

The Park's colourful past . . .

Code 141

Forge Mill Needle Museum and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

Housed in historic buildings, Forge Mill Needle Museum offers a glimpse into a past way of life, telling the fascinating, and sometimes gruesome, story of the Redditch needle making industry. Original working water-powered machinery and recreated scenes provide a vivid illustration of how needles were made in the last century.

Links with needles, have made Forge Mill a centre for textile lovers, and exhibitions and workshops attract enthusiasts from all over the Country. The shop specialises in unusual needles and sewing accessories.

On this site there is also an archaeological museum, showing finds from excavations at the adjacent site of Bordesley Abbey, where you can walk amongst the remains of the Cistercian Church. In the fields by the Museum you can trace the abbey fish ponds and water engineering works carried out by the monks. Take a picnic in the grounds or visit the shop to buy unusual gifts.

Essential Information . . .

School and Educational Visits

Many facilities are available for educational parties, at the Countryside Centre, Forge Mill Museum and Bordesley Abbey. Activities range from talks, guided tours and bad weather facilities, as well as "hands-on" projects such as pond dipping and the examination of archaeological finds. Discount rates available for pre-booked groups. To book or to discuss requirements, contact the education officer for an info pack:

Countryside Centre 01527 464000
or Forge Mill/Bordesley Abbey 01527 62509.

A partnership agreement with the national charity Youth Afloat means we can offer year round instruction for schools and youth groups in canoeing, sailing, wind surfing and adventure days. For further details phone 01527 464024

Forge Mill Needle Museum & Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

The Arrow Valley Countryside Centre
Battens Drive, South Moons Moat
Redditch B98 0LJ



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Visitor Guide

Where to go and what to see



Countryside Centre

Recently built, and opened by Dr David Bellamy, the Centre forms the focal point of future park developments. It has full disabled access, with education and conference rooms for hire as well as interpretation areas.

There are regular weekend demonstrations to watch, by members of the local craft guild, and both adults and children can take part in a wide variety of "drop in" workshops and courses that are on offer. Throughout the grounds of the centre you will find a coppice craft area, wildlife sanctuaries and a variety of environmentally friendly ideas which you can easily utilise in your own back gardens. A well stocked shop offers a wide range of unusual gifts and "pocket money" toys for children. The on-site restaurant offers hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks throughout the day.



Play Area at the Countryside Centre

Play Area

Located next door to the Countryside Centre you will find a fantastic, newly refurbished play area. Full of swings, slides, roundabouts and climbing structures, there is something for children of all ages to enjoy.

Redditch forms part of the National Cycle Route, a section of which passes through the park. There are several miles of flat, safe paths away from the traffic on which to cycle and the national route section is coloured green. Cyclists are asked to be aware that they share these paths with pedestrians.

Equestrian Route

There is also an equestrian route throughout, which follows the route of the River Arrow. A separate leaflet showing this route is available from the Countryside Centre.



Arrow Valley Countryside Centre



Sailing Club and Lake

The Arrow Valley Park

The Arrow Valley Park Covers an area of 900 acres and is the largest area of open space in Redditch. Incorporating the 30 acre man-made lake, the Park was developed for recreational use by the town's residents and visitors. The Park stretches from the Forge Mill Needle Museum in the North down to the Washford Mill in the south, and effectively bonds the new and old parts of the town. The continuous natural park area is readily accessible to residents and visitors alike, and has many different, interesting features.

Wild Flower Meadows

Visit the meadows in June and July, to experience a remarkable display of native wild flowers, which continue to improve year after year. Many wild flower meadows in the UK have disappeared due to intensive agriculture, so these meadows are a beautiful reminder of what can be so easily lost.

Woodlands

Throughout the park, it is possible to wander through mature woodland, along a network of pathways. Some are waymarked, whilst others are left to explore at your leisure. If you are lucky you may see fallow and possibly the very shy muntjac deer. There have also been several sightings of other mammals at many different locations. If you should see anything unusual, please report it to a member of staff.

River Arrow

Starting its journey in the Lickey Hills, to the South-West of Birmingham, the River Arrow flows through Alvechurch, before entering the park, close to the ruins of Bordesley Abbey. From here, you can walk the river banks for over three miles, wandering through beautiful and tranquil meadows, woods, passing ponds and lakes. The river then meanders out of the park, across the road from the Washford Mill.



River Arrow



Arrow Valley Lake

One of the main attractions of the area is the Arrow Valley Lake, a man made thirty acre stretch of water in the heart of the park. A shoreline path gives full disabled access and there is also the opportunity to walk, jog or cycle on these paths. For the less energetic there are places to stop, admire the views and picnic, amongst the peaceful surroundings.

For those who enjoy fishing, the lake holds carp of over 25lbs, as well as bream and roach. Tickets are available at the Countryside Centre. The council also offers a number of courses in both canoeing and sailing. Contact the centre for further details.

Millennium Wood

Only 300 yards from the Centre is a site, specifically dedicated to provide a living heritage for future generations. Here 10,000 trees have been planted by local school children of Redditch. A huge mound, with viewing points has been constructed, in order to reduce noise pollution over a wide area. The new wood can be found here.

Opposite Millennium Wood is an impressive wetland system dealing with waste water from the Centre, and a wildlife pond where you can sit and picnic in seclusion. Between these two sites, you can meander along paths, which are mown into the traditionally managed hay meadow. Disabled access is available to much of the site.

Redditch Skate Park

Redditch Skate Park is one of the best outdoor parks in the UK, run by a voluntary organisation called the Redditch Wheels Project. It caters for young people's needs in the town by providing opportunities for BMX, skate boarding and in-line skating.

Key

- Woodland
- Meadow
- P Parking
- Surfaced

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

