

# BESTWOOD WALK – “IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF NELL GWYNN”



**A circular walk around Bestwood, including Southglade Park, Bestwood Country Park and former Great Northern Railway line**  
**Walk No 6**

## DESCRIPTION

A circular walk around Bestwood, including Southglade Park, Bestwood Country Park and the former Great Northern Railway line

## THE FACTS

<b>Area</b>	Bestwood, Nottingham City and Gedling Borough
<b>Distance</b>	C 5.5 miles/ 8.8km
<b>Duration</b>	C 3 hours
<b>Maps</b>	As leaflet, street map or OS Explorer 1:25000 Map 260
<b>Travel Information</b>	Bus and tram services see <a href="http://www.nctx.co.uk">www.nctx.co.uk</a> and <a href="https://www.thetram.net">https://www.thetram.net</a>
<b>Terrain</b>	Footpaths, bridleways and pavements. Some steep sections. Some parts in parks may be muddy.
<b>Start/ Finish</b>	Point (A) Southglade Leisure Centre, Southglade Road, Bestwood, NG5 5GU or north of Point (H) Moor Bridge Tram Park and Ride, Hucknall Lane NG6 8AB
<b>Refreshments</b>	Southglade Leisure Centre, Duke of St Albans Pub, Bestwood Lodge Hotel.
Shorter walk option: Buses can be taken along Hucknall Road between points (H) and (J)	

**Cover images:** Clockwise from top left: Emmanuel Church, Southglade Park, Bestwood Lodge, Beeching Axe Bench

## THE ROUTE

- A. From the entrance to **Southglade Leisure Centre car park** turn right onto the path ahead with the children's play area on your right and Leisure Centre on your left, passing the Outdoor Gym on your right, follow the path through the trees. On exiting trees walk ahead on the grassed area, then left uphill to the right of the conifer trees and towards the boundary hedge. At the top of the hill go through gap in trees on ridge of hill, ignoring the park exit on your right and continue ahead with playing fields on your left and the boundary hedge (with Parkview Road) on your right. Exit the park through the arched entrance with yellow sun rays onto Ridgeway.
- B. Turn right, cross Park View and follow Ridgeway passing the Top Valley Social Club. Cross Bestwood Park Drive using the pedestrian crossing and walk around the front of the Duke of St Albans pub onto Bewcastle Road. Continue straight on past the industrial units on your left and then turn right onto Church View Close.
- C. Go through the lych gate (a roofed gateway to a church) into **Emmanuel Church** yard keeping to the right hand path through the church yard, on exiting the church yard, ignore the footpaths to the left and the kissing gate to the right and continue straight ahead for about 40m through the kissing gate into **Bestwood Country Park**. Take the path bearing right and continue straight ahead with the wood on your left. At a Y fork in the path turn left towards **Bestwood Lodge Hotel**. Continue across the car park and take the track on your left signposted Woodside Riding School.
- D. Continue along the path signed Woodman's Path. You should see a house through the trees on your left. Follow the path with the boundary fence on your left to a waymarker post (Bestwood Lodge, Gardens and Alexandra Lodge) near a crossroads of paths. Turn left and follow the path. Big Wood school is on your left, after which the housing estate starts.
- E. After the 3rd entrance to the housing estate (entrance to Gerrard Close) just after a waymarker post (Alexandra Lodge) continue straight on. After 35 metres, just as the path starts to go uphill, turn right off the path and through the trees and take the right hand path and continue uphill to the former coal pit summit with views of Newstead Abbey, Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station and Kimberley Water Tower. Continue straight on, keeping the hedge and woods on your left, turn left and head downhill along the surfaced path towards the entrance to Dunvegan Drive.
- F. With the entrance to Dunvegan Drive straight ahead, turn right and follow the waymarked path ("Horse Trail Permissive Bridleway") to reach a junction of paths. Continue downhill, ignoring the surfaced path, to a Mill Lakes sign, through a kissing gate to a large stone scribed Bestwood Country Park. Follow another Mill Lakes waymark onto the National Cycle Network (Route 6), running along the line of the former **Great Northern Railway**.
- G. Turn left and continue along the railway path for around 1km, with Bestwood Road on your right, to where the path veers left towards Hucknall Road. Note the "**Beeching Axe Bench**" near point (H). To the north of point (H), if you are catching the tram, you could visit the Springfield Corner Nature Reserve which is accessed from Hucknall Lane.
- H. Continue along the path crossing Bestwood Park Drive West and Top Valley Way at the pedestrian crossings to point (I).
- I. Continue uphill along the railway path with Tesco's car park on the left. Continue along the path crossing Rigley Drive and then Gala Way at the pedestrian crossings, keep to the path and then turn left onto Southglade Road at point (J)
- J. Head towards Southglade Leisure Centre to return to start at point (A).

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Nell Gwynn:** Born Eleanor Gwyn on February 2nd 1650 in London. In 1664, Nell became an orangegirl at the Drury Lane Theatre. Nell's first stage appearance was December 1665 and she quickly became a leading comedienne of the King's company. Nell became mistress of Charles II in 1669 and her last stage performance was 1670 in the Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards. The production had to be postponed for several months due to the birth of her first son to the King in 1670. King Charles II gifted the Bestwood hunting estate to Nell and her son Charles Beauclerk, who became the 1st Duke of St Albans. The estate was part of the Royal Sherwood Forest, used by landed gentry and monarchs for hunting. The King and guests would tease poor Nell for sleeping in and missing a good morning's sport. The King offered Nell "all the land she could ride around before breakfast" and the next morning, Nell was at the breakfast table before anyone else. It is claimed she had ridden out early, dropping handkerchiefs along her route, and the encircled area became Bestwood Park. For further information visit <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/culture-leisure/country-parks/history-of-bestwood>

**Southglade Leisure Centre:** A popular Leisure centre managed by Nottingham City Council. For more information phone 0115 87 61600 or visit <https://www.activenottingham.com/centres/southglade-leisure-centre/>

**Emmanuel Church:** A Victorian church with the foundation stone being laid in 1869. Built by the 10th Duke of St Albans in memory of his first wife Duchess Sybil who died in 1871, aged 23. The architect was SS Teulon who also built the nearby Bestwood Lodge, in its current form. The church is built of local Bulwell stone, Magnesian Limestone. It was built for the Duke's family, estate workers and the inhabitants of Bestwood Village. There are five memorial windows by William Morris & Co, dated 1911. In the churchyard are the family plots of the 10th and 11th Duke of St Albans and a memorial seat for Duchess Sybil. For further information visit <https://www.emmanuelchurchbestwood.co.uk/>

**Bestwood Lodge:** This former Victorian Hunting Lodge set in 700 acres of parkland is now a hotel combining the elegance and beauty of a small stately home with all the comforts needed by today's discerning customer and rambler! For further information, telephone 0115 920 3011 / <https://www.bestwoodlodgehotel.co.uk>.

**Bestwood Country Park:** The Country Park was once was part of Sherwood Forest, a hunting preserve of Royalty for centuries. In the 12th century King Henry II who reigned between 1154 and 1159 hunted regularly and to protect the game he offered 10 pennies (known as groats and worth around £30 today or 4 days wages for a skilled tradesman) reward for anyone who caught a poacher. In 1178, the Forest Court sentenced a man for trespassing in Bestwood Park. In 1205 King John, son of Henry II (known as John Lackland) who reigned between 1199 and 1216, raised the reward to five shillings (around £130 today or 25 days wages); this was the King's playground so didn't take kindly to poachers. In 1939 the estate, farms and farmland were acquired by Nottingham Corporation (Nottingham City Council) for housing. Today Bestwood Country Park forms a peaceful oasis on the northern edge of the City of Nottingham.

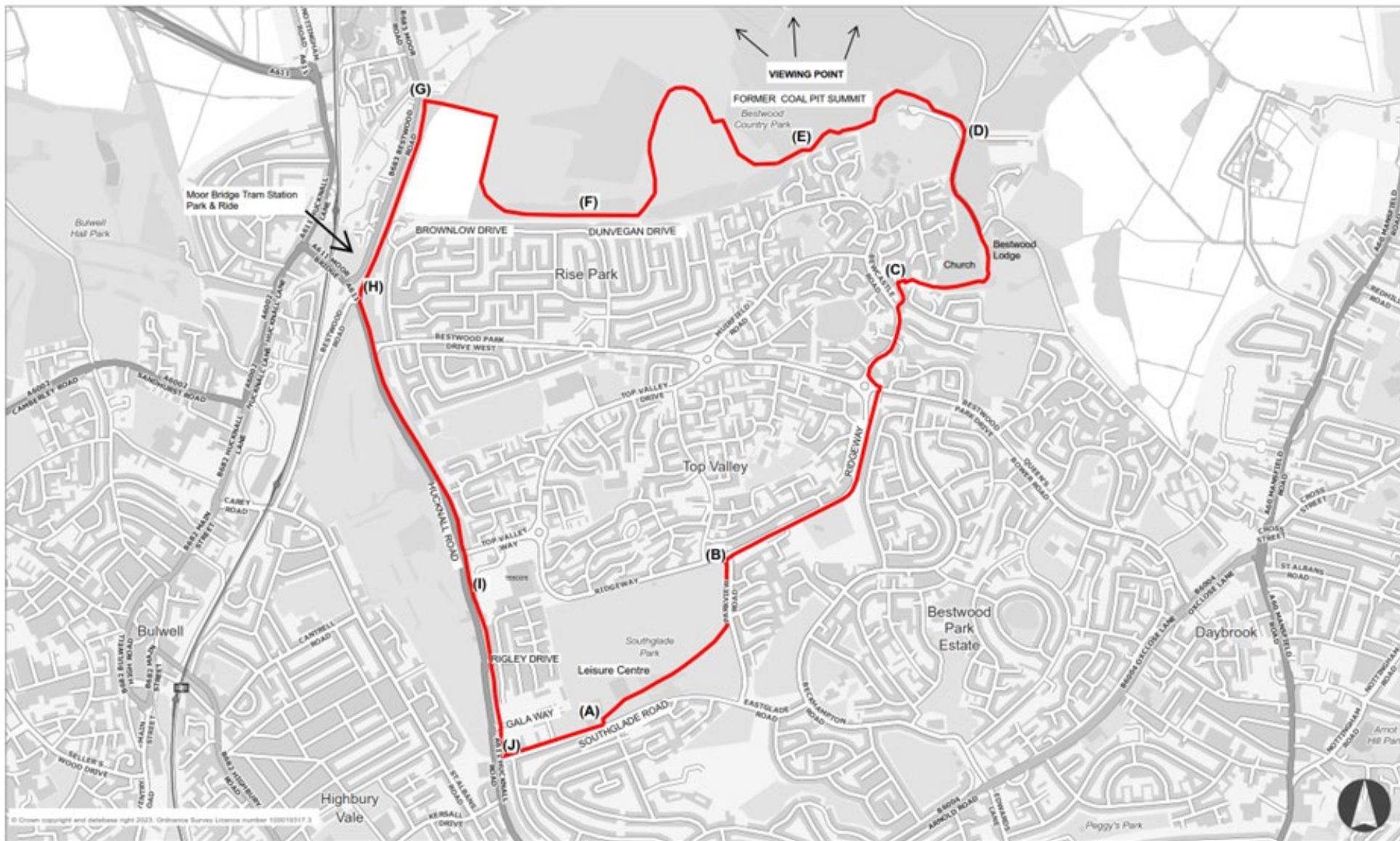
**Friends of Bestwood Park:** Formed in 2007, the group's overall aim is to promote the park, its habitats, flora and fauna, historic buildings and to act as the communication and cooperation between all users. For more details see [www.fbc.org.uk](http://www.fbc.org.uk).

**The Great Northern Railway Line:** Built 1881 – 1964. In 1882 the Leen Valley line was opened from Derbyshire to Newstead. This railway was built to represent another major attempt to secure the colliery and was extended in 1901 to Shirebrook. Soon every major colliery in the area were served by the Great Northern Railway and Midland Railway.

**Bestwood Village:** Originally a small hamlet, surrounded by agriculture and framework knitting. The village was expanded in 1875 when its coal mine was sunk by the Lancaster family. Their Bestwood Coal and Iron Company opened an ironworks next to the colliery in 1881 which closed 1928. The coal mine was one of the most successful in Nottinghamshire and once employed 2000 people until it closed in 1967. The terraces on Park Road, St Albans Road and The Square were built by the company to house its workforce and is now a conservation area. The company built its offices (with its distinctive clock tower) on Park Road. The Bestwood Colliery headstock and winding house built in 1837 stands at the Bestwood Village entrance to the park and is now a listed building.

Produced by the Nottingham Local Access Forum with the support of Nottingham City Council. January 2023

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 The Walk



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