

The Hemlock Stone

Presenting the walks, panoramic views and interest points of the mysterious Hemlock Stone, Stapleford Hill and Bramcote Hills Park.



Visit Nottinghamshire's striking and remarkable geological feature, only a stone's throw away from the beautiful, award winning Bramcote Hills Park.



Parks & Open Spaces
Broxtowe Borough Council



Greenwood



The Myths and Legends

Much speculation surrounds the Hemlock Stone. Even its name is a puzzlement - many theories exist as to how the stone got its name.

- Once commonly referred to as the Crumlech or Cromlech Stone, which comes from the 17th century Welsh and translates as a 'bent flat stone'.
- The name could originate from the word 'hemm', meaning border, as in hem of a dress and 'loca', meaning enclosure, translating as 'the stone in the border field'.
- A German word that has been used to describe similar looking rocks on the continent is 'Himmel - axt - stein', which means 'Heaven - hatchet - stone'.
- Many Danes settled in the Nottinghamshire area in the 9th century. The old Danish word 'hemmelig' meaning a cover, or overhanging.
- Local folklore even conjures up the idea of witches at the site using poisonous hemlock plants in their potions!

There are many theories and myths about the origin of the stone, and some are more exotic than others!

The Hemlock Stone is felt by many to have been the site of past activity by the Druids, the priesthood of the Celts. It would form a natural focal point, a temple and altar for Celtic festivals such as Beltane, where the ancient practice of lighting fires on the stone during the night before May Day continued until the early 19th century.



The combination of the stone with the surrounding oak woodland (the oak being a sacred tree for the Celts) and a nearby 'sacred spring' all add credence to the idea of Druidic use. On older maps the spring is shown as the 'Healing Well' just to the north-west of Stapleford Hill. This now lost natural spring was used by gypsies and miners alike as a place to wash and a local 'cure-all'.

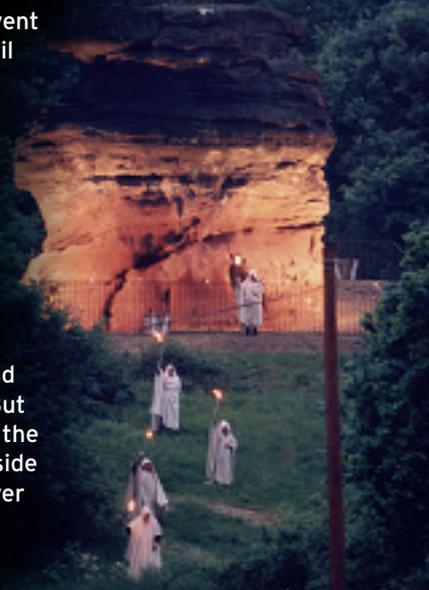
There are sandy caves and hollows on Stapleford Hill and there is a story that one of the filled in caves was the opening of a tunnel that led all the way to Wollaton Hall.

One of the very varied myths that exists around the Hemlock Stone is that it was thrown there by a giant, but the location, nationality and reason for this, seemingly varies with every telling of the story!

A modern myth suggested by local people is that the stone is actually the remnants of a meteorite!

Another legend concerns a very pious monk in Lenton Priory who found he could not sleep one night and decided that the Devil must be near.

He began to pray as hard as he could and this fervent praying woke the Devil who was asleep on Stony Clouds near Sandiacre. (Another version suggests Castleton in the Peak District.) In his anger for being woken, the Devil flung a mass of rock, aiming at the Priory, hoping to smash it and the monk to pieces. But his aim fell short and the stone settled on the side of Stapleford Hill, never to move again.





Introduction

The area of the Hemlock Stone, Stapleford Hill and Bramcote Hills Park is made up of red sandstone, deposited in the early Triassic period over 200 million years ago.

There are many points of interest and facilities in the area surrounding the Hemlock Stone. Coventry Lane, now a main road that runs in front of the Hemlock Stone, was once used by the Romans as a route to reach their fort at Broxtowe. The road is part of an ancient trackway which led further north into Nottinghamshire from a crossing of the River Trent near Attenborough.

The Woodland surrounding the Hemlock Stone, consists mainly of oak and silver birch and is typical of woodlands found in Nottinghamshire on sandstone soils. This type of woodland has been identified as vulnerable in Nottinghamshire, requiring protection and sympathetic management

Respecting the Environment

It's wonderful to enjoy open space and woodland environment. Here are a few helpful hints to remind us all of how we can positively contribute to the future of our environment:

In the open space and woodland

- Use paths where practical.
- Avoid trampling wild flowers.
- Minimise disturbance to any wildlife or nests.
- Avoid boggy areas where possible.
- Exercise caution on steep banks for your own safety and avoid scrambling which may dislodge vegetation.

Litter and Cleaning up

- Take all of your litter away with you and recycle what you can.
- Be a responsible dog owner by cleaning up after your dog. You will find many dog waste bins provided around the wood and parkland to dispose of your dog waste.

What else can I do to help?

- If you notice any damage or vandalism to the area please report it to us **0115 917 7777**

Management

The Hemlock Stone Woodland, Stapleford Hill and Open Space areas lie within the Greenwood Community Forest and are managed by Broxtowe Borough Council working in partnership with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and BTCV, formerly known as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

BTCV hold volunteer days on the site to help undertake maintenance tasks such as path surfacing, fencing, and tree management. For further information please contact them on **0115 9313316**.

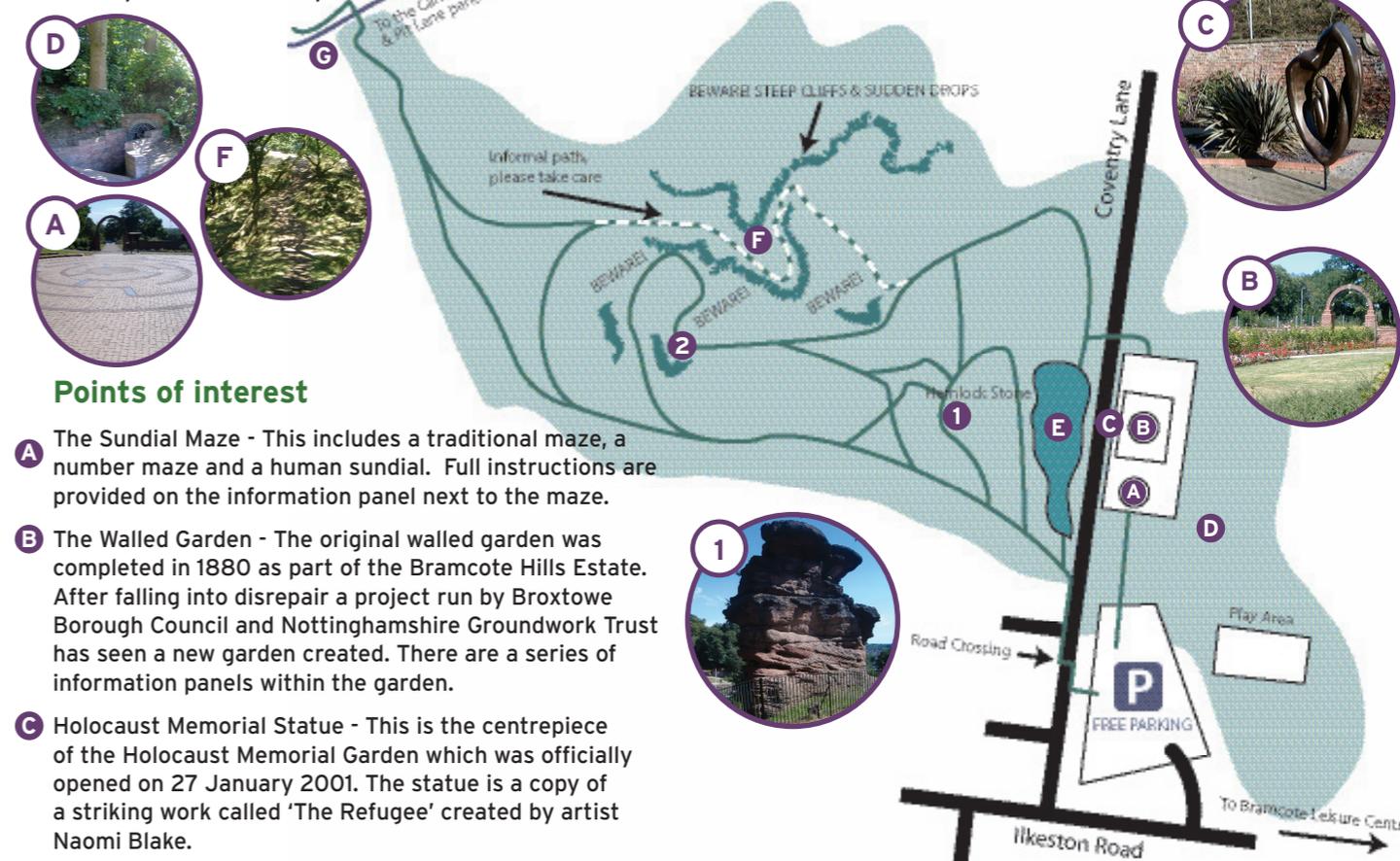
The woodland is maintained in accordance with the Stapleford Hill Woodland Management Plan which details annual operations to promote the conservation management of the site. A copy of the plan can be viewed on the Broxtowe Borough Council web site www.broxtowe.gov.uk - Alternatively you can request a copy of the plan by contacting Broxtowe Borough Council on **0115 9173649**.

Open Viewing Points

- 1 The Hemlock Stone - Standing in front of the Hemlock Stone there is a clear view of the beautiful walled garden within the grounds of Bramcote Hills Park.

The upper part of the Hemlock Stone is heavily impregnated with barium sulphate or barytes, a mineral that is resistant to weathering processes and thus forms a protective cap above the pillar of softer rock below. Over many millennia, erosion of the softer sandstone surrounding the pillar by water, ice, and wind has shaped the strange form of the Hemlock Stone that we see today.

- 2 Panoramic view from the summit of Stapleford Hill. At 101m above sea level, this spot boasts magnificent views on a clear day of Crich Stand, Wollaton Hall, and the valleys of the Rivers Trent and Erewash. Situated on the Hill is a triangulation point once used by Ordnance Survey.



Points of interest

- A The Sundial Maze - This includes a traditional maze, a number maze and a human sundial. Full instructions are provided on the information panel next to the maze.
- B The Walled Garden - The original walled garden was completed in 1880 as part of the Bramcote Hills Estate. After falling into disrepair a project run by Broxtowe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Groundwork Trust has seen a new garden created. There are a series of information panels within the garden.
- C Holocaust Memorial Statue - This is the centrepiece of the Holocaust Memorial Garden which was officially opened on 27 January 2001. The statue is a copy of a striking work called 'The Refugee' created by artist Naomi Blake.
- D The Ice House - The Ice House was built in 1881 and was used to store ice from local rivers and ponds for use in the kitchens of Bramcote Hills House. The ice would be used to keep food cool and fresh in the summer months.
- E Open Space - A good place for a picnic in the shadow of the Hemlock Stone.
- F Sandstone quarries and dramatic hill sides - Sandstone quarries were worked until the 1940s with tramway access to the main rail line off Coventry Lane. The remains of this activity make a dramatic addition to Stapleford Hill.
- G Canal Walk - A beautiful walk along the Nottingham Canal. The Nottingham Canal was completed in 1796 and built primarily for the transportation of coal. It ceased commercial operation in 1928 and by 1937 it was abandoned.

How to find The Hemlock Stone

Bus routes

From Nottingham

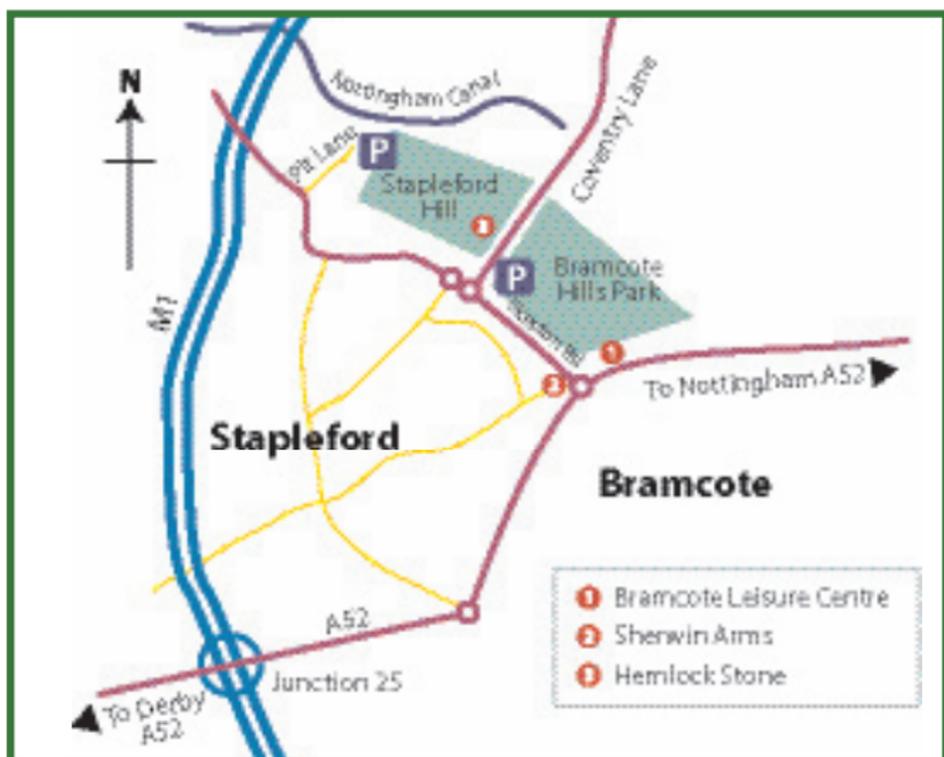
Take the Rainbow 4 from Broadmarsh Bus Station to the Sherwin Arms. It is a 10 minute walk along Ilkeston Road to the Hemlock Stone, situated on Coventry Lane.

Parking

Free Parking at Bramcote Hills Park. The park is open 365 days of the year. Additional parking can be found at Pit Lane Recreation Area, with a footpath leading to Stapleford Hill.

Accessibility

The walled garden is fully accessible. Stapleford Hill is a woodland and some paths are steep.



Research undertaken and text produced by local residents
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For further information about tourist attractions in the borough of Broxtowe please contact D. H. Lawrence Heritage on 01773 717353 or visit the Broxtowe Borough Council web site www.broxtowe.gov.uk

This information is available in large print.
To request a copy please call 0115 9173649