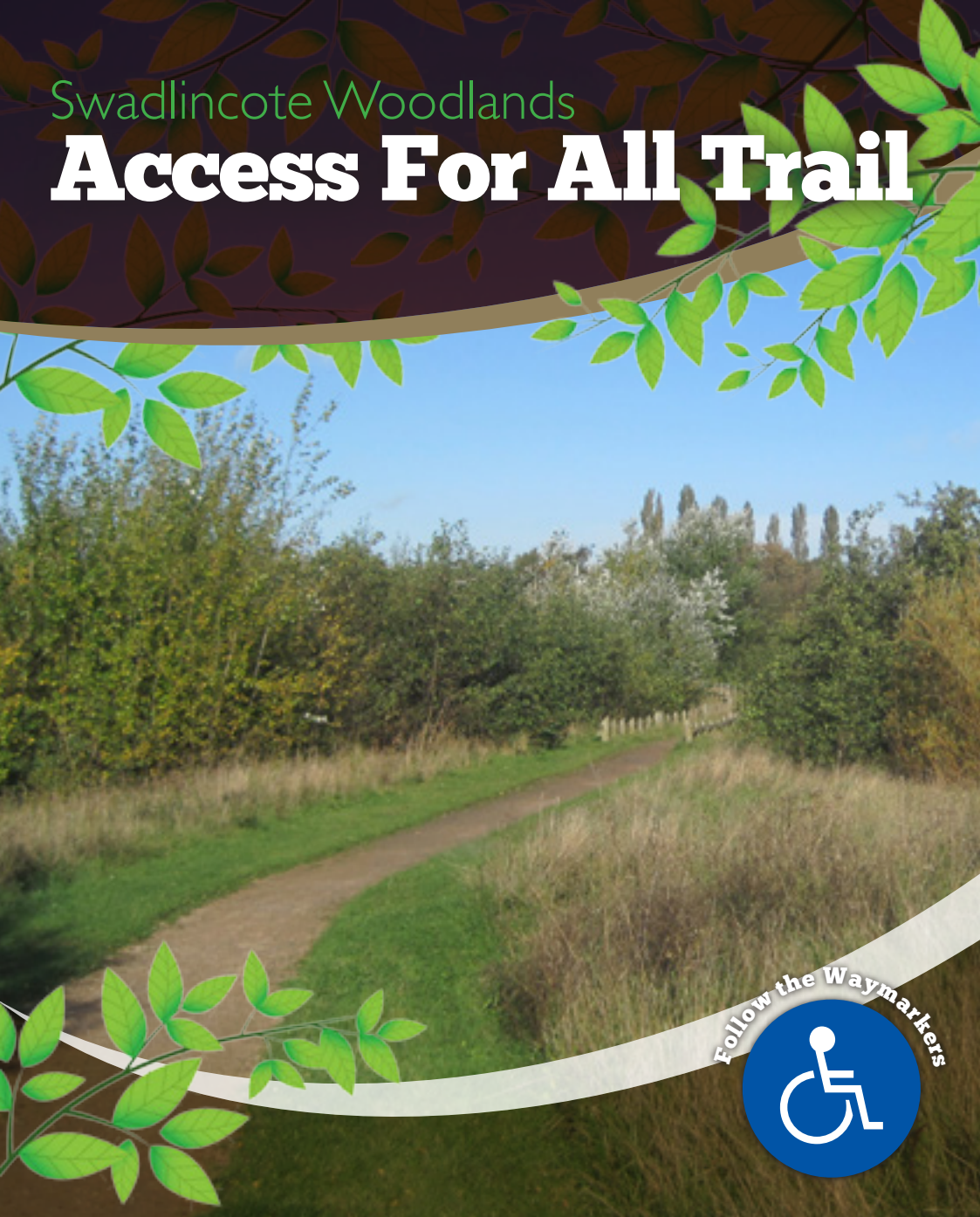


Swadlincote Woodlands

Access For All Trail



People | Place | Progress

www.south-derbys.gov.uk



**South
Derbyshire
District Council**

Please follow our park code

- Protect our site, wildlife and all visitors.
- Enjoy the views and trails
- Leave the habitats undisturbed.
- Well behaved dogs on leads are welcome.
- Take dog's mess and other litter to the bins provided.

Access For All Trail

Enjoy safe easy access. Contrast Swadlincote Woodlands with its dramatic industrial heritage.

The walk starts at the car park off Derby Road (DE11 8LP) and should take less than an hour to complete. It is about 1½ miles in length. There are two short gentle ascents and one short descent. Numbered plaques guide you round the route.

1

There are 33 hectares of parkland with a network of trails and a variety of habitats to enjoy. It is an informal woodland park and the restoration of the site has been supported by The National Forest Company, Butterfly Conservation and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. There is a meadow, wetland areas and woodland. A variety of wildlife has resulted – dragonflies, butterflies, wild flowers, invertebrates, a wide range of trees and shrubs together with bats, birds and grass snakes. More information can be found on the Nature Walk leaflet. A Community Wood fuel group is now involved with managing the site by crown lifting trees (removing lower branches) close to the trails and thinning others. Some of the wood is taken away, some remains as brush for mini-beast habitats.

Leave the car park by turning left past the toilet block and then through the metal sculpture arches. Stop at the cross of paths.

Safety & good practice

You should

- Wear appropriate clothing for the weather and carry extra layers
- Be aware of other path users.
- Mobility scooter – make sure it is properly maintained, keep the battery fully charged and make sure you know how far it can travel on a fully charged battery.

Map Key

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Woodland | Footpaths |
| Meadow | Parking |
| Ponds & Streams | Playground |
| Footbridges | Toilets |



Swadlincote Woodlands **Access For All Trail**

2

Dominated by Wragg's Sanitary Pipeworks the area looked like this in 1950:-



Turn right, pass the bridge on your left and then left onto Skylark walk and bear left.

3

Not only was it an eyesore, it suffered from air pollution. Wragg's pipe-yard had 26 round down-draught kilns belching out smoke and soot from their chimneys. When the drainage pipes were being glazed, salt was thrown on to them creating hydrochloric acid that permeated the air. Asthma sufferers struggled to breathe. Nearby roads were dusty and dirty as lorries leaving the site had no wheel washing facility to use.

Now continue ahead to the next right turn by bench and stop.

4

Look for the following trees on the trail

Native tree	Silhouette of leaf	Feature	Uses
Alder		Likes damp ground	Making clog soles & broom handles
Oak		Acorns once food for pigs	Building ships, homes & furniture
Goat willow		Pussy willow catkins in spring	Used to make clothes pegs
Silver birch		Silver bark	Twigs used to drive away evil spirits. Used to make brooms

Continue ahead to the junction with Granville Way. Stop and take a break and think about the past.

5

Timeline

1850 – Agricultural land grazed by cattle & sheep

1872 – Thomas Wragg visited Swadlincote to inspect new pipe-making machinery patented by A. & T. Sabine. Also he saw the quality of the local clay & as a result bought a hundred acres of land. He already had a business in Sheffield.

1873 – The pipe-works factory was built and John Downing Wragg, his son became manager.

1906 – Wragg's increased the size of their empire by purchasing the firm of Woodward's that used to be where Morrison's is today.

1972 – This site was closed leaving acres of derelict land.

1973 – The buildings shown in Section 2 were demolished with no sign of the pipe-works today. The tall chimney that dominated the area was blown up on 4th February. The quarry became the local domestic landfill site.

1995 – Work started to transform the bleak ruined landscape into an urban forest park – Swadlincote Woodlands.



Continue ahead, cross the bridge and turn left at the cross of paths down past the blue metal arch sculpture towards Frank Bodicote Way. Take a few minutes to consider the landscape from 100 years ago!

6

The quarry, locally known as a clay hole, found here in the first half of the 20th century was supplying clay from over 15 different beds. Terraces allowed a variety of grades of clay to be dug from up to 8 terraces at a time, as shown in the right hand photo.

The overburden (waste rock) was removed by a digger and the hole was 50 feet deep. The clay reached the works by horse-drawn tramway, as shown in the right hand photo.

The clays were used for a variety of products – sanitary ware, tiles, firebricks and drainage pipes. One ton of clay produced almost one ton of drainage pipes with little waste. This meant large stack-yards were needed for storage of the products waiting for transport to the UK and overseas markets.



On reaching the next cross of paths, turn left at the Welcome to Swadlincote Woodlands sign and along the woodland path known as Opening Hole Way. Stop at a glade where a brook passes below the path.

7

The Sanitary Pipe-works had a number of buildings to accommodate the pipe-making machinery, outdoor kilns and a very tall chimney. As can be seen from the photograph to the right it was an unsightly place.

The kilns were fired with coal until the Clean Air Act meant that gas-fired kilns had to be phased in. Each kiln was stacked with pipes – three levels high and then 'odd stuff' balanced on the top. (Straight pipes needed junctions which were made in moulds. These unusual shapes were called 'odd-stuff'). Six to eight fireplaces surrounded each kiln and a door gave access to fill and empty it after firing. A perforated floor allowed even circulation of heated gases and flames once the door had been bricked up.



Examples of odd-stuff in the foreground



The worker is applying 'gallymac' (a bitumen product) to ensure that the pipes sealed when joined together. The work was heavy and dirty, women worked in the pipeyard too! The photographs below show some of the workforce



Continue ahead and then turn right at point 2. Take the next left to follow the path round to point 8.

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8

During the life of the business the company had three locomotive steam engines, named 'Thomas Wragg' to take the finished goods along the sidings to the Swadlincote loop railway line. They were kept in a shed just below where you are.



Not all pipes were small!

Continue along the path to the starting point passing the climbing boulder on the right.

If you require this information in large print or in another language please phone: **01283 595795** or email: **customer.services@south-derbyshire.gov.uk**

Trail created by Dorothy Morson, April 2017. Thanks to the Magic Attic Archive for the heritage images.