

This information can also be made available in large print, Braille and audio. Please call 0845 833 4444 for details.

### Contacts

Telephone: 0845 833 4444

E-mail: parks@stockport.gov.uk

Website: www.stockport.gov.uk/parks

A free interpreting service is available if you need help with this booklet. Please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000. Email: eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk

如果你需要他人為你解釋這小冊子/單張的內容，我們可以提供免費的傳譯服務，請致電 0161 477 9000 史托波特傳譯部。

W przypadku gdybyś potrzebował pomocy odnośnie tej broszurki/ulotki, dostępne są usługi tłumaczeniowe. Prosimy dzwonić do Interpreting Unit pod numer 0161 477 9000.

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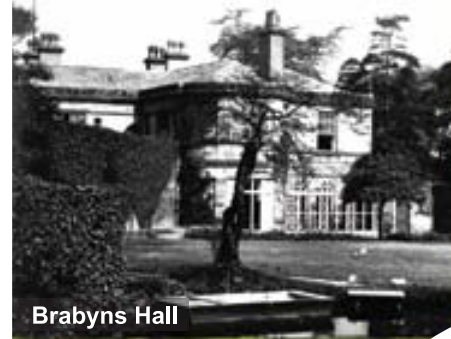
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The Iron Bridge Restoration Project

# Brabyns Park

# DISCOVERY TRAIL



Brabyns Hall

*Delve into the history of the park;  
Discover its wildlife and natural features;  
Enjoy a stroll through woodland, parkland,  
alongside canal and riverbank.*



Great Spotted Woodpecker

Includes nature  
identification pages  
and activities for  
all ages!



The Iron Bridge



The Lily Pond

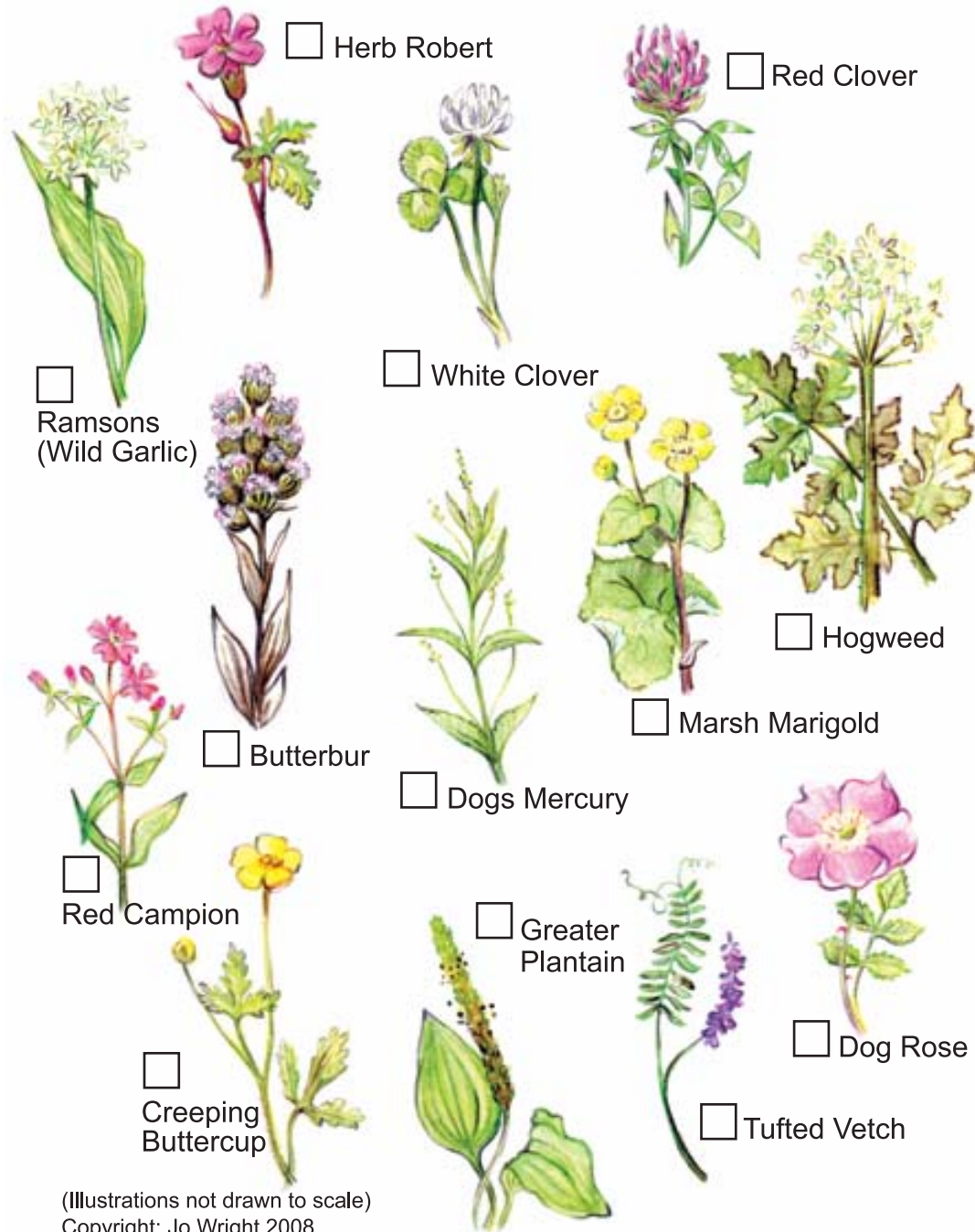


STOCKPORT  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



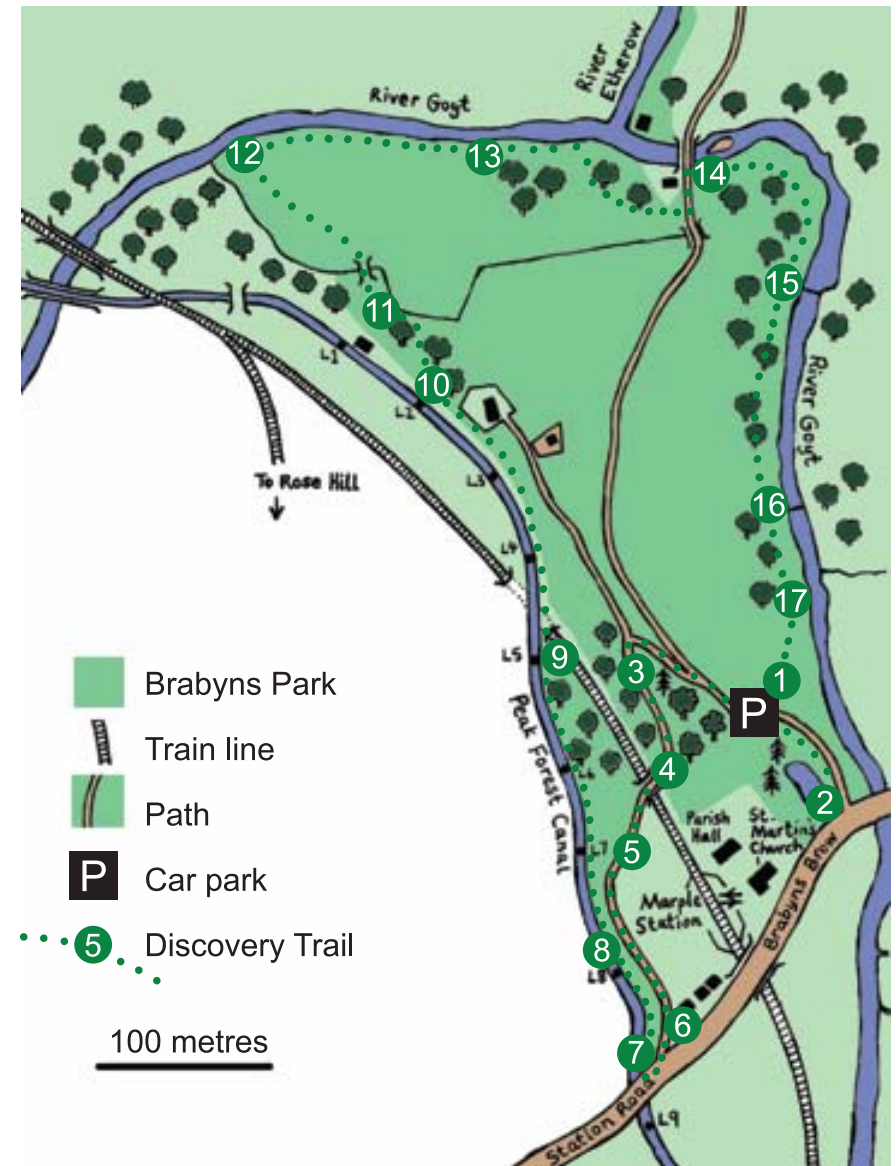
The Marple  
Weir  
www.marple-uk.com

# Wildflowers of Brabyns Park



(Illustrations not drawn to scale)  
Copyright: Jo Wright 2008

# Discovery Trail Map



## Butterflies and Trees of Brabyns Park



☐ Red Admiral



☐ Peacock



☐ Comma



☐ Holly Blue



☐ Small Tortoiseshell



☐ Speckled Wood



☐ Orange Tip



☐ Lime



☐ Beech



☐ Sycamore



☐ Elder



☐ Horse Chestnut



☐ Ash



☐ Common Oak



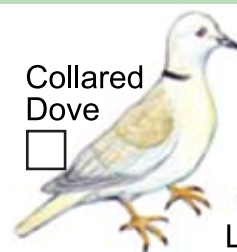
☐ Turkey Oak



☐ Yew

## Birds of Brabyns Park

(Not drawn to scale)



☐ Collared Dove



☐ Long Tailed Tit



☐ Coal Tit



☐ Great Tit



☐ Blue Tit



☐ Chaffinch



☐ Goldfinch



☐ Greenfinch



☐ Wren



☐ Nuthatch



☐ Mistle Thrush



☐ Song Thrush



☐ Jay

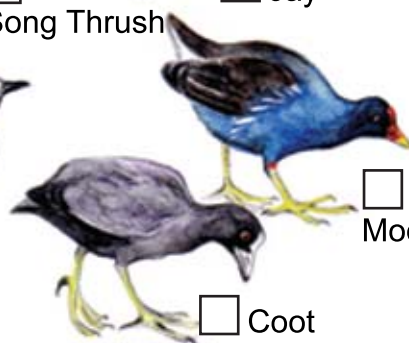
Great Spotted Woodpecker



☐



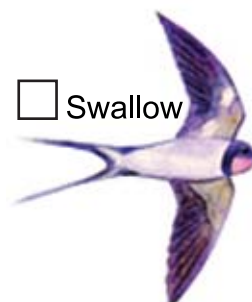
☐ Pied Wagtail



☐ Moorhen



☐ Grey Heron



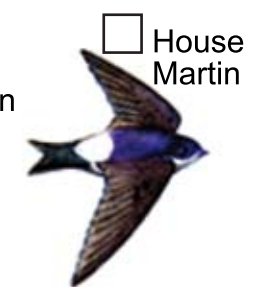
☐ Swallow



☐ Swift



☐ Sand Martin



☐ House Martin



## How to get here

**Address:** Brabyns Park  
Marple  
Stockport  
SK6 5DT

**Access:** The main entrance to Brabyns Park is off Brabyns Brow (A626) opposite the village of Marple Bridge at the junction with Strines Road (B6101). The A626 runs from Stockport to Glossop and the B6101 runs from Marple to New Mills. The park is also located alongside the Peak Forest Canal and there are several entrances into the park from the canal towpath.

**Facilities:** The car park offers free parking. There is a children's play area. There are no toilet facilities.

**Buses:** There are regular bus services to/from Stockport and Marple Bridge.

**Trains:** The park is situated close to Marple Railway Station on the main line between Manchester and Sheffield.

**Cyclists:** The park can also be accessed via the Marple branch of the National Cycle Network.

### **Please remember to follow the Countryside Code:**

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs;  
Leave gates and property as you find them;  
Protect plants and animals and take your litter home;  
Keep dogs under close control;  
Be considerate to other people.

## About the Brabyns Park Discovery Trail

**There is much of historical, geographical and natural interest to be seen in Brabyns Park and this self-guided trail will highlight points of interest - just look out for the numbered posts in the park which are shown on the map.**

At the front and back of this booklet are nature pages to help you identify some of the plants and animals that occur here.



Also, Monty the Mallard offers ideas for things to do along the way to keep any younger members of your group amused.

If you are walking the whole trail it is an easy to moderate walk, just under 2 miles/3 km long. The Discovery Trail starts and finishes at the main car park.

**Please note:** The unmaintained path is steep and uneven in places and may not be suitable for wheelchair users.

This trail booklet was originally written by second year pupils at Marple Ridge High School. It has been re-written by Jo Wright of Spot-On Interpretation with the help of local historian Judith Wilshaw and Mark Whittaker of The Marple Website. Its production was funded by The Iron Bridge Restoration Project.

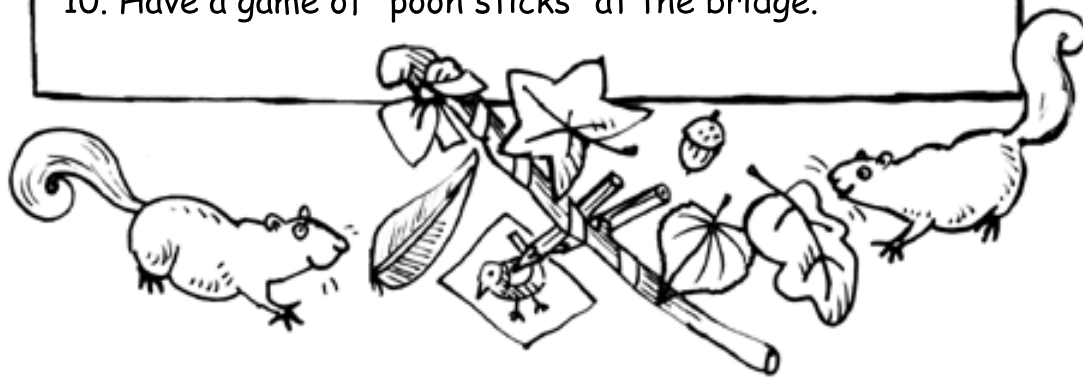
Cover photographs: Brabyns Hall (Unknown), Great Spotted Woodpecker (Philip Kinsey), The Iron Bridge (Jo Wright), Lily Pond (David Brindley).  
Booklet design and illustration by Spot-On Interpretation: [www.soi.org.uk](http://www.soi.org.uk)



# Monty Mallard's Top Ten

## Things to do with children

1. Take a pair of binoculars to view wildlife more closely.
2. Start a collection of feathers.
3. Look out for a suitable stick to make a walking stick and decorate it when you get home.
4. Have a walking race between points.
5. Take turns navigating with the map.
6. Tick off any wildlife that you see on the ID pages.
7. Collect a selection of fallen leaves and make prints of them when you get home.
8. Have a competition to see how many squirrels you can spot.
9. Sketch any unfamiliar wildlife and try to identify species when you get home.
10. Have a game of 'pooh sticks' at the bridge.



## Point 17 (Walled Garden)

This walled area was probably the **kitchen garden** of the hall. Over a doorway now filled in are the initials M.A.H. (Maria Anne Hudson) and the date 1905. This area is currently being used as a depot for park equipment.



"Jays around the oak trees. In the autumn they will collect acorns and bury them to dig up when they are short of food. Other woodland birds include nuthatch, mistle and song thrush, wood pigeon and collared dove."

**This marks the end of the Brabyns Park Discovery Trail. Please follow the path alongside the wall and return to the car park. We hope that you have enjoyed your visit!**

You may want to learn more about the history of the park and the surrounding area. There is a wealth of information to be found on The Marple Website at: [www.marple-uk.com](http://www.marple-uk.com) The website includes a Virtual History Tour and details of relevant organisations such as Marple Local History Society, Marple Locks Heritage Society, and Friends of Brabyns Park.

Two books of interest are: 'A History of Marple' and 'Brabyns Hall and Park' by Peter Bardsley and Ann Hearle, both published by Marple Local History Society and available from local bookshops.



## Point 16 (Water Gauge Weir)

This **weir** was built in 1971 to measure water levels in the River Goyt. Nearby lies a carved **foundation stone** that was pulled from the river by Marple Fire Brigade and friends. It came from a Boys' School and Parish Institute connected with St. Augustine's Church in Monsal, Manchester that was built in 1896. The building in Monsal was demolished in the 1960s. We can only guess how the stone ended up in the river.



"Caterpillars and butterflies. Patches of nettles provide food for the caterpillars of several butterfly species including peacock, small tortoiseshell and red admiral."

*Continue on to Point 17.*

## Point 1 (Car Park)

**Brabyns Park is Marple's largest park and was once the estate attached to Brabyns Hall. It covers 90 acres (37 hectares) of parkland, woodland, riverside walks and playing fields, and was first opened to the public in 1947. It is bordered on one side by the Peak Forest Canal and on the other two sides by the River Goyt.**

You are standing on the site of **Brabyns Hall** which was demolished in 1952. The hall was built on the site of an ancient farmhouse in the early 18th century by Dr Henry Brabyn, a local surgeon. It was a grand Georgian house, facing down the valley and looking out across beautiful pastureland. In 1800 the hall and estate were sold to Nathaniel Wright, a wealthy mining engineer, who had one of the first cast iron bridges erected here. Some years later the estate was left to Ann Hudson, Nathaniel's niece, who lived at the hall in great style with her daughter Maria Anne and orphaned granddaughter Fanny Marion. During the First World War the main part of the hall was used as a military hospital, but it remained the Hudson family home until World War II. On Fanny Hudson's death in 1941, the Local Authority bought the hall and its estate for £6,000.



"Chaffinch, greenfinch, blue tit, great tit and long-tailed tit feeding around the yew trees in the car park."

*Walk right along the bottom of the car park and past the children's playground.*



## Point 2 (Lily Pond)

As you walk towards the pond, there is an old **stone horse trough** with mounting steps to the left of the entrance road. This used to be outside the stables, which were demolished in the 1970s. The pond was originally an **ornamental lily pond** within the private walled garden of the house.

At the Brabyns Brow side of the pond beneath the yew trees is the **pets' cemetery**. You can still see a number of flat gravestones naming Hudson family pets. The **millstone** in front of the flowerbed was recovered from the site of Flowerdew Mill, behind the Midland Hotel opposite, by a team organised by The Marple Website.



"Yellow lilies, mallards and moorhen on the pond, and the gravestone of a rather unusual pet!"

*Return to the car park by retracing your steps. The trail continues along the road from the top corner of the car park. A little further on, take the left hand fork uphill to a junction of four paths. Take the left hand path and go past a stone water outlet.*

## Point 15 (Wright's Folly)

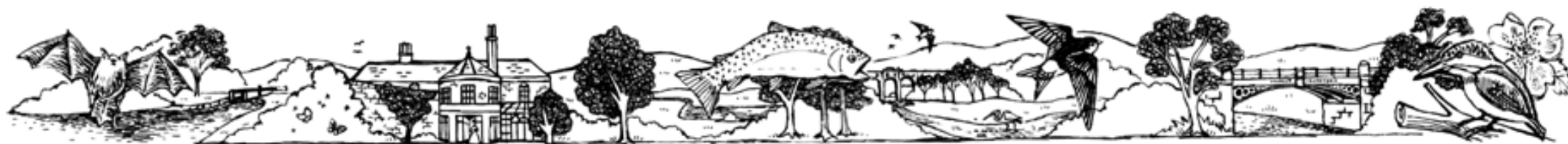
This weir, known as **Wright's Folly**, is another of Nathaniel Wright's constructions. It was built in 1810 to provide a head of water to drive a water wheel to power a mill. The project was abandoned when it was realised that the whole estate would need to be flooded to provide a sufficient reserve of water!

This stretch of water between Wright's Folly and the Iron Bridge is particularly popular with fishermen. Some fine specimens of fish such as **trout** and **grayling** have been caught here. (Please note that in order to fish in the River Goyt, a rod licence and permission from Stockport & District Anglers Association are required. Licences can be bought at any local post office, and there is a handy one nearby in Marple Bridge).



"House martins drinking from the river in the summer months. During springtime, look out for bluebell and dogs mercury, and use your nose to find clumps of ramsons (wild garlic)."

*Walk on a little further to Point 16.*



## Point 14 (The Iron Bridge)

One of the estate's previous owners, Nathaniel Wright, made many alterations during his time here. In 1813 he had this **cast iron bridge** erected, creating a carriageway to this end of his estate. It was constructed at Salford Iron Works, about 34 years after Abraham Darby III's first iron bridge at Ironbridge in Shropshire, and is a Grade II listed structure. (You can hear more about the history of the 'Iron Bridge' at the nearby listening post).

The bridge has recently been restored and it was reopened with great ceremony in June 2008. The work was paid for by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant with match funding from the Council and the local community. The driving force for the project was 'The Iron Bridge Restoration Group', a partnership between The Marple Website, Marple Local History Society and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Nearby is an even older bridge known as 'Scroll Bridge' which was built in 1804 and also restored in 2008.



"Summer-visiting sand martins which may be nesting in the sandy banks of the river."

*Please don't cross the bridge. Follow the path near the edge of the river until you arrive at Point 15.*

## Point 3 (Old Carriageway)

This path is an old carriageway to and from the hall and leads you through a **woodland glade** containing many beech, lime and holly trees. The beech trees in particular provide a spectacular display of colour in the autumn.

Behind these trees is **St. Martin's Church**, built by the Hudson family in 1869. It is Grade II\* listed and is a classic example of the Arts and Crafts Movement.



"Wildflowers such as tufted vetch, red campion and hogweed in the glade. Listen out for robins, wrens, thrushes and blackbirds. Songs are used from early spring onwards when male birds sing from 'song posts' to attract mates."

*Follow the path until you arrive at a stone bridge which crosses the railway.*



## Point 4 (Railway Bridge)

Railways came to Marple in 1865. By the 1890s, **Marple Station** had four platforms, forty staff and 109 trains passing through each day. The original station buildings and platforms were demolished in the 1970s, though the original footbridge across the line remains. On your left you can see the modern platforms and buildings of Marple Station. On your right, further up the line, you can see a **tunnel**. This was built so that the railway could pass under the canal, just below Lock 5. It is interesting to note that only half a mile further on, the railway passes high above the canal when it crosses the viaduct.



"Dog roses during the summer months and elderberries in the autumn."

*Continue along this path.*

## Point 13 (Gean Tree)

About 50 metres/55 yards into this copse is a wild cherry or **gean tree** growing by the bank of the river. Can you spot it? Look for the horizontal stripes on its bark.

A little further along you will come to the point where the River Etherow joins the River Goyt. The cottage you can see here is aptly named 'Water Meetings Cottage'.



"Kingfishers and herons fishing along the river. Plants to look out for include butterbur, marsh marigold and herb Robert."

*Continue along this path until it joins the main path through the park and then turn left. Continue until you arrive at the historic Georgian cast iron bridge.*



## Point 12 (River Goyt)

By the time it has reached this point, the **River Goyt** has flowed 20km/12 miles from its source in the hills near Buxton, and has been joined by the River Etherow. The river flows on to Stockport where it joined by the River Tame, and they become the River Mersey which flows on to the sea at Liverpool.



"Kestrels hovering and hunting over the meadow and summer visitors such as swallows and swifts feeding on gnats and mosquitos. Look for wildflowers such as red and white clovers, creeping buttercup and greater plantain."

*Follow the path to the riverbank, bear right and walk along by a field and enter a small copse.*

## Point 5 (Dead Wood)

Can you see much **dead wood** around here? The area is managed to be like this. Dead wood provides an excellent habitat for many species of insect, which in turn provide food for other woodland animals such as nuthatches. Woodpeckers also use the trunks of dead trees to make their nest holes.



"Signs of great spotted woodpeckers and interesting fungi. Listen out for woodpeckers drumming."

*Walk on towards the wall bordering the canal towpath.*

A little further on, bearing left, you pass **Brabyns Tennis Club** formed in 1926.

*Continue on past the tennis courts and walk towards the park exit. On the way, look and listen out for woodland birds such as nuthatch, wren, chaffinch, greenfinch and goldfinch.*



## Point 6 (Brabyns No. 1 Lodge)

Here you arrive at **Brabyns No. 1 Lodge** (Grade II listed) where the gate keeper and his family would have lived. This was the main entrance gate where visitors to the hall would arrive by horse-drawn carriage.

Across the road is Lock 9 of the **Peak Forest Canal** and to the right of it is the former lock keeper's cottage.



"The old stone gate posts and the unusual shape of the lodge."

*Leave the park at the lodge and walk a few paces up Brabyns Brow as far as the footpath sign. Turn right on to the canal towpath.*

## Point 11 (Ancient Woodland)

Brabyns Park contains a number of areas designated as **ancient semi-natural woodland**. These are the most important category of woodland for nature conservation as they are usually rich in wildlife and often contain trees which are several hundred years old.

Here are several examples of large **beech**, **oak**, **sycamore** and **horse chestnut**. Few plants can cope with the deep shade cast by these trees. During autumn, the ground is covered in a thick blanket of leaves. The rotting vegetation provides ideal growing conditions for many kinds of fungi.



"Jays, woodpeckers, woodland butterflies and bracket fungi on the beech trees in the autumn. There is an impressive solitary beech tree across the meadow when you leave the woodland."

*When you have crossed a small stone bridge, turn left and follow the edge of the meadow until you reach the River Goyt.*



## Point 10 (Lock No. 2)

This flight of **16 locks** was built in 1804 to connect the upper and lower levels of the Peak Forest Canal, completely replacing the old tramway by 1807. The locks allow boats to climb up or down a hill 63 metres/209 feet high between here and Top Lock by a series of steps. The house at Lock Number 1 is known as **Bottom Lock House**. It was the house of the canal company agent and later the clerk of the railway when that arrived in the 1860s.



"The huge leaves of the gunnera plant along the canal banks, and grey and pied wagtails 'wagging' during summertime."

**\*Aqueduct/Viaduct detour** If you continue along the towpath you can access the top of Marple's Grand Aqueduct. This superb Grade I Listed structure is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It was opened in 1800 and carries the Peak Forest Canal over the River Goyt 100 feet/30 metres above the river. It was designed by Benjamin Outram, took seven years to build and seven men were killed during its construction. People came from all over the country to see it. The Victorian viaduct nearby carries the railway line over the River Goyt and the Peak Forest Canal. Return to Point 10.

*Between Locks 2 and 1, go through an opening in the wall and down the steps to your right, away from the canal. Turn left at the bottom of the steps and carry on down the slope through the woods.*

## Point 7 (Peak Forest Canal)

The route now follows the towpath of the **Peak Forest Canal** which stretches from Whaley Bridge to Portland Basin at Ashton-under-Lyne. The construction of the canal was begun in 1794 from both ends. The Upper Level runs from the top of the locks at Marple to Bugsworth Basin near Chinley. This was operational by 1796. Work was started at the same time from Portland Basin near Ashton under Lyne, to the far end of the aqueduct. This section was in use by 1797. The locks were not completed until 1804 and so for a time the two sections of the canal were connected by a rope-hauled tramway.

The canal was originally built to transport **limestone** from the quarries at Dove Holes, near Buxton. Limestone was and still is a valuable resource used both in construction and to produce a vast range of chemicals, including bleaching powder which was widely used in the textiles industry to whiten cloth.



"Canal boats passing through the locks. At dawn and dusk, look for bat species such as pipistrelle and whiskered bats feeding around the woodland edge and flying up and down the canal between feeding and roosting areas."

*Walk on to Lock 8.*



## Point 8 (Lock No. 8)

Along the side of the canal are **milestones** which once marked distances along the canal. These were chiselled off during World War II to confuse any invaders. Find a milestone nearby. Can you read anything on it?



"Dragonflies and damselflies which lay their eggs in ponds, and other wildlife stopping off for a drink."

*Continue on along the towpath to Lock 5. On your way, look out for some old walls at Lock 6 on the opposite side of the towpath. These were the garden walls of 'Glen Cottage', a lock keeper's home, which was demolished in the 1960s.*

## Point 9 (Lock No. 5)

The large ponds or '**pounds**' between each pair of locks act as reservoirs to provide enough water to operate the locks. They are also used as moorings for boats waiting to go through the locks at busy times.

If you look to the right after passing Lock 5, you can see back along the railway line to the bridge where you stood at Point 4.



"Mallards, coots and other waterfowl on the canal."

*Walk on towards Lock 2. As you draw level with Lock 3, look out for the foundations of an old canal building outlined in stone on the towpath. It seems to have been too small for a dwelling and was probably used for storage. Can you see where the doorway was?*

