

## Walk 5

About 7 miles (1 on roads)

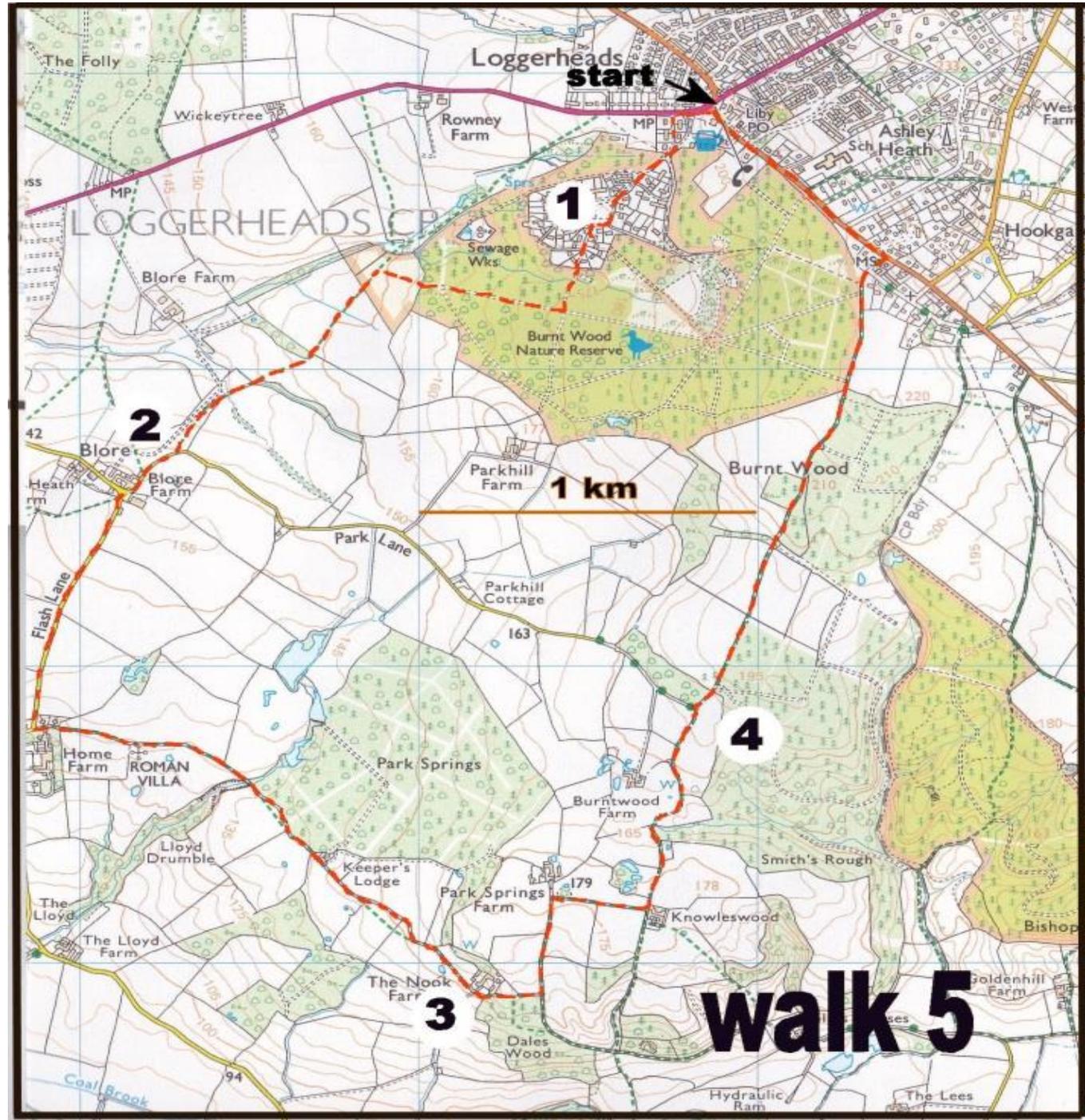
Allow 2 ½ – 3 ½ hours

This walk starts from the Loggerheads Hotel and crosses to Blore by the cross-country route that was part of the return stretch of the previous walk. It then continues to the edge of the village of Hales and follows the Hales estate road, where pheasants reared on the estate fly out from Park Springs Wood. The walk finishes through the Burnt Wood – now regrettably much reduced in size from that shown on the O.S. Map – a habitat for a variety of interesting flora and fauna, in particular butterflies.

Turn left out of the Loggerheads Hotel car park and walk down the A53 in the Market Drayton direction. Turn left at the first road into KESTREL DRIVE and follow this road until you reach a green. Follow the road round the left hand side of the green and take the second road on the left into WOODPECKER VIEW. At the end of this short road go down a path between two houses into the BURNT WOOD.

①

The houses are built on the site of the Cheshire Joint Sanatorium which between 1923 and 1969 was renowned for its treatment of tuberculosis. The patients were given open air therapy which meant that every day, whatever the weather, beds were wheeled outside. Back in 1920 Loggerheads had pure air with atmospheric pollution the lowest on record in Great Britain.



As you enter the BURNT WOOD continue on the path until you reach a crossroads. Turn right down a well-made track and continue to the end of the track and then onto a path through a coppice of younger trees. When the path forks take the left fork and continue until you reach a stile with a tall marker post. Cross the stile into the field and walk straight across the field to another stile. Cross the stile and go right around the corner of a copse and then aim across the field towards another stile between a line of trees. Go over the stile, cross the field to a gap in the trees and follow the marker arrow. Walk up the field to cross another stile in the middle of the fence line. Walk up this field keeping close to the hedge on the left. Look out for a stile in the hedge line that takes you into PARK LANE.

②

Turn right and walk up the bank past BLORE FARM on your right. At the junction, bear left to FLASH LANE (not signposted). Soon, at half-right ahead, can be seen the squat tower of Hales Parish Church and, much further away, The Wrekin's familiar shape is visible. Turn left at the next road junction. Do not be put off by the apparently contradictory signs ("private road") – the concrete road ahead is a public right of way on foot, but walkers should keep strictly to the road. The route follows this road for 1.5 km.

In about 300 metres on the left, look for an oak tree and a wire fence going down the field on the right. Notice a raised part of the field on the right near the road – this is the site of a Roman villa (on private land). Nothing remains above ground, but it has been excavated and well documented by local archaeologists.

Ahead to the left is PARK SPRINGS WOOD, and the residence nestling by the edge of the wood is the KEEPER'S LODGE. Just past the lodge on the left, notice the beautiful line of mixed trees framing the edge of the wood. Along the side of the road are the pheasant rearing pens.

③

The next farm on the left is NOOK FARM, and down on the right is a nice view of the Coal Brook Valley. Turn left at the next road junction and follow the lane until you come to PARK SPRINGS FARM ahead.

Turn right before you reach Springs Farm and walk down a track until you reach KNOWLESWOOD FARM which is derelict. At the disused buildings turn left down a well-made track until you come to a metal gate.



View from where nine paths cross; The Burnt Wood.

Pass through the gate and keep to the track with BURNTWOOD FARM on your left. As the track goes left to the farm, veer right across the field towards a large Oak tree with a gate and stile to the right of the tree. Go over the stile and keeping the hedge to your left walk up to the top of the field to another stile. Cross over the stile and turn right down a well-made track. In 100 metres pass through a metal gate and keep straight ahead on the track.

④

This is the entrance to BURNT WOOD, about 600 feet above sea level. As the path rises, look backwards and to the left, and notice the magnificent views of The Wrekin and Shropshire. The Welsh Mountains are visible in clear weather.

Some years ago, both sides of the road were covered by growing timber nearly all the way to Hook Gate, about 1500 metres away. As the trees mature and are felled, they are making way for pasture.

Keep straight on as the path continues to rise. Go through another gate and enter a remaining part of the woodland. Do take special care here not to start fires; remember an empty bottle can be as dangerous as a cigarette end in hot weather. As you exit the wood through a kissing gate carry on straight ahead until you meet the B5026 Eccleshall Road. Cross carefully over to the pavement on the opposite side, turn left and return along the road past the school and down the hill to Loggerheads. The car park is on your left.