Ironbridge to Blists Hill Victorian Town

This Trail takes you from Ironbridge to the Victorian Town on a pleasant footpath, and once in Lloyd's Coppice, away from traffic. En-route you may pass the remains of the old engine house and Madeley Wood Hall.

Lloyd's Coppice is an ancient semi-natural woodland of 40 hectares and steeped in history. It once lay at the southerly end of the Wrekin Forest which was subject to forest law in medieval times and has been managed since at least the 1600s.

This woodland grows in sandstone, clay and coal and supports a wide range of tree species such as sweet chestnut, field maple, small-leaved lime, yews and wild service. However, much was felled for fuel during the 1st and 2nd World Wars and so very few veteran trees exist.

Of the 574 species of invertebrate recorded within Lloyds Coppice, several were species new to Shropshire, or nationally scarce. The heathland is cared for and monitored by Severn Gorge Countryside Trust volunteers and staff and hosts a large recorded number of species including toads, wood mice, butterflies, spiders and beetles. Of the 49 species of spider recorded, 40 of them were found only in the heathland showing its importance. There are several small pools, one of which supports the Great Crested Newt.

Today, Lloyd's Coppice contains remains of cottages, pools, quarry faces, tramway routes and the ruins of Madeley Wood Hall and its outbuildings. There were once formal gardens and some garden species remain near these outbuildings. This Hall, demolished in the 1920s was, in 1857, home to John Anstice, owner of the Madeley Wood Company, its mines and furnaces. The company was famous for abolishing child labour in the area. He employed 6 house servants, 15 estate workers on his 100 acre farm and 800 people in the mines, brickyards and furnaces. Madeley Wood Company made pig iron from local coal and ironstone and operated blast furnaces at Bedlam (1757–8) and Blists Hill (1832).

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

The Trust was set up in 1991 to look after 260 hectares of land for the benefit of wildlife, local people and visitors. The Trust is responsible for over half of the land within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, managing an important landscape with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and endangered species.

The Trust also looks after 60 historic structures, traditional hay meadows and over 25km of paths. The Trust is unusual in that it has an open access policy on all 260 hectares of land it manages. The Trust employs up to 25 local contractors to undertake various works. The Trust also has a strong volunteer programme carrying out a wide variety of tasks, contributing thousands of work hours each year.

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

The Trust's aim is to promote, protect and conserve the living landscape of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site

Find us at:

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REG CHARITY NO. 1004508

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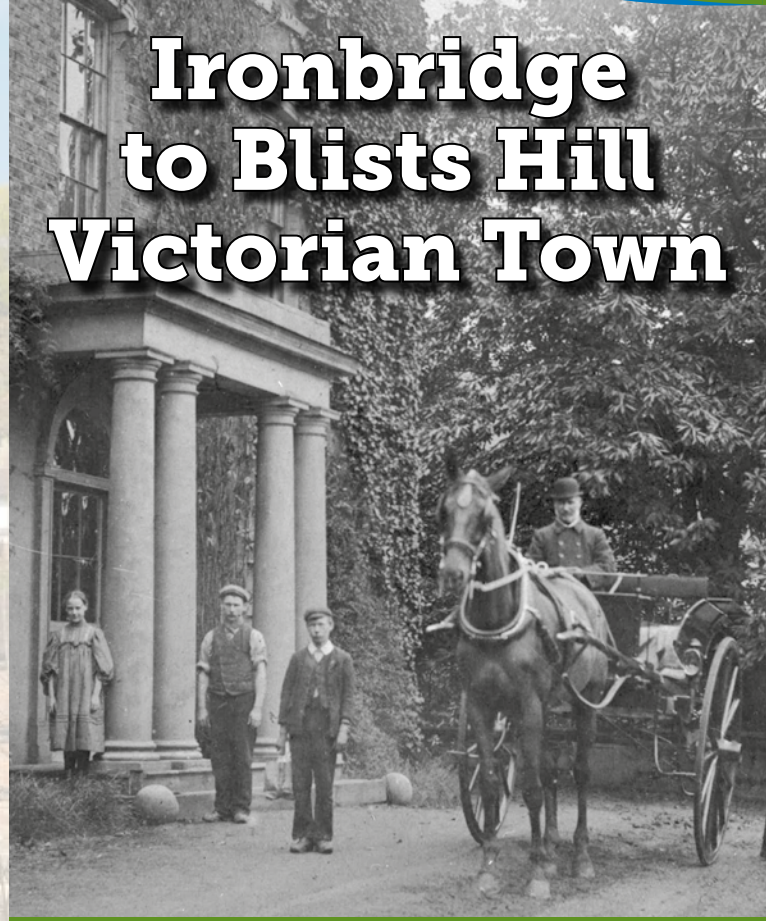
Back cover: The Iron Bridge © Mike Ashton

Severn Gorge COUNTRYSIDE Trust

Ironbridge to Blists Hill Victorian Town



Nearest parking: Ironbridge Central Car Park
Access: Tarmac and woodland paths
How long: 3.5 km, 1½ hours
How easy: Undulating & steps
Pushchair friendly: No
Toilets: In the Square, Ironbridge
Crossing Roads: Beware of traffic

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Start at The Iron Bridge

☛ From the Iron Bridge, turn right towards Coalport keeping the river on your right.

1 The Bedlam Furnace was built by the Madeley Wood Company in 1756. These were coke-fired blast furnaces in use into the 19th century.

☛ At the junction of the Jackfield Bridge. Cross the road, keeping the river on your right.

2 Blocks of slag along the footpath are waste products from the iron making process of the 1700s.

☛ Walk 150m to a wooden fingerpost signed 'Blists Hill'. Cross the road to pass through a wooden kissing gate into Lloyd's Coppice woodland. Continue along this path.

3 A glade, on your left, hosts a variety of wildlife and a panel shows the history and geology of this landscape.

Lizard in heathland

☛ Continue along the path until you reach a junction. You can either turn right for a short detour to visit the remains of an old engine house or carry on along the path.

Engine house remains

4 This engine was used to pump the water out of the mines once located here.

☛ At the next fingerpost follow the path straight ahead signed Coalport Road.

☛ At the next fingerpost, signed Blists Hill and Coalport, you have the option to explore the remains of Madeley Wood Hall and storage area.

5 Madeley Wood Hall was the home of the Anstice family who owned and operated the Madeley Wood Company. The restored brick structure, once thought to be an ice house, is all that remains of Madeley Wood Hall and was most likely used for storage.

6 An ancient coppiced Sweet Chestnut tree is located on the right of the path junction. Return to the fingerpost and continue up the steps.

☛ At the junction, follow the fingerpost to 'Blists Hill' leaving the woodland via a kissing gate.

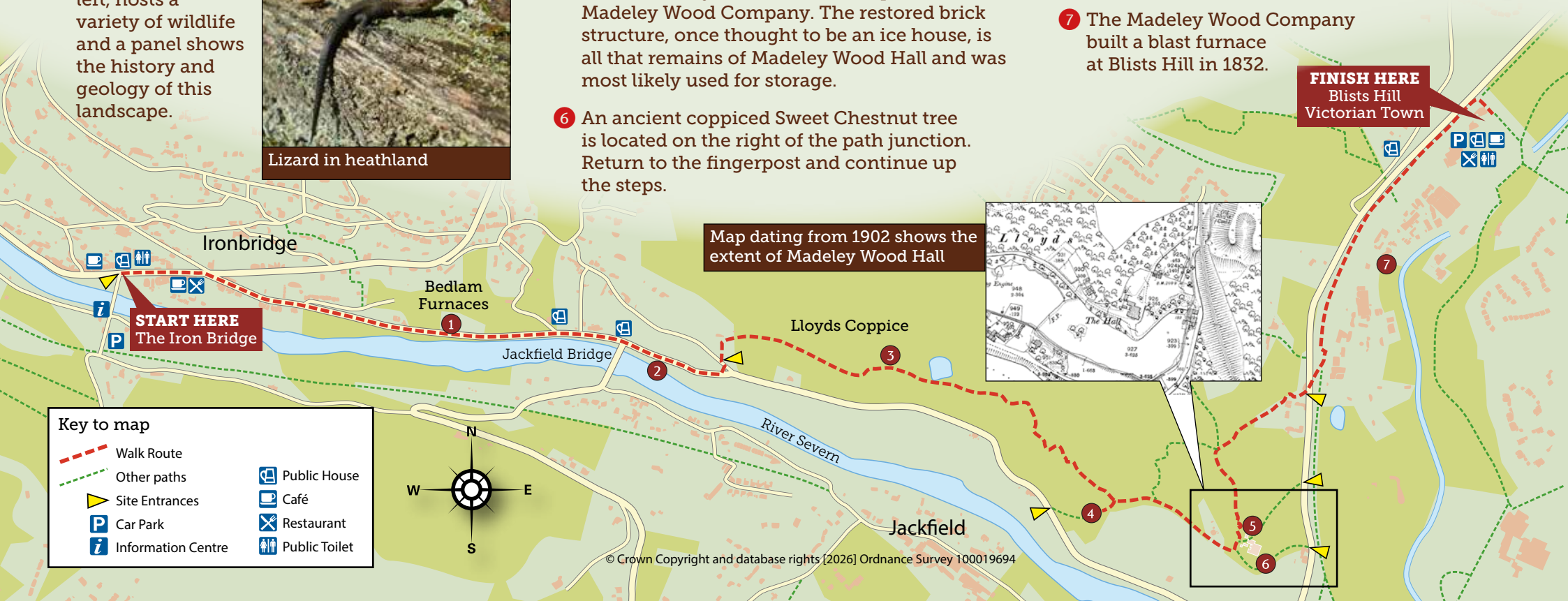
☛ Follow a path alongside some houses and then cross over the road towards a fingerpost.

☛ Cross the car park diagonally, go down the steps onto the Silkin Way and then turn right to Blists Hill Victorian Town entrance for about 700m. This is managed by National Trust.

Storage area

Sweet Chestnut

7 The Madeley Wood Company built a blast furnace at Blists Hill in 1832.



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