

# Heritage Walks



## POINTS OF INTEREST

### General

The Wick Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve is particularly rich in industrial archaeology and wildlife. The Valley, once full of heavy industrial activity, is now a relic gone to seed.

The noise once produced by the iron-founding industry and later the internationally-renowned Ochre Works has been replaced by birdsong, and the former structures of this industrial past are largely unrecognisable beneath a tangle of undergrowth.

The industry of this area was powered by the weir, built in the 18th century to provide power for, at first the Iron-founding industry, and then in 1892 adapted to provide power for the processing of red ochre.

The Valley is centred around the River Boyd, which carves its way through the site acting as a corridor for birds and bats. Look out for dippers and kingfishers along the river and listen to blackbirds, wrens, woodpigeons and woodpeckers in the woods.

Walk up to Ravens Rock, a plateau above the valley, for fantastic views of Wick Quarry. This is truly one of the best reserves in South Gloucestershire, with easy access for the local community and also for its diverse wildlife.

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### Further information

#### Wild Roots

Wild Roots is an innovative Heritage Lottery Funded, three year project that is working with local communities to conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of South Gloucestershire.

www.southglos.gov.uk/wildroots

Telephone: 01454 863581

#### Walking to Health

Walking to Health in South Gloucestershire aims to get residents more physically active by participating in regular health walks in their local areas. The project works with a team of volunteers and other projects such as Active South Gloucestershire and Exercise on Prescription.

www.southglos.gov.uk/walkingtohealth

Telephone: 01454 868006

#### Acknowledgements

Illustrations and photographs: by Don Hamblett.  
Local Historian: Jim Burgess.

This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audio tape. Please phone 01454 868004 if you need any of these or any other help to access Council services.



WALKING TO HEALTH

# Wick Golden Valley

Heritage Walks



#### START/FINISH POINT

Wick Village Hall car park

#### TRANSPORT

634, 635 along the A420 stops close to the reserve entrance, near the Carpenters Arms

Accessible by bicycle from the A420 with two cycle 'rock locks' near the entrance of the site

#### PARKING

Wick Village Hall car park. Disabled visitors can use two accessible parking bays at the Carpenters Arms

#### REFRESHMENTS

Carpenters Arms pub

#### TOILETS

Carpenters Arms pub



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WALKING TO HEALTH

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Heritage Walks



### Sites en route

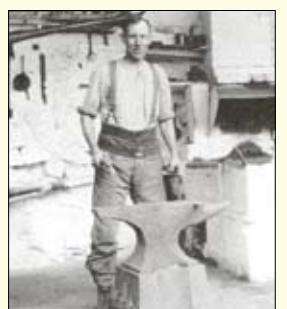
<b>A</b>	<b>Wick Church</b>	St. Bartholomew's Church was designed by William Butterworth and was consecrated on 3rd April 1850.
<b>B</b>	<b>Folly Arch</b>	Built with locally quarried limestone, the Folly Arch used to stand within the gardens of the Ochre Works Manager's estate.
<b>C</b>	<b>Raven's Rock/ Wick Quarry/ Freezing Hill</b>	From Raven's Rock there are spectacular views across Wick Quarry towards the Cotswold escarpment, and the notorious Freezing Hill (marked by a prominent line of trees), the site where the famous "Battle of Lansdown" took place in 1643. Led by Royalist Sir Ralph Hopkins, the 4000 strong support decided to attack the Parliamentary strongholds of Bath & Bristol. From Raven's Rock you also get a splendid viewing point of the dramatic landscape at Wick Quarry. The quarry, operated by RMC materials LTD (www.rmc-group.com), contains Carboniferous Limestone laid down between 352-323 million years ago. Fossils such as corals, shellfish and fish found in the rock indicate that this area was once an underwater tropical paradise; examples of such fossils can be found in the two large rocks to the right of this viewing point. Looking at the quarry's rock face, notice how the layers of this former seabed have been tilted to an almost vertical angle due to movement in the earth's crust.
<b>D</b>	<b>Winding Shed</b>	The Winding Shed, or 'drum house', is the only building that remains on the site today. Built from local stone and containing a wooden cable drum with a steel cable wound around, it is still in its original position and has been granted listed protection. From 1895 Ochre was being extracted from shallow mines at Rock Road, from here it was conveyed by ponies along the tramway to the Winding Shed above the Ochre Works. It was then carried down to the works by gravity.
<b>E</b>	<b>Weir</b>	The weir was originally the only source of power for the Iron-Rolling Mill, powered by the River Boyd, a lake was created behind the weir that can be still viewed in today's valley. Built in the 18th century, it was adapted in 1892 to provide the extra power needed for the new Ochre Works. The weir was later supplemented by a condense steam engine, fired by coal.
<b>F</b>	<b>Ochre Works</b>	Under the direction of the Beavis family 'The Golden Valley Ochre & Oxide Co Ltd' became internationally renowned, expanding every year and at its peak employing as many as 200 people. In 1970 the works were closed down, machinery removed and the building demolished. Nowadays the site remains much as it was after the demolition, although now very much overgrown, you can still make out a substantial structure of heavy girders that supported extensions made over an old quarry. Notice how this structure is a deep red colour acquired by contact with the Ochre.
<b>G</b>	<b>The River Boyd</b>	The River Boyd powered the industry of this valley, via the weir built in the 18th century. Running through the entire valley, it now acts as a corridor for birds and bats. Look out for dippers and kingfishers along this stretch.



Horse power transport of Ochre Products circa 1900



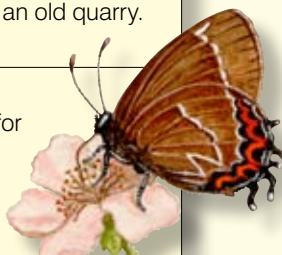
Ochre works from the rock pool 1951



Mr Alvis, Blacksmith



Drawing of the ochre works circa 1904







WALKING TO HEALTH

# Wick Golden Valley

## Heritage Walks



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KEY  
--- short walk  
--- long walk

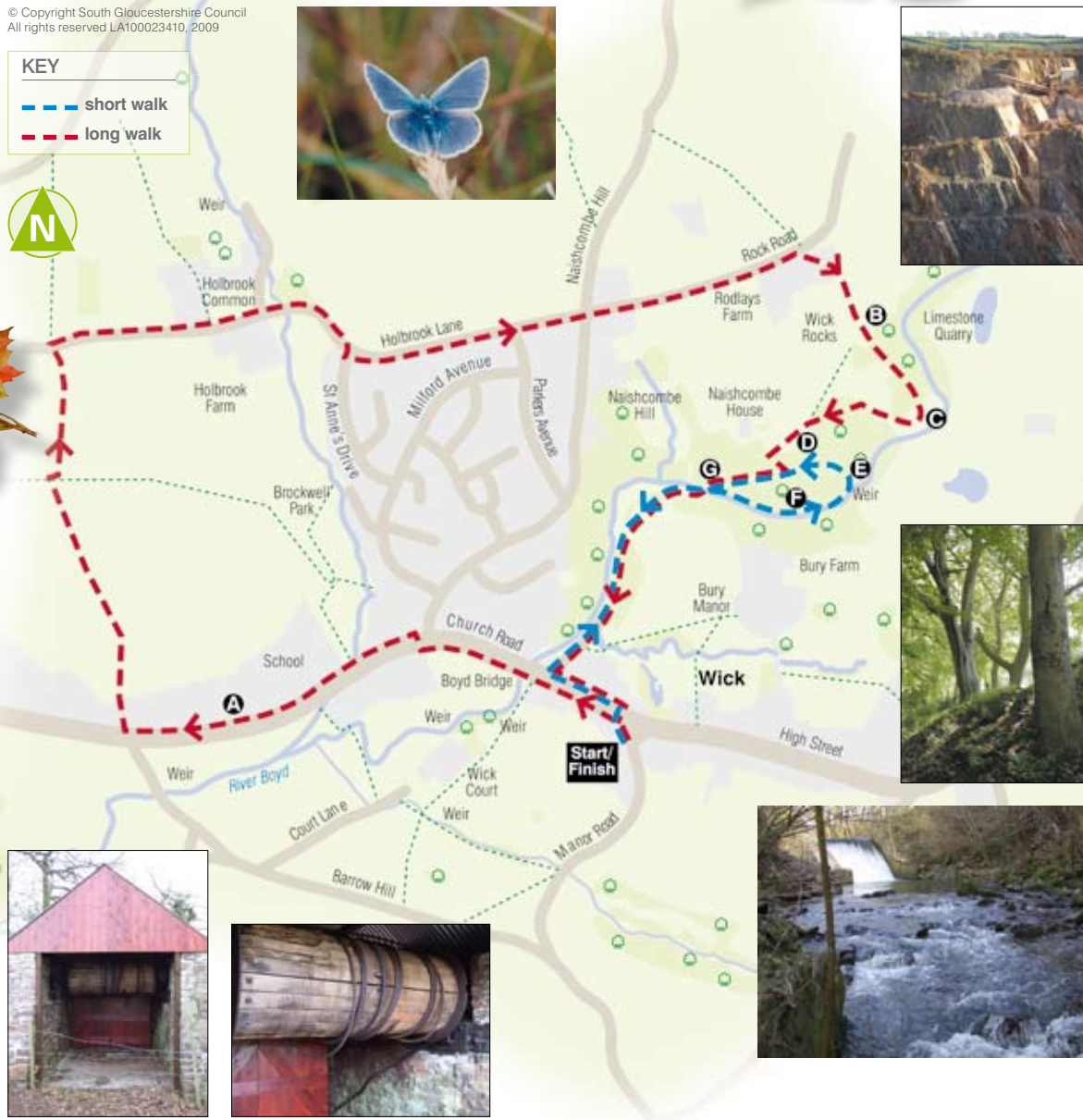


### Longer Walk ▶ 3.2 miles

**T**his longer walk, centred on Wick Golden Valley, is loaded with industrial archaeology and wildlife interest. The walk forms an attractive circular route, exploring both the Valley contents and the surrounding undulating Wick countryside.

This longer walk will finish at the Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve (LNR), where you can explore the heritage of this once industrial site including the weir, former Ochre Works (look out for the red ochre which still coat some of the derelict buildings), Winding Shed and Wick Quarry. This route contains several steep sections, and great care must be taken during wet weather.

- 1 Leave Village Hall and turn left at High Street, walk down left-hand side of High Street until you reach the traffic lights at the bottom of Naishcombe Hill.
- 2 Cross over at the lights and then turn left to cross the bottom of Naishcombe Hill. Walk straight ahead to continue along the right-hand side of the High Street past the speed camera and **church (A)**.
- 3 Shortly after the church and the bend in the road, you will see a public footpath sign, pointing up a short grassy lane. At the end of this lane there is a kissing gate, proceed through and then begin the fairly steep ascent up over the field keeping close to the hedge on your right.
- 4 Upon reaching the top of the field you will see another kissing gate, proceed through this and continue over the next field, again walking parallel to the hedge (now on your left).
- 5 The hedge will come to an end and you will be faced with another hedge at a right angle to you. Turn right and walk along this hedge for a short way before reaching a gate on your left. Hidden away to the left of the main gate is a kissing gate. Proceed through this and continue over the next field.
- 6 You will see another kissing gate ahead of you, which leads out onto Holbrook Lane. *NB – There is no pavement on this road or Rock Road later on so be aware of traffic which may be moving at speed*
- 7 Turn right along Holbrook Lane and walk around the sharp right-hand bend. Once you have walked around the bend you will see a short distance ahead of you that the pavement begins on the right.
- 8 Cross onto the pavement and cross the junction with St. Anne's Drive. Continue along Holbrook Lane and ascend the raised pavement all the way along to the junction with Naishcombe Hill.
- 9 At Naishcombe Hill, cross over and enter Rock Road. Continue along Rock Road, past the entrance to the Reserve on your right at Naishcombe House and continue along to reach Roddays Farm.



- 10 Walk between the farm buildings following the red Reserve signs. At the end of the chipping drive the path splits, take the path to the left (lower than the other) and follow this into the Reserve through a kissing gate beneath a stone arch. Continue on to pass **Folly Arch (B)** on your left.
- 11 Continue along the path through the trees until you emerge in an area of open ground. Keep to the left-hand path which will bring you to **Raven's Rock (C)** for spectacular views of Wick Quarry and Freezing Hill/Lansdown.
- 12 From Raven's Rock take the left-hand path (opposite to the direction you came from) up a short, sharp slope to pass through a kissing gate and emerge in to a field. *NB – It's quite common for there to be cows in this field.*
- 13 From the corner turn to face down the grass slope and proceed downwards over the ridges to the steep grass slope, which descends into the woods. On your way down the hill you will see the **Winding Shed (D)** on your left.
- 14 Walk through the wooden kissing gate at the bottom of the slope and turn left onto a rough path. This path comes out on a concrete slope descending to your right.
- 15 Turn right and walk down the concrete path to the bridge on the Reserve floor.
- 16 At the bridge turn left to walk along the path adjacent to the River Boyd until you reach the **weir (E)**. Continue following the path round to the left through the trees following the small square stone markers until you reach the disused **Ochre Works (F)** amongst the trees. Arrive back at the bridge over the **River Boyd (G)**. (You will pass a small circular seated area used by school groups and other educational activities).
- 17 Take the main path to the left along the Valley floor, which takes you to the Reserve entrance/ Golden Valley Road.
- 18 Upon reaching the main entrance, walk through the metal barriers and along the access road to come out on the High Street.
- 19 Cross over the High Street with extreme caution and walk up the hill on the right-hand side back to the Village Hall.



### Shorter Walk

▶ 1.25 miles

A lovely shorter walk takes in the delights of Wick Golden Valley and the River Boyd. This lower part of the Reserve is completely accessible for wheelchair users and pushchairs. Following the circular walk route you can explore several sites of interest, as well as enjoying the diverse habitats seen within the Valley.

- 1 Leave Village Hall and turn left at High Street, walk down left-hand side of High Street until you reach Boyd Bridge and the Carpenters Arms.
- 2 Cross over High Street and walk down Golden Valley Road to the right of the bridge directed 'Golden Valley'.
- 3 Follow this road to the main entrance of the Reserve, go through the metal barrier to the right of the large main gate and enter.
- 4 Continue along this path until you reach a small bridge over the **River Boyd (G)**.
- 5 Turn right here and walk along the path adjacent to the River Boyd until you reach the **weir (E)**.
- 6 Continue following the path to the left through the trees following the small square stone markers until you reach the disused **Ochre Works (F)** amongst the trees.
- 7 Continue along the path until you arrive back at the bridge over the river Boyd. (You will pass a small circular seated area used by school groups and other educational activities).
- 8 Take the main path to the left along the valley floor, which takes you to the reserve entrance/ Golden Valley Road.
- 9 Upon reaching the main entrance, walk through the metal barriers and along the access road to come out on the High Street.
- 10 Cross over the High Street with extreme caution and walk up the hill on the right-hand side back to the Village Hall.

