

River Leen from Source to the Trent: Section 2 - Papplewick Moor to Bulwell

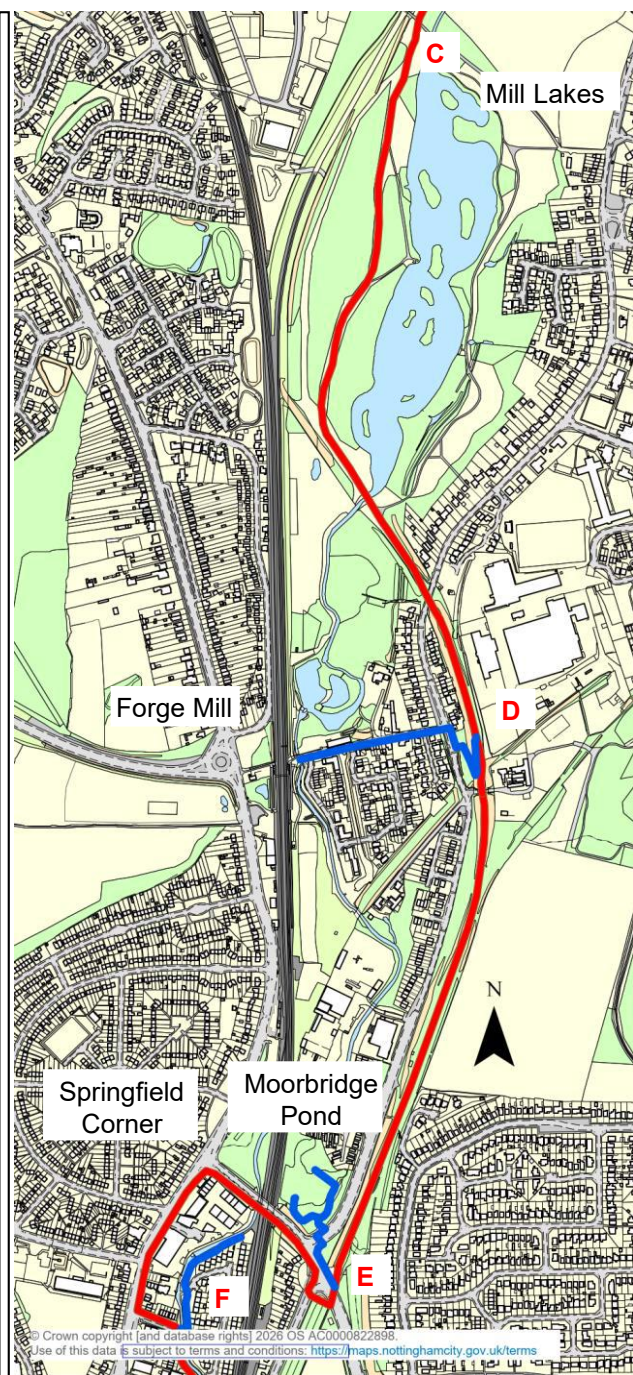
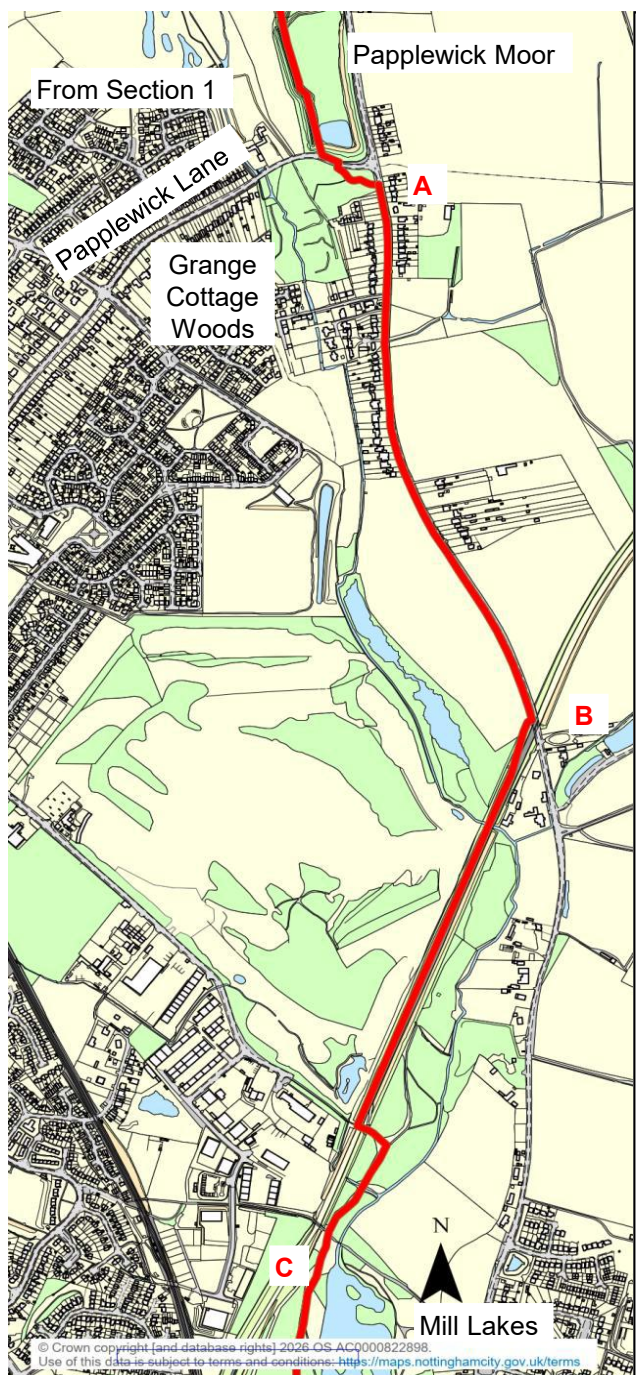


Linear walk from Papplewick Moor starting along Moor Road to join a cycle path on a former railway line (with views of the Leen below) bringing us to Mill Lakes in Bestwood Country Park. Here we follow National Cycle Route 6 past the lakes and continue along it as it joins the Hucknall Road Linear path still on a former railway line. There is an option to detour to Forge Mill near Bestwood Village, and to Moorbridge Pond Nature Reserve. We leave NCN 6 where it meets Hucknall Road and follow busy roads to explore the Leen as it flows into Bulwell.

Start	Papplewick Moor – bus stop at Papplewick Lane End on Moor Road (B683)
Finish	Bulwell Bogs
Distance	c 4.5 miles/ 7.5 km
Time	2-3 hours
Terrain	Footpaths and pavements; some shared pedestrian/ cycle paths
Travel Information	141 bus in Papplewick Moor; buses on Hucknall Road and in Bulwell; tram stop at Moorbridge and Bulwell; trains in Bulwell
Maps	OS Explorer 270 (Sherwood Forest) and 260 (Nottingham)
Facilities/ Refreshments	Bulwell

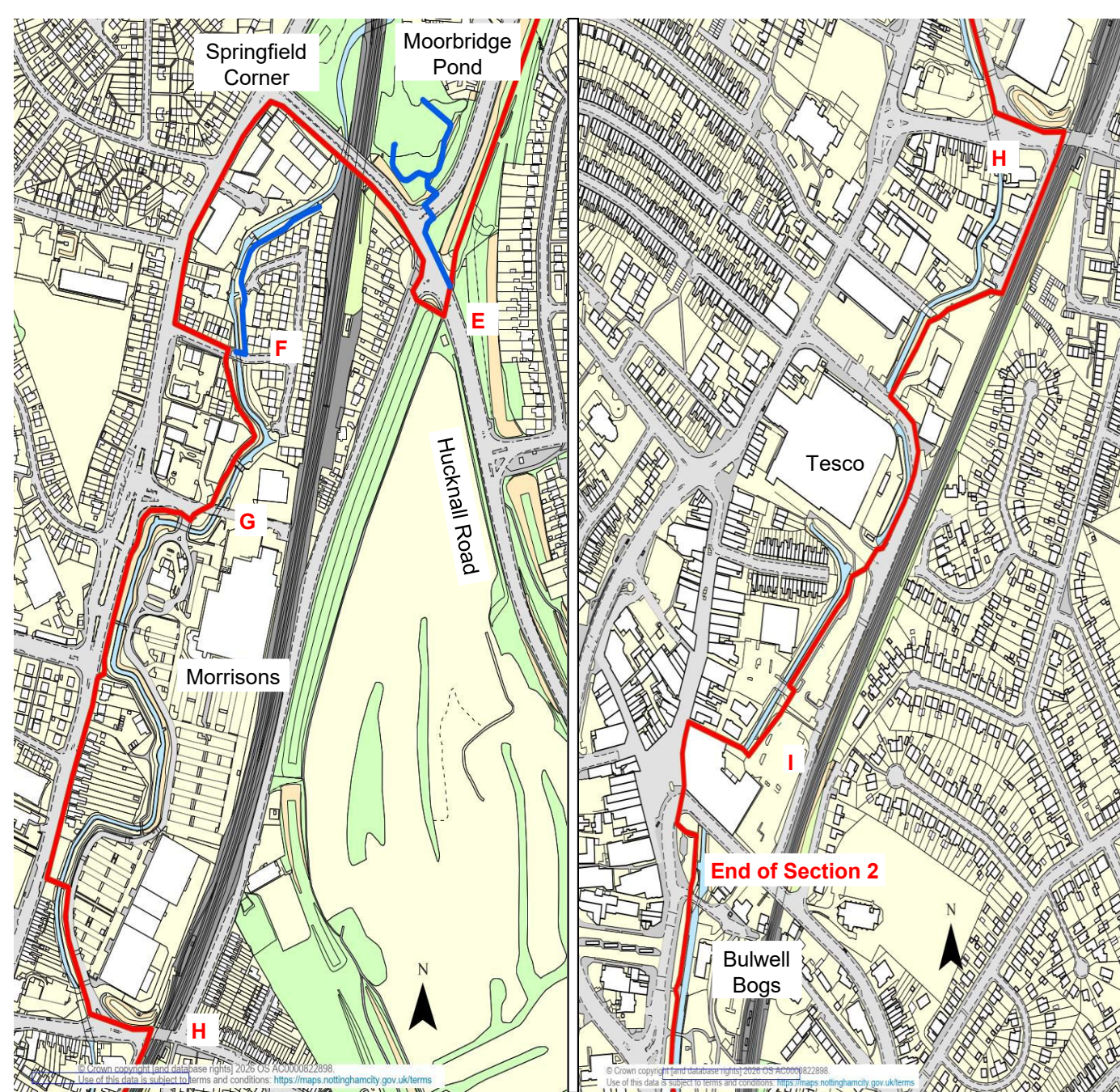
Pictures clockwise from top left: swans on Mill Lakes; NCN 6 sign on Hucknall Walkway; Bulwell Bogs Park with Highbury Road Bridge; Moorbridge Pond Nature Reserve; Forge Mill in Bestwood Village

The walk is on publicly accessible paths and open spaces, most of which are rights of way; some paths are on private land where public access is by permission of the owner.



Route Description

- A. From the bus stop in Papplewick Moor, walk south on Moor Road for c 1km, passing an entrance to Papplewick Grange on your right. Initially walk on the pavement, then carefully on the road when the pavement ends. The Leen is to your right across fields.
- B. Just before a bridge over the road, turn right at a sign for **River Leen Valley** towards Hucknall and **Bestwood Country Park** and ascend to keep ahead on the former railway line. Soon, through the trees on your right, it is possible to glimpse the River Leen below as it flows through Leen Valley Golf Club and then under the railway path to flow on your left. At the first path junction descend to your left, to reach a T junction of paths. Butler's Hill tram stop is nearby and signed on a wooden post at the T junction. Here we turn left to reach an NCN 6 sign.
- C. Follow the path (and NCN 6) through the trees. We cross a small stream and soon see the Leen again on our left. At the next signpost, gates and path junction continue ahead still on NCN 6 as the Leen now flows through **Mill Lakes** (there's a welcome bench with views over the lakes if you detour left off the path). You reach the end of the lakes at a bridge over the River Leen as it flows out of the lakes (there are more benches here). We leave the Leen here as our route continues along NCN 6 to cross Bestwood Road on a bridge, then soon reach a footpath sign to Hucknall and Bulwell Hall Park.
- D. A detour can be taken here following the signed path down to the right to cross Bestwood Road, then briefly right and then left to walk down Mill Lane to see **Forge Mill** where the Leen can be seen again. It is not possible to follow the Leen further here, so return to NCN 6 and continue along this. Ignore further signs/ paths on your left into Bestwood Country Park (unless you wish to detour), including an elaborate National Cycle Network sign. The path bends to the left then descends right to reach another sign board on your left. Here turn right to reach a pedestrian crossing on Hucknall Road and information sign for the **Hucknall Road Walkway**.
- E. Here you can detour again before crossing Hucknall Road, by turning right and carefully crossing Bestwood Road to visit **Moorbridge Pond Local Nature Reserve (LNR)**. (Springfield Corner LNR on the other side of Moor Bridge can also be visited). Return to the pedestrian crossing to cross Hucknall Road, then turn right to cross Bestwood Road and continue ahead on the pavement as Hucknall Road crosses the railway on Moor Bridge. Turn left at the junction (mini roundabout) passing Screwfix. Turn left again at Ventura Drive (before Greggs Drive Thru) to reach the River Leen again near house number 17.



- F. Here you can detour again by crossing over the Leen, then turning left to follow the Leen upstream to see where it comes out from under Moor Bridge. Return to Ventura Drive and cross this to continue the walk by following the path on the right side of the River Leen. You reach a road giving access to Travis Perkins, Macdonalds and Morrisons. Turn right to cross the access to Macdonalds, then immediately left to cross to a “Welcome to Morrisons” sign. Beyond this cross the pedestrian crossing on a bridge over the Leen.
- G. Keep right then immediately left, following the tarmac path by the Leen with Morrison’s car park on the other side of the river and a hedge on your right. Where the tarmac path ends rejoin the pavement by the road (sadly the grass path by the Leen to the left is currently inaccessible). Soon on your left there is another bridge over the Leen (at Springfield Retail Park). Cross this and turn right on the path with the Leen on your right to reach Carey Road.
- H. Cross Carey Road using pedestrian refuges and turn left to follow the pavement round to the right onto Newcastle Street passing Forestside Building and Roofing and Exton’s Motorcycles. The railway is now on your left. Where the road reaches a car park entrance (sometimes with yellow bollards), turn right to follow the path around the edge of the car park to rejoin the Leen. Cross the next road at a pedestrian crossing then turn left to follow the pavement with the Leen on your right, and Tesco’s covered car park on the other side of the river. Cross entrance to this at a pedestrian refuge then right to cross another Tesco car park entrance and follow the path on the edge of the car park with the Leen on your right (the path immediately by the Leen is currently inaccessible). At the end reach a bridge over the Leen.
- I. Cross the bridge and walk through Holborn Place car park, exiting in a gap between buildings into **Bulwell Town Centre**. Turn left through the pedestrian area and market, then keep ahead to cross Highbury Road at pedestrian lights. Immediately after turn left into **Bulwell Bogs park** which has a well, sculpture of a bull and 2-D metal sculptures celebrating Bulwell Viaduct, Shonky Pit, Bulwell Stone Quarry and Bulwell Hall Park. We also see the Leen flowing out from under Highbury Road Bridge (built 1895). The walk ends here. The stone bridge (dating from 1830) can be crossed to reach the tram and train stations. The bus station is on the other side of Main Street.

Points of Interest

Papplewick Moor

This section begins at Papplewick Moor with the Leen to the west of our route. Cotton Mills were developed by the Robinsons along the Leen in this area including at Grange Farm. [The cotton mills on the Leen | Papplewick Parish Council | Papplewick Parish Council](#). A small World War 2 military airfield operated to the west of the B683 here between 1941 and 1945. [Heritage Gateway - Results](#)

Leen Valley Railway Line.

The Leen Valley Railway line was constructed from 1880 to serve the collieries of the Leen Valley, previously served by the Great Northern Railway and Midland lines. The line carried both passengers and coal. [Leen Valley lines of the Great Northern Railway - Wikipedia](#)

Mill Lakes and Bestwood Country Park

Mill Lakes are part of Bestwood Country Park with the lakes fed by the water of the River Leen. The Robinsons' Lower Mill, which was the first to use a rotative steam engine to power a cotton mill, was near here [The cotton mills on the Leen | Papplewick Parish Council | Papplewick Parish Council](#). Bestwood Country Park continues the other side of Bestwood Village on the site of Bestwood Colliery (which closed in 1967). It was the first mine in the world to produce 1 million tons of coal in a 12 month period. Bestwood Colliery Winding House (built 1876) is the last remaining part of the colliery and can be visited. There is a community café there on Saturday mornings. In the Middle Ages Bestwood Country Park was a hunting estate in Sherwood Forest and noted for visits from King Charles II and his mistress Nell Gwynne. For history see [History of Bestwood | Nottinghamshire County Council](#). The park has an active friends' group. See www.fbc.org.uk

Forge Mill

Iron refining took place at Forge Mill from the early 17th century burning timber felled from Sherwood Forest. In the 18th century George, James and John Robinson (who operated the cotton mills further upstream) leased land at this site and created a cotton mill here. In the 19th century it operated as both a corn mill and a bone crushing mill (producing fertilizer). See [M2082 - Forge Mill, Hucknall - Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record](#)

Moorbridge Pond Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Moorbridge Pond was originally part of a larger wetland area where the "Bull Well" a natural spring flowed into the River Leen. The spring was capped to provide a source of water for local industry and was used in the Springfield Dye Works. The factory has long since gone and the spring now enters the river further downstream. An area of natural wetland still thrives here. (source: Wildlife in the City information board on site). It is also possible to visit nearby **Springfield Corner LNR** off Hucknall Road on the other side of the railway over Moor Bridge, though care is required crossing roads to rejoin the main route. The Leen can be seen flowing through Springfield Corner.

Bulwell and the River Leen

The community of Bulwell grew up around a medieval bridge over the River Leen. The name "Bull Well" may refer to an Anglo-Saxon person called "Bulla" or derive from a legend that a bull struck sandstone rock causing it to seep water. The Leen has influenced industry and employment in the town over centuries by providing water and power including for bleaching, dyeing and textile manufacture. In the 19th century with growing population and industry, pollution of the Leen from Bulwell downstream was an increasing problem. The expansion of Nottingham's city boundaries to include places alongside the Leen was in part a response to this, so that water management could be under one authority. Today the Leen in Bulwell flows by retail outlets, light industry, housing and car parks. Wildlife in sections here include Water voles, Otters, Brown Trout, Kingfishers and European Eels. Bulwell also gives its name to Bulwell Stone, an impure coarse-grained limestone found locally and much used as a building material in Nottingham. A former quarry can be found behind St John's Church, Bulwell. Shonky Pit top was on Quarry Road. Bulwell viaduct crossed near where Morrisons is now. Bulwell Hall was built by John Newton in 1770. Its owners included Thomas Hardy a founder of Hardy-Hanson Brewery, and Alderman Albert Ball who purchased mineral rights to the land. In the 1930's the Hall was a sanatorium, then an Italian prisoner of war camp during the war. It was demolished in 1958. [Bulwell - Wikipedia](#)

Bulwell Bogs

The area around Bulwell Bogs was common land and a traditional play area for children. Nottingham Corporation agreed to purchase and preserve Bulwell Bogs in 1879 after a dispute (known as "The Battle of the Bogs") with a local landowner who attempted to enclose the lands.