

The Derwent Valley

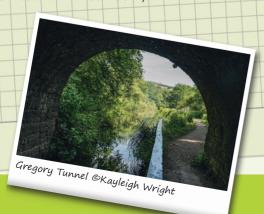
The Derwent rises in upland Derbyshire where the high valley sides are tough gritstone and flows on to join the Trent south of Derby. The county's gritstones were laid down in a wide prehistoric river delta 300 million years ago. The gritstone erodes to soils which naturally favour oak woodlands, forming a particular community of plants, animals, and fungi. The name Derwent is ancient in origin and also used elsewhere in the British Isles, meaning "valley of oaks" in the pre-Romano British Celtic Brythonic language.

Gregory Tunnel

The tunnel cuts through the tough gritstone, originally to carry the canal between Cromford and Langley Mill. The cool temperatures here allow harts tongue ferns to grow on the structure.

IMPORTANT

Please note that from Gregory tunnel onwards the walk involves steep, narrow paths and uneven ground. Only the points from Aqueduct Cottage to Gregory Tunnel, along Cromford Canal towpath, are accessible for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility.



Wood Sculpture

This finger post in the woods, crafted by a local sculpture artist, showcases just some of the wildlife that can found at Lea Wood.





Supported by friends of Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team for all those whose lives have been affected by asbestos disease.

Get in touch

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Sandy Hill, Main Street Middleton, Matlock, DE4 4LR

Tel: 01773 881188

Email: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk Web: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 222212

- @DerbyshireWildlifeTrust
- oderbyshirewildlifetrust

Cover image: Lea Wood @Kayleigh Wright

@DerbysWildlife











Derbyshire Vildlife Trust

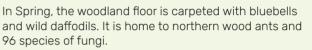
www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

lea Wood

On behalf of the local community, The Lea **Wood Trust aifted this** spectacular woodland to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in 2012.

It is a beautiful semi natural ancient woodland.

located in the Lower Derwent Valley.



Lea Wood is managed for conservation and recreation. Among its varied birds are several that are declining in numbers, including pied flycatcher which regularly breed in the wood, lesser spotted woodpeckers and spotted

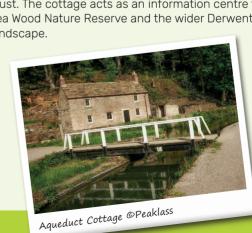
Why not keep the adventure going by combining a walk here with a walk along Cromford Canal, keeping an eye out for grass snakes and dragonflies along the way.

Aqueduct Cottage

The cottage was originally built in 19th century to house the lock keeper for the Lea Wood arm of the canal but fell into disrepair and eventual ruin from 1970. With the help

of partner organisations, local businesses and a team of volunteers, it was restored in 2023 by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. The cottage acts as an information centre for the Lea Wood Nature Reserve and the wider Derwent Valley

landscape.







Nature Reserve

Large alder trees grow where the Derwentside Nature Reserve meets the Derwent, and their river washed roots are perfect cover for otters. The rough grassland includes willow,



and large swathes of butterbur and wild daffodils. The sun trap encourages butterflies and other invertebrates, and is the perfect feeding ground for bats roosting in the larger trees alongside the river.

Last used as a working waterway about 1938, this section of the

Cromford Canal is now an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) for its entire length from Cromford Wharf to Ambergate. Whatever the time of year, you are likely to spot ducks, little grebes and other water birds on the canal itself.

3: Springs in the Wood

A nearby spring flows through here adding a different habitat to the woodland, where large pendulous sedge grows. This spring flows down into the Cromford canal, and can be seen from the Cromford canal footpath as it trickles gently down into the valley. As you continue along the path, look out for an old waymarker and turn right at this point towards sculpture number 4.



4: Gritstone and daffodik

The local gritstone is close to the surface, forming boulder slopes, and also making it easy to quarry. The woodland here, becomes flush with flowers in spring: bluebells, greater stitchwort and delicate wild daffodils.

Did you know that the English oak tree is a haven for over 2.300 wildlife species, providing a place to eat, shelter and breed. Look out for large populations of the northern hairy wood ant, these little engineers change the woodland floor and can form colonies of several hundred thousand.

5: 0aks



6: Lea Wood Meadow

Stop here to take a view of the meadow During spring and summer, the meadow is alive with greater stitchwort and red campion. Slow worms and grass snakes have been spotted around the meadow, hiding amongst the vegetation.



7: Fabulous Fungi

An impressive 96 species of fungi have been recorded around the reserve with autumn being the prime time to spot the enchanting fairytale like fly agaric which can be found mostly beneath birch trees.



8: Hazel

You will find a number of hazel trees in Lea Wood, as historically hazel was coppiced for charcoal. These trees are famous for their long, yellow catkins in spring and a crop of hazelnuts in summer. Hazelnuts are favoured by dormice and wood mice, and some small mammals will cache their finds, storing them in burrows or old birds' nests.

9: Ancient Woodland



Areas of Lea Wood are ancient woodland. Dog's mercury is one of many indicator plants for the oldest woodlands in the British Isles and can be found throughout the reserve. The woodland is also home to many bird species: listen for the screeching of jays and the 'dwip dwip' call of nuthatches. and watch out for treecreepers scaling the trees.

10: Wych Elms

Here is where the dry bed of the old Lea Wood canal lies. Moist soils here favour wild garlic in spring and the wych elms along the dry bed support the white letter hairstreak butterfly. They spend most of their time up in the treetops and get their name from the white lines that form a 'W' shape on their underside.

