

## Biking around Bestwood



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Distance</b>         | 5 miles (8 km)   |
| <b>Stiles</b>           | 0  |
| <b>Route summary</b>    | Suitable for all the family, on 'off road' tracks within the Country Park. Some gentle hills but with great views.   |
| <b>Start point</b>      | Bestwood Country park, Bestwood Village.   |
| <b>Public Transport</b> | Railway stations on the Robin Hood Line at Bulwell (2 miles / 3.5 km) or Hucknall (2.5 miles / 4 km). Both stations are close to the National Cycle Network Route 6 which runs directly into Bestwood Country Park. Phone 08457 48 49 50 or visit <a href="http://www.nationalrail.co.uk">www.nationalrail.co.uk</a> for rail enquiries. |
| <b>Parking</b>          | Winding House car park, Bestwood Village.  |
| <b>Dogs</b>             | Please keep dogs under close control at all times.   |

### Along the way

Up until the 1960's Bestwood was a thriving scene of industry, now a haven for wildlife, thanks to its rich diversity of habitats, from mature woodland, ancient pasture and heathland to reclaimed industrial land and former 'Mill' lakes. Recreation has always played an important role at Bestwood. Today the park is used by a large number of visitors seeking quiet recreation such as cycling, walking and horse riding. In medieval times Bestwood was used by royalty to hunt deer, the park then being part of Sherwood Forest and enclosed as a hunting reserve in the mid 1300's. In 1681 the hunting lodge, built here during the Plantagenet Kings reign (1154 to 1399), together with the 3000 acre estate was given to Nell Gwynne, one of Charles II's 13 mistresses. The estate was passed to her son, The Duke of St. Albans and in the 1850's the 10th Duke replaced the medieval lodge with the building you see today, now Bestwood Lodge Hotel.

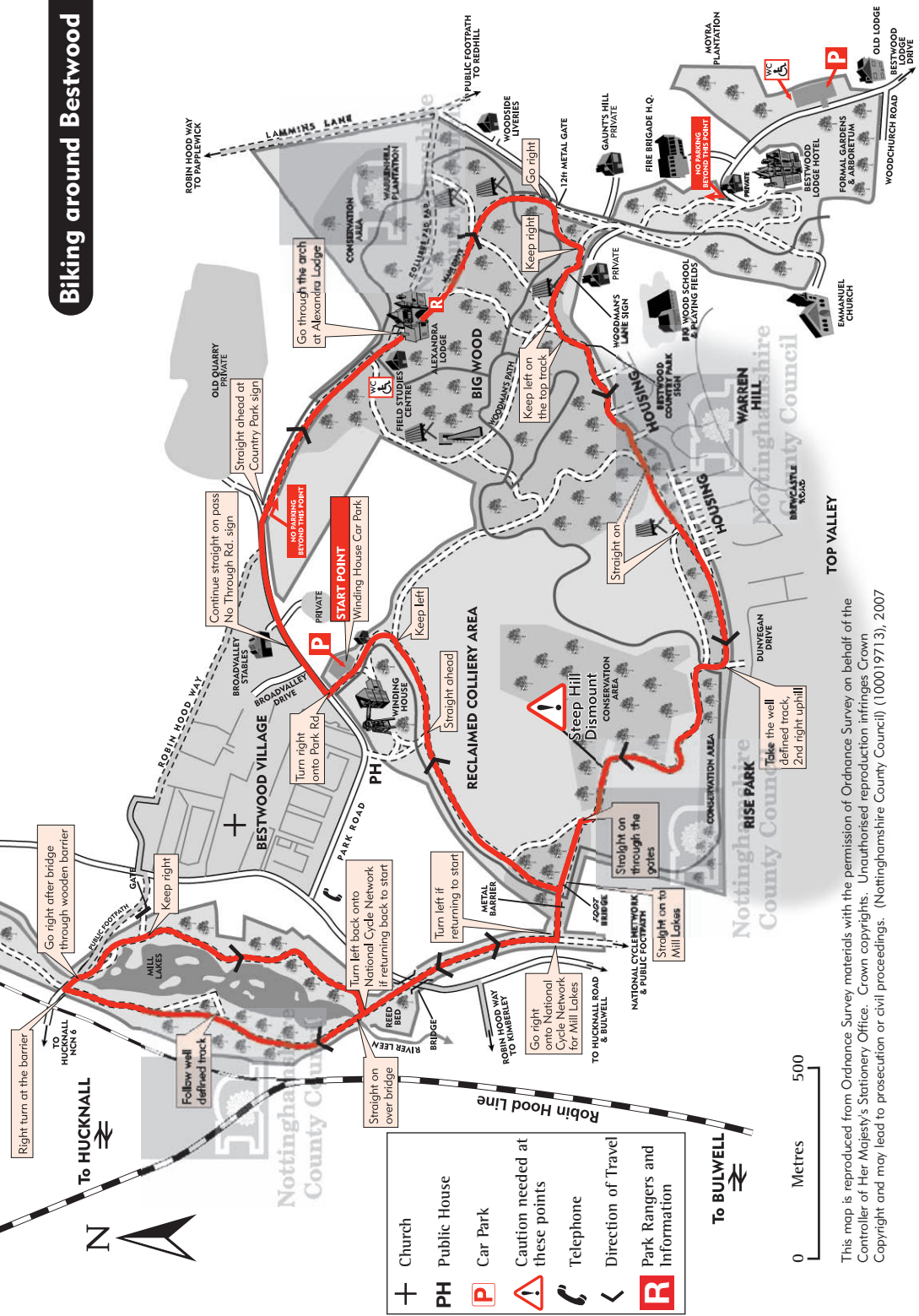
### Old King Coal

In 1872 the 10th Duke of St. Albans granted John Lancaster a lease on his land to mine coal, and the Bestwood Coal and Iron Company was established. The landscape changed dramatically with the building of the mine, offices (look out for the building with the tall clock tower), railway and road infrastructure, and a large iron smelting works. In 1876 housing was built for the colliers and their families, Park Road in Bestwood is an excellent example of former colliery housing proudly displaying the stone company crest (with the initials B.C.I.C). The ironworks ceased in 1928 and the pit, one of the counties largest at the time, closed in 1967.

### Winding Engine House

The industrial clutter has long gone but the old Winding Engine House lives on as a reminder of Bestwood's industrial past. The red brick building hides an enormous vertical mounted winding engine, the only one in England and still in its original winding house. The iron latticework headstocks are reputed to be the original ones from 1872, the main supports being encased in concrete at a later date. The listed building is now maintained by volunteers and Nottinghamshire County Council.

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|    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| +  | Church                         |
| PH | Public House                   |
| P  | Car Park                       |
| ⚠  | Caution needed at these points |
| ☎  | Telephone                      |
| ◀  | Direction of Travel            |
| R  | Park Rangers and Information   |



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TOP VALLEY

Nottinghamshire  
County Council  
BEPAC/CLC



To HUCKNALL

To BULWELL

### **Mill Lakes**

This 100-acre nature reserve, managed by Bestwood Country Park, consists of old 'mill' lakes, reedbeds and ancient water meadows with the River Leen passing through. The river was dammed in the late 18th century to form an artificial lake to power local waterwheels at Forge Iron Mill and several cotton mills lower down the Leen hence the name – Mill Lakes.

### **The Leen Valley Railway**

Throughout the life of Bestwood colliery there has always been a large railway presence. The Midland Railway Company opened a branch line here in 1876 but it wasn't until the arrival of the Great Northern Railway in the early 1880's that Bestwood celebrated the opening of its first railway station. To celebrate the first day a special train ran to 'sunny' Skegness. Sadly the station closed in 1931 and the last freight train ran during Dr Beeching's restructure of the railways in the mid sixties. The former trackbed at Bestwood is now used as part of the National Cycle Network (Route Six). Nothing remains of the old station but the old booking office, near the footbridge to Mill Lakes, is now a private dwelling.

All paths in Bestwood Country park can be walked. There are also some horse trails. Contact the country park ranger service for more information on 0115 927 3674.

**This walk is a taken from 'Exploring Nottinghamshire by Bike' a compilation of 7 circular cycle rides across the county, priced £2.50. For ordering details please see the back page of this leaflet.**