The Sabbath Walks Trail

Between 1782 and 1792, Quaker and Ironmaster Richard Reynolds levelled and widened existing pathways in these local woodlands. These paths were inspired by visits to Enville Hall near Bridgnorth and the Goldney family garden follies in Bristol. He created one of the UK's first publicly accessible parks, almost 200 years before National and Country Parks. The walks featured a Doric Temple, cast iron Rotunda and many arbor seats.

The Sabbath or **Workmen's Walks** were mainly used on Sundays, a day of rest, for the workers to enjoy the views overlooking industrial Coalbrookdale and the panoramic views of the iconic Ironbridge Gorge. It is hard now to imagine what a hellish scene would have met your view had you walked these routes during the working week with constant loud hammering, belching smoke, fumes and flames. The work was dirty and physically demanding and the ale houses would have been a choice for many on a Sunday.

His lifelong friendship with the Goldneys of Bristol, who managed Clifton estate and gardens is important. Trees and plants including false Acacia, fly honeysuckle and laburnum were provided in 1784 for Hannah's Cottage garden in the middle of the woods. This part of Lincoln Hill and Dale Coppice was formally laid out as a beautiful woodland walk at a time when most of the rest of the gorge woodland had been felled for furnace fuel. The false Acacia trees and fly honeysuckle can still be seen as can a large Atlas cedar tree. Reynolds was also familiar with the poet William Shenstone's garden, 'The Leasowes' at Halesowen at which he was a frequent visitor, and Shenstone was said to have coined the phrase 'landscape gardening'.

The area around the Rotunda would have been planted with small trees around 1793. This would have given far reaching views across Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge and the Wrekin.

On the route there are seats made by local community groups in 2003, and hand-painted panels to interpret the past.

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:

Darby Road, Coalbrookdale,TF8 7EP

01952 433880

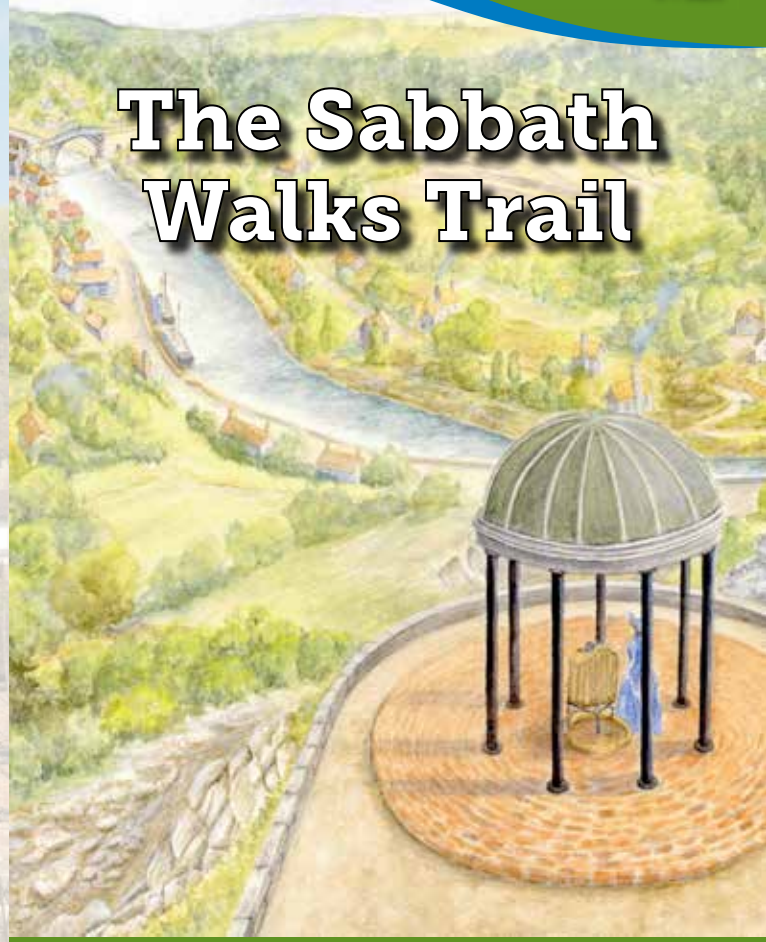
www.severngorge.org.uk

REG CHARITY NO. 1004508

Artwork by MA Creative.
Cover illustration: The Rotunda by Lynne Morgan
Back cover: The Iron Bridge © Mike Ashton

Severn Gorge COUNTRYSIDE Trust

The Sabbath Walks Trail



Parking: Dale End Park, Coalbrookdale
Access: Mainly woodland paths
How long: 3.5km, 1½ hour
How easy: Some hills, steps, kissing gates
Pushchair friendly: No
Toilets: Museum of the Gorge Car Park
Crossing roads: Beware of traffic

unesco World Heritage Site | Ironbridge Gorge

Start at Dale End Car Park

☛ From Dale End car park, turn right towards Ironbridge .

☛ Opposite the Merrythought Teddy Bear Shop and Museum take the steep hill up Paradise. After 100m bear right to Upper Paradise, carry on straight ahead past some houses on your right entering Lincoln Hill woodland through a gate.

1 400 million years ago this area was a coral reef positioned south of the equator! The bodies of the sea creatures forms the limestone.

☛ At the first finger post you come to, carry straight on. At the second fingerpost turn right uphill (signed Rotunda) to a T-junction.

☛ Turn left (signed Church Road) along to a kissing gate and cross Church Road into Dale Coppice woodland, signed Woodside CBD.

2 Here since the 13th Century, this woodland was part of a formal landscape laid out by Reynolds in the 1790s as part of the Sabbath Walks

☛ At the junction bear left and continue downhill, past a sculpture and down a set of steps.

☛ At the fingerpost (signed Rough Park) follow red arrows up the steps to the interpretation panels of Hannah's Cottage and Garden.

3 False Acacia trees, planted in 1782, burst into leaf in mid-May.

☛ Follow the red arrows round to the right to the interpretation panel of the Doric Temple, built by Hannah's father, Richard Reynolds.

Woodland walk seat

☛ Follow the path ahead through a kissing gate onto Rough Park. Turn right keeping the woodland on your right.

4 Rough Park managed by Telford & Wrekin Council is now an open meadow; it was once mined for coal and clay for local industries.

View from The Rotunda

☛ Continue on the path until it forks, take the right fork. Continue on past Castle Green cemetery, at the next fork bear right to Church Road. Carefully cross the road following fingerpost for The Rotunda View, enter Lincoln Hill woodland through a kissing gate.

Lincoln Hill

The Mike Pooley sculpture

5 The three posts are a celebration of the life of Mike Pooley, author of local walking guides. ***Abred***= enlightenment/acquisition of knowledge, ***Gwynfyd*** = bliss or being in a state of bliss with one's environment and ***Ceugent*** = eternity.

☛ Continue along the path, with views across Coalbrookdale through the trees to your right.

6 The Alcove on the left of the path was a brick structure with a seat, that was built during the construction of the Sabbath Walks.

☛ Continue along the path to the Rotunda to enjoy the views of the Iron Bridge in the valley below.

7 Lincoln Hill ridge was created during the mining and quarrying of limestone that stopped in 1800.

☛ Take your time to descend the steps. At the bottom of the steps, turn right.

☛ Take the first left down some more steps. Then, at the bottom of the steps, turn right, signed to Ironbridge. Follow the tarmac road to the left, retracing the route back to the Merrythought Teddy Bear Shop and Museum.

Sculptured bench