



WALKS IN LONGDON PARISH

7. WIDE TRACK

Turn right back to the start passing a circle of logs forming an "outdoor classroom". Further on noting the remains of the windmill by Ye Olde Windmill Inn. Enjoy the extensive views to the west over the Common and beyond. Nearing the end of this walk we will briefly follow the routes of The Two Saint's Way, a long distance revived pilgrimage route between Chester and Lichfield Cathedrals, also The Heart of England Way, which is a 100 mile walking route connecting Milford Common on Cannock Chase with Bourton-on-the-Water in the Cotswolds.



Gentleshaw Common is located in the southern part of the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is the sixth largest area of lowland heath (a fast disappearing and endangered habitat) in Staffordshire covering 86 hectares.

Lowland heath land is rare across the world with the UK having about 20% of the global total making it even more endangered and scarce than rainforests and therefore a priority habitat for nature conservation.

Heaths such as this were created at wildly differing times from as early as Neolithic time (3000BC). Trees were cleared and the open land maintained by grazing, burning and timber cutting producing characteristically poor soil supporting a specialized range of plants and associated animals. Gentleshaw Common was once a training ground for cavalry and infantry soldiers. Their emplacements can still be seen. During the time of the general strike in the 1920s many of the trees were felled for fuel by the local miners.



The Common was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by English Nature in 1981 and it is also a grade 1 Site of Biological Importance (SBI). SSSI's are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites.



REMEMBER THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow signs
- Consider other people
- Leave gates and property as before
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control

Leaflet 10 pence - when purchased

FUNDED BY:
 **Staffordshire**
 County Council
 and Longdon Parish Council

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Designed & Printed by The Benhill Press Ltd. Tel: 01889 583240



NUMBER 8
GENTLESHAW
CHAPEL
LANE WAY



LONGDON PARISH WALKS

NUMBER 8

GENTLESHAW CHAPEL LANE WAY

Christ Church • Chapel Lane • Windmill Lane • Green Lane • Gentleshaw Common

WALK DISTANCE:

1.75 miles (2.75 km) • Time 1 hour

This short walk takes a circular route to the south east of the village using a mixture of minor metalled roads and footpaths across undulating farmland and quiet woodland.

Parts of this walk can be muddy at times especially in winter and after rain.

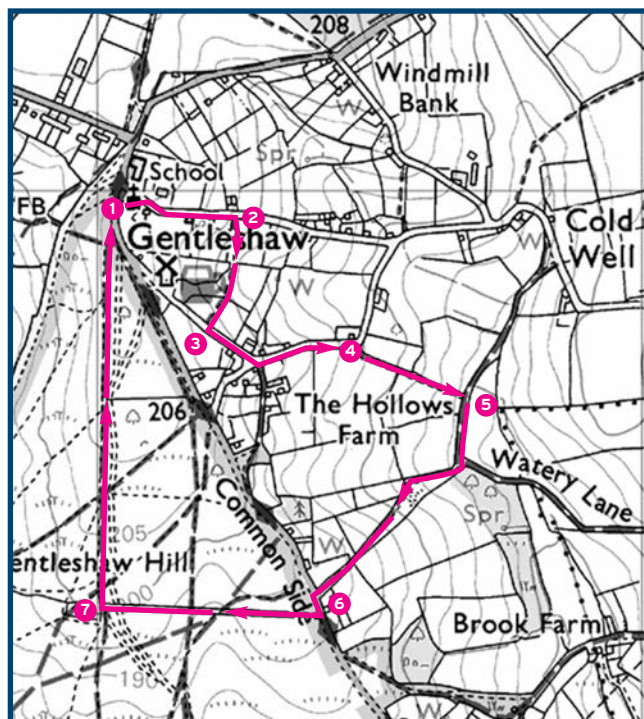


1. START AT GENTLESHAW CHURCH

Christ Church, which was built to serve as a Chapel-of-ease to Longdon, was officially opened on 28th August 1837 by the then Bishop of Lichfield. At the small car park opposite the Church and facing the Church walk to the left turning right into Chapel Lane. Proceed down Chapel Lane noting the fine old vicarage and the old chapel now converted into a residence.

2. LILAC COTTAGE

Immediately opposite Lilac cottage on the right climb the stile and proceed straight ahead down the field and up the other side to a further stile, climb this and exit into the lane.



3. WINDMILL LANE

Turn left down the hill. (If refreshments are required, turn up the lane to Ye Olde Windmill Inn). On a clear day one can look north east towards Burton upon Trent across the Trent Valley The large white building in the distance is the Argos warehouse by the A38 near Barton-under-Needwood. Continue down the lane to the junction with Shaw Lane.

4. SHAW LANE

Turn left continuing down hill past "Wogabena" (meaning Our Home in Aboriginal Australian), Mary's Place and noting the date 1778 of Benton Cottage. Opposite Old Well Cottage climb the stile and follow the footpath keeping the hedge immediately to the left, over a further two stiles to a small sleeper bridge over a stream.



5. GREEN LANE

This is an old track known as Green Lane. Turn right for about 100 yards and bear right at a fork where the track opens out. Walk uphill through delightful quiet woodland.



6. WINDYRIDGE NURSERY

At the top of the track by the Nursery cross the road taking care as traffic can be fast (too fast) onto Gentleshaw Common. A small footpath ahead enters the woodland. Proceed along this path for about 30 yards where a path crosses. Here you have a choice to either turn right and follow this path back to the start or alternatively carry straight on for about 400 yards onto the open heath land, locating another path (more a wide track) crossing the path.

