

Take a walk through time on the Geopark Way

The Geopark Way long distance walking trail was conceived from the aspiration to highlight geology, landscape and associated heritage within the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark (AMHG) and to make these accessible to all.

Linking geological sites of interest the Geopark Way trail winds its way for 109 miles alongside rivers, through forests, along ridge-tops and across heathlands, whilst the associated 136 page guidebook interprets the sites and vistas seen along the route. Alongside the geological interpretation the guide draws attention to examples of how geology has played a significant part in influencing the wildlife, archaeology, social and industrial history of the area.

The trail guide conveniently splits the Geopark Way trail into 17 comfortable day walks; each with its own detailed map. A slim supplementary booklet details useful information on public transport routes, tourist amenities and attractions, further geological walks and countryside sites along the Geopark Way.

On the trail:

Starting in the town of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, the Geopark Way explores the Permian sandstone cliffs that separate Bridgnorth into a High and a Low Town, both lying on the banks of, and overlooking the River Severn.

Travelling south from Bridgnorth the trail passes through the Wyre Forest Coalfield. Along with exposures of Carboniferous cyclothemic lithologies the trail encounters evidence of the social and industrial impact that the availability of natural resources had on local communities. There is much to be seen highlighting the mining history of the area.

Leaving the coalfield the trail passes over a succession of Permo-Triassic sedimentary rocks and visits the Quaternary wind blown sands that cover the lower terrace of Hartlebury common. This local nature reserve is celebrated not only for its geology, but as a lowland heath and as a common with a social history spanning at least 2000 years.

Next the trail veers westwards and crosses over the East Malvern Fault where the topography becomes more dramatic as the Silurian limestones and shales of the Abberley Hills come into view. Rock exposures, fossils, bentonites, quarries and abandoned lime kilns collectively tell a compelling story of this series of rocks.

Continuing south and travelling further back in time to the Pre Cambrian the route encounters the Malvern Hills; an area still not geologically fully understood, or at least with theories of chronology still fuelling debate amongst geologists. The Geopark Way visits several sites on the hills to capture the essence of their geological history, peppering the science with tales of folklore and the Victorian Water Cure phenomenon that placed Malvern on the map.

Leaving the Malvern Hills the horizon changes as the Cotswold Hills come into full view. Into Gloucestershire the trail passes over the inlier of May Hill with its distinctive crown of Jubilee (Queen Victoria) trees, before entering into Huntley Quarry Geological Reserve to explore the fault and fold structures clearly seen on the quarry face.

The final leg of the trail leads you over the relatively flat plains of late Triassic and early Jurassic sediments, visiting sites to unveil the River Severn's formational history before arriving at its final destination of

Gloucester cathedral. This wonderful building of oolitic limestone marks a fitting end to a traverse across 700 million years of Earth history

The rocks along the Geopark Way tell amazing stories of continental collision, of tropical seas, hot deserts, equatorial swamps and coastal lagoons and of vast ice sheets and polar deserts. But just as interesting are the building stones of churches, bridges, town halls, cottages and even a cathedral. These stories can be followed in the guidebook delivering a totally new perspective on long distance walking.

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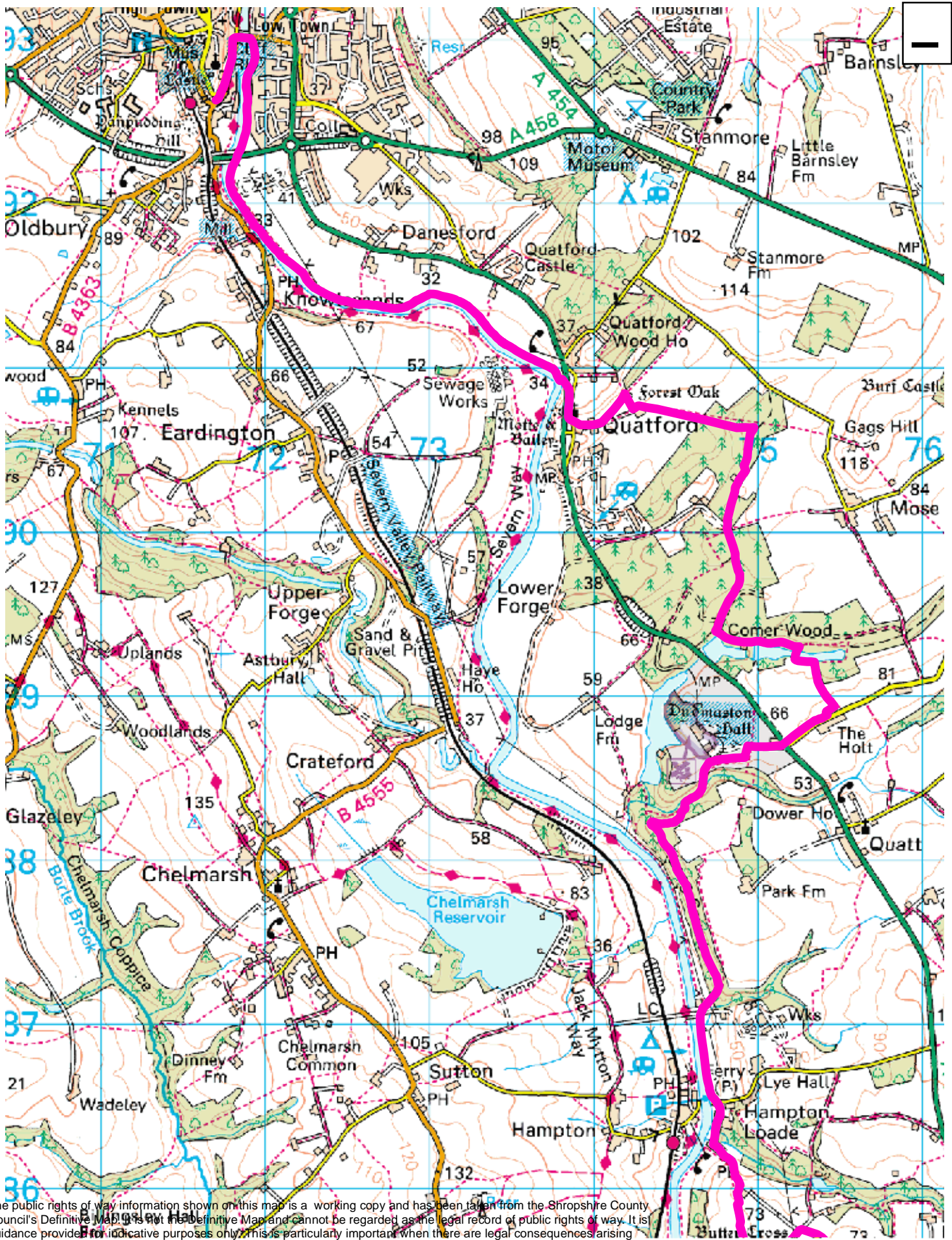
website: <http://www.earthheritagetrust.org/blog/TheGeoparkWay>

Publications

The Geopark Way trail guide 136pp ISBN: 955839009-7 £9.95 plus £2 p&p direct from H&W Earth Heritage Trust

Geopark Way visitor guide (free with guide or download)

Trail guide available from a number of stockists along the trail including several TIC's.



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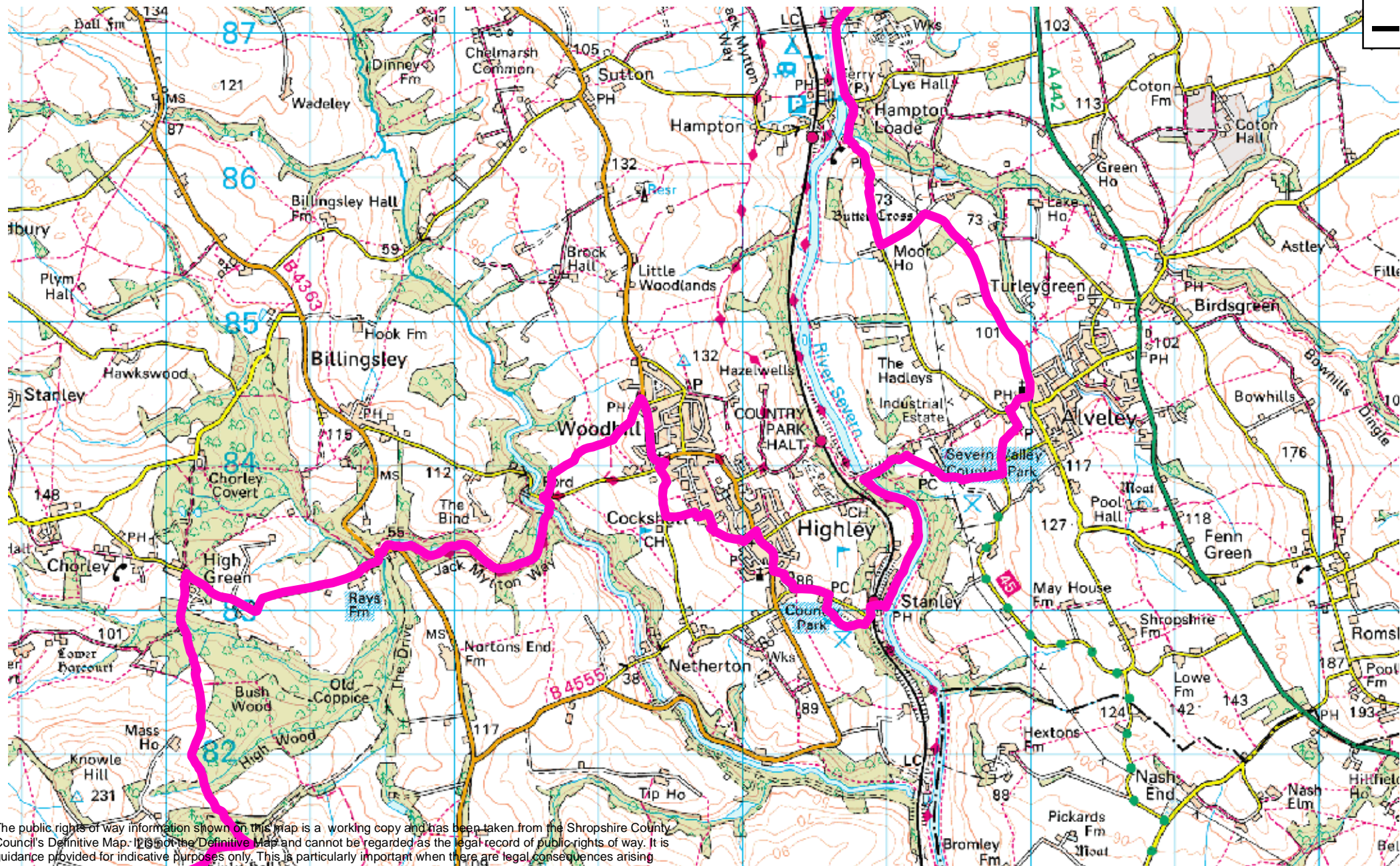
The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate
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Scale: 1:30,000

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The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate
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Ttiel

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