

BLUE TRAIL - 2 miles - 1 hour approx

This trail can be walked as either an extension to the **Red** or **Green** Trails or from its starting point at Coppice Hill car park.

(A) Head east past the barrier along the hardcore track with a larch plantation on your right. This is one of the few coniferous trees which turns brown and loses its needles in Autumn.

(B) Taking the left-hand fork, you happen upon the ancient oak woodland of Brocton Coppice. This 200 acre woodland, with its 600 sessile oak trees, is all that remains of the once vast Royal Hunting Forest of Cank. Some trees are over 500 years old.

(C) Turning right into the Coppice, wonder at the horizontal branch protruding from the oak tree.

(D) Before going left at the junction, take time to admire the magnificent oak tree to your right with its twisted trunk and beautiful canopy. As you continue you will notice young oak plants and a deer lawn where the animals can graze in peace.

(E) Carrying straight on at the crossroads, the Coppice is now dominated by Silver Birch - the Princess of the woodland. Take care as you descend the stony track skirted by Bilberry adorned with blue berries in mid-summer.

(F) On leaving the Coppice turn left and walk 100 metres to the junction with the **Green Trail** (6).

(G) Turn left and follow the trail until you reach Mere Pool and join the **Red Trail** (5).

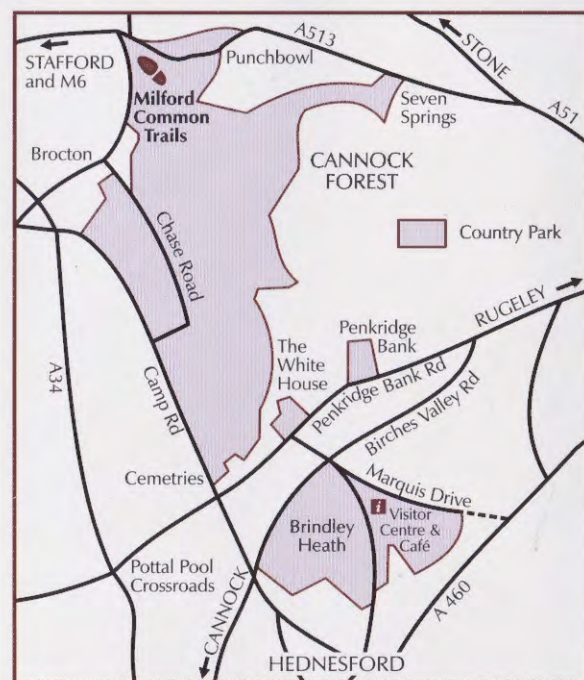
(H) Again turn left and follow this trail to (6). (Please refer to the literature in this leaflet on the **Red** and **Green** Trails for further information).

Should you, or someone you know require it, this information can also be produced, on request, in large print and in other formats or languages other than English.

(I) Continue along the old route of the Tackeroo Railway Line and view the young mixed deciduous plantation to your right in Hollywood Slade. Continue along the track until you near the barrier.

(J) Turn left up over the bank onto the grassy path and return to Coppice Hill car park.

MILFORD COMMON - location



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The County Council has a wide range of further publications for walking in the Staffordshire countryside, for further information contact:

**Environment and Countryside Unit,
Development Services Directorate,
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MILFORD COMMON - an introduction

Milford dates back to late 18th century origin and was part of the Milford Hall Estate. The area was included in the 2,120 acres of unenclosed land gifted by Lord Lichfield to Staffordshire County Council "to be managed as a nature reserve for public access".

Historically, Milford Hills have been used as sites for Bronze Aged burial barrows and earthworks / cursuses. The latter are normally dated to 3000 BC and could have been used for chariot racing, sacrificial ceremonial activities or as astronomical perches.

With the development of the railways, Milford Common became a popular countryside venue for visitors from the town and cities, especially the Potteries. The station was on the site of the garage opposite the car park, but visitors also came by horse and trap. The hills overlooking the Common were planted with attractive non native trees such as Red Oak and Swedish Whitebeam. Milford continues to be popular today as one of the 'honey pots' of the Chase which attracts over 1,000,000 visitors annually.

RED TRAIL - 2 miles - 1 hour approx

(1) The trail begins at the start of the Heart of England Way, a regional footpath that runs 100 miles through the green heartland of England, linking the Staffordshire Way with the Cotswolds Way. It crosses Cannock Chase to the Iron Age fort at Castle Ring.

(2) At the top of the hill are two large Scots Pine trees. These were planted to commemorate the naval exploits of Admiral Anson, who circumnavigated the world between 1740 and 1744. His brother, Thomas, lived at Shugborough Hall which is now the residence of Lord Lichfield and open daily to the public.

(3) Skirting the Sister Dora Pool on your left, look out for Palmate Newts in the spring and agile Dragonflies during the summer. Both are dependent on there being sufficient seasonal rainfall to avoid the pool drying out. Bearing left, walk over the rise.

(4) You now enter the 'Cutting'. During the 1914-18 War the Tackeroo railway ran through this valley, serving the military camps based on the Chase. Notice the mixture of vegetation on the banks, including the deciduous Bilberry with its angular stem and dark blue berries and the evergreen Cowberry with circular stem and red berries.

(5) Exiting the cutting continue along the route of the old railway and you will see to your right Mere Pool. This formed due to the construction of the railway embankment and was part of the military camp drainage system. The pool is a good example of a Hydrosere which is where water is gradually succeeded by plant life. Look out for Moorhen and Dabchick which reside in this habitat.

(6) Having walked along the side of Mere valley, stop and admire the distant views of the Wrekin Hill in Shropshire to the left, and Stafford and its Castle to the right. Now descend towards the barrier in Brook Lane, Brocton.

(7) Taking the right-hand fork, follow the lane keeping the houses on your left until you reach 'Heathervale'.

(8) Here you turn right up the narrow path through the bracken until you reach a clearing. Bearing left, look across to the right and see the Anson Pines standing proudly on top of the hill.

(9) Continuing northwards, nestle in the variety of foliage surrounding you. With the perpetual yellow flowering gorse on your left and the holly and splendid oak tree to your right. Wander under the crown of this tree and you will come across the remains of an old hermit's house chiselled out of the sandstone cliff below.

(10) Pass the barrier, carry straight on along the vehicle track keeping the houses on your right.

(11) Having reached the end of the track you can either take a well earned rest by sitting on the wooden bench and admiring the rolling hills or you can continue on down the grassy slope and up the bank opposite. You have now rejoined the route at Sister Dora's Pool from where you can stroll back to Milford Common.

GREEN TRAIL - 2 miles - 1 hour approx

(5) Having followed the same route as the **Red** Trail from Milford to this point at Mere Pool, take the left-hand track signposted Punchbowl ½ mile. Immediately to your right, hidden by the vegetation, are remnants of World War I filter beds.

(6) Continue straight on towards the Punchbowl. You are now walking on part of the Staffordshire Way, which is a 92 mile path linking Mow Cop in the north with Kinver Edge in the south of the County. To your right is a larch plantation which is on the Shugborough Estate.

(7) Just before reaching the Punchbowl car park turn sharp left up the grassy hillside and work your way up amongst the birch wood.

(8) Take the right-hand fork at the fine example of a coppiced birch, which has resulted in its three trunks.

(9) At the junction of the 5 tracks, turn right up to the brow of Springhill. Keeping right, descend the stony track and enjoy the views across to the River Sow, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the County town of Stafford beyond.

(10) Bear left in the valley bottom and once over the crest of the hill, you will see the familiar sight of Sister Dora Pool. Rejoin the **Red** Trail back to Milford Common.



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Milford Common TRAILS