

Natural History

The Woodland

Redisher Wood is one of the best examples of ancient woodland in the Borough of Bury. There has been continuous tree cover on the site since at least 1600 and probably since the last ice age.

No woodland in the UK, however, escapes modification by man. The most natural area of Redisher is the slope above the path between Cow Steps and the top of Bottom Simons where typical upland oak, birch canopy, holly shrub layer and wavy hair grass dominate. The ground layer which is peppered with occasional whimberry and hard fern. Lower down the valley an ancient beech plantation dominates the canopy, between Redisher Lodge and the Vineyard. Laurel and rhododendron dominate the shrub layer above the goit and mature sycamore characterising the slopes below Hollingrove. The ground flora in these areas, where not suppressed by the dense shade cast by some of these species, is more typical of lowland oak woodland with breathtaking displays of bluebells in April and May.



Painting of Fine Brows by David Swithenbank

The Heathland

Fine Brows is a mosaic of young birch, bracken, heathland and acid grassland. Characteristic species include whimberry, heather, gorse, tormentil and mat grass. Heathland and acid grassland are UK priority habitats because of large losses over the last half century through development, agricultural improvements and neglect. A programme of birch removal began in 2004 to ensure that the impressive displays of yellow and purple of the heathland that characterise Fine Brows in the late summer are not lost. Wildlife interest includes green hairstreak butterfly, green woodpecker, kestrel and sparrowhawk.

Holcombe Brook

The brook cuts North-West to South-East, through the middle of Redisher Wood, and at times has shoals of stone loach fish and many aquatic insect larvae such as mayfly nymphs. The diversity of species reflects the cleanliness of the water flowing through the valley.



Holcombe Brook in Spring

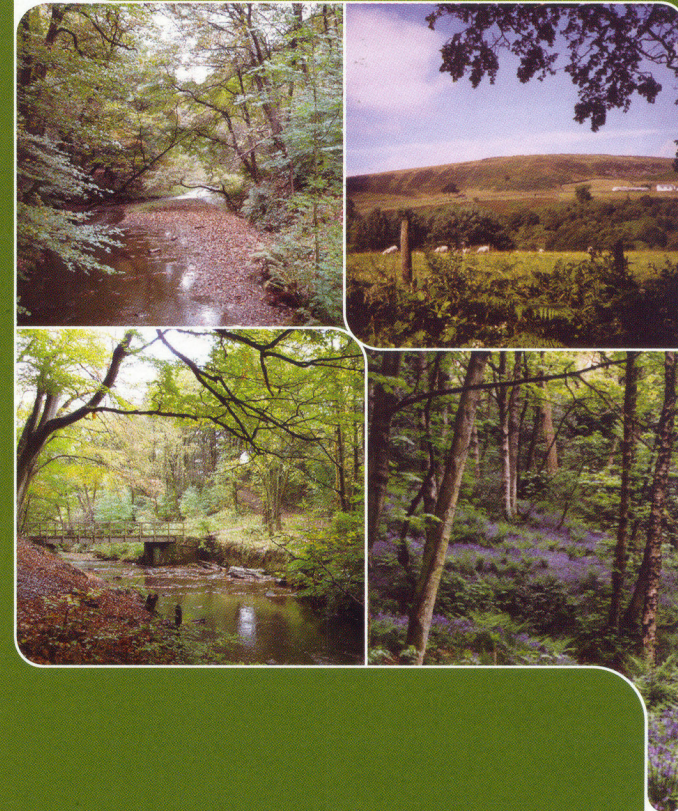
Mill Ponds and Lodges

None of the ponds or lodges within the LNR are particularly deep, having been either breached, silted up or had the outlet valves left open. This has led to the development of an interesting marshland flora including marsh marigolds in the lower mill ponds and reedmace and common valerian in Bottom Simons.

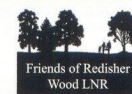
a walk in

Redisher Wood

local nature reserve

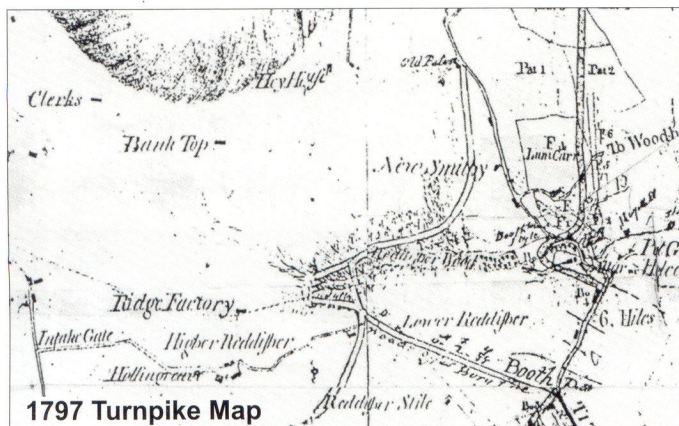


BURY COUNCIL



A brief history of Redisher Wood and its environs

The earliest known written reference to Redisher Wood is from a map dated 1797 showing proposed Turnpike roads from Bolton to Edenfield and from Bury to Booth Pits, East of Harcles Hill, Holcombe. The Turnpike Roads were built to link many of the small communities that had developed in and around the area. As with many old maps and documents the spelling of names and places changes over time. The 1797 map spells Redisher with two ds, as Reddisher and a later Ordnance Survey map from 1848 changes the name once again to 'Radisher Wood'.



The origin of the name Redisher is uncertain but it is thought that it may refer to the red ochrous deposits from naturally occurring iron within the bedrock of the area which seeped out onto the surface along faults and the stream bed of Holcombe Brook. Another possibility is a derivation of reed ditch (as in Redditch or Reddish): a wet valley, ditch or marsh with reeds.

The presence of a constant supply of water, from Holcombe Brook, was instrumental in the development of industry and indeed created the steep sided valley of which Redisher Wood is part.

The area of Redisher and Holcombe Moor to the North was affected by glaciation. Holcombe Brook carved a steep gully and is joined by a tributary stream which flows in a glacial overflow channel. A spur of land, known as the 'Ridge', lies between these two streams.

The community that developed in and around Redisher Wood was initially based on agriculture but by 1893 a corn mill, a cotton mill and Redisher Bleachworks were all established in the valley and using the water from Holcombe Brook for power. The quarrying of stone for construction in the Cinder Hill area and a coal mine operation are noted on later maps, explained by a coal seam noted in a geological survey of 1867. A mine adit has been found further North of Holcombe Brook where it is known as Red Brook.

Despite this flurry of industrial activity, pockets of ancient woodland remain and evidence from the earliest maps indicates continuous woodland cover, due largely to the steep-sided valley which has prevented complete deforestation.

When steam power succeeded water power the attractiveness of the valley of Holcombe Brook for development declined. The effect of this is that the area has remained largely unchanged since the mid 19th century. The only significant development since the early 20th century has been the influence of the Ministry of Defence as a neighbouring landowner with the construction of the Holcombe Moor Training Camp facility and ranges.

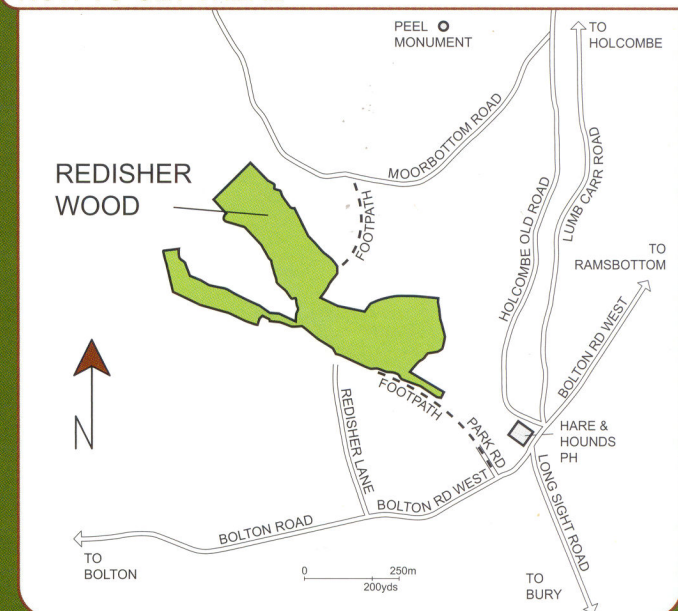


The Old Bridge, Redisher Wood c1910

Redisher Wood LNR

Redisher Wood Local Nature Reserve is one of the best woodland sites in the borough, with Holcombe Brook flowing through the middle. Various works are in progress or planned to improve the site for wildlife and recreation, co-ordinated by the Friends of Redisher Wood LNR, a group made up of local people and officers of Bury Council.

HOW TO GET THERE



The main entrance to the nature reserve is via Redisher Lane, however there is no space for car parking along this lane. There are several public footpaths that give pedestrians access to the site such as the footpath from Moorbottom Road and from Park Road, off Bolton Road West. Buses 474, 472, 481 and others stop outside the Hare and Hounds Public House on Bolton Road West.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about Redisher Wood and how you can get involved, ring the Local Nature Reserves Officer on 0161 253 7668

This leaflet has been produced by the Friends of Redisher Wood LNR and Bury Council with the assistance of Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Area Board KickStart funding.

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