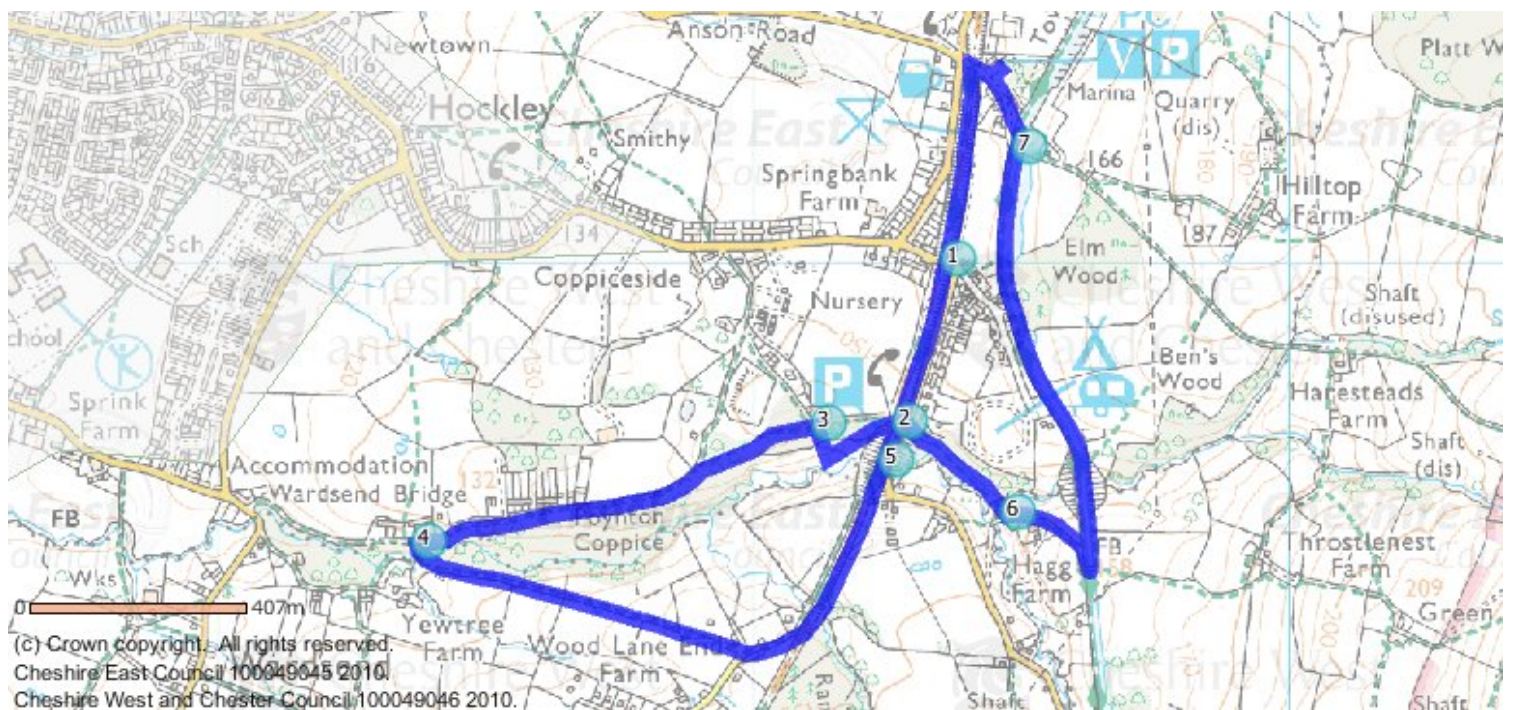


Nelson Pit Walk 5 One of a series of walks from the Nelson Pit Visitor Centre.

Grade	Moderate
Distance	4.8 km/3 miles
Time	About 1hr 30mins
Start	Nelson Pit Visitor Centre
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Moderate, muddy in places
Toilets	Available 364 days a year between 10.00am and 4.00pm at the Start and End of the route.
Contact	Countryside Rangers Tel: 01625 504528



Route Details

One of a series of walks from the Nelson Pit Visitor Centre. The route through Poynton Coppice is pretty at any time of the year. The majority of The Coppice is owned by Cheshire East Council and is subject to a ten-year management plan.

The route starts along part of the Middlewood Way, which is nearly 11 miles long and was originally the Macclesfield-Marple railway line that opened in 1869 and closed in 1970. After closure the area became derelict until the early 80s when it was landscaped. Dr. David Bellamy reopened it in May 1985. The majority of the Middlewood Way lies within the Borough of Cheshire East and is managed by the Ranger Service.

You are then taken through Poynton Coppice, which is classed as an ancient semi-natural wood because although it has a history of felling it has never been ploughed or used other than as woodland. In 1847, 44 acres were planted with trees by Lord Vernon to provide timber for the mines and some for sale.

Plans to bring a canal through the Coppice for carrying coal were proposed in 1795 but abandoned because of the high cost of construction. During the 1925-26 coal strike the Coppice was felled. Subsequently, alder trees were periodically coppiced to provide materials for the local clog making industry.

Many areas of woodland are called, 'Coppice', 'Copse' or 'Copy'. Nearly all British trees will grow new shoots if they are cut down. Traditionally coppicing provided a continual supply of wood. Each winter a different area of the woodland was cut close to ground-level and allowed to regrow. Usually a few trees were left as standards to grow to maturity. After a period of about ten years, the first area was ready to be coppiced.

The route then returns to Nelson Pit. The pit's shaft was located at the top of the mound facing the Visitor Centre. Adjacent to the shaft was an engine house and chimney. The pit engine lifted a metal cage filled with tubs of coal. At the top it was sorted into coal and 'slack', then tipped into horse drawn barges at Mount Vernon Wharf. The Poynton collieries had fourteen horses to pull the barges. Coal from Nelson Pit was distributed locally to Bollington and Marple cotton mills; quarries at Kerridge and silk mills in Macclesfield.

Directions

From the sculpture outside the Pit, walk across the road and down the path marked 'Middlewood Way'. Pass Higher Poynton station platform.

1. Beyond the first bridge (Shrigley Road), notice Reedmace growing in the ponds. Reedmace has a velvety brown, sausage shaped head and flowers in June and July.
2. As the path reaches the car park, turn right and walk into Poynton Coppice. Turn immediately left for the 'Woodland Walk'. Down the steps and along the path with Poynton Brook on your left. At the end of the boardwalk follow the path to the right, and walk up the steps.
3. Turn left. Follow the waymark sign straight ahead. Through a kissing gate and continue ahead. Where the path divides keep right. As the path finishes turn left onto a waymarked track joining from the right. Walk through a five bar gate and pass houses on the right. After passing the house on the left with blue painted window frames (Keepers Cottage), walk until you reach more houses on the right and turn left onto the signed public footpath.
4. Down the steps and cross Poynton Brook. Turn left and climb the steps. Walk ahead crossing a stile and through a metal kissing gate by a large tree. At a T-junction turn left through the metal gated entrance to Rose Cottage. Walk ahead then right over the stile. Walk up the steps and turn left onto the Middlewood Way.
5. Walk past the car park and sign boards, exit the Middlewood Way to the right past the telephone box and cross the road. Bear left and almost immediately turn right into the entrance path to a house (Number 81). Walk a short distance; turn right down the path on the left following the yellow marker. Turn left crossing three bridges.
6. After the third bridge, go up the steps to the large fir tree. With the tree on your right turn left. Walk along the track slightly uphill past the farmhouse and through the avenue of trees. At the first gap in the trees, turn left and join the towpath of the Macclesfield Canal. Turn left again with the canal on your right.
7. Walk under Brownhills Bridge (no 15) and turn left off the towpath, just before the steep cobbled bridge. Turn right, walk down the road to Nelson Pit Visitor Centre.