

## Hungersheath Loop (Orange Route)

About 7 miles (11km)

Allow 3 - 4 hours

The walk commences at Hungersheath Farm Shop & Tea Rooms. Courtesy of Mr & Mrs Furnival you may leave your car in the farm shop car park.

**1** Walk back down the farm drive and at the end turn sharp right and follow the road. Proceed ahead until you reach the old park gates whose beautiful ironwork is worth a close inspection.



At the junction turn left and proceed down the straight road (Park Lane) and in 0.7 miles (1200 metres) the A53 Newcastle Road is reached. Cross the road CAREFULLY into Top Rock Road. Go ahead for 150 metres and, by the post box, fork right into Eldertree Lane, an unmade track. Walk to the end of this lane and turn right. In 150 metres go straight ahead into Chapel Lane, passing the old Congregational Church. In 300 metres, take the first turning right into Wesleyan Road and continue up the road to the A53.

At this point the route is also part of the Eastern Loop. Those who wish to have an extended walk have the opportunity to combine the two Loops. The Eastern Loop diverts off Wesleyan Road, up the track and then turns back to Ashley Memorial Hall.

CAREFULLY cross the A53 bearing very slightly to the left to metal farm gates with a wooden stile and signpost to its left.

**2** Climb the stile into the field and very shortly climb another stile to your right. Turn half left and climb up the field through a gap in an ancient tree line until you reach the larger field at the top of the hill. Continue diagonally across the field and exit the field onto a road. Turn left onto the road and follow it until you reach a gate with Lordsley End Farm to your right. Go through the metal gate and follow the hedge.

**3** You are now on the old wagon road from Ashley to Winnington. Carry on, keeping the hedge to the right passing through two gateways. In about 350 metres, continue through a small metal gate. From here the wagon route is more identifiable as you pass between hedges. Pass through a metal farm gate and, keeping the small stream on the left, continue along a large field divided by a fence, to a small metal gate with an old stone wall to its left. Go diagonally across the field to a small metal gate at the right corner of the opposite hedge line. Go through the gate and, keeping the hedge to the right, go on and through another gate into a large field. From this path there are magnificent views over Shropshire and, in good weather, the Welsh mountains. Carry on, keeping the hedge on the left, eventually swinging right and on to a rough stone road. Follow the road and cross the ford. Then bear right past the drives of two houses. Turn

right onto the main road and very shortly right again onto the road to Winnington Forge Farm.

**4.** Continue along the road past Winnington Forge Farm. Looking right up the hill, notice Willoughbridge Lodge on the skyline, a former hunting lodge. It once stood in a large deer park. After passing the next house on the right, a metal gate and footpath sign is seen to the right. The bridle path lies straight ahead through the field to the right of two telephone poles, past a white cottage through a metal farm gate. Carry on along this route with the field to your left. Cross over a farm lane, through a metal gate and go straight ahead up the track. Pass through another metal gate and turn right by an ancient oak tree.

**5.** The house to the left is Willoughbridge Wells (private land) in the gardens of which are some sulphur spring wells. They are mentioned by the famous Dr Plot in his 'Natural History of Staffordshire' published in the 17th century. Keep to the right along the tarmac road passing a track on the right. Soon the road turns away to the right and leads to the quarry. Go straight ahead through the trees on a bridle path. Park House Farm and the Maer Hills can be seen to the left. At the Old Park Gates, turn left and return to Hungersheath Farm.

