



7 Asymmetrical Sherbrook Valley facing slope.

sections of valleys like the Sherbrook 8 are also characteristic of the asymmetric cross-valleys and the dissected nature of the plateau. The occurrence of dry weathering breaking up the sandstones, explains the influence of freeze-thaw combination with the brief summers. This, in surface drainage when snow melted during the development of permafrost subject to cold conditions similar to northern Canada today. The

At other times, the Chase was free of glacier ice but was still suggests they were eroded subglacially. beneath the ice, the undulating profile of the northern channels can only flow uphill underneath a glacier, being under pressure chise 2, 3 highlight the erosion of glacial meltwater. As water

Whilst the Glacial Boulder 7 demonstrates the ability of glaciers to last 2 million years has had a dramatic impact on the landscape. The episodic growth and retreat of the British ice sheet over the subsequent differences in the rates of weathering and erosion more resistant than the mudstones of the surrounding area and (earth movements) and surface denudation (by wind, water and ice). Tectonic processes resulted in the local uplift of Triassic (sandstones (see cross-sections). These rocks are harder and

Cannock Chase comprises an undulating plateau 150-250m in elevation that stands proud of the surrounding valleys. Its prominence reflects the combined influence of tectonic processes (earth movements) and surface denudation (by wind, water and ice). Tectonic processes resulted in the local uplift of Triassic (sandstones (see cross-sections). These rocks are harder and more resistant than the mudstones of the surrounding area and subsequent differences in the rates of weathering and erosion have further accentuated the relief.

The episodic growth and retreat of the British ice sheet over the last 2 million years has had a dramatic impact on the landscape. Whilst the Glacial Boulder 7 demonstrates the ability of glaciers to transport material long distances, glacial meltwater has generated the most impressive landforms. Both the prominent valley linking Rugeley and Cannock 13, 31 and a series of deeply-incised channels around the northern perimeter of the chise 2, 3 highlight the erosion of glacial meltwater. As water

From the view point 18 continue on to the far corner of Castle Ring. Turn left downhill and then immediately right along the path parallel to the fence 19 then forking left on the main path. Continue down, and cross the Red Brook 20. Take the track to the left at the marker post, continuing on and straight across the road 21. Carry straight on, keeping the ridge to your right eventually heading downhill 22 & 23, over a stream and follow the valley to the right, emerging on a spoil heap 24. Go straight on to the Breton-Ravenhill Way for 50m and take the path to the left up to the road bend 25. Follow the bridge path on the opposite side of the road on your left into the Victoria Mound quarries 26.

Retrace your steps to the Breton-Ravenhill Way and follow it to the left, crossing Colliery Road 27. Continue to the end of the business Coppice Lane for 400m and take the right fork uphill. Continue straight ahead across the minor road and across the main A460 along the farm track passing through the farmyard 30 and down the path beneath the railway and straight across the field crossing the stream 31. At the Heritage Path, turn left and then right through a gate. Follow the path past Horns Mill pond 32. An alternate route continues past the pub, turns left at the road and then takes the path right, opposite the Victory Hall, back to the Birches Valley Forest Centre. Back-track and follow the Heritage Path left down the valley. Take the footpath left to Slitting Mill pumping station 33.

Continue along Jones Lane 34. On reaching the main road turn right for 100m, then left along a footpath to Chaseley Road. Turn left and after 450m turn right along West Butts Road to the end. Continue straight across and take the footpath to the summit of Etching Hill 35. Return downhill and turn right along Mount Road. At the junction, take the footpath opposite, following the field boundary and pass through a wood to a farm track 36. Turn right down the track 37 and follow it to Wolsley Bridge.

Follow the A51 towards Stone, cross the Trent by the Wolsley Bridge 38, and at the canal take the towpath left. Approaching Great Haywood, cross the canal by the iron bridge, pass under the railway and take a right fork. Continue across a field taking the second main valley on the right into a wood. Follow the path to Cliff Caves 39. Continue through the wood exiting by another stile, and turn left across a field, then follow the path back to the canal. Continue along the towpath to Trent Lane and turn left to cross Essex Bridge 40. Follow the road and Staffordshire Way through the Shugborough Estate 41 to the A513 and turn right. Follow the road 42 to Coldman's Slade and take the footpath from the back of the second car park parallel to the road, straight back to Satnall Hills Quarry.

Continue past the entrance to the Forest Centre and the houses, and take the main path to the left. After crossing Stony Brook 41 continue straight on along the wide track to the road. Turn right, beneath the rail bridge 42 and then up the other side of the valley 43. Cross the main road and follow the side road down to the farm. Turn left and follow the track up the valley. An alternate route turns left near the mountain bike trail, through Regent's Wood to Stile Cop. It continues through Stile Cop car park and follows an escarpment emerging at The Levels near Breton 27.

Continue straight ahead along the main path until it meets the Marquis Drive / Heart of England Way at a T-junction and turn left, following it to the crossroads 14. Turn right along Colliery Road and then left through a small car park on to a footpath. After 100m, take the footpath on the right. Continue along the path 15 and when it returns to the road follow the Heart of England Way to the left, continuing straight on to Castle Ring 16 to the crest of a sharp rise 17. Here, take the left fork and turn left to Castle Ring. Follow the north side of the Castle Ring to the view point.

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## GEOMORPHOLOGY

### GEOLOGY

The rocks of Cannock Chase belong predominantly to the Triassic Period (here 250-245 million years old). These overlie the Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures (314-312 million years old) separated by a 60 million year unconformity during which the older rocks were deformed, uplifted and eroded.



11 Spoil heaps

The Carboniferous muds, coals and ironstones were deposited near to the equator in a low-lying muddy delta. Periodic emergence of the delta top allowed plants to colonise the surface, the remains of which were compressed to form coal. These coals, and associated ironstone bands have been extensively mined on the southern margin of the Chase.

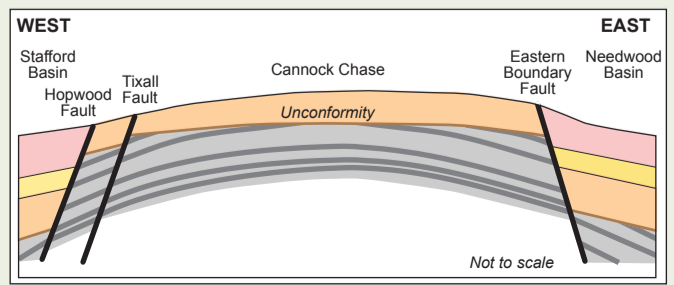
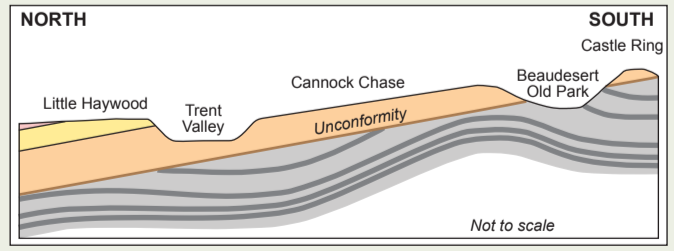
By the Triassic, Britain had moved to the northern desert latitudes. The pebbly Kidderminster Formation was deposited in a large braided river flowing northwards from mountains located in Northern France. The liver coloured quartzite pebbles are believed to have originated there and very rare limestone pebbles have been found to contain fossils from the Ordovician period of Brittany. Other pebbles include white vein quartz used in glass making, pink rhyolites and black basalts. The Kidderminster Formation is both an important source of aggregates and water.



1 Pitted pebble

The overlying Bromsgrove Sandstone is finer grained and lacks pebbles, indicating a decline in energy in the Triassic rivers, becoming meandering in nature as the mountains subsided. This unit has been used as a building stone and equivalent rocks beneath Morecombe Bay form a reservoir for natural gas.

#### Schematic geological sections across Cannock Chase



### LOCATION MAP



A project managed by Ian Stimpson and Richard Waller on behalf of the Staffordshire RIGS Group with financial support from the Staffordshire Aggregates Levy Grant Scheme 2008. Text and photographs by members of the Staffordshire RIGS Group. Design by Rosie Duncan.

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A member of UKRIGS, the Staffordshire RIGS Group is a voluntary organisation responsible for the conservation of regionally important geological and geomorphological sites in Staffordshire. For more information contact: Staffordshire RIGS – [www.staffs-rigs.org.uk](http://www.staffs-rigs.org.uk)

North Staffordshire Group Geologists' Association – [www.esci.keele.ac.uk/nsgga](http://www.esci.keele.ac.uk/nsgga)  
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – [www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk](http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk)

Remember to follow the country code and please do not hammer rock surfaces. Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs; leave gates and property as you find them; protect plants and animals and take your litter home. Keep dogs under control and consider other people. Please adhere to all Forestry Commission instructions and warnings

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## GEOTRAIL DIRECTIONS

# The Cannock Chase Geotrail

### A Landscape Evolved from Desert, Swamp and Ice

