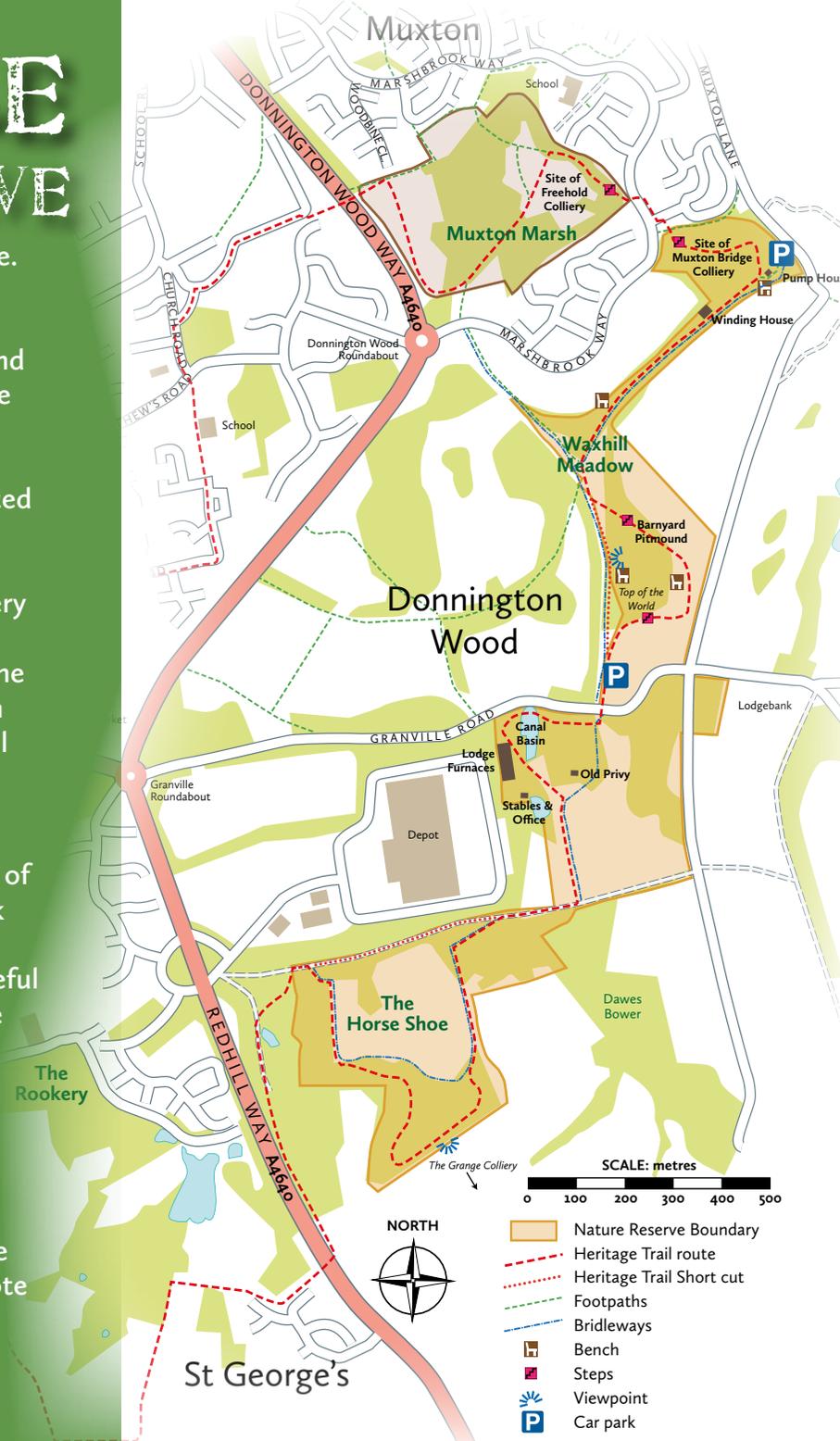


GRANVILLE NATURE RESERVE

Welcome to Granville Local Nature reserve. We invite you to explore this large and sprawling network of copses, heaths, grasslands, pools, scrub, wet woodlands and oak capped mounds. The rugged landscape of Granville is the result of over 200 years of industrial upheaval. Coal mines, canals, railways and blast furnaces nearly eliminated the previous agricultural landscape bar a few very important exceptions. The pit-mounds, cuttings, waterways and some very impressive brick and stone work ruins are all that is left of the industry of men like the Dukes of Sutherland and the ordinary men and women who worked for their Lilleshall Company.

Nature has triumphed now, the thick blossoms of the hawthorn, nodding heads of yellow rattle and purple orchid spikes trick the viewer and hide the turbulent past of this tranquil wild landscape. Please be careful as you explore and help us to conserve the industrial heritage by not climbing on the structures, thanks.

Granville LNR is owned by Telford and Wrekin Council who work in Partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and The Friends of Granville to care for the Reserve for the benefit of its wildlife and to promote public enjoyment of the amazing local natural asset.



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1 Donnington Wood Tub Canal basin

BUILT by Earl Gower in 1768, the Donnington Wood Tub Boat Canal was one of the earliest canals in Britain. It ran 5½ miles from the coal mines at Donnington Wood to a coal wharf at Pave Lane where surplus coal was sold. The branch you see was used by horse drawn tub boats to transport raw materials in and smelted iron out of the Lodge furnaces. Other branches served the limestone quarries at Lilleshall.



Broad-bodied chaser dragonfly

Today, coots and mallards ply the water's surface whilst beneath three-spined sticklebacks aggressively protect their breeding territories. Frog tadpoles and smooth newts

can be found wriggling past the stalks of the pink flowered amphibious bistort.

2 The Lodge Furnaces

IN 1822, the Lilleshall Company built two furnaces here to supplement those it had in Donnington wood. A further furnace was added in 1846 and two more in 1859 although it appears that the last two were hardly used due, perhaps, to insufficient



Old Lodge Furnaces
Courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust



Red admiral butterfly

power in the blowing apparatus. The furnaces had an international reputation for the quality of iron produced and continued until 1888 when they

were blown out for economic reasons. In the crevices of the remaining stonework buddleia has taken root feeding peacock and small tortoiseshell butterflies. The pioneering birch and sallows grow easily across the tumbled discarded stone of the engine platforms and wild strawberry is found in succulent carpets when the light allows. In the hollow chamber of the last loading ramp pipistrelle bats roost, clinging high up away from interference in this now calm corner of the Reserve.

3 Stables and office

BUILT, originally, to store blasting powder used in nearby mines, this structure later formed the basement of the ironworks office at Lodge furnaces and was used as stabling for those office workers who could afford to travel to work on horseback. Later the office was converted to a house and extended to the east when a kitchen was added. The house was finally demolished in the 1960's. The remains of a brick privy stands in front of the outgrown thorns of a hedge and nearby a pear tree and its bitter fruit are the



Early purple orchids

last living reminder of the gardens that would have been cultivated by the workers who lived in walking distance of their daily employ.

4 The Grange Colliery

ORIGINALLY called the Albert and Alexandra, this pit was sunk in 1864 to exploit the deep coal seams east of the regions faultline which had given access to surface coal in earlier "bell" pits. It continued in production until 1951 when it was linked underground with the Granville system sunk in 1860. Thereafter it was just used for pumping water out and ventilating the latter. It was closed in 1979 when the Granville colliery ceased operation.

A series of small pit mounds can be climbed at the southern end of the reserve, each topped with clumps of heather, bare soil pock marked in early summer with the tunnels of the tawny mining bee and the yellow flowered European gorse scrub of the lower slopes is full of bird song during the breeding season.

5 Barnyard Colliery

BARNYARD COLLIERY took its name from the field name in which it was located. It probably started as a chartermaster pit around 1837 as a very small operation. The surviving structure was

probably the winding house. An inclined plane ran down to the mineral railway and, possibly earlier, to the canal. A later branch of the mineral railway ran up to the colliery via another route By 1880 the colliery was in disuse. Today hawthorn scrub and wildflower studded grassland covers the top of the pitmound.

Horses are used to graze the open spaces to create growing room for yellow rattle, knapweed and oxeye daisy. The local name for the Barnyard pit-mound is 'Top of the World' and on a clear day excellent views can be had of The Wrekin hill and off over the north Shropshire Plain.



Knapweed

6 Freehold Colliery

THE FREEHOLD PIT was probably sunk around 1860. It was a relatively small operation which is unlikely to have made a substantial profit due to high production costs being twice those of Muxton Bridge according to a report in 1899. The mine was closed after flooding in 1928.



The mound is wooded with oak, birch and willow, stumps of brick engine mountings remain hidden and patches of willowherb give away the locations of the main buildings.

Rosebay willowherb

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This leaflet was produced by the
Friends of Granville

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Speckled wood butterfly

7 Muxton Bridge Colliery Pump House platform

THE BEAM ENGINE situated here pumped water drained from the Waxhill Barracks and Barnyard collieries as well as Muxton Bridge colliery itself and discharged it into the nearby Donnington Wood tub boat canal at a rate of 9,350 gallons per hour. It is thought that the engine could have been unhoused, as the foundations which remain show no signs of a covering structure.

Hazel, sallow and ivy vie to obscure the ruined remains, low down scurrying blackbirds enjoy the dense cover and speckled wood butterflies compete for the sunlit glades.



Eyebright

8 Muxton Bridge Colliery Winding House

THE MUXTON BRIDGE PIT was opened by 1840 and was one of the early deep mines sunk by the Lilleshall Company. The winding house was constructed in 1884 and once contained two high pressure steam engines for winding the paired shafts, the tops of which you have seen in the picnic area. In operation it lay directly adjacent to the canal and, later, the mineral railway, where materials and product could be easily shipped in and out. A veteran oak with rangy limbs stands guard over the proud remains of the Winding House. This tree would have been a young sapling when the Winding House was built. Now it is set as a silent witness of the dramatic changes that characterise the history of Granville.

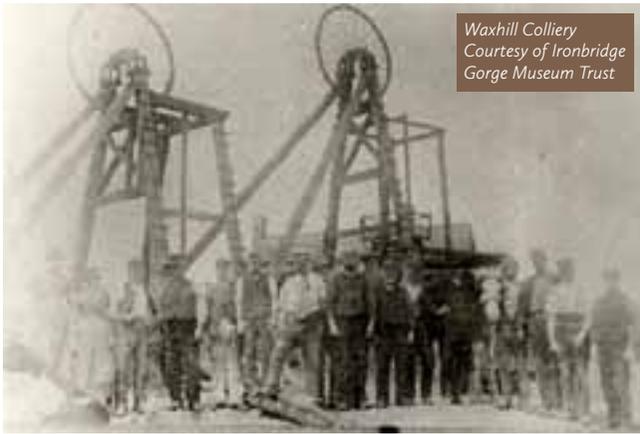
9 Waxhill Colliery and meadow

AMONGST the trees are the remains of a Methodist Chapel associated with Waxhill colliery barracks which housed the colliery workers. The colliery itself and the barracks are now demolished and no visible trace remains.

THE COLLIERY started life as a chartermaster pit around 1819. The Lilleshall Company then sank further shafts around 1828 and managed them



Hawthorn flowers



Waxhill Colliery
Courtesy of Ironbridge
Gorge Museum Trust

directly. The colliery was closed down around 1899 when a recommendation for increased production and better transport arrangements were, apparently, not implemented.

THE BARRACKS, a single storey block of cottages set in three rows, was built next to the canal in 1804 and were occupied until the 1930s despite part demolition starting around 1900. The 1851 census lists 27 distinct families – a total population of 153. Professions included coal-miner, pit sinker, labourer and one engineer.

WAXHILL as well as bearing the foundations of this long-gone community was also a junction on the railway network which include a steep incline now a bridleway. Common spotted orchids, eyebright and knapweed grow in profusion on an open grassland, whilst scrubby woodland does its best to fill in the gaps. The Dingy Skipper butterfly has been found on the banks here, its larval foodplant being Bird's foot trefoil. Green hairstreak butterflies are a Granville speciality, the UK's only green butterfly.

10 Muxton Marsh SSSI

THE TITHE MAP of 1840 shows that what is now Muxton Marsh was then called 'Marsh Meadow Leasowes'. The general shape of the field has

been relatively unchanged despite the bulk of the Freehold colliery pit-mound directly to the east.

The brook that feeds the marsh teems with aquatic life, freshwater shrimp, great diving beetles, minnows, frogs and caddis fly larvae.

The grassland becomes progressively drier going west and consequently contains a considerable array of plants so much so that it has become a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Soft and hard rush, remote and hairy sedge, hemp agrimony, meadow vetchling, marsh thistle, common spotted and southern marsh orchid to name a few. Muxton Marsh SSSI is grazed by horses and the water levels carefully monitored.

Dingy skipper butterfly



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Where Nature is gently reclaiming
a once huge industrial landscape
for her own