

STONEY WOOD

**When you go down to Stoney Wood,
why don't you...**

Enjoy views over the rooftops of Wirksworth, across
the Ecclesbourne Valley and of the night sky

Explore art, wildlife and special places

Picnic and play with family and friends

Visit the **Community Orchard**

Take a **walk** or go for a run

Discover its stories

Attend an **event**

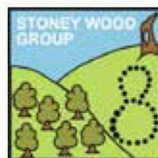
**Your experience of Stoney Wood will be different
at different times. It is always worth returning.**



Please ensure Stoney Wood looks good for your next
visit – take litter home with you, use the dog waste
bins, and take care of the trees and wildflowers.

Stoney Wood is owned by Wirksworth Town Council
and looked after by the Stoney Wood Group, a team
of volunteers. You can become a member, help look
after the wood or find out about events.

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www.gowirksworth.com Find us on Facebook



**Discover Wirksworth's
Community Woodland**

A PLACE FOR SHARKS

**Stoney Wood began life as part of a
shallow, tropical lagoon where warm
waters teemed with life.**

Sharks hunted for fish and trilobites among
ammonites. The sea bed was covered in shellfish,
including clam-like brachiopods, which jostled for
space with corals and the hard-shelled stalks of
crinoids. Crinoids were anchored to the sea bed
and each stalk held aloft a bowl-like creature whose
tentacles waved in the currents to catch microscopic
food.

Coral reefs fringed the lagoon and protected it from
the colder, deep open seas beyond.

This was about 350 million years ago.

As the creatures died, their bones and shells built up
on the sea bed. Over millions of years these mixed
with lava and ash from erupting volcanoes, and
eventually formed the limestone you see today. The
lagoon has become the White Peak.

You can look for their fossils in the stone. Crinoids
are most common and appear as small discs or
grooved tubes a bit like screws. Shark teeth have
been found locally and one ancient type of shark is
named after Wirksworth.



A PLACE FOR STONE

For almost 200 years this area was one of Wirksworth's limestone quarries.

The diggers moved in to fields at the end of the 1700s. Over the years, the quarry produced stone, aggregates for roads and fluxing stone for Black Country iron furnaces.

Visit here 100 years ago and you would have a very different experience to today. Rock-blasting shakes the ground. Quarrymen load stone into horse-drawn trucks which go to a steam-powered rock crusher. Trains rumble through a tunnel under Middleton Road and on to Wirksworth Station. The air is thick with steam, soot and limestone dust. Quarrymen are deafened, coated with dust and in constant danger from machinery or blasts.

The houses shook on Greenhill when the quarry was blasting.

Gerald McIntyre

Work finished by 1986 and the quarry was gradually infilled and landscaped. You can still see evidence of Stoney Wood's quarrying past, such as the gunpowder store near the start of the Ascent to the Stars.



Photo courtesy Tony Holmes

A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

Stoney Wood is a popular community woodland created by the people of Wirksworth.

The quarry lay unused in the 1990s. The quarry company was landscaping the spoil heaps with bulldozers and planting trees at the bottom of the quarry when a group of Wirksworth residents approached them with an idea.

Local people were visiting Wirksworth's French twin town Die in 1994. They went to the Forêt Jean Giono, a community woodland inspired by *The Man Who Planted Trees*. This story told how a shepherd grew a forest in the mountains by planting thousands of acorns. "We can do that" they thought. Abandoned Stoneycroft seemed the right place – and the quarry company agreed. They handed the land over to the town council. Volunteers, local children and countryside rangers began planting trees. The creation of Stoney Wood is told in this video - <http://bit.ly/StoneyVid>



Photo courtesy Aidan Shingler

A PLACE FOR WILDLIFE

Wildlife thrives in Stoney Wood.

The woodland is a mix of native species that includes ash, alder, hazel and many others. This type of woodland has grown in the Peak District for 10,000 years, ever since trees spread from the south as Ice Age glaciers melted. The trees produce cover and food for wildlife, and take in carbon dioxide, so helping to combat climate change.

There is also rare, unimproved limestone grassland. Cowslips bloom in spring, orchids in early summer and a range of other native flowers throughout the spring and summer. The grasses and wildflowers are a rich source of food for insects and birds. Bees and butterflies love the nectar and pollen of the flowers as well as the Community Orchard's blossoms. Birds thrive on the seeds and the insects.



Photo courtesy Phil Richards

Explore Stoney Wood

What will you do here today?

Viewing Platform

Stand on Stoney Wood's highest point for one of the best panoramic views in Wirksworth. You can see across Middle Peak Quarry as far as Middleton Top and Moor.

StarDisc

Walk across the universe on this celestial star map within a 21st century stone circle. StarDisc is a place to contemplate, gather and connect with the stars. Wirksworth artist Aidan Shingler created the StarDisc above the town lights to offer views of the night sky. Find out more about StarDisc – www.stardisc.org.

Orientation Disc

Find out where you are in relation to nearby towns and landmarks as you look across Wirksworth and the Ecclesbourne Valley.

Calendar Stones

Stoney Wood's own solar calendar. Line up the stones with sunrise or sunset during a solstice or equinox to view how the sun changes position with the seasons.

Chain Sculpture

Remember the quarry workers of Stoneycroft at this memorial sculpture made from chains and drills they used in the quarry.

Picnic Seats

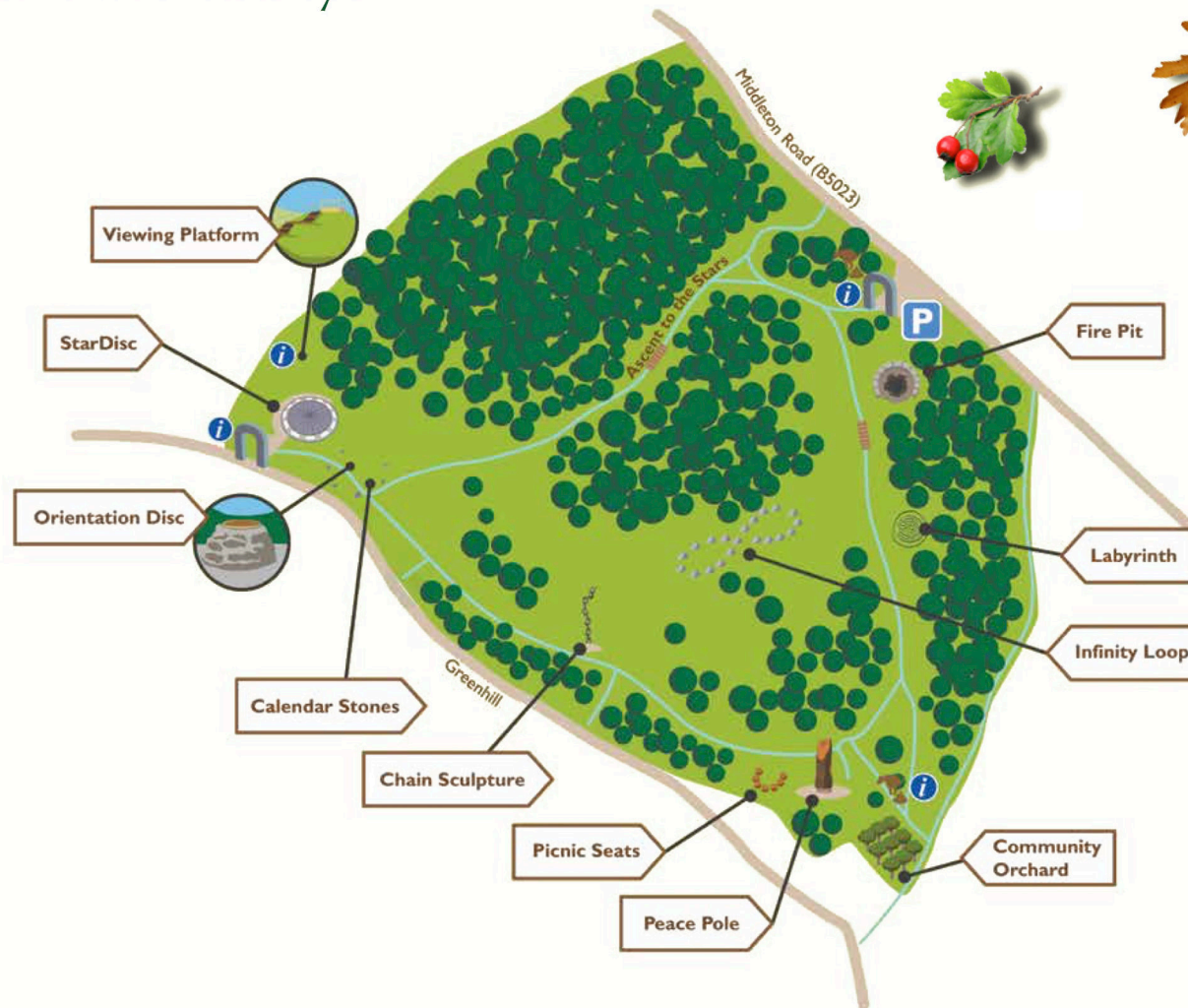
A circle of wooden seats carved by local sculptor Andrew Frost. Enjoy the view, read a book or have a picnic.

Peace Pole

Another Andrew Frost sculpture, this is one of thousands of Peace Poles across the world. 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' is carved in English, and the languages of our French and German twin towns. Find out more about Peace Poles at www.peacepoleproject.org – and Wirksworth Twinning at www.wirksworthtwinning.org.uk.

Community Orchard

In 2009, local volunteers planted over 30 varieties of apple, pear and damsons in what had been a rubbish dump. All are heritage varieties suited to Derbyshire's climate. There are also cider apples and a row of raspberries. You can picnic among the trees.



Fire Pit

A place for conversations, stories or songs by a campfire. If you wish to have a fire here please be safe, take care it doesn't spread, make sure it is out before you leave it and only use wood you have brought with you.

Labyrinth

Walk to the centre of the labyrinth, an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. It is a single circuitous path which winds its way into the centre and out again, and can be used as a meditative tool. Our labyrinth was designed by local artist Glennie Kindred and constructed by local people.

Infinity Loop

Explore the huge sculpture that is a figure-of-eight, infinity symbol and analemna. Built from local limestone by Wirksworth artist Veronica West, who describes it as 'It Is What It Is'.

What's an analemna?

Check out this video to find out about this celestial event – <http://bit.ly/Stoneyloop>