

Black darter – Britain's smallest dragonfly, often found on heathland



Red Trail
2 miles (3.2 kilometres) – approx. 1 hour

A short walk following the Heart of England Way, returning via the western slopes of Broc Hill. Follow the red waymarkers around the route.

① The trail begins at the start/end of the Heart of England Way, a long-distance footpath that runs for almost 100 miles to Bourton-on-the-Water in the Cotswolds. It crosses Cannock Chase to the Iron Age hillfort at Castle Ring.

② At the top of the hill are two large Scots Pine trees. These were planted to commemorate the naval exploits of Admiral Anson, who circumnavigated the world between 1740 and 1744. His brother, Thomas, lived at Shugborough Hall, the former residence of Lord Lichfield, now run by the National Trust.

③ Skirting the Sister Dora Pool on your left, look out for palmate newts in the spring and agile dragonflies during the summer. Both are dependent on there being sufficient seasonal rainfall to avoid the pool drying out. Bearing left, walk over the rise.

Either retrace your steps to rejoin the trail at point 4, or head down Broc Hill due east to join at point 5.

④ Exiting the cutting continue along the route of the old railway and you will see to your right Mere Pool. This formed due to the construction of the railway embankment and was part of the military camp drainage system. The pool is now a haven for dragonflies, newts and all sorts of other pondlife.

⑤ You now enter the 'Cutting'. During the Great War the Tackeroo railway ran through this valley, serving the two huge military training camps based on the Chase. The banks are now predominantly wooded, but you may still find the occasional deciduous bilberry with its angular stem and dark blue berries as well as the evergreen cowberry with circular stem and red berries.

Cowberry – one of several heathland shrubs



Young soldiers at Brocton Camp during the Great War



⑥ Having walked along the side of Mere valley, stop and admire the distant views of the Wrekin Hill in Shropshire to the left, and Stafford and its Castle to the right. Now turn right to descend towards the barrier in Brook Lane, Brocton.

⑦ Taking the right-hand fork, follow the lane keeping the houses on your left until you reach 'Heathervale'; Here you turn right up the narrow path through the bracken until you reach a clearing. Bearing left, look across to the right and see the Anson Pines standing proudly on top of the hill.

⑧ Continuing northwards, note the variety of foliage surrounding you. With the perpetual yellow flowering gorse on your left and the holly and splendid oak tree to your right.

⑩ Pass the barrier and carry straight on along the vehicle track keeping the houses on your right.

⑪ Continue on down the grassy slope and up the bank opposite. You have now rejoined the route at Sister Dora's Pool from where you can stroll back to Milford Common.

Staffordshire
County Council

Milford Common Trails



Waymarked Trails

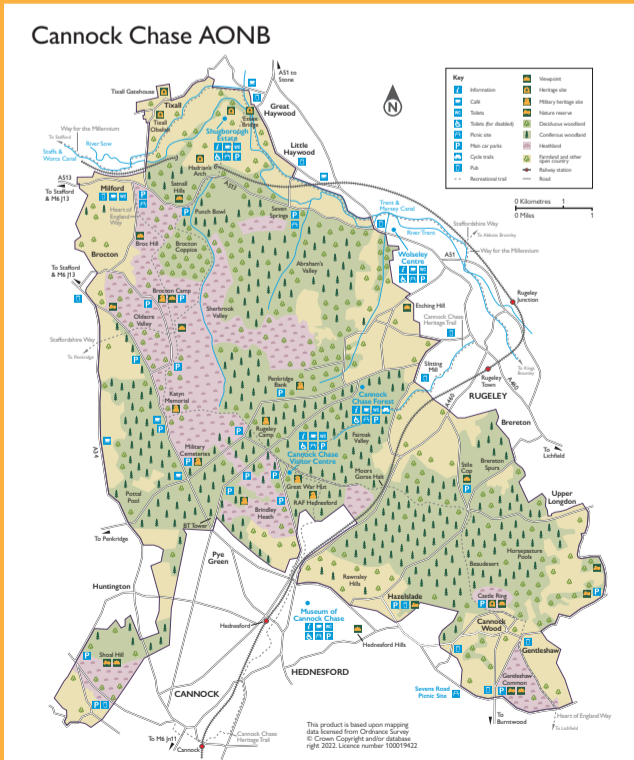
Two circular walks on country paths
2 miles / 3.2 kms (1 hour)



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Be a Chase Champion – Follow the Cannock Chase Code



Discover more about the landscape, nature and heritage of Cannock Chase on our website or by visiting one of the visitor centres/hubs in the area.

www.cannock-chase.co.uk



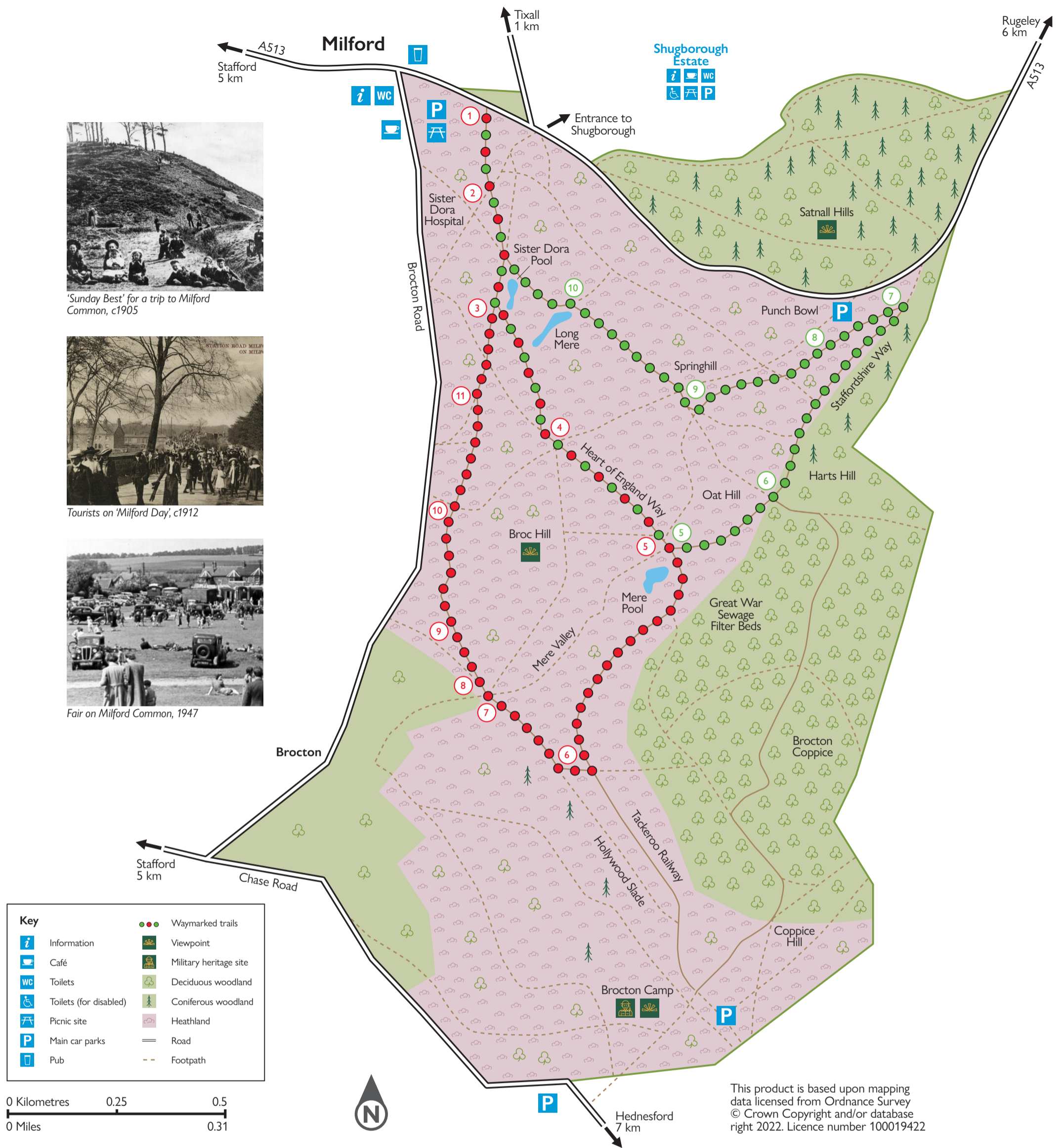
Milford Common lies in the north-east of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The village of Milford dates back to the late 18th century and was part of the Milford Hall Estate. The common was included in the 2,120 acres of unenclosed land gifted by Lord Lichfield to Staffordshire County Council in 1957.

The Common has been a popular recreation spot for local people for many years, and has traditionally been the site for travelling fairs. With the development of the railways, it became a destination for visitors from the town and cities, especially the Potteries. The station was on the site of the garage opposite the car park, but visitors also came by horse and trap.

In the late 19th century a 9-hole golf course was constructed on the Common and run by the Earl of Lichfield and Cannock Chase Golf Club. Annual membership of the Club in 1903 was 11 shillings!

Up until the Great War the hills overlooking the Common were open grassland and heathland. Today's wooded landscape includes planted non-native trees such as Swedish whitebeam and red oak and natural regeneration of birch and oak.

Milford continues to be popular today as one of the 'honey pots' of the Chase. Two short waymarked trails from the car park allow visitors to explore the surrounding heaths and woodlands, taking in features of heritage and natural interest along the way. The Trails take visitors into the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – a landscape of high ecological value protected for its rare heathland habitats, plants and animals including the adder, woodlark and nightjar. To keep Cannock Chase special please follow the Cannock Chase Code.



Green Trail

2 miles (3.2 kilometres) – approx. 1 hour

A short walk over the Springhill heathlands to the Punch Bowl. The route follows two long-distance trails for part of the way – Staffordshire Way and Heart of England Way. Follow the green waymarkers around the route.

⑤ Having followed the same route as the Red Trail from Milford to this point at Mere Pool, take the left-hand track signposted Punch Bowl ½ mile. Immediately to your right, hidden by the vegetation, are remnants of Great War filter beds.

⑥ At the junction continue straight on towards the Punch Bowl. You are now walking on part of the

Staffordshire Way, which is a 92-mile path linking Mow Cop in the north with Kinver Edge in the south of the County. To your right is a larch plantation which is part of the National Trust's Shugborough Estate.

⑦ Just before reaching the Punch Bowl car park turn sharp left up the grassy hillside and work your way up amongst the birch wood, until you reach open heathland.

⑧ Take the right-hand fork at the fine example of a coppiced birch, which has resulted in its three trunks.

⑨ At the junction of the five tracks, turn right up to the brow of Springhill. Keeping right, descend the stony track and enjoy the views across to the River Sow, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the county town of Stafford beyond.

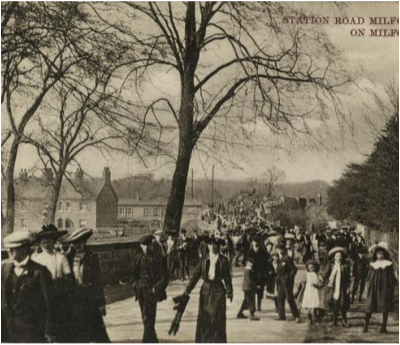
⑩ Bear left in the valley bottom and once over the crest of the hill, you will see the familiar sight of Sister Dora Pool. Bear right to rejoin the Red Trail back to Milford Common.



Emperor moth – look out for this heathland specialist on the trails



'Sunday Best' for a trip to Milford Common, c1905



Tourists on 'Milford Day', c1912



Fair on Milford Common, 1947