

Wick Golden Valley · Wick Golden Valley · Wick Golden Valley



A PARADISE RIGHT ON OUR **DOORSTEPS**

The Wick Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve is an important and unique place. There are few reserves in South Gloucestershire with such a diverse habitat so readily accessible to the local community. The range of habitats includes the river corridor of the River Boyd, mature woodland, scrub, steep valley slopes and unimproved limestone grassland.

Structures of the industrial past are largely unrecognisable to visitors but many local residents can describe the location and function of buildings used in the processing of ochre in the valley bottom.

The majority of the reserve is contained within the river valley. The exception is Ravens Rock, which rises as a plateau above the valley. From this promontory there is a spectacular view of Wick Quarry. To the east of the rock is a steep cliff dropping to a wetland area created by the weir.

Peregrine

Beautiful Demoiselle

River Corridor

The River Boyd runs through the site and acts as a corridor for birds and bats, as well as supporting otters and a wide variety of fish and other forms of aquatic life.

The Woodlands

Wild Service Tree

Throughout the woodland you will find sessile oak, ash, and small numbers of wych elm. Silver birch is found in the mosaic of scrub. Sycamore forms a canopy near the site



of the former Rock House. Wild service tree, an indicator of older and well-established woodlands, occurs as well as beech, apple, wild cherry, hazel, whitebeam and

hawthorn. A single small leafed

lime, possibly

planted, is found in the valley woodland. Flowers associated with long established woodland found here, include bluebell, wood spurge, lords-and-ladies, pignut, hairy violet, wood anemone and ramsons.



Woodpecker

Bellflower

Scrub

Since the closure of the ochre works, nature has been allowed to reclaim the land. Goat willow, silver birch, bramble, buddleia, bracken and snowberry grow on the scrub areas. Flowers include evening primrose, purple loosestrife, foxgloves, valerian, bellflower and agrimony.

Grassland

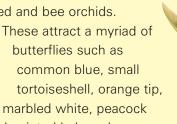


A large area of unimproved grassland is found at Ravens Rock. In summer the grassland is transformed into a

meadow full of flowers like scabious. wild marjoram, harebell, vetch, woolly thistle, viper's bugloss and pyramidal, spotted and bee orchids.

> These attract a myriad of butterflies such as common blue, small

Marble White and painted lady and moths like six-spot burnet.



Bee Orchid

Birds



Dipper

Look out for dippers and kingfishers along the river. Listen for blackbirds, wrens, woodpigeons, chiffchaffs, green and great spotted woodpeckers and many

other birds in the woods, whilst ravens. peregrines and sparrowhawks may be seen from Ravens Rock.

Mammals

Otters frequent the River Boyd, whilst small mammals such as hedgehogs, stoats, weasels and squirrels inhabit the reserve, together with at least seven species of bat.



TRAILS

Starting from the main entrance, walk alongside the River Boyd through an area of mature woodland to the river bridge where the trails start.

THE RED OCHRE TRAIL

The Red Ochre trail is fully accessible to wheel chairs.

On this trail you will see deposits of red ochre which still coat some of the derelict structures of the old ochre works. Ochre is a mixture of fine clay and iron oxide. It was used in the manufacture of fine colours, especially Venetian Turkey and Indian Reds, paints, varnishes and Fullers Earth.

Warning: red ochre may stain your clothing.

Cross the bridge and take the path alongside the river on your right, noticing the concrete floor of the old Ochre Works on your left, which has been colonised by young trees and a mosaic of grasses and flowers.



You will arrive at the weir, which was built to provide power for an iron rolling mill, creating a lake behind the weir. The mill was adapted in 1892 to power the processing of red ochre and at its peak 200 people were employed. In 1968, after severe flooding, the weir was lowered. Production ceased in 1970 and the works were demolished.

Ochre works from the rock pool 1951

Leaving the weir continue on the Red Ochre Trail following the circular, marked route back to the bridge.

Starting at the weir, climb the steps. Turn left at the top and take the steep marked trail up the valley side and through the woodland. As you climb garden plant species appear such as periwinkle. These have escaped from the former gardens of the now demolished Rock House. On the right you will pass the old summer house, which once had a thatched roof. The trail takes you past the remains of Rock House and through to Ravens Rock.

Arriving at Ravens Rock you are now on an area of limestone grassland, which supports a myriad of wild flowers and butterflies.

Wick Quarry

From Ravens Rock you get spectacular views towards the Cotswold escarpment and Freezing Hill, marked by a striking line of trees. Directly in front of this dramatic landscape is Wick Quarry. The quarry faces contain carboniferous limestone which is crushed and used for road construction and concrete products. The quarry is operated by RMC Materials Ltd. (www.rmc.co.uk)

If you follow the path through the trees past the folly arch you will arrive at the entrance gateway in the wall. This leads you on to the public footpath to Rock Road, or you can continue on the trail across the field and down to the woodland and river, passing the winding shed on your way.

The Winding Shed

Red ochre was extracted from shallow trenches and mines at Rock Road and was conveyed to the winding shed above the ochre works in drams along rails by ponies. It was then carried down to the ochre works by gravity. Ochre was later imported for processing.



We hope that you enjoyed your walk and will revisit the reserve to observe the changing seasons.



A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

We hope you enjoy your visit to the Golden Valley and share our vision for the conservation of this wildlife haven.

Please always follow the Country Code:

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Fasten all gates
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Keep dogs under close control (and pick up after them)
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Make no unnecessary noise

The reserve is on the site of a former ochre works and old quarry. Please be careful and stay away from steep drops and rock faces. Paths are steep in places.

YOU CAN HELP



The Friends of Wick Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve help to look after the reserve and organise a range of talks, walks and activities.

The group is open to anybody who has an interest in the reserve. Membership forms may be collected from Wick Post Office or downloaded from website **www.wildspaces.info**

WICK GOLDEN VALLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Wick Golden Valley is designated as a Local Nature Reserve in recognition of its value to the local community as a site of nature conservation importance and industrial heritage. The site is owned by RMC Materials Ltd and managed in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council.

For further information visit: www.wildspaces.info www.forestofavon.org.uk

www.southglos.gov.uk (access is free from local libraries)



WHERE IT IS AND HOW TO GET THERE

The reserve is in Wick, South Gloucestershire and forms part of the Forest of Avon (OS Grid Ref:ST706732).

On foot

There are several access points. The most accessible

is the main entrance via Golden Valley Road off the A420 (OS ref: ST704729). Please refer to public and permissive footpaths on the map inside this leaflet.

By bus Travel Line Tel. No. 0870 608 2 608

There are nearby bus stops for services from Bristol, Bath, Yate and surrounding villages.

Bus Services at Wick

620 Tetbury-Chipping Sodbury-Yate-Wick-Bath

634 Bristol-Kingswood-Wick-Dyrham-Tormarton

635 Bristol-Kingswood-Wick-Marshfield-Chippenham

684 Wick-Upton Cheyney-Bitton-Keynsham

By bicycle or car

Please park at Wick Village Hall. There are two spaces at the Carpenters Arms for orange or blue badge holders.

Acknowledgements: This leaflet was written by the Friends of Wick Golden Valley Local Nature Reserve. Illustrations drawn by Don Hamblett.



















