Walks in the Shire Brook Valley

Introduction

The Shire Brook valley is in the South East of Sheffield about 4 miles from the city centre. The general information in the booklet covers the outline of the valley shown on the map above. The four walks in the booklet are based around the middle part of the Shire Brook between Meadow Brow and the Broomhall Road Landfill site. The area is cut by footpaths and footbridges, most of which can be fairly tight and steep in places. However, some are longer, running up and down the valley, and get through areas that can sometimes be muddy, slippery or overgrown.

There are walks along some of the paths so you can get out and explore the area. The walks have been planned to explore some of the valley's industrial past and the variety of wildlife that there is. As well as footFeb, expression, expression has been included along the course of the walks as points of interest for the paths.

Footpaths

Some of the footpaths and paths that cross the area are very old routes. They linked the old villages of Meersbrookheath and Woodhouse with the farm and mills.

Wetlands

The Shire Brook itself was key to early industry providing water for turning water wheels. In the early years of the nineteenth century the coal mining industry expanded as technology improved and deep mining became possible. Several coal mines were developed in the part of the valley to mine coal from the Shire and other regions. Birley East Colliery dominated the west end of the valley, and produced coal between 1896 and 1959. It was then used as a stone training centre and closed in the 1980s. There is a stone train station which is the start of the Red Walk. The Blue Walk goes through some of these areas and goes good areas over to the foot of the valley.

Old Boundary

The Shire Brook is so old that it is the boundary between the counties of York and Lancashire. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Shire Brook valley was designated as a Local Nature Reserve. The central part of the Local Nature Reserve is based around the former Countryside Council.

Coal Mining

Five different coal seams lie under the valley. The main ones are the Birley East and Birchfield Coal. Birley East Colliery started in the mid-19th century and closed in 1959. It was then used as a stone training centre and closed in the 1980s. There is a stone train station which is the start of the Blue Walk. The red and Blue Walks go through some of these areas and gives good areas over to the foot of the valley.

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The Shire Brook valley is a wetland area. In the early years of the nineteenth century the coal mining industry expanded as technology improved and deep mining became possible. Several coal mines were developed in the part of the valley to mine coal from the Shire and other regions. Birley East Colliery dominated the west end of the valley, and produced coal between 1896 and 1959. It was then used as a stone training centre and closed in the 1980s. There is a stone train station which is the start of the Blue Walk. The Blue Walk goes through some of these areas and gives good areas over to the foot of the valley.

New Housing

Much of the land on the side of the valley has been built on for housing. By the mid-1980s, fields were covered and hedgerows removed as the industrial buildings. One of the Shire Brook valley was designated as a Local Nature Reserve. The central part of the Local Nature Reserve is based around the former Countryside Council.

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Old Settling Tanks early 1990’s

Waste from the mining and industrial processes went into sewage works. They were a mixture of mostly native species such as Oak, Ash and Hazel, but also included Larch, Cherry and Laurel. New areas of heath are developing around part of the old Birchfield East Colliery site on the old spoil heaps and sites of buildings. The Blue Walk goes through some of these areas of heathland and birch trees.

Woods, Hedges and Trees

Trees were planted along the valley in the late 1800s and early 1900s, which was known as Nether Wheel. Remains of this Nether Wheel can be seen on the extension to the Red Walk. The rebuilt Carr Forge dam, which you can see on some of the walks, attracts many different birds including

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Red Walk (longest) approximately 2 1/2 miles - allow 1 1/2 to 2 hours

Leaving the carpark by the main entrance and turn left along the path past the visitor centre and continue to the end of the path past the railway seat and cross over Stone Lane onto the footpath beside Rainbow Meadow. The first part of the path leads down to the Visitor Centre. At the bottom of the path you will come to the former Brightland Road bridge-side. This now莽ening is marked as a wildlife walk. Turn right and follow the walk down to the waterfall and the main entrance to the amphitheatre. Alongside the path is a great place to rest and enjoy the views. This short route takes you through the woods away from the main path and provides you with a great opportunity to see parts of the brightland with its rich wildlife. The path emerges into an open area that was formerly the site of the old colliery yard and you will find a commemorative stone engraved with the dates 1888–1943 indicating when coal was produced at the colliery.

Blue Walk (middle distance) approximately 1 mile - allow 1 1/2 hours

Leaving the carpark by the main entrance and immediately - same entrance as above. This short route takes you through the woods away from the main path and provides you with a great opportunity to see parts of the brightland with its rich wildlife. The path emerges into an open area that was formerly the site of the old colliery yard and you will find a commemorative stone engraved with the dates 1888–1943 indicating when coal was produced at the colliery.

Purple Walk (easy walking) approximately 1/2 mile - allow 30 to 45 minutes

The path becomes stony and uneven and should be walked carefully. The path eventually rejoins the lane through an A-frame barrier bringing you out to the site of the old colliery yard and you will find a commemorative stone engraved with the dates 1888–1943 indicating when coal was produced at the colliery.

Orange Walk (short) approximately 1/2 mile - allow 45 minutes to 1 hour

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