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## Walk 5 Hanbury to Fauld crater

*An ancient forest, glacial deposits and explosive gypsum works*

*Distance: approximately 9 km (5.5 miles) Time: about 3 hours*

This walk starts in the village of Hanbury, a small and pleasant village seven miles north-west of Burton upon Trent. The village overlooks the beautiful Dove valley and also has views north to the moorlands and hills of Derbyshire. The route straddles the boundary of The National Forest and takes you through the northern extremity of the ancient Needwood Forest a chase or royal forest that today includes some of the UK's most ancient woodland. It is a relic of the forest which was granted to the first Earl of Lancaster in the 13th century and some areas are still in the ownership of the Duchy of Lancaster today. The forest was drastically reduced in the early 19th century, with large areas of chase and deer-park cleared to make way for farmland. The walk mainly crosses over the youngest sedimentary deposits from the last glacial period. However, very little can be seen of this glacial till (a mixture of clay, sand, gravel and boulders), as the area is extensively laid to pasture.

Proceed back along Church Lane and take the second road on the left. After about 50 m, take a footpath off to your right, through a garden and over a stile. Look over to your left and you will see magnificent views across the Dove valley. Head for the right-hand corner of the field, go over another stile and on to the road. If you park in one of the other car parks [2][SK 17355 28323], [3][SK 17362 28124] in the village, you will come up the hill along this road. Cross over the road and the footpath continues just a little way on your left. Go over another stile, cross a field and two more stiles. In the next field, you can appreciate more fabulous views over the Dove valley. Head to the right of the pylon in the far corner of the field by the woodland, go through a gate and you will see the next gate ahead on the far side of the field.

There are three places to park in the village (see map), the church [1][SK 17058 27910] is probably the best place to park, but not on a Sunday morning as the car park is used by church-goers.

Start by visiting the St Werburgh's church on Church Lane, built of nearby Bromsgrove Sandstone (p.29). You can see evidence of cross-bedding (pp.8 and 10) in many of the stones. Look inside the church and admire the magnificent stained-glass window above the altar, the fine alabaster tombs, the Anglo-Saxon cross and colourful 19th century murals. Outside in the graveyard, there are some headstones made from the local Swithland Slate quarried in Charnwood Forest. These can be easily recognised by their rough back surfaces.

Cross another stile back into woodland and after about 15 m, turn right through a gate. Follow this path, taking a left turn at the next junction, followed by a right turn that takes you along past the Fauld crater.

In places, you can see into the deep crater and note how extensively it has been colonised by woodland since it formed. The mine entrance lies just to the north of the crater and for much of this walk, you have been going over the underground caverns of the mine (p.66). Continue around the crater perimeter until you reach the memorial where you can read about the disaster [4][SK 18128 27631] (p.16).

Carry on along this path, through a gate and take the next footpath off to the right. Another gate takes you into a pasture field. Follow the hedge line, through a third gate and then turn to the right at the next fence line. At the end of the field turn left, then after about 20 m turn right, cross a stile and take the footpath through a small copse. Crossing another stile into a pasture field, you will see houses to your right and farm buildings straight ahead. There is no footpath marked on the ground on this section of the walk. Head for the end of the hedge running into this field, go past this, turn left and go through a gate into another field. Again there is no clear path marked here. Climb up on to the ridge ahead of you and head for the telegraph pole on your right and cross the fence; this is not an easy crossing so take care. Ahead of you, you will see a pair of telegraph poles to your right and a single pole to your left. Head for this and you will come to a waymarker by the next hedge. Here, take the path indicated off to your left — the path shown going straight on towards the farm buildings is no longer available. Go past the left hand side of the barn — this section can be very muddy in wet weather — then through two gates, on to the road and turn right [5][SK 17841 26565].

After a short walk along the road, there are two paths marked off to your left, either of which can be taken. The first of these involves negotiating a difficult fence and a very muddy area when wet. The second takes you through a garden and gate. When in this next field bear to the right, head for a short length of fencing jutting out into the field and go through the gate. The path is well marked from here, taking you around the edge of some new woodland [6][SK 17647 26231].

This new area of woodland has been created by the Duchy of Lancaster on a redundant gypsum mine site through the National Forest Company's 'Changing Landscapes Scheme'. The land here was affected by subsidence, caused by shallow gypsum mine workings, which caused a number of features known as 'crown holes' to form. These are roughly circular in shape with diameters of over six metres and depths of between two and seven metres. So treacherous is this ground that it could not be farmed. Instead, the 13 acre site has been designed to enhance the landscape by increasing the area of woodland that typifies this part of The National Forest, and to also attract wildlife and re-establish native species. Work started on the site in the winter of 2009/10 and planting was completed in the winter of 2010/11. A mixture of trees such as oak, ash, and silver birch are part of the woodland design that incorporates owl boxes, bat boxes, bluebell planting and the sowing of wildflowers amongst the open areas. PLEASE NOTE that the presence of the subsidence holes means that access into the wood is not allowed, but you can skirt the edge on the public bridleway. There is a convenient bench at the corner of this field to take a rest.

Walk down to the next waymarker, turn right and head across the field to the left end of the hedge ahead. Go through the next gate and note the sign warning you of gypsum subsidence ahead. In spite of this warning, there has been very little subsidence associated with the Fault mine, apart from the redundant gypsum mine you have just visited. Continue on the well-marked path across a field, a ditch bridge, through a hedge and on to the farm buildings ahead of you. Go towards these buildings and turn right just before the house [7][SK 17812 25523] (the second of two tracks off to your right), entering woodland. Note the diverse woodland including sweet chestnuts in the autumn and a plentiful supply of holly for Christmas. Continue through the woodland until you emerge on to a road. Turn right here and you will come to Hanbury Park Farm buildings [8][SK 17812 25523]. Hanbury Park is an ancient enclosure originating from the medieval Needwood Forest; it has eleven veteran oaks and around 20 other mature trees.

Pass through the buildings and turn to the left through the gate. Veer to the right, go through another gate and head towards the right-hand corner of this field. Cross the stile here and almost immediately turn right after the next hedge. Continue to another hedge and turn left, heading towards some houses in the distance. The path takes you through a garden and on to a road at Sycamore Farm [9][SK 16690 26395] where you should turn right. Look out for a small stile on the left after a few metres; go over this and a footbridge and keep straight on following the waymarkers over fields then turn right and head towards Knightfields Farm. Go through the gate and head over the field, the tower of Hanbury church should be coming into view. At the next footpath junction, turn left and follow the hedge down to the road and turn right. You come to a road junction where there is a stile off to the left [10][SK 16550 27194]. Take this and go down the field and over another stile into the wood. In the wood take the small path which veers to the left and head down the steep hill. Do take care in wet conditions because the path is very slippery. Go over the stile at the bottom of the hill and head left going past Foxholes Cottage [11][SK 16394 27645], over a stile and into a field. Head for the left-hand corner of this field, over another stile and continue to climb up hill with a copse on your left. Go over a third stile, still climbing up the hill and breast the summit. Look behind and admire the views across to Greaves Wood, a mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland. Cross yet another stile and you will see Hanbury church ahead of you. Head towards the trees near the church and admire the views across the Dove valley ahead of you. Cross two more stiles and head to the right, back into Church Lane and to the car park.

## Figures

(Figure 82) Fault crater Photograph © Tony Waltham, courtesy of NFC.

(Figure 83) Walk 5 route map. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2011.

(Figure 84) Gypsum workings associated with Fault mine. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2011. BPB United Kingdom Limited.

(Figure 85) Looking over the Dove valley.

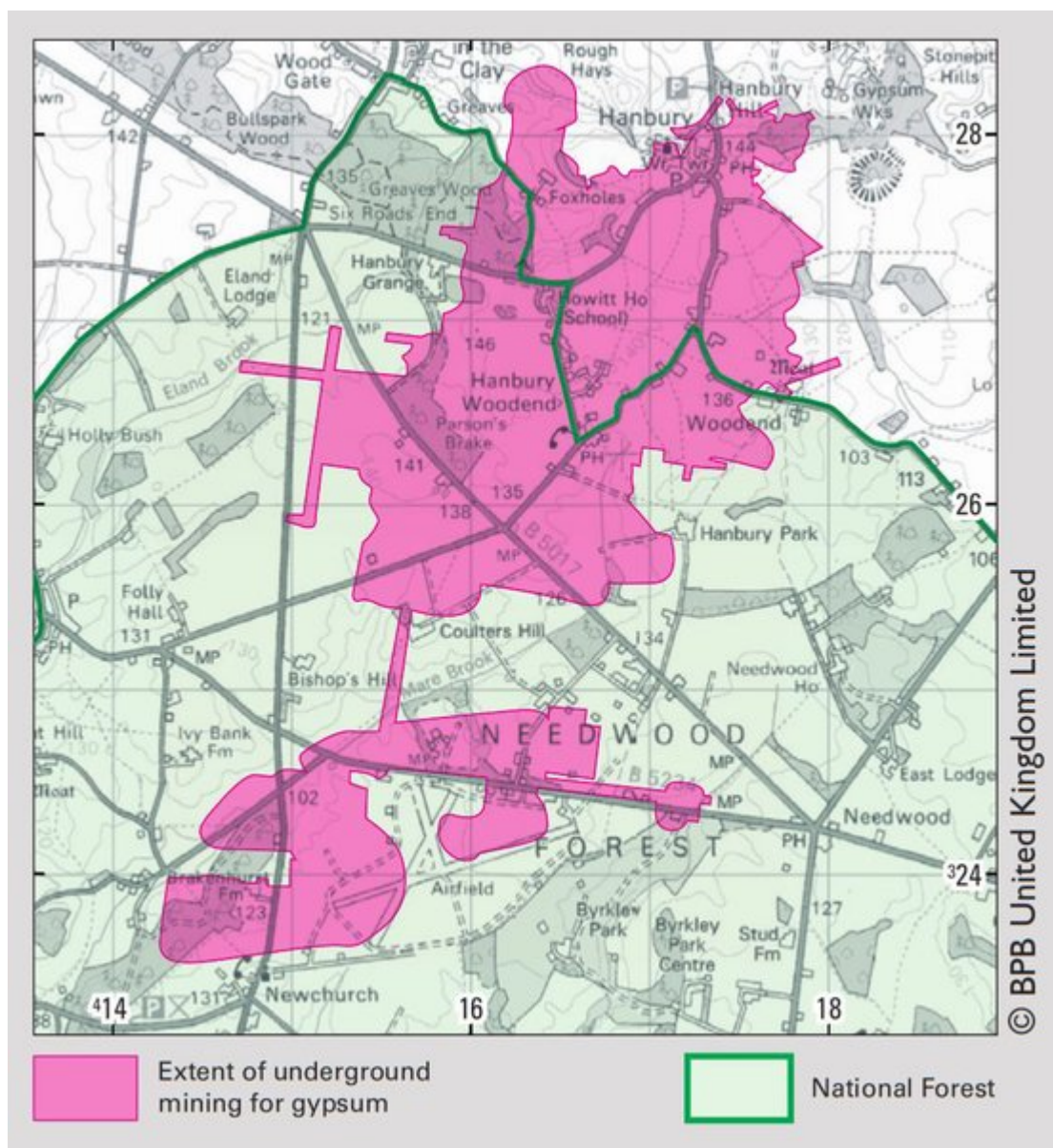
(Figure 86) Greaves Wood.



(Figure 82) *Fauld crater Photograph © Tony Waltham, courtesy of NFC.*



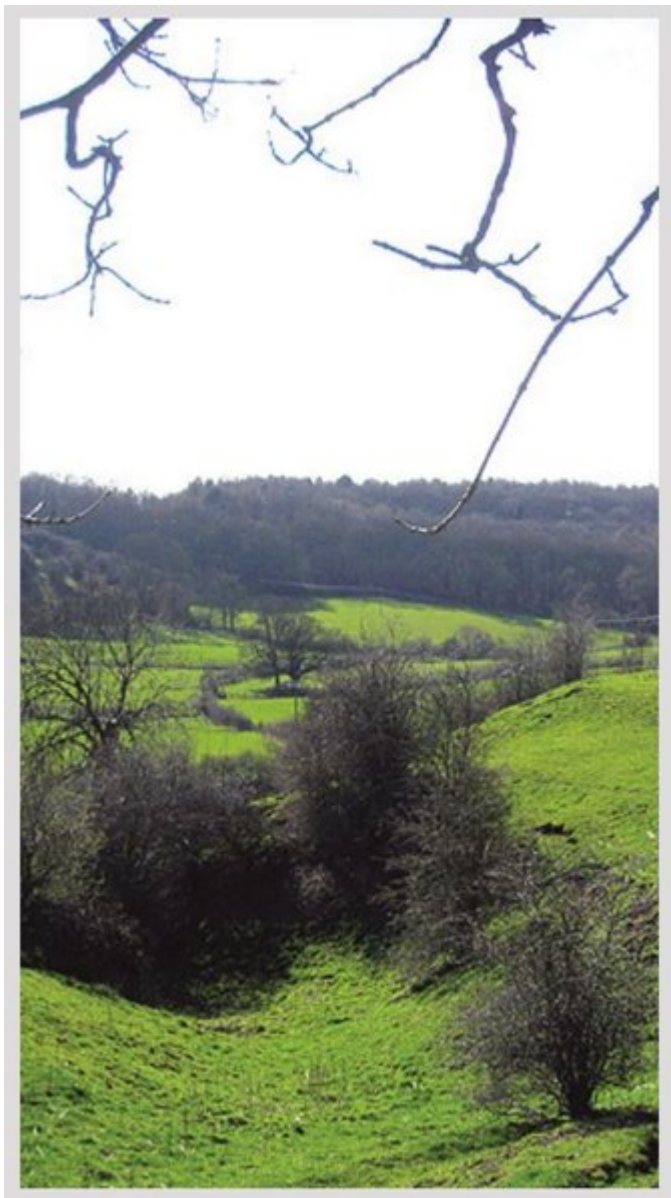




(Figure 84) Gypsum workings associated with Fauld mine. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2011. BPB United Kingdom Limited.



*(Figure 85) Looking over the Dove valley.*



*(Figure 86) Greaves Wood.*