

Nelson Pit Walk 1

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

Grade	Easy
Distance	4.8 km/3 miles
Time	1 hour 30 minutes
Start	Nelson Pit Visitor Centre
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Canal towpath, easy tracks and footpaths
Barriers	N/A
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

This short walk follows the canal towpath and The Middlewood Way, giving an insight into the industrial history of the area.

At Nelson Pit, located at the beginning of the walk, miners worked 400 feet underground, and in 1870 would have earned £1.95 for a five and a half day week. Mount Vernon Wharf was used to load coal onto horse drawn barges. A tubway ran from Anson Pit over the bridge adjacent to the Nelson Pit car park.

You soon join the canal towpath - The Macclesfield Canal was opened in 1831. In its heyday the barges carried coal, stone, bales of cotton and silk. Bridge no.14 was designed as an 'adjustable bridge', the parapet can be taken off and the stone raised in the event of subsidence. About 400 yards after bridge 14 look left and see the remains of Canal Pit. Here a steam engine, nicknamed 'Redlegs', pumped water out of the pit as well as winding men up and down.

The walk joins part of the Ladybrook Valley Trail which runs adjacent to the Stockport-Buxton railway. Opened in 1857 the incline is one of the steepest gradients on the UK railway system.

You also pass by the site of the old Middlewood Upper Station which was part of the Macclesfield-Bollington-Marple line - opened in 1869 and closed in 1970. Neither the upper or lower station has road access. The area was popular in the 1950's with weekend visitors and in the local woods there were teahouses and slot machines.

Later on the route is the site of Jacksons Brickworks, which was opened in 1924. By 1974 it was producing 180,000 bricks a week. After closure in 1979 the site remained derelict until 1996 when Macclesfield Borough Council developed the brickworks into a Local Nature Reserve, for the great crested newt, a large variety of moths, butterflies and other grassland insects for which it is now a special habitat.

Railway bridges along the line were strengthened using box like frames of old rails. As you return to Nelson Pit walk onto Lyme Road Bridge and look over to Higher Poynton station. In the 1940's up to 28 trains per day called at this station. The Coffee Tavern opened in 1876 as a temperance house for the miners. Adjacent to the Nelson Pit car park you will see the coal spoils covered with trees.

Directions

From Nelson Pit Visitor Centre turn left and walk up the road to join the canal at Mount Vernon Wharf.

1. Turn left onto the canal towpath (heading north) following the canal, under bridges numbered 14 and 13, continue along the towpath, ignoring the first Public Footpath sign to the left.
2. Just after the canal crosses the railway, the path divides. Turn sharp left and follow the Ladybrook Valley sign, onto the Public Footpath (west), keeping left as you pass along the edge of a field.
3. Reaching the Middlewood Way turn left in a southerly direction past Middlewood Station.
4. Keeping to the left track, walk for about 5 minutes and then turn sharp left for Jacksons Brickworks Conservation Area (signpost). Continue along the path through the brickworks site, heading for the car park (via the steps sign). Walk through the car park and onto the road, past the new houses and left down the steps to the Middlewood Way.
5. Turning left continue along the Middlewood Way, under Prince Road and Barlow House Bridge, return to Nelson Pit by way of the ramp up from the platform of the old Higher Poynton Station just after Lyme Road Bridge (Bridge 15).