



## Wildlife & Nature

Dimmingsdale is a haven for wildlife. Its lakes, streams and rivers combine with a mix of broadleaf and spectacular Scots pines to provide the perfect habitat.

On the lakes you will see all different types of wild fowl –heron, kingfisher, moorhen, Canadian Geese; mallards to name but a few.

A little harder to see are the residents actually in the lakes - Crayfish, frogs, toads, newts, trout and a host of other insect and other invertebrates.

Spotted and Green Woodpecker can be heard echoing through the valley, buzzards soar above it and pied flycatchers, redstarts and the willow warbler are also residents of this tranquil place. It is also home to Tawny and Little Owls and many more common woodland birds.

The trees also provide shelter and protection for a host of mammals – badgers, foxes, hares, rabbits, grey squirrels, hedgehogs, stoats, and weasels. There have even been sightings of Muntjac deer and pine martins in the area!

The valley is also a perfect habitat for woodland flowers. In spring, the slopes are a carpet of bluebells, wood anemones and wood sorrel. In the summer, ferns, foxgloves and blackberries abound.

At the top of the valley is one of Staffordshire most important remaining ancient hill pastures, now classed as a site of Special Scientific Interest. Covered with heather, tough grasses and bilberry and interspersed with yellow tormentil and heath bedstraw. Special wetland plants, such as yellow bog asphodel and sphagnum mosses nestle in hollows beside the path.

This beautiful pasture attracts a plethora of insects - grasshoppers, hoverflies, bees, brown and large skipper butterflies are just a few of the pasture's residents. The area simply shimmers in summer with insect life.

## THE LEGEND OF THE CHAINED OAK

Within the valley is a large, extremely old Oak tree smothered with chains. Legend has it that in the 1830's a beggar woman asked the Earl of Shrewsbury for some money. He refused and so she put a curse on him. For every branch that fell off this magnificent Oak, a member of the Earls family would die. Later a branch did fall off the tree and member of the Earls family died. Immediately the Earl of Shrewsbury had chains wrapped around the branches to stop any more branches falling off. The ride 'Hex' at the Alton Towers Resort is based on this local legend!



## A stroll along Earl's Drive

**A gentle, picturesque stroll for all the family!**  
(Approx. 30 mins)

- 1.Exit car park and take left-hand path past the Ramblers Retreat. The path will pass a converted Smelting Mill located on the right hand side of the path.
- 2.You will reach a lake, located on right hand side of the path. Here you can enjoy beautiful views of the lake and valley. Children can also feed the ducks that live on the lake.
- 3.Continue on this path, passing woodland on your left and streams on your right. On your left, you may be able to see an outcrop of sandstone rock which looks like a lion's head, however when the trees are in full bloom it may be difficult to view.
- 4.Follow this path until you arrive at a second lake, again located on the right hand side of the path.
- 5.When ready, simply turn around and retrace your steps back to the Ramblers Retreat car park.

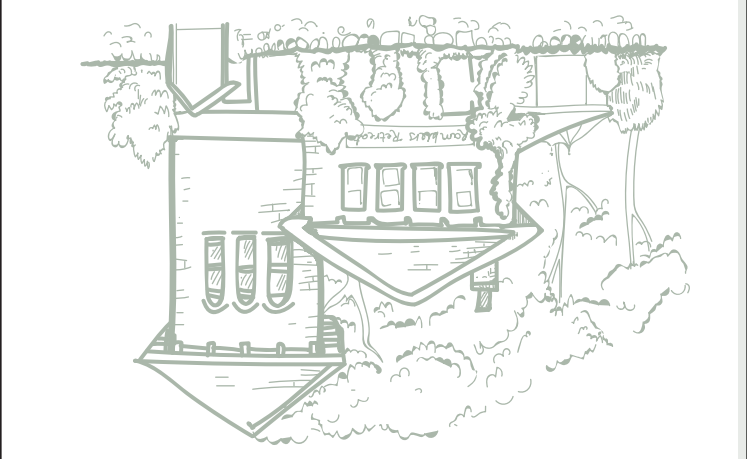
## Castle View Walk (2miles)

A relatively easy walk, taking approx. 1 hour, offering lovely views of woodland, sandstone outcrops & the castle at Alton Towers. It will also take you through an ancient hill pasture which is a Site of Scientific Interest due to its flora & fauna.

**Directions:**

- 1.Exit car park and take right-hand path past the Ramblers Retreat. The path will pass a converted Smelting Mill located on the left hand side of the path.
- 2.You will reach a lake (again located on left of the path). Here you can enjoy beautiful views of the lake and valley.
- 3.The path continues with the lake on your left but shortly divides. Take the right hand path up bank. As you reach the top of the bank look up to view sandstone outcrops & Scots pine trees growing out of the rocks.
- 4.Continue until the path splits again. Take the left hand path which bends around to the left. Follow this path for approx. ½ mile. Again, there are impressive woodlands and sandstone rocky outcrops on the right hand side of the path.
- 5.You will then arrive at a cross roads. Take the right path up bank for approx. 50 yards arriving at a T-junction.
- 6.Turn left at the T-junction and follow the path past the YHA on your left hand side. The path continues behind the YHA after which you will pass through a small gate and into a meadow. This meadow is ancient pasture and is a Site of Scientific Interest.
- 7.Follow the path straight ahead and you will come to a bench on your right. Sitting on the bench gives you a lovely view down the valley to the castle at Alton Towers.
- 8.Keeping your back to the bench, follow the path straight ahead through the meadow. At the bottom of the meadow you will pass through a gate.
- 9.Shortly after the gate, take the left hand path. Continue for approx. 1/3 mile.
- 10.You will then arrive at a crossroad. Take the left hand path that descends down the valley.
- 11.Keep going straight on this path until you return to the Ramblers Retreat (approx. 1/2 mile). You will pass a house called "Earls Rock on your right hand side and the lake, which will again be on your right hand side.



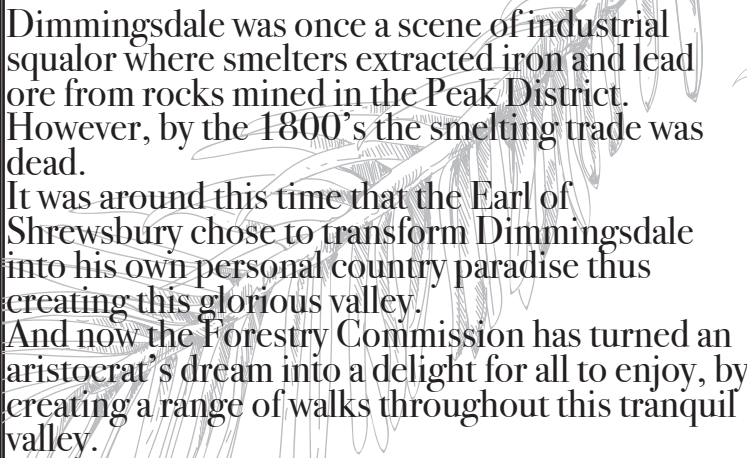


Discover  
Dimmingdale  
AND THE  
RAMBLERS  
RETREAT

Dimmingsdale is truly  
one of  
**STAFFORDSHIRE'S  
HIDDEN GEMS**

Lakes, streams and rivers combine with a mixture of broadleaf trees, spectacular Scots Pines and huge sandstone rocky outcrops to create spectacular scenery and an amazing haven for wildlife, which is beautiful at anytime of the year.

Affectionately known as “Little Switzerland” and “Fairy Glen” it was also described by a priest as “the closest place to heaven”!

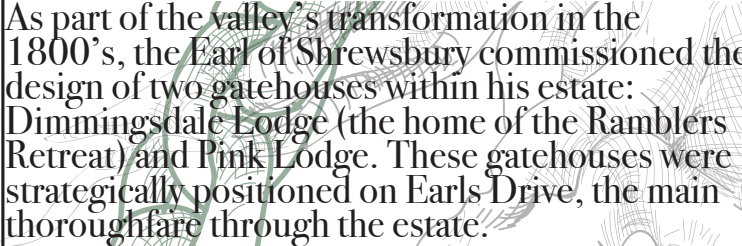


# RAMBLERS RETREAT

## Dimmingsdale

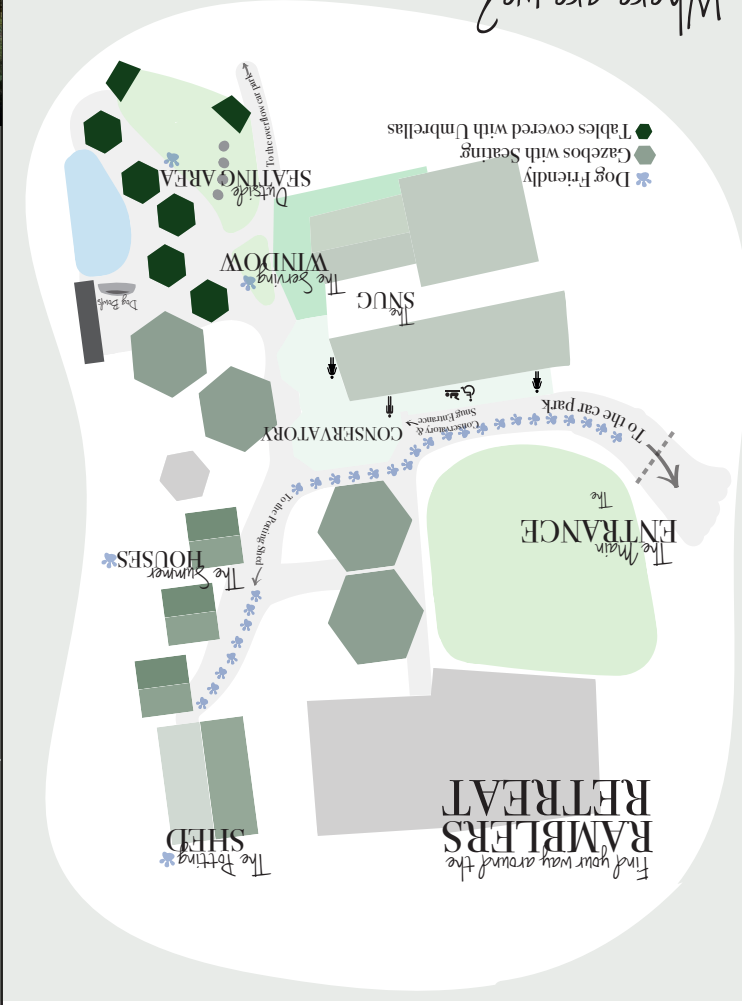
We are a family run, award winning country tearoom nestled in the heart of the beautiful Churnet Valley in Staffordshire.

Whether you chose to eat in our cosy beamed snug, our airy garden room or alfresco in our beautiful gardens overlooking the woodland, we guarantee you'll find the atmosphere warm and welcoming.



In the 1900's the Earl's estate was divided up into lots and sold. However, after the 1960s the lodge was left vacant and fell into serious disrepair.

A dereliction order was placed on the buildings in 1978; however Gary and Margaret Keeling saw life in the dilapidated building. It took two years hard work to restore, however in 1980, Gary, Margaret and their family moved in and made it their home.



Where are we?



● Gazebos with Seating  
● Tables covered with Umbrellas

**SEATING AREA**  
*Outside*

MODERN  
The Serving  
SOCIETY

## Our Menu

For over 35 years, we have offered a range of high quality, traditional homemade food – from hearty breakfasts, to delicious three course lunches to tasty snacks – not to mention our extensive range of mouth watering homemade desserts!

Our menu is homemade and we pride ourselves on using only the best ingredients - many of which are sourced from local suppliers within the Staffordshire Moorlands.

*Breakfast*

Our Staffordshire Breakfasts are most definitely a great way to start the day! The perfect way to fuel up before a day exploring Dimmingsdale.

*Main Courses & Light Bites*  
We pride ourselves on serving homemade main courses and light bites, using the best locally selected ingredients wherever possible. Choose anything from a Staffordshire Roast Dinner, homemade quiche to Staffordshire Oatcakes, toasted sandwiches, jacket potatoes, farmhouse sandwiches & baguettes.

*Homemade Cakes & Puddings*  
Cakes certainly are our speciality! We are famous across Staffordshire for our homemade cakes: whether it be Maggie's famous Lemon Meringue Pie, or any of our chef's daily specials. Our cakes are sure to satisfy your sweet tooth!

**Hot & Cold Drinks**  
From barista made coffee and tea, to luxury milkshakes made with organic ice cream, a wide range of refreshing soft drinks as well as alcoholic beverages. You're sure to find the perfect way to quench your thirst after a stroll around the beautiful Churnet Valley.



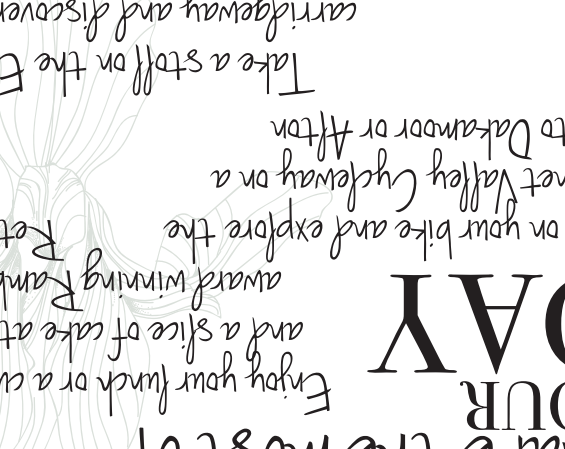
*Ice Cream*

We sell Marshfield Organic Dairy ice Cream. Premium dairy ice cream made with super-fresh organic milk and all-natural ingredients. From Chocoholic Heaven to Rum and Raisin, we've got a flavour for everyone and they're all a perfect treat for a stroll around Dimmingsdale!

Take-home menus are available from staff.

Wander for as long as you like on  
Earl's drive, enjoying the  
stunning tranquility and scenery  
Dimmingsdale has to offer

Visit the Ranger SS&I,  
Staffordshire's last remaining  
ancient hill pasture and enjoy the  
views across the valley



Make the most of  
YOUR DAY  
Enjoy your lunch or a cuppa  
and a slice of cake at the  
award winning Ramblers  
Retreat  
Jump on your bike and explore the  
Churnet Valley Cycleway on a  
trip to Dakamoor or Afton  
Take a stroll on the Earls  
carriageway and discover the  
legend of the Chained Oak for