

WHAT IS AT THE SITE



- Free car parking.
- Picnic meadow.
- Wheelchair access to viewpoint and picnic area.
- Relicts and information signs about quarrying heritage and wildlife conservation.
- Choice of waymarked trails:
 - Whitestones for easy walking (1 mile / 40 minutes).
 - Gullet and Woodland – Moderately difficult (2.5 miles / 1 hour 40 minutes).
- Countryside walks to local villages along connecting footpaths.
- Riders' route for horse riders and cyclists.
- Motor cycles and other vehicles are not allowed beyond the car park.
- Dogs are welcome but should not be allowed to foul the car park or mown picnic meadow. They must be kept on a lead when sheep are grazing.
- Gateway to other sites in Rockingham Forest.



Twywell Hills and Dales is located in the parish of **Twywell**, (grid reference SP945775), 3 miles to the west of Thrapston. To the south lies the A14 trunk road; to the east is Twywell village.

The site covers an area of some 54.6 ha (135 acres).

Twywell Hills and Dales lies on the southern edge of the **Rockingham Forest**. Named by Norman kings some 900 years ago, the area was subject to Forest Law, which meant that nothing could be taken from the land without the king's permission.

The Rockingham Forest Trust works to maintain a thriving countryside. It is especially concerned with environmental management and with working with local people to explain and conserve the Rockingham Forest's unique character.



If you would like to know more about the Trust and its work, please contact:

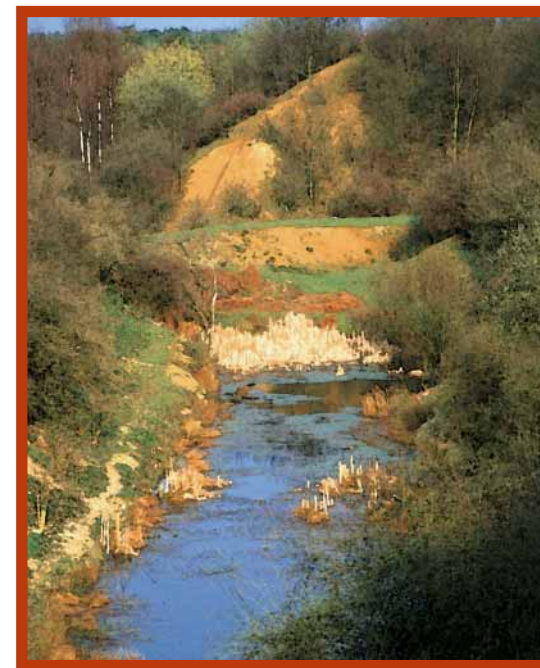
The Rockingham Forest Trust, Drill Hall House, 1A Benefield Road, Oundle, Peterborough PE8 4EY.

Telephone 01832 274278.

Registered Charity No. 1050157.

DISCOVER ROCKINGHAM FOREST

Twywell Hills and Dales



A Partnership Between



Twywell Hills and Dales

In 1994 the land was purchased by East Northamptonshire Council from British Steel for conservation to offer quiet recreational opportunities to local people and other visitors. Its overall management was given to the Rockingham Forest Trust, in partnership with the Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust.

FARMING



Twywell Lodge before it was demolished.

The site was originally farmland and mainly used as pasture. Remnants of Twywell Lodge farmhouse and its dairy and orchard can still be seen.

"The first machines on the Twywell site were twenty-ton steam shovels in the 1920s. They used to start with a flat field and would have one machine pulling out a gullet. The transporter then moved the soil to form a 'hill' on a bit that wasn't going to be dug out. When the next cut was started they then put the muck in the gullet where they had already taken the ironstone out."

Extract from "Pig Iron & Old Men".



Ruston 20 ton steam shovel loading ore.

QUARRYING

Quarrying at the site began in 1920. At first manual labour was used to extract the stone. Later, large heavy machinery was used. A railway line was laid to carry the stone up to Slip Furnaces for smelting. This became part of the largest narrow gauge railway system in the country. The quarry was finally closed in January 1948.

For more detailed information about the site the Rockingham Forest Trust has published the following:

"Pig Iron & Old Men" – A leaflet telling the story of local quarrying in the words of former quarrymen.

"Betwixt Twywell and Cranford" – A report on the quarrying heritage of Rockingham Forest.

Additional worksheets to the schools' education pack "Learning About Rockingham Forest" specific to the Twywell site, are available from the Trust.

CONSERVATION

Apart from some plantation of woodland in the 1930s and 1950s, the site was allowed to revert back to nature, leaving an undulating landscape. Today it is important for its limestone grassland, rich in wild flowers and for its varied pond life.



Common spotted orchid – one of the site's rare plants.

Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund



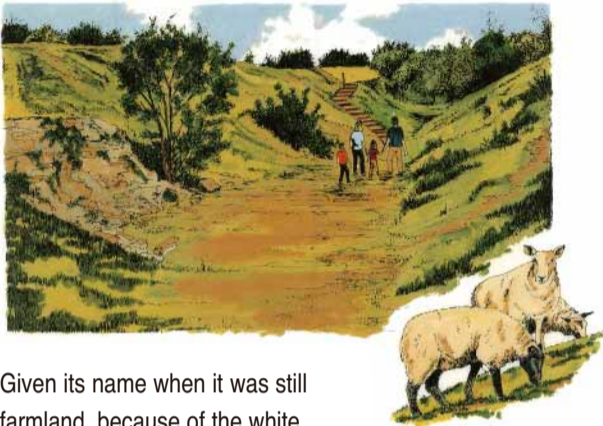
**COUNTRYSIDE
COMMISSION**

Twywell Hills and Dales

The site takes its name from the abandoned quarry workings which have left an undulating landscape. Most of the site has been left to revert back to nature and is now a haven for rare wildlife. It can be divided into three distinct areas.

WHITESTONES

Sheep grazing in Whitestones encourages wild flowers to flourish.



Given its name when it was still farmland, because of the white limestone found here, the area is again grazed by sheep. These, and the large numbers of rabbits on the site, keep the grass cropped, encouraging the growth of many wild flowers and plants.

Follow the easy trail over its gentle ups and downs and explore the old railway cuttings and rich limestone grassland. For a longer walk continue to Twywell village and back via the wood and gullet.

If on horseback or bicycle, take the Riders' Route which loops around the edge of Whitestones.

Public Bridleway
Slipton 1 Mile
Twywell 1/4 miles

THE GULLET

For a spectacular view head for Twywell Lodge viewpoint. This deep gorge-like quarry and adjacent hill and dale ridges were formed by digging deep for ironstone. The area has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its rich wildlife, especially pond life. It provides a home for great crested newts, badgers, rare butterflies, dragonflies and beetles. Plants growing on the site include bee orchids, common spotted orchids, wild strawberries and hart's tongue ferns.

Take care if taking the rugged and difficult trail that starts at the far end of the pond and follows the gullet along the adjacent ridge towards the wood.



The Wood's grassy paths attract butterflies.

THE WOOD

This mainly evergreen wood was created after ironstone extraction ceased, beginning with the planting of European larch in 1932. More trees were planted during the 1950s.

Complete the waymarked trail along wide grassy paths and turn back beyond the large half-hidden pond. You may be fortunate enough to see fallow or muntjac deer.

