

Lickey Hills Country Park

The Visitor Centre 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.



Heathland

Heathland is a broad term used for wide open landscapes dominated by plants such as heathers, gorse and heathland grasses with scattered trees. They are historic landscapes and are essentially a man-made, semi-natural habitat.

Since 1800, in north west Europe around 90% of heathland has been lost to intensive agriculture, plantation forests and urban developments. Once there were more than 600 acres of heathland in the Lickey area. Heathland was also widespread across Birmingham as evidenced by place names ending in 'heath' eg. West Heath, Kings Heath, Small Heath, Druids Heath.

Now only 74 acres remain within the Country Park and these are special because of the presence of bilberry plants which are usually found at higher altitudes.

Heathland restoration work – the removal of trees, bramble and bracken, has been undertaken on the Lickeys for decades. This has benefitted biodiversity and reclaimed the panoramic views from the hill tops.



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.



The hard rock that forms the Lickey Ridge, (Rednal, Bilberry and Cofton Hills) is Lickey Quartzite. It was created around 485 million years ago when layers of sand interspersed with thin clays were laid down on a coastal tidal flat. The dramatic overfold seen in Barnt Green Road Quarry (see left) shows that the rocks slowly buckled under pressure from tectonic forces.

The Lickey Ridge stands higher than the much younger rocks on either side because the rocks were fractured along two north-south faults, pulling down these softer rocks. These eroded, leaving the hard Quartzite as a prominent ridge.

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

Start your adventure

from the Visitor Centre where the cafe and facilities can be found. Nearby is the children's play area.

Above you is the Lickey Ridge with spectacular views of the Park and surrounding countryside, a vista enjoyed by visitors since at least Victorian times.

This area was used by the Ministry of Defence during both World Wars. See the WW1 information boards around the Visitor Centre and quarry opposite.

From 1929 to the 1970s, a fairground (see top) and tea rooms were operated, first by the Jervis family then by Yorke Jones. It was located off Drover's Way, on the opposite side of Warren Lane to the Visitor Centre.

NATURE NOTES

Warren Lane. In mediaeval times warrens were used to breed rabbits hence its name. On quiet days, rabbits can still be seen hopping across open grassy areas.

Rabbits are not native to Britain but were introduced by the Romans and later re-established by the Normans.

Please beware of all those rabbit holes on your walks!



To report an incident – contact 0121 454 7810



ECO-friendly frame made of recycled plastic



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

map on reverse

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