

Places to visit

Anson Museum

Tel: 01625 874426

www.ansonmuseum.org.uk

Visit

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/rangers

For the latest news and information about Ranger events and the sites we manage.

Plus why not sign up to our monthly e-newsletter?

The Ranger Service protects, enhances, encourages and promotes the proper use of the Council's outdoor recreational facilities.

For further information telephone 01625 504528 or go to:
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/rangers

Follow The Countryside Code

Helping everyone to respect, protect & enjoy our countryside.

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



www.nhs.uk/change4life

Walks from Nelson Pit Visitor Centre

5

Facts

Distance

4.8 km (3 miles)

Time

About 1 hr 30mins

Start

Nelson Pit Visitor Centre

Terrain

Moderate, muddy in places

Map

Ordnance Survey Explorer 268

Refreshments

The Coffee Tavern and Boars Head Pub situated near to Nelson Pit.
The Trading Post on the towpath by Mount Vernon Wharf.

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Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1HZ

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/rangers



**Nelson Pit ► Middlewood Way ► Poynton Coppice ►
Middlewood Way ► Macclesfield Canal**

Introduction

One of a series of walks from the Nelson Pit Visitor Centre. The route through Poynton Coppice is pretty at any time of the year. The majority of The Coppice is owned by Cheshire East Council and is subject to a ten-year management plan. Selective coppicing enhances the wildlife value of woodland by providing a gradually changing mosaic of structurally diverse vegetation. It benefits many wildlife species, allowing light to get to the woodland floor and greatly increasing the diversity of the layer of vegetation beneath the main canopy of trees.

Route

From the sculpture outside the Pit, walk across the road and down the path marked 'Middlewood Way'. Pass Higher Poynton station platform.

i The Middlewood Way is nearly 11 miles long and was originally the Macclesfield-Marple railway line that opened in 1869 and closed in 1970. After closure the area became derelict until the early 80s when it was landscaped. Dr. David Bellamy reopened it in May 1985. The majority of the Middlewood Way lies within the Borough of Cheshire East and is managed by the Ranger Service.

- 1** Beyond the first bridge (Shrigley Road), notice Reedmace growing in the ponds. Reedmace has a velvety brown, sausage shaped head and flowers in June and July.

i Reedmace was made famous, in error, when Victorian artist Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema painted 'Moses in the Bulrushes' from the biblical story. He in fact showed the child's cradle in a clump of Reedmace. Because of the fame of the painting, the plant became popularly known as Bulrush, and later, what had started in error became the accepted common name for it!

- 2** As the path reaches the car park, turn right and walk into Poynton Coppice. Turn immediately left for the 'Woodland Walk'. Down the steps and along the path with Poynton Brook on your left. At the end of the boardwalk follow the path to the right, and walk up the steps.

i Poynton Coppice is classed as an ancient semi-natural wood because although it has a history of felling it has never been ploughed or used other than as woodland. In 1847, 44 acres were planted with trees by Lord Vernon to provide timber for the mines and some for sale. Plans to bring a canal through the Coppice for carrying coal were proposed in 1795 but abandoned because of the high cost of construction. During the 1925-26 coal strike the Coppice was felled. Subsequently, alder trees were periodically coppiced to provide materials for the local clog making industry.

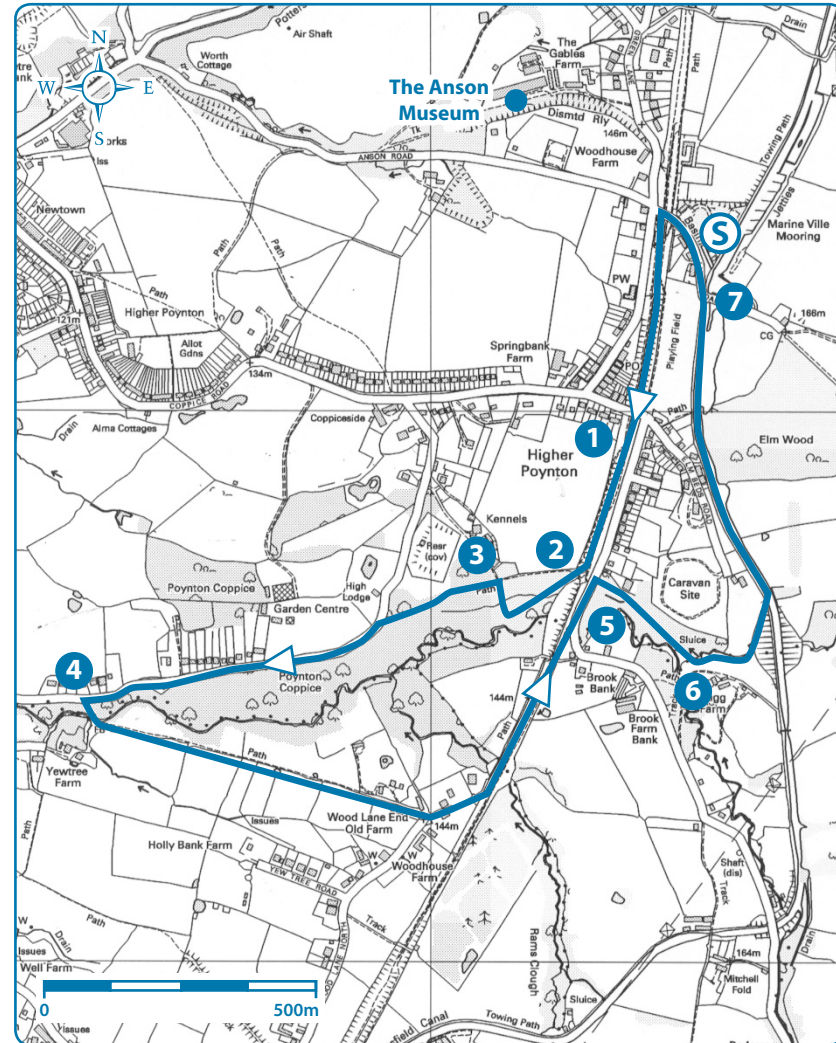
What is Coppicing?

Many areas of woodland are called, 'Coppice', 'Copse' or 'Copy'. Nearly all British trees will grow new shoots if they are cut down. Traditionally coppicing provided a continual supply of wood. Each winter a different area of the woodland was cut close to ground-level and allowed to regrow. Usually a few trees were left as standards to grow to maturity. After a period of about ten years, the first area was ready to be coppiced.

- 3** Turn left. Follow the waymark sign straight ahead. Through a kissing gate and continue ahead. Where the path divides keep right. As the path finishes turn left onto a waymarked track joining from the right. Walk through a five bar gate and pass houses on the right. After passing the house on the left with blue painted window frames (Keepers Cottage), walk until you reach more houses on the right and turn left onto the signed public footpath.



- 4** Down the steps and cross Poynton Brook. Turn left and climb the steps. Walk ahead crossing a stile and through a metal kissing gate by a large tree. At a T-junction turn left through the metal gated entrance to Rose Cottage. Walk ahead then right over the stile. Walk up the steps and turn left onto the Middlewood Way.
- 5** Walk past the car park and sign boards, exit the Middlewood Way to the right past the telephone box and cross the road. Bear left and almost immediately turn right into the entrance path to a house (Number 81). Walk a short distance; turn right down the path on the left following the yellow marker. Turn left crossing three bridges.
- 6** After the third bridge, go up the steps to the large fir tree. With the tree on your right turn left. Walk along the track slightly uphill past the farmhouse and through the avenue of trees. At the first gap in the trees, turn left and join the towpath of the Macclesfield Canal. Turn left again with the canal on your right.



i The Macclesfield Canal was surveyed by Thomas Telford (1757-1834). He was the self-taught son of a shepherd, who began as a stonemason, and moved onto architecture. He planned the wrought-iron Menai Suspension Bridge, (1825), plus over 1000 miles of road, 1200 bridges, several canals, harbours, and docks. He designed the Macclesfield Canal to run level 518' above sea level for 16 miles. It is 26¼ miles (42km) long, cost £320,000 to build and opened on 19th November 1831.

7 Walk under Brownhills Bridge (no 15) and turn left off the towpath, just before the steep cobbled bridge. Turn right, walk down the road to Nelson Pit Visitor Centre.

i Nelson Pit's shaft was located at the top of the mound facing the Visitor Centre. Adjacent to the shaft was an engine house and chimney. The pit engine lifted a metal cage filled with tubs of coal. At the top it was sorted into coal and 'slack', then tipped into horse drawn barges at Mount Vernon Wharf. The Poynton collieries had fourteen horses to pull the barges. Coal from Nelson Pit was distributed locally to Bollington and Marple cotton mills; quarries at Kerridge and silk mills in Macclesfield.

The Anson Museum

Located a short distance from the Visitor Centre down Anson Road towards Poynton. The Museum was built on the site of Anson Pit which closed in 1926. The land and many of the exhibits were donated by the late Les Cawley. The Museum houses probably the largest display of Internal Combustion Engines in Europe. It has a predominantly working display of early engines with particular emphasis on oil and gas machines made in Manchester. There is an admission charge.

