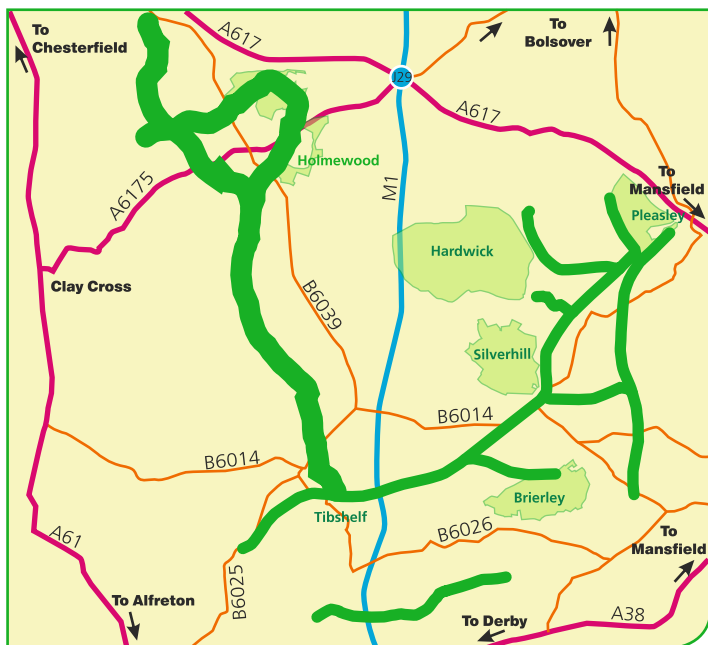


## Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service

The Five Pits Trail and other local countryside sites are managed by Derbyshire County Council. Our countryside centres have a wide range of maps, leaflets and advice for exploring the local countryside.

### Contact us for information on:

- Discovering Chesterfield's Greenways.
- Discovering the Phoenix Greenways.
- Guided walks and events in the area and throughout the county.
- Volunteer opportunities.
- Links to countryside teams across Derbyshire.



**Clay Cross Countryside Centre**, 23 Market Street, Clay Cross, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S45 9JE. Tel: 01629 533020.

**Tapton Lock Visitor Centre**, Lockoford Lane, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7JB. Tel: 01246 551035.

Email: [countrysideservice@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:countrysideservice@derbyshire.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countryside)

Find us on Facebook and Twitter  
[www.facebook.com/derbyshirecountryside](https://www.facebook.com/derbyshirecountryside)



### Other contacts:

[www.hidden-gems.org.uk/hidden-gems](http://www.hidden-gems.org.uk/hidden-gems)



For this leaflet in other formats please contact **Call Derbyshire** on **01629 533190**.

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# Discover The Five Pits Trail



**DERBYSHIRE**  
County Council  
Improving life for local people

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countryside)

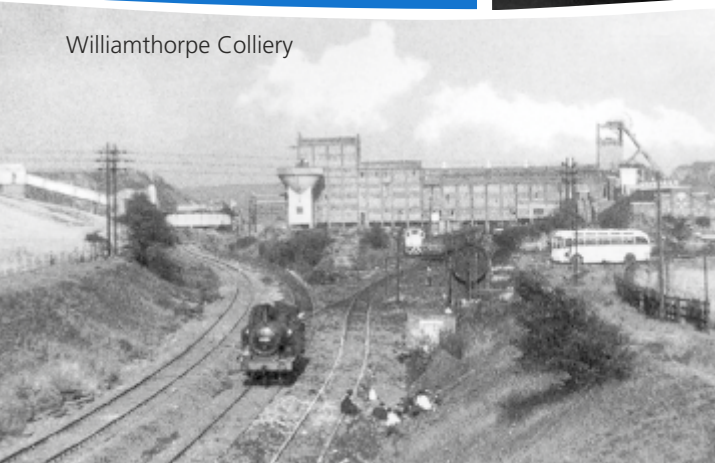
## The Industrial Roots of the Five Pits Trail

Memories and photographs are almost all that remain of the industrial past of rail and collieries in our area.



Left to right above: Grassmoor Colliery, Tibshelf Station

Williamthorpe Colliery



Locko Lane Viaduct



The Great Central railway closed in 1967 closely followed by Williamthorpe Colliery, which was the last of the Five Pits to close in 1970.

These photographs show us how it used to be, but now this landscape has been transformed from smoke and steam to parks, woods and grasslands for you to enjoy.

You can still find these sites along the trail. Search for the information boards which tell you about the area's history and what to look out for today.

Heath Station



Pilsley Station and Pilsley Colliery



# Coalfield to Conservation - Wildlife on the Trail

The trail you enjoy today is a changed landscape from the industrial days of collieries and railways. It now links Country Park to Local Nature Reserve and growing woodlands to lakes, meadows and ponds. The trail provides wildlife with a 'corridor' linking habitats such as woodland, wetlands and meadows supporting greater biodiversity.

Here are just a few of the plants and animals you might see when you are out and about.

**Common Spotted Orchid and Bee Orchid** - the nutrient poor soils of these reclaimed colliery spoil heaps suit these beautiful flowers, more often found on limestone or chalk grasslands. Look out for them from May and into the summer months.

**Water Voles** - make their homes in the banks of still or slow moving water. Once seen regularly all over the UK, these small mammals are now an endangered species.

**Great Crested Grebe** - you'll recognise this elegant waterbird by it's ornate head plumes. They dive to feed and also to escape, preferring this to flying. In spring you might see their elaborate courtship display; they rise out of the water and shake their heads in what is called the Reed Dance. You will sometimes spot their young riding on an adults back.

**Grass Snake** - they are often found in rough ground, close to water, but their speed and wariness make them hard to spot. This non-venomous reptile is completely harmless to humans, but watch out if you're a frog or toad as you will make a tasty snack.

**Reed Warbler** - the reed beds are home to these summer visitors. They fly here all the way from Africa! You are more likely to hear it's 'churring' song coming from the reed beds than see this small, shy brown bird.

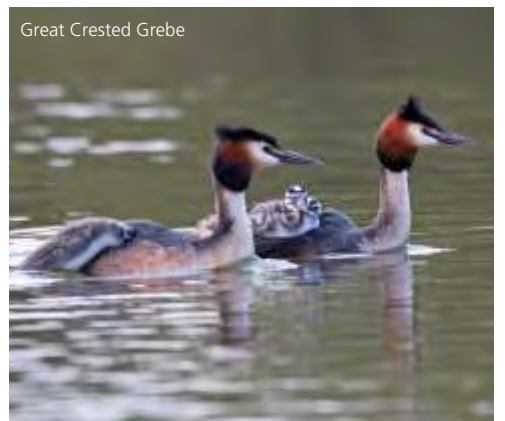
**Six-Spot Burnet** - this day flying moth is commonly seen on grassland and woodland edges. Our trails are ideal habitat for them. Their caterpillars feed on common birds-foot trefoil, while the adults feed on the nectar of knapweed and thistle.



Bee Orchid



Water Vole



Great Crested Grebe



Six Spot Burnet Moth



Reed Warbler



Grass Snake

## Looking after our wildlife

The mix of woodland, grassland, reed beds and open water are being managed for the benefit of our native wildlife. Our countryside service team work hard to maintain and improve these habitats. If you see them working alongside the trail, stop and have a word, they will be happy to explain the management work they are doing.

**Woodlands** - the maturing woodlands at Grassmoor Country Park, Williamthorpe Local Nature Reserve, Locko Plantation and Tibshelf Ponds are home to birds, small mammals, insects and wildflowers. If you see us felling trees during the winter months, don't panic! This is to increase the diversity of the woodland habitat.

**Grasslands** - the shallow soils, which are poor in nutrients, on our reclaimed colliery sites are brilliant for wildflowers, which in turn attract insects and birds. These special habitats come to life with swathes of wildflowers in the spring and summer. We manage these by hay cutting in the summer and scrub clearance during the winter months.

**Reed Beds and Open Water** - Williamthorpe Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has one of the largest reed beds in Derbyshire. Reed beds are among the most important habitats for birds in the UK. They support many breeding birds and provide winter roosting for many more. Reeds used to be harvested for thatching, today we still cut the reeds to manage the beds. You'll also see many varieties of dragon and damselfly along the water's edge. In the evenings look out for the different species of bats hunting for insects above and around the water.

Williamthorpe Pond and Reed Bed



Meadow



Photographs of animals, birds and insects this page by [www.northeastwildlife.co.uk](http://www.northeastwildlife.co.uk)



Weasel

Snipe

Common Spotted Orchid

Peacock Butterfly

Jay

Kestrel


# The Five Pits Trail

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders can all enjoy the countryside of the Five Pits Trail. Follow the 5.5 mile off-road surfaced route from Grassmoor Country Park to Tibshelf Ponds or extend your route to 7.5 miles by exploring the route through Williamthorpe Local Nature Reserve and Holmewood Woodlands.



**Holmewood Sculpture**  
Funded by the Young Roots Heritage Lottery Fund, students from Deincourt School worked with artists from Gotham-D to design this sculpture. Using metal, stone and wood, the sculpture shows leaves and keys (seeds) and takes its inspiration from both the natural and industrial heritage of the area.

The trail mostly follows the route of the Great Central Railway. Since the large collieries and smaller pits along the railway closed, the landscape has changed dramatically. Parts of the land were opencast and most of the original railway line removed. Now you will find a rolling trail that has some long steep slopes. This may limit some people's access in places - look for the 'steep slope' symbols on the map. There are no stiles or steps and you will find seats along the way to stop, rest and enjoy the views. Look out for the information boards with large site maps showing some of the heritage and wildlife along the trail.

 You can listen to tales of history, heritage and wildlife with downloadable audio trails for the Five Pits Trail, Holmewood Woodlands and Grassmoor Village. Visit [www.hidden-gems.org.uk/hidden-gems](http://www.hidden-gems.org.uk/hidden-gems) for more information and to download the trails. Or make the most of new technology and follow our QR trail. Look for the QR codes as you travel the trails. Scan them, using the free QR reader app, to your smartphone and listen to history and wildlife snippets.

## Walking Routes

Walkers can explore the surrounding landscape on Public Rights of Way by following one of the Five Pits Trail Circular Walks. These walks are between 2.5 and 5.5 miles in length and each walk is waymarked with a coloured disc. Waymarked footpath links also exist from the Five Pits Trail: from Holmewood Woodlands to historic Stainsby (1.5 miles) and on to Hardwick Hall (3 miles) or from Williamthorpe Local Nature Reserve to Heath village (0.75 miles) and on to the Stockley Trail to reach Carr Vale Nature Reserve (2.5 miles). It is recommended that visitors use the Ordnance Survey Explorer map Sheet 269 to gain maximum enjoyment from the countryside around the Five Pits Trail. A selection of 'Walk for Health' leaflets are available from Clay Cross Countryside Centre.

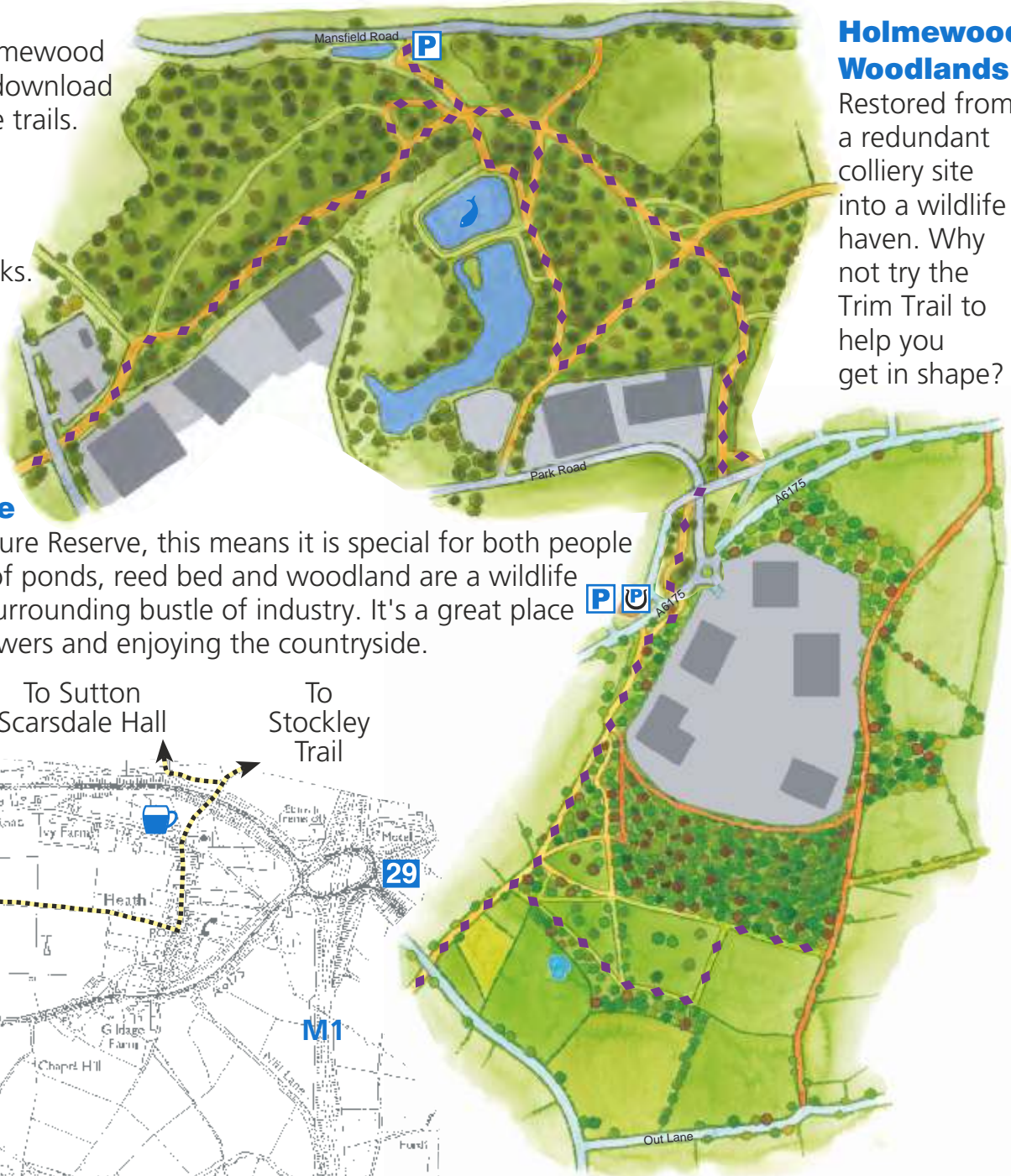
### Grassmoor Country Park

An ideal starting point for exploring the trail. The park is a mix of grassland and woodland with two former colliery ponds. This mosaic of habitats makes the park a great place to spot wildlife.



### Williamthorpe Local Nature Reserve

Designated as a Local Nature Reserve, this means it is special for both people and wildlife. The mosaic of ponds, reed bed and woodland are a wildlife haven, hidden from the surrounding bustle of industry. It's a great place for bird watching, wildflowers and enjoying the countryside.

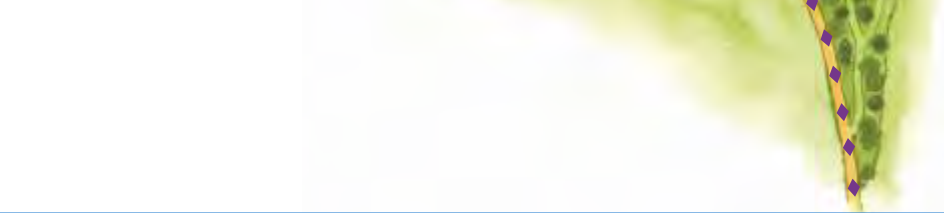


### Holmewood Woodlands

Restored from a redundant colliery site into a wildlife haven. Why not try the Trim Trail to help you get in shape?

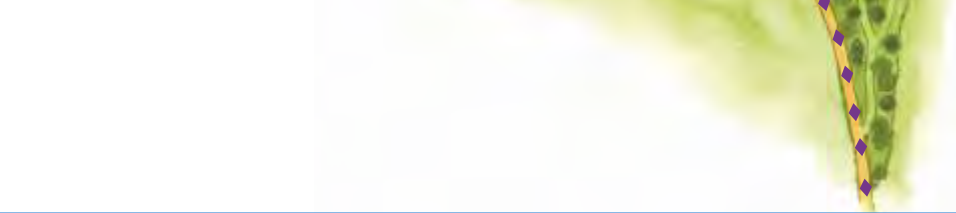
### Countryside Centre

This is an important local bird and wildlife reserve. Woodland management here is improving and creating more diverse habitats for wildlife.



### Locko Plantation

This is an important local bird and wildlife reserve. Woodland management here is improving and creating more diverse habitats for wildlife.



- Multi User Trail (walkers, cyclists, horse riders)
- Astwith Walk (Blue disc) 5.5 miles
- North Wingfield Walk (Brown disc) 3 miles
- Pilsley Walk (Red disc) 3 miles
- Tibshelf Walk (Purple disc) 2.5 miles without stiles for easier access
- Footpath Links
- Steep Slopes
- Pub/Refreshments
- Parking
- Horsebox Parking
- Bus Stop - regular service close to trail, for details contact Traveline
- Picnic Area
- Fishing - contact the Countryside Centre for site angling information

0 1 km  
Scale: O.S. Five Pits Trail map

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### Tibshelf Ponds

This area of woodland, meadows and pretty ponds at the southern end of the trail is an ideal place for short walks and picnics. There is parking for cars and horse boxes and access to a specially designed canter track for horse riders. If you want to go further afield follow the links to the Phoenix Greenways.



Site maps not to scale