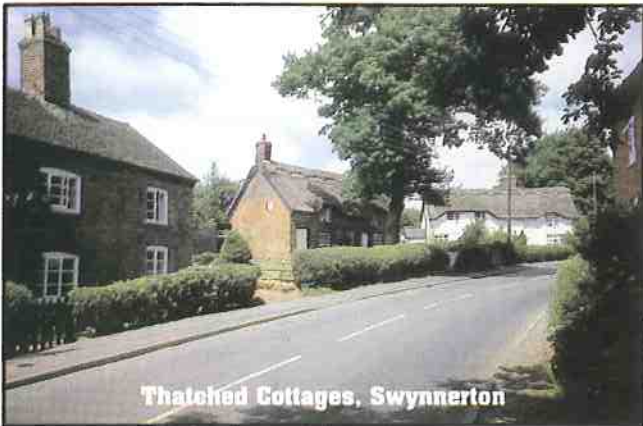




Beech Caves

Dominating the village is **Swynnerton Hall**, rebuilt after the restoration in 1660 and home of the Stafford family. The village itself is almost enclosed by **Swynnerton Park** with copses, woods, arable and pasture land. Buildings of interest are the 12th Century Parish Church of St. Mary, the Roman Catholic Church adjacent to the Hall, the Victorian "Tudor" School, 18th Century rectory and thatched cottages.

From Swynnerton, the walk continues across farmland to the A519, and follows an ancient green lane arched with trees, leading past disused sand quarries and onward to **Lower and Upper Hatton**. The impressive waterworks at Hatton lead to Common Lane which meets up with the **Red Walk** at Harley Thorns, from where the walk continued back to the **Picnic Site**.



Thatched Cottages, Swynnerton

Refreshments available from Dukes Lodge opposite Hanchurch Hills Picnic Site and Fitzherbert Arms Public House in Swynnerton.

Nearby places to visit: Mill Meece Pumping Station, Eccleshall Castle and Izaak Walton Cottage.

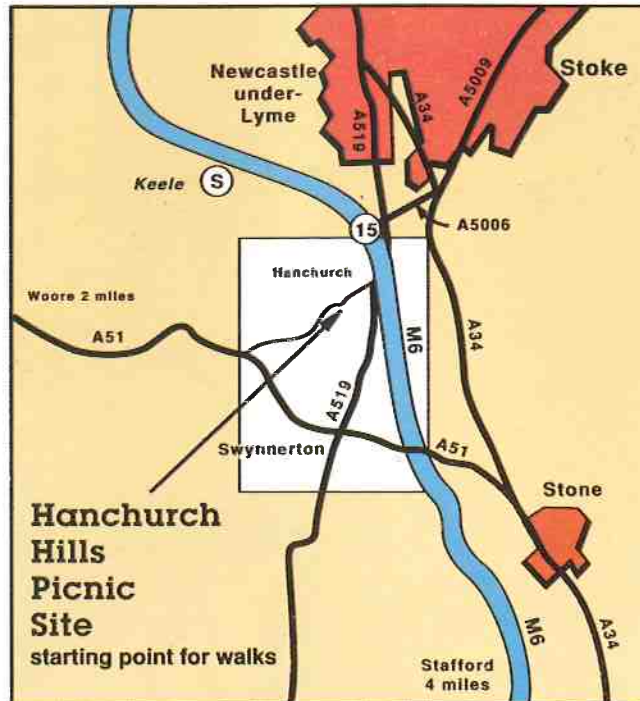
Further information from the Staffordshire County Council, Shire Hall, Market Street, Stafford ST16 2LQ. Telephone No. (01785) 223121, and Tourist Information Centres at Stoke-on-Trent Telephone No. (01782) 411222 and Stafford Telephone No. (01785) 214668.

Hanchurch Hills is the first in a series of walks around **Country Parks and Picnic Sites in Staffordshire** which are being promoted by **Staffordshire County Council** with assistance from the **Countryside Commission**.

Situated approximately 2 miles west of Trentham and 4 miles south of Newcastle, **Hanchurch Hills Picnic Site** provides the setting for **3 Circular Country Walks** varying in length from 2 to 7 miles linking the picturesque villages of **Hanchurch** and **Swynnerton**. Each walk is well signposted and colour coded, and offers a variety of topography, wooded and pastoral landscapes, architecture, geology, flora and fauna.

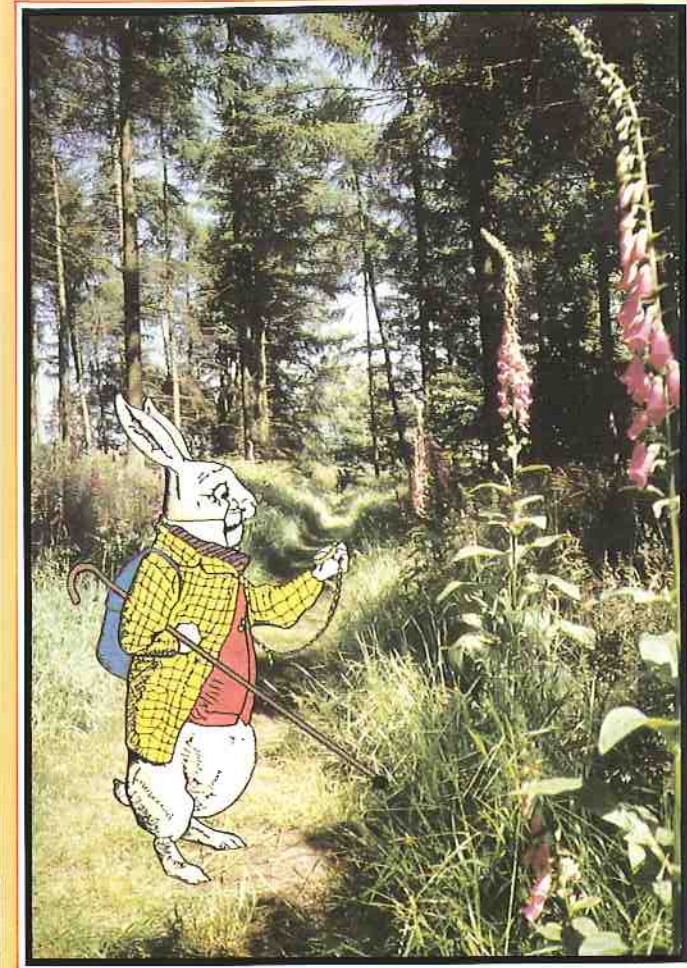
HAPPY WALKING AND, WHEREVER YOU GO, FOLLOW THE COUNTRY CODE

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Fasten all gates
- Keep your dogs under control
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise



The Countryside Commission supports Staffordshire County Council's walks programme to help people use and enjoy their local countryside.

HANCHURCH HILLS WALKS



Staffordshire
County Council

Pride in your Country

**COUNTRYSIDE
COMMISSION**

Take
"Time Out"
for a
Country Walk

**No. 1 in a series
of country walks**

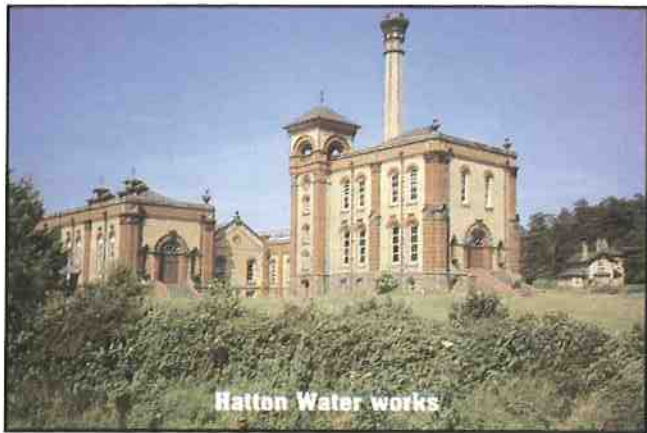
HANCHURCH HILLS WALKS

Situated within the Parish of Swynnerton, the three **Hanchurch Hills circular walks** offer a variety of scenery, from rolling pastures and arable fields to commercial conifer plantations. On higher ground excellent views across to the Potteries, Cannock Chase, Shropshire and Wales add to the interest.

Hawthorn hedges with occasional specimens of sycamore, ash, oak, holly and rowan line the roads. Other trees include beech, oak, willow, chestnut and silver birch. On Hanchurch Hills due to generally poor soils, the coniferous forests are planted with Scots pine and Japanese larch, and where there is less ground cover, heather and bilberry bear witness to the original heathland. The woodlands host a variety of wild flowers; lesser celandine, honeysuckle, wood sage, sorrel and wood anemones. Around Hanchurch Pools, alder trees thrive, together with marsh marigold, wavy bittercress, golden saxifrage, brooklime and watercress.

The forests are also a natural habitat for wildlife, including fallow deer, foxes, stoats and squirrels. Amongst the birdlife, woodpeckers, sparrowhawks and owls may be spotted. Also of interest are the families of house martins occupying the water tower at Hanchurch.

Perhaps the most dominant feature of the walks are the Grade II listed Italianate yellow and red brick **water works at Hatton** and the **water towers at Hanchurch** and **Swynnerton**. Built at the end of the last century by the Staffordshire Potteries Water Board, the water works met the increased demand for water, in part due to increased population and the new "fashion" of the indoor bath and water closet. As part of the agreement with Mr. Fitzherbert of Swynnerton Hall, the facilitating Act of 1888 provided for a direct supply to Swynnerton village and Hall, resulting in the construction of the reservoir and ornamental tower in Stab Lane.



Hatton Water works

It is no coincidence that there are reservoirs in the area. The water bearing strata or aquifers of Sherwood sandstone formations in the Meece Brook Valley, dating from the Triassic period, were found to be capable of yielding 1.5 million gallons of excellent quality water each day. The Hatton Water works were constructed over a period of 20 years, with steam pumping engines installed simultaneously for

water extraction. Water pumped directly to Hanchurch Reservoir with a capacity of 2,866,000 gallons supplies Newcastle, Stoke, Hanley and the Trent Valley.

Water is still pumped at Hatton although electricity has replaced steam. For those interested in steam driven power, nearby Mill Meece Pumping Station is open to the public at weekends, with "In steam" on selected dates.

GREEN WALK - 3.5 miles: approx. 1 hour 30 minutes

This walk covers a variety of wooded and pastoral landscapes. The main focus is on the village of **Hanchurch**, and a change of scenery is offered with the **Hanchurch pools** where marsh marigold and watercress can be found.

The route is mainly level walking, with a short steep climb returning from Underhills Farm, through Hanchurch Hills Woods and back to the **Picnic Site**. If you are lucky, fallow deer can be seen in the woods. There are views to the north revealing the Potteries and beyond towards the Peak District.



Pines and Deer

Hanchurch

Once situated upon the main Newcastle route, **Hanchurch** became an isolated settlement by 1758 due to the turnpiking and realignment



Hanchurch

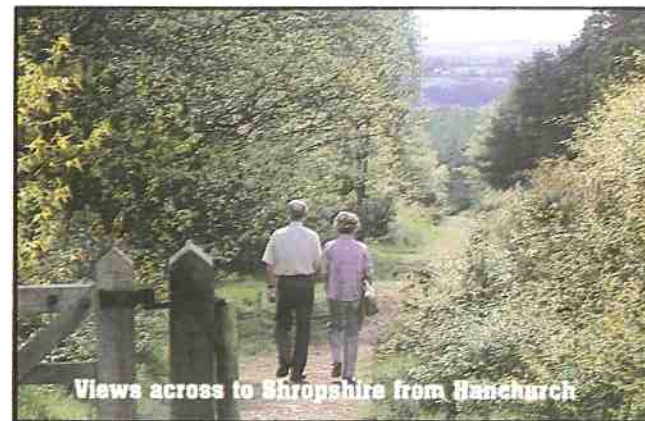
of the main road. Although adjacent to the M6, little seems to have changed the character of Hanchurch, mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086, and a village shrouded in mystery and folklore. Local legends reveal the possible site of the Church (the name of Hanchurch is believed to mean "High Church") for which the presence of the Hanchurch "Yews" adds credibility. There is also evidence of Roman occupation, the Hanchurch "Wakes" and "Rides" and primeval forests.

The village itself is on a plateau formed of Sherwood sandstones overlooking Trentham Park. Some buildings of note are the Model Farm, Hanchurch Manor, Manor Cottages, 17th Century timber framed farmhouse and adjacent barn and the medieval schoolhouse.

RED WALK - 2 miles: approximately 45 minutes

This can be a short walk or extended with the **Blue Walk** to take in the village of **Swynnerton**. The route from the **picnic site** follows Harley Thorn Lane where the nearby wood was once used as a tank training area by Staffordshire Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association. At Harley Thorn Cottages, the walks separate, the **Red** route skirting Harley Thorns with panoramic views across to the Wrekin in Shropshire and Cannock Chase. Beyond this point the route is mainly along pleasant woodland trails to return to the picnic site.

In places it is noticeable that rocks have been quarried on a small scale revealing outcrops of sand and pebbly beds of bunter sandstone.



Views across to Shropshire from Hanchurch

BLUE WALK - 7 miles: approx. 2 hours 15 Minutes

From the **Picnic Site**, the **Blue** and **Red Walks** share the same route as far as Harley Thorn Cottages, from where it continues to Beech. From this pleasant hamlet a short diversion from the circular walk allows you to explore the local caves, the source it is believed of the stones used to build nearby Trentham Hall. Following the route south, the open landscape reveals views across to Shropshire and the Welsh Hills, and the approach to Swynnerton along Stab Lane is heralded by the Italianate Water Tower, now being converted to a house.

Swynnerton

This delightful village with its estate character belongs to a bygone age, one where protection was afforded by the Lord of the Manor.

