
Walk 4 Broombriggs and Woodhouse Eaves

Explosive volcanoes and igneous intrusions

Distance: about 9.5 km (6 miles) Time: about 3 hours

This walk can be very muddy when the weather is wet.

** Note there are more walks in this part of Charnwood Forest in the companion publication 'Exploring the Landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel'.*

Park at Broombriggs Farm County Park [1] at [SK 524 145]; there is a pay and display machine at this car park.

Take the track through a gate, alongside the line of oak trees and walk across the field uphill towards the woods. Continue along the track by the edge of a wood and note the diverse woodland with a wide range of tree species. Just before heading downhill there is a track up to the left to the top of Windmill Hill [2][SK 52536 14254]. Here you can see the remains of a windmill that was last used in 1895 but still stood until it was burnt down in 1945. The rocks exposed here are Tuffs that were erupted from volcanoes centred around Bardon and Whitwick about 600 million years ago.

Follow the path back down to the main track and turn left [3][SK 52841 14007]; note the many fragments of Charnian rocks on the track floor. The last part of the track is tarmacked before you reach the road which leads to the village of Woodhouse Eaves [4][SK 52932 14072]. At the junction turn left down Maplewell Road. Notice the grey Swithland Slate rocks that make up the walls and roofs of the houses at the end of Mill Lane. Take a short detour and turn right at the bottom of Maplewell Road beyond the Pear Tree pub to see an example of an old Swithland Slate (pp.5 and 22) quarry next to the nursery building. The slates have been compressed and folded into a huge arch-shaped fold called an anticline. The rocks here dip steeply to the east and represent that particular side or limb of the fold.

Head back to the crossroads, turn right down Meadow Road and at the end by the primary school, turn through the gate on your right and take the right branching footpath across the fields on the Leicestershire Round. You are now on red Triassic clay but you may be able to see numerous fragments of Charnian rocks in the field. Cross over the road [5][SK 53867 14259] and follow the yellow waymarks across several pasture fields along a valley, going over two farm roads. At the end of the field after the second of these roads, the footpath takes you over two stiles but you can miss these and head through the open gap in the hedge. As you crest a low rise ahead, you will see two waymarkers ahead of you. Make for the one to your right, following the well-trodden footpath. Ahead, you will see the tracks of the Great Central Railway. As you meet the railway line, bear left, cross over the bridge ahead and take the footpath immediately on your left [6][SK 55331 14379].

A small detour from the railway bridge can be taken along the road which leads down to Swithland Reservoir [7][SK 55531 14610] and a quick look at the blocks in the dam wall reveals a different type of rock called granodiorite. This is an intrusive igneous rock that crystallised slowly at depth forming large crystals. The hill covered in trees beyond the reservoir at Mountsorrel hides the massive working Buddon Wood quarry which is one of the largest in Europe; the rock is extracted for buildings, roads and railway ballast, and was used to build the dam.

The main route now heads back along the opposite side of the railway track towards the village of Quorn. Follow the yellow waymarkers along the edge of a wood populated mainly by sycamore trees. The path leads away from the railway line, round a corner and over a stream into more mixed woodland. You can make out a pond to your right beyond the fence. Continue to follow the waymarkers, turning right then left and into a Nature Conservation Area. Turn right, over the next stile, then immediately left and you come to a tree-lined path. The footpath now follows the stream up to Mill Farm.

Follow the track into village of Quorn [8][SK 55590 16157] and turn left along the road. Notice how the walls on your left are made up of the pink granodiorite from Mountsorrel and walls on the right are made up of mainly grey Charnian rocks. At the bend in the road, go left along Buddon Lane and at the end, take the footpath ahead, across a pasture field and

into a tree-lined section which takes you past the edge of the Nature Conservation Area again. Go under the railway bridge [9][SK 55018 15556] and then head up the hill. As you traverse up the hill you will first encounter Triassic clays and then pebbly glacial till towards the top of the hill — can you see any pebbles? Turn left at the junction along a track and road for about 750 m, then at the next junction, turn left towards the village of Woodhouse. Here again the buildings are made up of Swithland Slate and other Charnian stones. Turn left and at the next junction, [10][SK 53943 15285] bear left into School Lane, past the Church of St Mary in the Elms. If you go into the churchyard, you will see that many of the gravestones here are made of Swithland Slate. These can be distinguished from the later Welsh slate by having rough, uneven backs compared to the smooth-surfaced Welsh slates.

Follow the road down past Pestilence Cottage, an unusual house built around 1300. There is a plaque outside the house telling you about its history.

At the bend in the road turn right up School Lane and take the footpath straight on at the end of the lane, up alongside a stream. This path emerges alongside the playing fields at Woodhouse Eaves; turn right along the Main Street and then left at the Bulls Head; this will bring you back to the Broombriggs Car Park. You may like to stop for refreshments at the Bulls Head, or you can turn left and go into the main part of the village where there is another pub and shops.

Figures

(Figure 77) Windmill at the top of Windmill Hill, Woodhouse Eaves. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.

(Figure 78) Walk 4 route map. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2011.

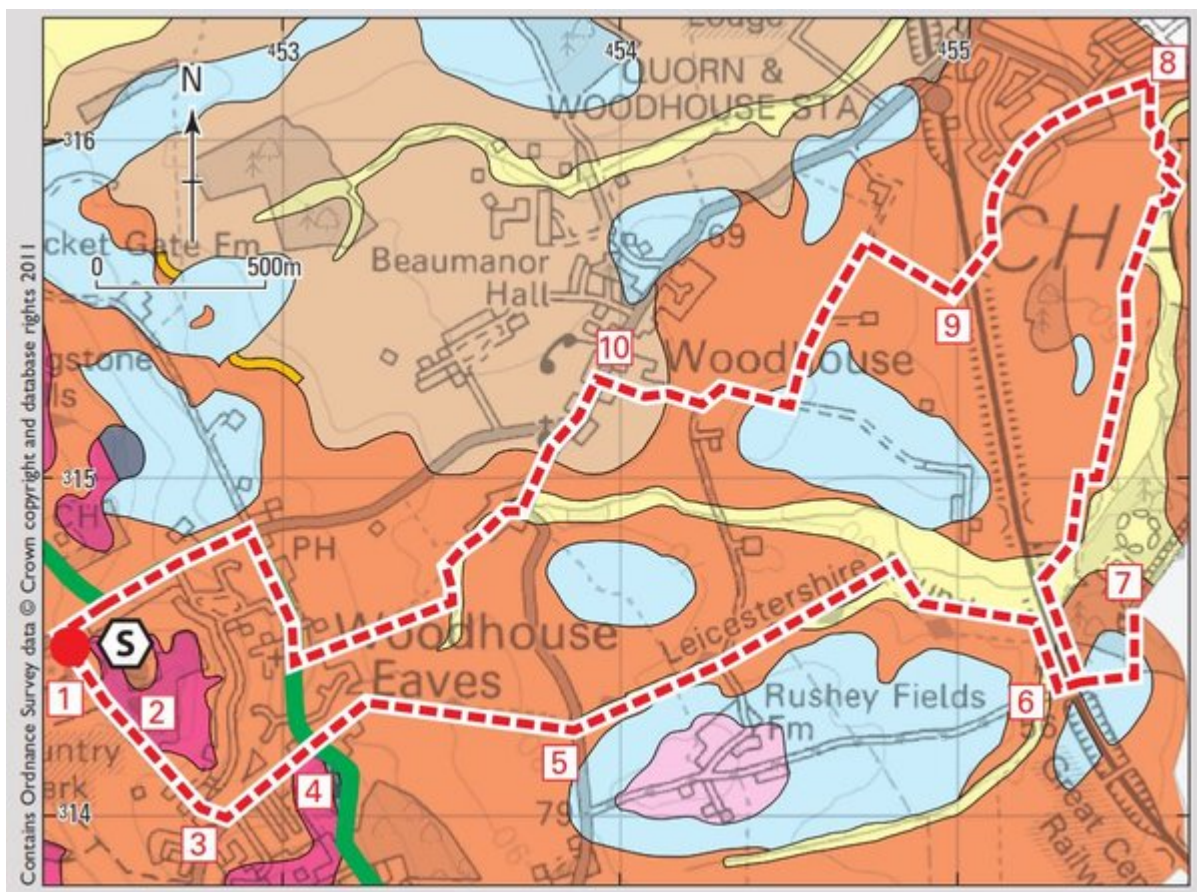
(Figure 79) Charnian tuffs exposed at the top of Windmill Hill. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.

(Figure 80) Swithland Reservoir dam. Note the block of Mountsorrel granodiorite in the foreground. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.

(Figure 81) Pestilence Cottage, Woodhouse. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.



(Figure 77) Windmill at the top of Windmill Hill, Woodhouse Eaves. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.



(Figure 78) Walk 4 route map. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2011.



(Figure 79) Charnian tuffs exposed at the top of Windmill Hill. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.



(Figure 80) Swithland Reservoir dam. Note the block of Mountsorrel granodiorite in the foreground. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.



(Figure 81) Pestilence Cottage, Woodhouse. Photograph © Gill Weightman, courtesy of NFC.