

Walk No 10: Wilwell Farm Cutting and/or Silverdale
 Walk/Photos taken 4th & 6th July 2020

- Wilwell Farm Cutting:
- Silverdale:
- Both:

Full Walk is approx. 11.5 Km

The Wilwell Farm Cutting (only) walk turns left on Ruddington Lane to go to the Cutting and then to the tram route before turning right and going back via Compton Acres.

The Silverdale (only) walk continues along the tram route from Ruddington Lane stop and then goes around Silverdale before going under the A52 and back via Compton Acres.

The Full walk combines the two and goes to Wilwell Farm Cutting and then to the tram track but turns left to go around Silverdale.

From Musters Road, the walks follow the route of Walks 3A & 5 along Eton and Rugby Roads, right towards Rushcliffe Arena and then left and along paths by the two ponds –

- to see how the goslings and ducklings are getting on.



Continue to The Compton Acres tramstop and turn right towards Ruddington Lane.

When this route was a railway (Great Central Railway) there was no housing on the Compton Acres side. The line had been closed for over twenty years when the housing was built and the route was overgrown, with a rough path along it (embankment at Wilford Lane, gradually lowering to a cutting towards Ruddington Lane). When the proposals for the tram route were out for public consultation, residents of properties in Compton Acres close to the proposed line were concerned about loss of amenity (the path), noise and loss of trees, etc. I recall a public meeting at which I was expecting to hear more about these concerns and explain what could and would be done. When I arrived I was informed that the event would be a kind of Question Time – they had a large video camera set up facing a line of chairs where the panel (3 residents plus me) were to sit. The audience were mainly opposed to the tram proposal, as were the other members of the panel. So no ‘BBC balance’, not even from the ‘chair’a challenging evening!

Today, the route has noise barriers along where there is housing, a very well used pedestrian and cycle path and new trees and shrubs provide visual protection.



And new housing is being built to take advantage of the close proximity of the tram service.



At Ruddington Lane, the Silverdale only route goes straight ahead, alongside the tram route under Clifton Boulevard (A52) – the description of this route will continue a little later.

For the route to Wilwell Farm Cutting and the combined route, turn left along Ruddington Lane – Wilford Road, past the Nottingham South & Wilford Industrial Estate, and go under Clifton Boulevard.



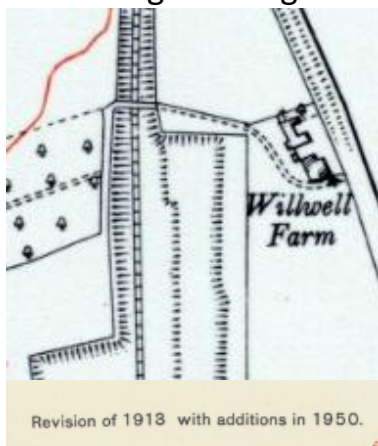
Note the butterfly on the bridge wall



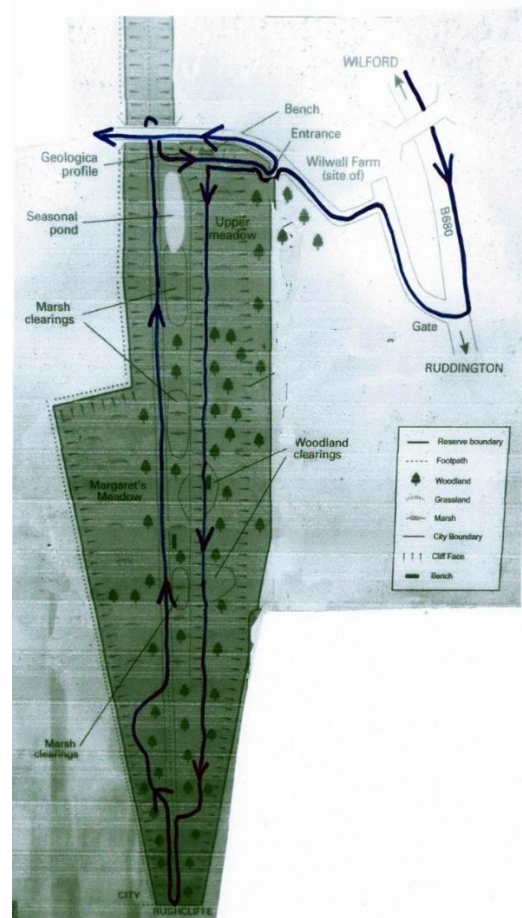
A short distance past the bridge, turn right and go up to the Wilwell Farm Cutting Nature Reserve – declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1981 because of its ‘exceptional wildlife’.



The old map below shows the now demolished Wilwell Farm (before the A52 was built) and also the Great Central Railway alignment for which the cutting was dug out in 1895.



Revision of 1913 with additions in 1950.

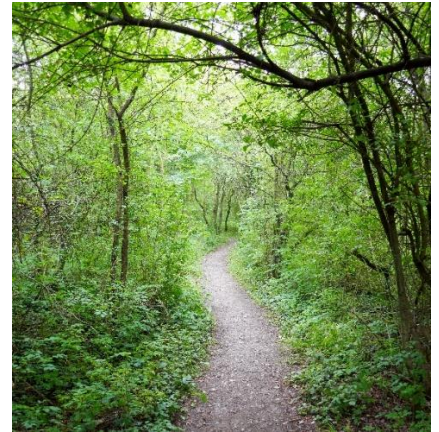


This map shows the route around the Cutting.

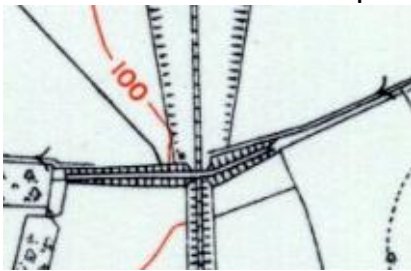
At the top of the hill, continue along the track by the edge of the field and through the wood – the gate to the nature reserve is on the left.....



Just past the information board, take the path to the left and walk to the far end – the route is part meadow, part wood.



At the end, the old rail alignment is blocked by an earth bank with evidence of brickwork – this was an old bridge used to reach fields each side of the railway. There is also an old culvert to take a stream under the track. Both are shown on this old map.



Signs indicate private land, no public access, so turn around.

The route back is straight along the old rail alignment. More meadow on the left and some grazing Hebridean sheep.



Back just below the path down from the entrance gate is another farmers' bridge – this one still erect. Just before it, turn right, up the path and out through the gate and then turn left and cross over the bridge, towards Clifton.



Before leaving the Cutting, it is sometimes surprising how an old railway, long since closed and removed, can leave its mark behind – not just the remains of bridges and other infrastructure but sometimes actual marks in the soil. This screenshot of the 'satellite' view from google maps (right



side is North) shows the southern end of the Cutting on the right and then also shows pale marks in the fields where the rail alignment continued (straight across the picture, right to left) to Ruddington – even after, presumably, nearly 50 years of ploughing!

Once over the bridge turn right down towards the tram track, then left, parallel to the tracks, and then cross over at the crossing.

The 'Wilwell Farm Cutting only' walk turns right and goes back under the A52 (below) and then returns to the start via Compton Acres.

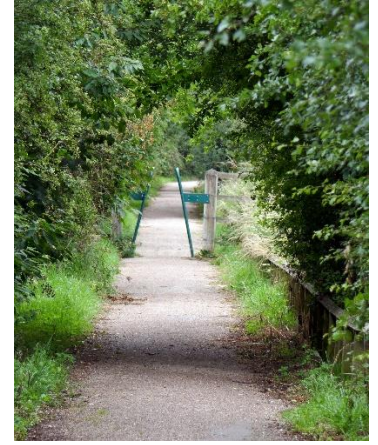
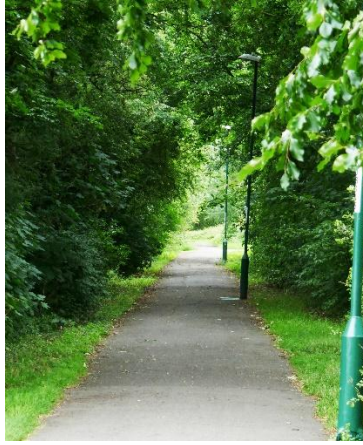


The 'Silverdale only' and combined walks go left towards Clifton alongside the tram route and cross the bridge over Fairham Brook. Fairham Brook is a 16-mile-long tributary of the River Trent that flows from its source near Old Dalby, Leicestershire. The walk will follow some of its route towards the Trent.





Over the bridge, bear right and then turn right, along the path known as Silverdale Walk. Take the first right, over the Fairham Brook, and then immediately left along the path on the Silverdale side of the brook.



The edges of the path are full of trees and plants so there is little to indicate that the path is not far from housing – Silverdale on one side, Clifton the other. There are occasional gaps in the trees that give views of the brook....



And the possibility of seeing some wildlife. This Grey Wagtail was unexpected. Note that the tail is blurred – it was wagging too fast for the camera setting!



The path emerges from its peaceful, green environment at the busy A52/A453 junction. The Fairham Brook goes through an ugly tunnel beneath the road and the way ahead towards Wilford Lane is dominated by heavy traffic.....



But that is not the way for the walk. Follow the path round to the right, go up the steps and go right towards Silverdale, then left on Westerfield Way



Silverdale was constructed, on land from the former Wilwell Farm, by George Wimpey in the late 1950s, with more than 450 brick dwellings built over a three-year period. It was not initially known as 'Silverdale' but the Ruddington Lane Estate.



The estate had no schools and children had to walk to Clifton, initially along an unmade path, but later tarmacked, with some lighting. This is now the southern end of Silverdale Walk (between where our walk crossed the brook and the tram track) but residents dubbed it 'The Black Path', because the few lights seldom worked and there was not much natural light even in daytime.

The estate did have its own Public House, which used to be visible from the slip road between the A52 and A453. The Clifton Bridge Inn, or "The Ponderosa" to the locals, was situated at the junction of Westerfield Way and Brookthorpe Way. It closed down in 2010 and was demolished around 2015.



The site is now occupied by the Wilford View Care Home.

At this point, turn right along Brookthorpe Way, then left on Radway Drive and then right on Newholm Drive.



About half way along Newholm Drive, there are steps to go under the A52.

Go through the underpass and out onto Launceston Crescent – turn left and then left again onto Ruddington Lane.



The next road off Ruddington Lane is Horwood Drive, followed by Kenny Avenue, which leads to Becket Grove, all part of a new housing estate. This new development is on the site of The Becket lower school, previously Corpus Christi school which opened in 1958. The two schools were amalgamated in 1975. This site (and that of the Becket sixth form on Wilford Lane in West Bridgford) was closed in 2009 when The Becket moved to its new site on The Becket Way, off Wilford Lane (as mentioned in Walk 9). The old school buildings were demolished in 2012 and the new housing estate built later.

2010



2020



Cross over Ruddington Lane and go alongside the Ruddington Lane Park to the Compton Acres tramstop and back along the paths passing the ponds, through to Rugby Road, Eaton Road and back to Musters Road.

