgrove Sandstone in the 19th century but it actually stands on the site of a former 13th century church. Several of the features of the earlier church remain including the tower and some of the monuments inside. However, it may not be possible to go into the church as it tends to be locked. Sir Nigel Gresley, the engineer who designed the locomotive Mallard, is buried in the church cemetery. Just beyond the church at the bend in the road on your right, there are small outcrops of the Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation showing cross-bedding (pp.8 and 10). This is the youngest unit of the Sherwood Sandstone. Netherseal was more famous for its coal mining and had a large colliery with two shafts which were sunk in 1867. Five hundred workers were employed in the 19th century to extract coal from the Main, Stockings and Eureka seams. Netherseal has two pubs and a post office shop so you may want to stop for refreshment.

Walk through the village. Many of the place names in this area have the word 'Seal' which suggests the area was once heavily forested. Nether means 'lower' and Over (of the neighbouring village Overseal), means 'upper'. At the end of the village, take the footpath just after the Sports Club on the left. At the far end of the sports field, climb up into the adjacent field and proceed along the next hedge. At the bend in the fence, veer to the right and cross two fields. The path is vaguely marked here and the fields may contain planted crops, so it may be necessary to deviate around the edges in summer. Exit the second field at the gap in the fence marked by a footpath sign, cross the road and take the path that goes across a field close to Grangewood Hall [6][SK 28163 14367]. The path does a right then left turn, passing a pond

on your left and continue on to a road. Turn right here and you will be roughly following the line of the Gunby Lea Fault which fractures the Coal Measures of the South Derbyshire Coalfield.

Unfortunately, there is no path along this road but there is a good grass verge on the left hand side and a partial verge on the right; the road is not busy. At the T junction, turn left on to a busier road and again you can walk on grass verges. After about 50 m, just before the next bend in the road, go over the stile to your right and enter Gunby Lea and Broomfield's Wood. Take the track on the left which skirts round the left edge of the woodland. After about 500 m cross through the hedge and follow the track up across four pasture fields towards Overseal. Follow the minor road through houses up to the main A444, cross over the road in Overseal [7][SK 29621 15114], on to Moira Road and take the footpath on the right after 150 m. The path goes to the right of a white house between gardens. At the end of the path, cross the stile and carry straight on and through a farm gate keeping the farm buildings to your left. The path then goes over a field and heads approximately due east (about 45° to the farm buildings) to where the hedge juts out ahead of you. Cross a stile and head down the next field across another stile and on to the road. Cross the road and then head diagonally across the next two fields emerging at Short Heath. Turn left and take the footpath back towards the Conkers Waterside Centre.

Figures

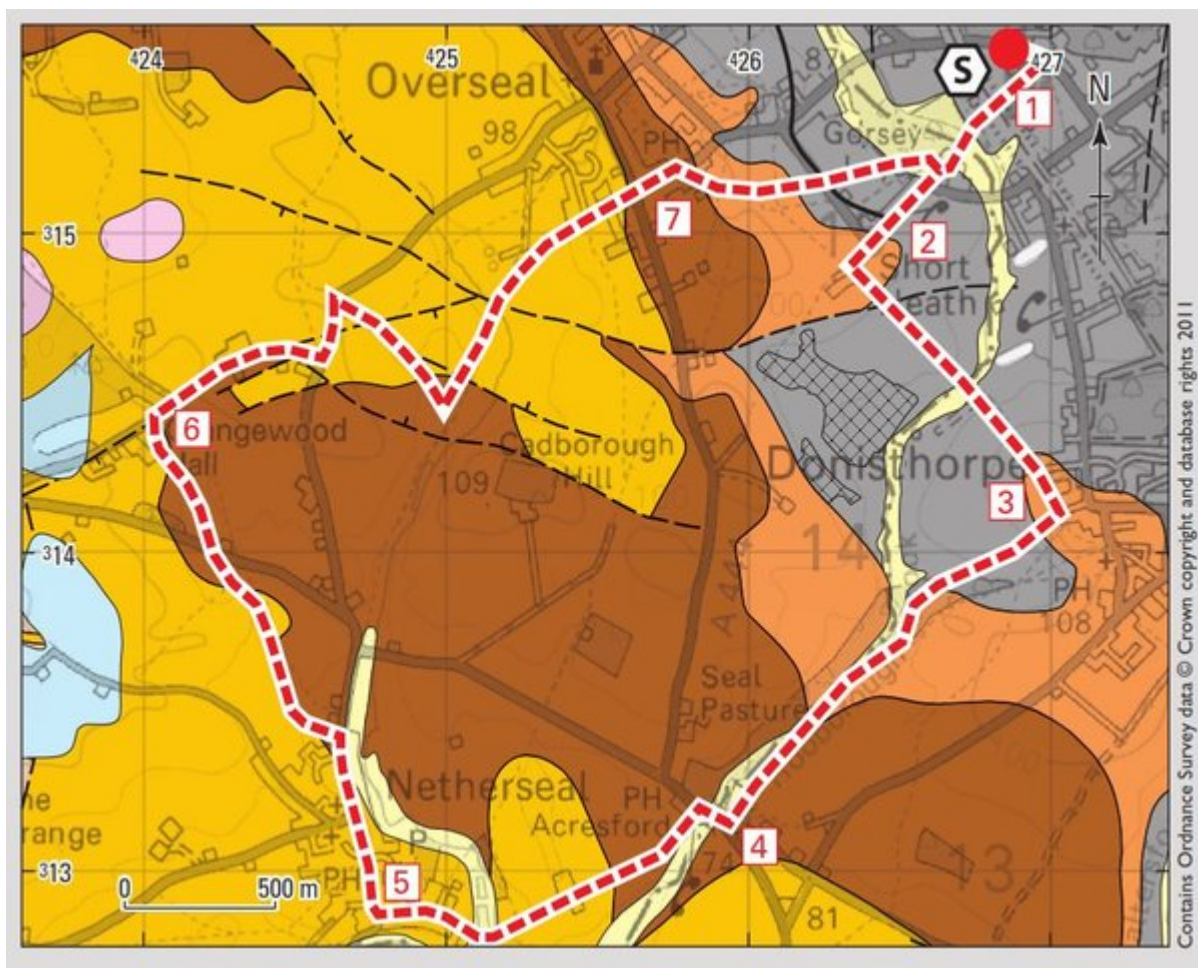
(Figure 56) Face of old quarry in the Kidderminster Formation at Acresford, showing sandstone, pebble sandstone and conglomerate. The face is about 8 m high.

(Figure 57) Walk 1 route map. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2011.

(Figure 58) Wall in Netherseal built on an outcrop of Bromsgrove Sandstone.



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