

Lickey Hills Country Park

Fordrough Area

'walk softly - leave no trace'

The Country Park borders Worcestershire and south west Birmingham. The Park began life in 1888 when Rednal Hill was presented to the City of Birmingham by the Birmingham Society for the Preservation of Open Spaces.

By 1947, it had grown to its present size of 524 acres (212 hectares) through purchases of land by the City and donations of land by members of the Cadbury family. Although most of the Park is in Worcestershire, it is owned and managed by Birmingham.

The Park consists of four hills – Beacon Hill, Rednal Hill, Bilberry Hill and Cofton Hill. Beacon Hill is the highest at 978 feet (298 metres). The range of the stunning Lickey Hills is a major English watershed. Some streams rising on the hills flow to the River Rea and into the North Sea via the River Trent. Other streams flow into the River Arrow and on to the Bristol Channel by way of the River Avon and the River Severn.

The first day-trippers came on foot, by carriage and, after the opening of Barnt Green Station in 1844, by train. In 1913, a motorised bus service to Rednal started, using 10 Daimler open top double-decker buses.



From 1924, trams arrived at Rednal from the centre of Birmingham. On Easter Monday of that year they carried passengers to the Lickeys at an estimated rate of 100 per minute. By 10.30am some 10,000 people were waiting for a 'tram to the Lickeys', which had become a holiday playground for many Brummies. Trams continued to run until 1952.

In 1971, the Park was formally designated a Country Park and the Visitor Centre in Warren Lane opened in 1990. In 2000, it was the first park in Birmingham to be awarded the prestigious 'Green Flag' – an international award that recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces.

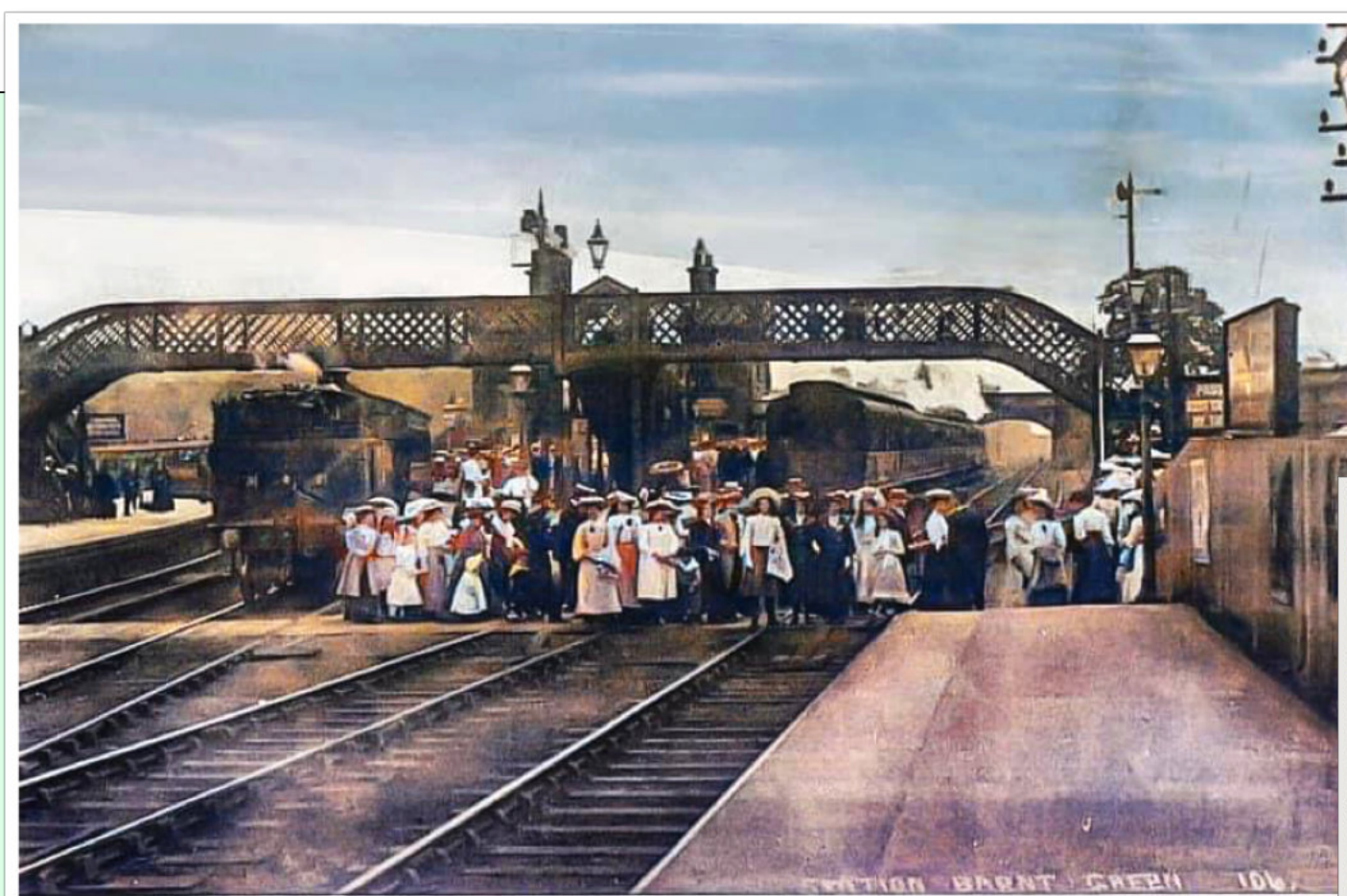
The Fordrough

This strip of land between Fiery Hill Road and Cherry Hill Road was bought by Birmingham City Council from Lord Plymouth in 1919, to provide access to the Hills from the station at Barnt Green. It is known as the Fordrough, an old dialect word meaning "A private way through the homelands of a dwelling-house; but which, by opening broadly on to a public road, has the appearance of a lane or by-way".

In 1844, Barnt Green Station was opened leading to an increase in visitors to the Hills and the development of Barnt Green village. The Lickey Incline, the section of track between Bromsgrove and Blackwell, is famously the steepest gradient of any main line in the country and so steam trains needed the assistance of Big Bertha (as seen in the circle above).

Legend tells of a phantom huntsman, Harry-ca-Nab, who kept his hounds at Halesowen (supposedly 'Hell's Own'). On stormy nights, he rode a winged horse or a wild flaming bull across the Lickey Hills whilst hunting wild boar. If you saw his hunt it meant ill luck or worse.

Park Rangers warn: Don't go out on a stormy night!



Geology

The rocks on the Lickey Hills range in age from around 485 million years to around 250 million years old. Five geological periods of time are represented: Ordovician, Silurian, Carboniferous, Permian and Triassic. Superficial material on the Hills – clays, silts, sands, gravels, pebbles – was deposited during the last Ice Age in the Quaternary geological period.



Country Park and to the east of the Lickey ridge, the rock is the Kidderminster Formation from the Triassic geological period. These are the youngest rocks in the Lickey Hills, at 250 million years old and consist of pebbles and red sand dunes. The rounded pebbles were smoothed by tumbling in ancient rivers. Look out for them in the main paths (see left).

So nearby are the oldest rocks in the Lickey Hills, the Barnt Green Volcanics. These consist of sandstones with layers of ash similar to that blown out by volcanoes today.

So, around 485 million years ago, in the early Ordovician period, the sky would have been intermittently darkened by volcano ash.

More details on the Bilberry Hill geology board, www.ehtchampions.org.uk or this QR code:



The Park contains fragile ecosystems – home to thousands of rare and protected species of flora and fauna.

We wish to protect the Country Park for you and future generations to enjoy.

Kindly play your part by respecting these rules.

LITTERING

is anti-social, encourages vermin & can kill wildlife

HOW YOU CAN HELP

please take your litter home or dispose of it in our bins

BBQS & FIRES

are a major fire risk, damage heathland & grassland

HOW YOU CAN HELP

do not light barbecues or fires inform staff urgently if seen

UNCONTROLLED DOGS

can disturb, injure & even kill wildlife

HOW YOU CAN HELP

keep under control at all times & on a lead in busy areas

DOG WASTE

is a threat to human health & wildlife habitats

HOW YOU CAN HELP

pick-up and dispose in the bins provided or take home

CYCLING & HORSE RIDING

can be dangerous, disturb wildlife, erode paths, archaeology & habitats

HOW YOU CAN HELP

please stick to designated bridleways - see map

REMOVING FLORA

plant, fungi & wood removal damages biodiversity & spreads disease

HOW YOU CAN HELP

do not remove anything irreplaceable - ask if in doubt



AROUND & ABOUT

The Lickey Hills Country Park has several way-marked routes ranging from a quarter of a mile 'Easy Access Trail' to a six mile ramble and everything in between taking in the fantastic views and wooded walks.

More information is available from the Visitor Centre to help you to explore the Park and to best experience the seasonal changes in the landscape.

The Visitor Centre can be reached via the entrance off Cherry Hill Road and is a 1.5 mile walk from here through Pinfield Wood.

NATURE NOTES

Bluebells flower during April & May with a sea of blooms throughout the woods. They are a protected species and an indicator of ancient woodland. Around half of the world's bluebells can be found in the UK.

They are important to pollinating insects and are poisonous so **please don't pick!** Their soporific scent fills our woods on fine spring days.



To report an incident – contact 0121 454 7810



ECO-friendly frame made of recycled plastic



Digital Map and more info **HERE** thelickeyhills.org.uk

map on reverse



This board produced by a Midland Adult School Union grant in partnership with:

