

BULWELL AND BULWELL FOREST WALK



Circular walk exploring Bulwell, Bulwell Forest and part of Bestwood Village

Walk No 7

DESCRIPTION

Circular walk through Bulwell, Bulwell Forest and part of Bestwood Village, including the River Leen, Bulwell Bogs and an historic market town, linked by wonderful green spaces, including Bulwell Hall Park.

THE FACTS

Area	Bulwell, Bulwell Forest and part of Bestwood Village
Distance	c 6 miles (around 9.5 km)
Duration	c 3 hours
Maps	As leaflet, street map or OS Explorer 1:25000 Map 260
Travel Information	Train, tram and bus services to Bulwell (see www.nctx.co.uk and www.traveleastmidlands.co.uk)
Terrain	Pavements, footpaths, bridleways, stone and mud paths, some gentle slopes, some steps, bridge over railway. Some parts unsuitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters
Start/ Finish	Bulwell Town Centre
Refreshments	Cafés and bars in Bulwell; Country Park Café, Bulwell Hall Park

Shorter walk options: Shorter walk options are available using public transport to access points C, D, E or G

Additional Information: Old Ordnance Survey Maps (the Godfrey Edition) Nottinghamshire Sheet 38.05 Bulwell 1913; “Smoke in the Valley: Bulwell and Basford”: Walking and Cycling map by Chris Matthews (available at christopherpaulmatthews.co.uk)

Cover images: Clockwise from top left: Stone Bridge at Bulwell Bogs, Moorbridge Ponds Nature Reserve, Forge Mill, Bulwell Hall Park, Welcome to Bulwell sign on A611 Hucknall Lane

THE ROUTE

A. Start in **Bulwell Town Centre** by the **River Leen** at **Bulwell Bogs**. Note the **stone bridge (1830)**, the **iron footbridge (1880)** and the **Highbury Road Bridge (1895)** and **Public Hall** behind. Cross to **Market Place**. Continue to right through pedestrian area past Wilkos. There are now two options. **Either** continue along **Main Street**, joining the main road to Carey Road. Note the late 19th/ early 20th century buildings amidst the modern development. Turn right at Carey Road to railway. **OR** for alternative route along the River Leen, turn first right after the Royal Oak public house, down Holborn Place, walk through car park and then turn left onto the path by the River Leen. Continue along the path crossing over Jennison Street using the pedestrian crossing, passing the petrol station on the right and continue along Newcastle Street to Carey Road.

B. Cross railway, then turn immediately right following Broxtowe Country Trail through Colston Road flats. At the road junction turn right along Austin Road (still following Broxtowe Country Trail Sign). If you can, visit **Bulwell Forest Community Garden** on your left, open at advertised times. Turn left along Braemar Road, then left up Cantrell Road.

C. At T junction at the top, cross over (St Albans) Road and take the footpath into **Bulwell Forest**. At footpath crossing (by seat and litter bin) turn left up some steps. Follow this path between trees/ bushes. Keep to the left with the golf course always on your right. Part way along, an alternative path can be followed on the top of the old **Great Northern and Great Central Railway Embankment** (accessed just past a red bin where there is an exit to Bestwood Road). Either path brings you out at Hucknall Road near Bestwood Road junction.

D. Cross Hucknall Road at crossing. Note the railway signal and **Hucknall Road Walkway** information board. At this point a diversion can be made to **Moorbridge Ponds Nature reserve** (possibly site of the original "Bull Well") by crossing *carefully* over Bestwood Road (location shown on information board map). Turn left along the Hucknall Road Walkway (which follows the former **Leen Valley extension of**

the Great Northern Railway) following the National Cycle Network (NCN) route 6 signs to Hucknall and footpath signs to Leen Valley and Bestwood Park. At an elaborate NCN 6 sign keep left still following NCN 6 signs. At next footpath sign follow this towards Hucknall and Bulwell Hall Park leaving the walkway by descending left. Cross Bestwood Road and turn down Mill Road opposite to pass **Forge Mill** bringing you to tram/ railway line.

E. Cross railway/ tram line using footbridge. Turn left along main road past bus stop (optional detour to small unmarked nature reserve on left). Cross at pedestrian island and take path opposite following sign to **Bulwell Hall Park**. Follow this path with hedge on right, field on left, then hedge both sides, and fields beyond on right. After around 800 metres cross line of the **Great Central Railway (1899-1966)**, which ran from Manchester to London and is marked by a memorial stone on the right. Keep straight ahead on main path bending left and following fingerpost sign to Hucknall/ **Bulwell Hall Park**.

F. After 200m path bends to right, soon joining **stream (tributary of the Leen)** on left. Where path divides, keep ahead on either path (left is closest to stream) to reach footpath signs and small bridge. For the most direct route through the park turn left following bridle way sign to Bulwell Town Centre, but you are encouraged to explore other paths in the park: e.g. to **Country Park Café** in the Golf Club, near the site of **Bulwell Hall** (now demolished); to **Bulwell Hall Park Lakes**, a national swan sanctuary where heron, coots and moorhens can be seen; or to **Barker Wood** nature reserve and community woodland.

G. Leave Bulwell Hall Park at main entrance. Cross over main road and turn immediately right along Camberley Road taking path by houses, parallel to main road. At end of houses where path bears left go straight up bank to enter meadow (*). Follow grass path to meet **Bulwell Meadow** sign. Follow paths through Meadow to exit left by sculpted entrance near Top House Pub (white building) onto Hoewood Road. (***Alternative:** follow path left by side of houses. On reaching

Hoewood Road turn right to walk along grass Embankment or pavement. Enter **Bulwell Meadow** at blue sculpted gate, opposite Duchess Street).

H. Cross over Hoewood Road and go down Rock Street (opposite pub). Turn first right down Aldgate Close. Keep straight ahead towards school, then turn left on footpath arriving at **St John the Divine Church**. Here detour right to visit the church and site of old **Bulwell stone quarry**. By church, bear slightly left and straight ahead. At Musters Walk sign there is a view of the **Victorian parish church of St Mary's** (designed by Derby architect Isaac Stevens, replacing a medieval building). Keep straight ahead (following cycle sign to Bulwell Town Centre) onto Commercial Road. Take left fork at Commercial Road play area. Notice **Strelley House** (former Free School built by George Strelley in 1667) on the corner of Strelley Street, then continue to go through the underpass into the pedestrianised area. Continuing ahead brings you back to **Bulwell Market**.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Bulwell

There has been a settlement here since Anglo-Saxon times. The ancient market town developed around a medieval bridge over the River Leen. The market dates from 13th century and still thrives. The name Bulwell may refer to an Anglo Saxon person called Bulla, or to the bubbling sound of water, or derive from a legend that a bull struck a sandstone rock causing it to seep water (possibly the spring near Moorbridge Ponds). Many buildings reflecting the industrial, commercial and social development of the 19th and early 20th centuries still stand today. Examples on Main Street include the 1911 Picture Palace (now the William Peverel pub), the 1919 Doctor's Surgery (now Shelton's Solicitors), the former Methodist Chapel (now Seventh Day Adventist) and St Mary's primary school.

The River Leen rises in the outskirts of Kirkby in Ashfield and flows through Bulwell on its way to join the River Trent opposite Wilford. The river provided power for the mills in Bulwell. Bleaching and dyeing works for the lace and hosiery industries were located along its banks. **Bulwell Bogs** has been a popular recreation area since Victorian times. Nottingham Corporation agreed to purchase and preserve the

bogs in 1879 after a dispute (known as the "Battle of the Bogs") with a local landowner who attempted to enclose the lands.

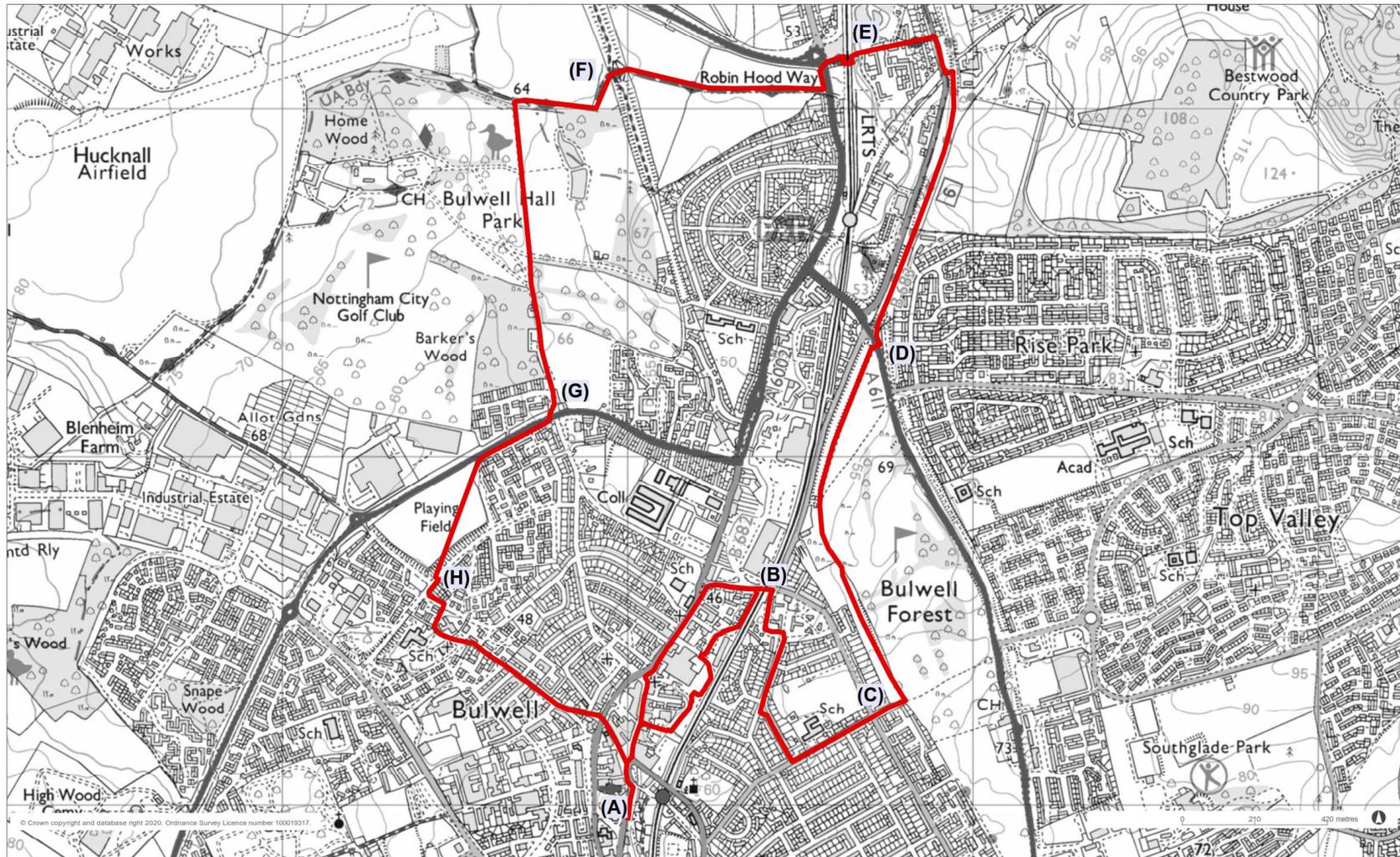
Bulwell Forest

This was originally heathland on sandstone rock forming part of the southern edge of the ancient Sherwood Forest. The land was enclosed for recreation in the 19th century; the golf course on this site dates from 1887.

Bulwell Hall Park

Bulwell Hall was built in 1770 by John Newton. At various times it has been a sanatorium, an approved school for boys, a military headquarters and a prisoner of war camp. The hall was demolished in 1958 but the Victorian stables remain and there is still much to be enjoyed in the park, including areas of ancient forest, meadowland, ponds and a tributary stream of the River Leen, which in spring weaves its way through carpet (and aroma) of wild garlic accompanied by birdsong.

Bulwell Stone is a magnesian limestone used in the construction of many buildings and walls in Nottingham. Behind St John the Divine church, a former chapel of ease, is the site of a former quarry.



 THE WALK



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