

## Walk No 2

# Discovering Lincoln Hill

Starting from the White Horse car park, this woodland walk follows the spine of Lincoln Hill which was part of the **Sabbath Walks** or Workmen's Walks laid out in the late 18C by the Quaker ironmaster Richard Reynolds. The walk encompasses the unique geology of the hill, and visits the remains of structures associated with the Sabbath Walks, the **Alcove** and the **Rotunda** which still offer wonderful panoramic views of the Ironbridge Gorge and surrounding countryside. The route follows a 200-year old old plateway, an even older sunken path known as **Gypsy Lane**, before resuming a section of the Sabbath Walks in nearby Dale Coppice.

 **Accessibility:** Boots are advisable all year round for frequently muddy sections in this largely woodland walk. There are some moderately steep ascents, one very steep descent of 150 steps from the Rotunda, a step-through stile at the beginning of the walk and a kissing gate on the exit from Lincoln Hill onto Church Road. *Note: Road sections and crossings involved - care needed and supervision of children.*

 **Key Features:** Industrial and cultural history, archaeological interest and viewpoints.

 **Length & Time:** About 3km (1½ km shorter walk), About 1½ hours (45 minutes shorter walk)

 **Car Parking:** At the White Horse Car Park

 **Public Transport:** At the nearby Woodside Estate perimeter road. (5 mins to start of walk)

 **Refreshments:** The White Horse (top Lincoln Hill) and The Crown (Hodge Bower)

 **WCs:** White Horse



- 1 Start at the White Horse Car Park on Lincoln Hill and walk up the road, taking care of traffic which may appear suddenly over the brow of the hill ahead. On the left of the road is a brick safety wall. Peer down for a moment into a huge steep-sided chasm; this is the one end of what was a succession of limestone quarries in the 18C and 19C which effectively removed half the hill. 50m further up the road you will come to a wooden signpost on the left. Take the sharp left into the wood signed to the Rotunda.
- 2 After a few metres you will pass over a wooden stile and a little beyond that on the right is a short inconspicuous track which leads up to a magnificent Atlas Cedar, planted more than 200 years ago as a landmark tree visible all around the Dale at a time when Lincoln Hill, unlike today, was scarcely wooded. The tree appears to have been either set on an artificial circular mound or to have exploited a natural elevation in the woodland at that point.
- 3 Resume the main path which inclines very slightly to the right. Soon you will come upon a curious semi-circular brick-built structure tucked into the hillside on the left. It is known as the Alcove or Alcove Seat and was one of the structures which Richard Reynolds built as part of his Sabbath or Workmen's Walks in the late 18C.

Continue on the path until you come to a wooden sign post. The path descending to your right was another section of the Sabbath Walks established by Richard Reynolds.

- 4 Continue on the main path signed to the Rotunda, walking straight on and ignoring any other routes off. We are now following the ridge or spine of Lincoln Hill, created once the limestone quarrying on this particular part had ceased. Originally the hill would have towered above you.
- 5 When you have taken in as many of the views as you wish, carefully descend a series of very steep steps, taking the right hand path - a former plateway - at the bottom. After 100m the path bears to the right, and it is at about this point that an incline plane once ran down the hillside to the left to join up with the plateway at Dale End. You are now following the line of the former plateway built to carry limestone to the furnaces in Coalbrookdale.

Another 200m on, the old plateway crosses an even more ancient hollow way, known locally as Gypsy Lane. This was probably a sled track enabling coal, charcoal, ironstone and limestone to be brought down from Dale Coppice and Lincoln Hill to Dale End. The hollow way was filled in at the intersection of the two paths to provide a level crossing for the plateway to continue on to the former furnaces in Dale Road.

Walk up the hollow way. As you walk, you will notice on your right several successive semi-circular cuttings just off the path, particularly noticeable in winter when there is little ground cover. These are the sites of old charcoal hearths using earth-covered clamps - charcoal having been a vital ingredient in the iron-smelting process before Abraham Darby I's discovery of coke-smelting.

Soon you will arrive at a stile which brings you out onto Church Road.

**6** For the short walk, simply turn right and walk up the road back to the White Horse. For the longer walk, taking in another section of the Sabbath Walks, turn left and walk down the road for about 500m until you reach a stile, opposite the church and leading into the woodland there.

**7** Pass over the stile and enter Dale Coppice. The woodland here is heavily shaded, particularly in summer, due to the dominant species of beech, of which there are fine individual specimens to be admired. Walk up the flight of steps until you reach a wooden signpost and take the right hand fork signed to the Rotunda. The path now is another section of Reynolds' Sabbath Walks and travels along the face of the hill, soon reaching a series of broad, gravelled steps. Near the top you will see on your left a series of stone-filled gabions used to shore up land that in recent years was subject to landslip, effectively destroying that section of the upper walk that Reynolds laid out.

**8** 50m along the now widened and stone-surfaced path you can pause to look back down into Coalbrookdale where a fine view of the church tower and the sweep of the valley beyond is allowed by the wayleave opened up for the power lines.

Continue on the stoned path, until you come to a simple bench. Turn left here and then after a few metres uphill, an upper path presents itself. You should take the right fork. You are now on a section of the upper Sabbath Walks laid out by Richard Reynolds. Continue on the path through the wood until a narrow squeeze barrier presents itself, leading onto a broad track. Turn right until you come to a 5-barred gate.

**9** Go through the side gate onto Church Road, taking care because of the blind corner at the brow of the hill. The White Horse where you started from is just down the road on the left.