

WARSLOW

*EXPLORING THE...*

# MANIFOLD VALLEY



*IN THE...*

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS

30p

*PEAK DISTRICT*

# THE MANIFOLD VALLEY



**T**he Staffordshire Moorlands has some of the best landscapes in England with high moorland and spectacular gorges carved deep into the limestone rock by the Manifold and Hamps rivers. Situated in the southern part of the Peak District National Park these winding chasms are clothed in woodlands, pitted with caves and rich in heritage. The river beds are largely dry from spring to autumn, leaving a wealth of wild flowers, butterflies and birds.



*Rambles above Thor's Cave*

High above the gorges is a moorland plateau with narrow lanes and old packhorse routes passing by remains of forgotten industries, whilst miles of footpaths link the tiny villages rich in character and folklore.

If you love the outdoors, this is a great place to walk or cycle.



*Take a break at Lee House Tea Rooms*



*Cycling on the Manifold Track*

## WILDLIFE

**A**sh woods in the area are amongst the best in Britain, rich in bird life, butterflies and many small mammals. Together with the variety of wild flowers which love the limestone soils, this diversity means that much of the Manifold and Hamps valleys and hills are designated as nature reserves and managed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust or owned by the National Trust.



*Sun dappled ash woods are home to the flycatcher*

**Remember these places are special - please keep to the footpaths.**



*Red Admiral Butterfly*



*The remarkable Butterbur*



*Stoat - hunter of the woods*



*The Dipper appears to fly underwater*

## TAKE CARE

The roads to and in the villages are winding and narrow and are best discovered on foot or cycle. If you do take a car, be on the look-out for walkers, cyclists and slow moving farm traffic.

When walking on country roads walk in single file on the right hand side, facing oncoming traffic. On sharp bends, it may be necessary to cross the road before the bend so that oncoming traffic can see you, and cross back again after the bend. In poor light or at night always wear something bright or reflective. When walking with children, walk between them and the traffic. Always keep your dog on a lead.

**Follow the Country Code.**

## DISAPPEARING RIVERS AND HIDDEN CAVES

A feature of the Manifold and Hamps rivers is the seasonal drying out of the river beds. The waters simply soak away to underground caverns, flowing deep beneath the porous limestone to emerge again in Ilam Country Park. In summer the river beds become thick with rich green vegetation, typified by the spectacular butterbur plant.

Thousands of years ago, when the climate was much wetter, these rivers carved their way down into the easily eroded limestone, creating caves like Thor's Cave and the gorges and spectacular cliffs such as Beeston Tor. These cliffs, and the valley floor limestone outcrops, are rich in fossil remains of shellfish and corals. Fossils can commonly be seen in the stones quarried for local buildings and the field walls.



*The dry bed of the Manifold at Dafar Bridge*

## VISITING THE PAST



The imposing Thor's Cave was home to both stone-age dwellers and wild animals for at least 50,000 years. The bones of mammoths, giant bears and rhinoceros have been found in other caves in the valley. On the high ground are the burial and other religious sites of prehistoric peoples.

The stone walls lacing the landscape date largely from medieval times when the lands were enclosed by the monastic houses which owned the area. Medieval hillside terraces used for cultivation near Throwley Hall are easily seen from Bincliff, above Beeston Tor. Mining, too, has left its mark, the remains of old lead mines dot the landscape south of Wetton whilst Ecton was the site of what were, 300 years ago, the world's richest copper mines.

## MANIFOLD VALLEY VISITOR CENTRE

**H**oused in the old Hulme End Station, information displays outline the history of the railway, the industries and communities it served, the limestone landscapes and the rich natural history which characterise the valley.

Here too, are relics of the railway together with reminders of other man-made features which make the valleys of the Manifold and Hamps rivers such a rewarding area to explore.



There's a miniature scale model of the railway, showing Hulme End Station in its heyday. Guidebooks, maps and leaflets are also available. The Visitor Centre (telephone 01298 84679) is open most weekends and school holidays. At other times the main Tourist Information Centre in Leek is open for all tourism services, including accommodation booking.

## LEEK & MANIFOLD VALLEY LIGHT RAILWAY

**1904-1934**

**T**his little narrow gauge railway, followed the tortuous river gorges for nearly nine miles between Hulme End and Waterhouses where it met the main line. Opened in 1904, it served the tiny farming communities, brought in tourists and carried away millions of gallons of milk and tons of cheeses from an isolated dairy at Ecton.

Two eccentric steam engines, originally designed for a narrow gauge line in India, were used to haul primrose yellow coaches between the lonely halts on the line. Dubbed "A line starting nowhere and ending up at the same place", the line finally ran out of steam in 1934. When the old line was lifted the route was surfaced and turned into the Manifold Track for use by walkers and cyclists.



*An old post card shows a train in operation.*

# HOW TO GET TO THE MANIFOLD VALLEY

## BY BUS

**W**aterhouses is on the main daily X1 service between Manchester, Leek and Derby and is ideal for access to the southern end of the valley. Longnor, Hulme End and Warslow have limited services most days from Buxton. Other villages have market day (Wednesday) buses from Leek and occasional other services.

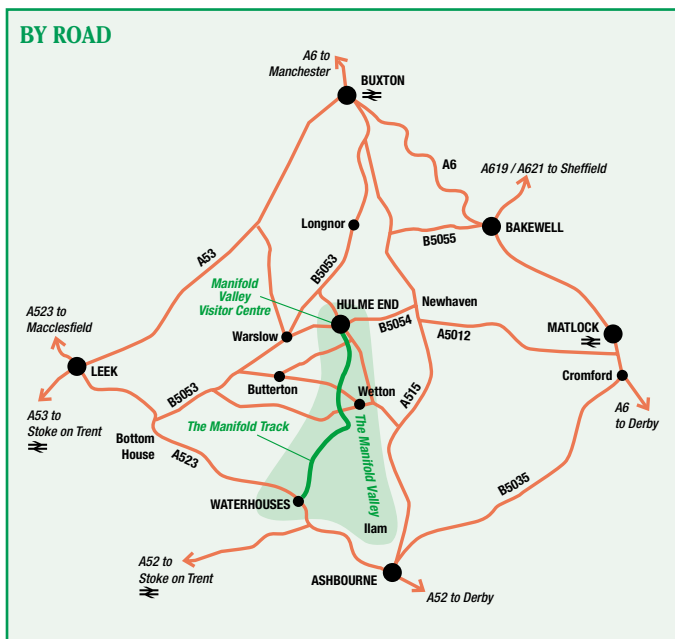
A Post Bus service also runs between the local villages on Mondays to Fridays.

For details contact Leek Tourist Information Centre or ring the Staffordshire Busline on 01785 223344.



Post Bus at Wetton

## BY ROAD



STAFFORDSHIRE  
*moorlands*  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Directorate of Development Services



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