

Things to do...

Explore

Learn more about everything to see and do at Dimmingsdale as you walk! Buy a family activity pack from the cafe or download activity sheets from our website before you come to make the most of your visit. Coming to Dimmingsdale on a learning trip? Hire our 'Ranger in a Box' kit for plenty of ideas to run your own self-led educational programme. Visit forestry.gov.uk/england-learning for more details.



A rich history

Ore smelting (the process of extracting metals from certain rocks, known as ore) flourished in Dimmingsdale for more than 150 years. Rock was brought here by cart from mines in the Peak District. However the trade that brought mill owners profit impoverished the environment - hillsides were stripped of timber to feed the fires and the pleasant stream was damned and its waters put to work turning millwheels.

Now the spoil heaps are gone, but you can still see remnants of Alton Smelting mill near the Ramblers Retreat. The mill was built around 1741, but by the 1780s the building was converted into a corn mill.

Coppicing survived into the 20th century producing timber for charcoal until the late 1950s. Today ancient semi natural woodland of oak, beech and birch clothe the hillsides alongside commercial crops of pine and larch. The woodland is managed for timber, wildlife and people. The pine and larch undergo a cycle of felling and replanting allowing for some natural regeneration in cleared areas.

Food and drink

Refreshments can be bought from the award winning Ramblers Retreat licensed restaurant, next to the car park. Enjoy delicious homemade food using only the best locally sourced ingredients.



Flora and Fauna

At the top of the valley is the Ranger, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and one of Staffordshire's last remaining hill pastures. Covered with heather, tough grasses, cranberry and bilberry interspersed with tormentil and heath bedstraw. Special wetland plants such as bog asphodel, sphagnum mosses and round leaved sundew also thrive here.

In mid summer you may see butterflies like Meadow Brown and Large Skipper and a myriad of insects. These in turn attract a wealth of birds from Woodpeckers to Willow warblers and Redstarts.

Learning in your forest

Your forest is cared for by the Forestry Commission, for people, wildlife & timber.

To find out more, visit: forestry.gov.uk/england-learning



Welcome to Dimmingsdale

We have turned an aristocrat's dream into a delight for everyone. Magnificent drives built by the Earl of Shrewsbury have been incorporated in the Valley walk.

Visitors to this North Staffordshire beauty spot can now stroll where fine carriages once carried gentry on pleasure trips. The rolling hills and dramatic sandstone outcrops make a visit to this woodland a delight at any time of the year.

Visitor information



Location

The entrance to Dimmingsdale is on Red Road, the lane running between Alton and Oakamoor.
Sat Nav: ST10 4BU
OS Grid ref: SK 064434

Parking

The car park is managed by the Forestry Commission and can be used by Ramblers Retreat patrons. The barrier is closed at dusk and there is no overnight parking.
www.forestry.gov.uk/pass

Contact

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If you need this publication in large print or in another language please contact us. Tel: 0131 314 6575
Email: diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



Dimmingsdale is cared for by:

Explore Dimmingsdale

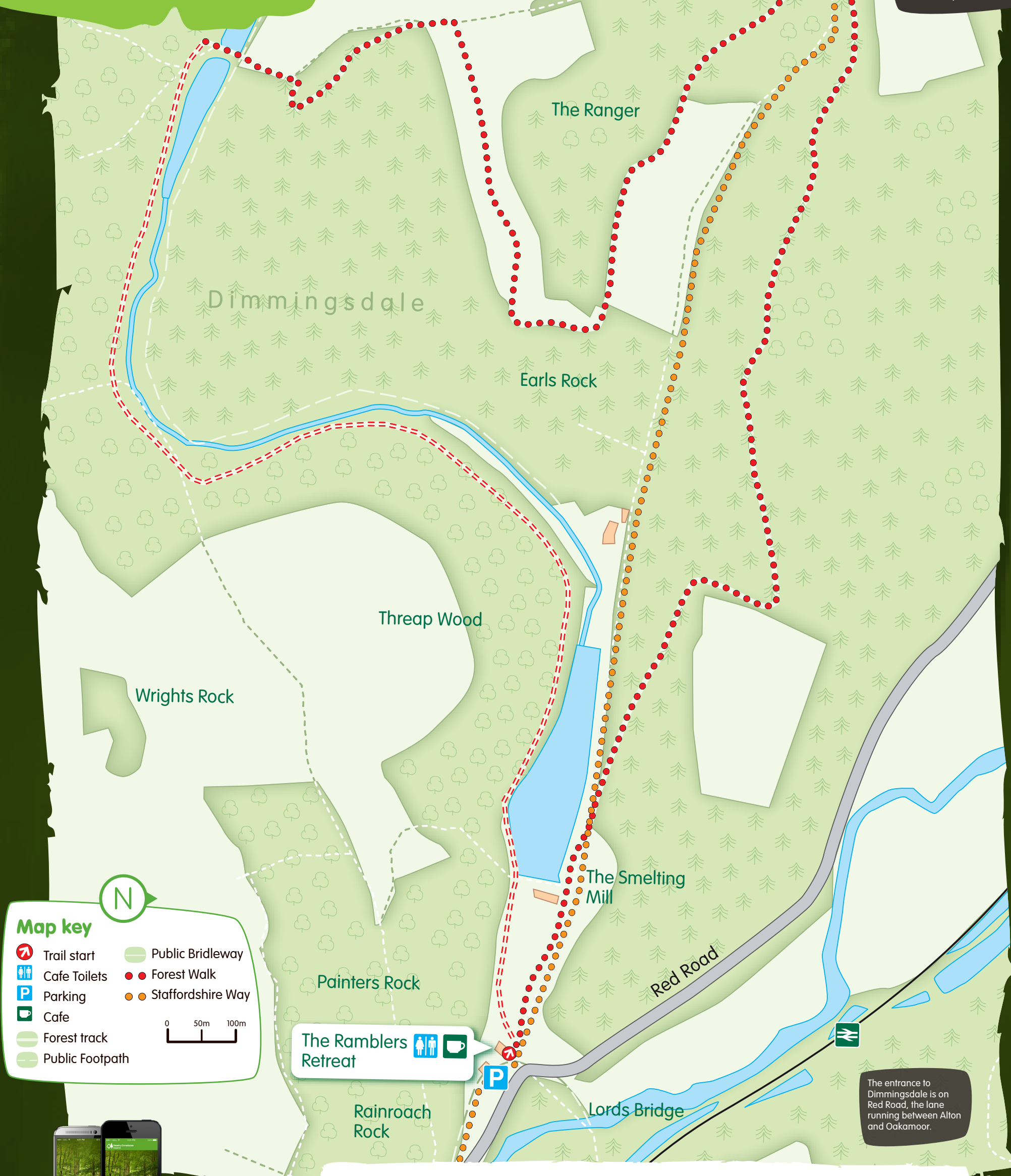


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Exploring the woodland walks

Follow the Forest Code

- Guard against all risks of fire.
- Protect and respect wildlife, plants and trees.
- Keep dogs under control & tidy after them.
- Take your litter home.
- Make no unnecessary noise.
- Take only memories away.

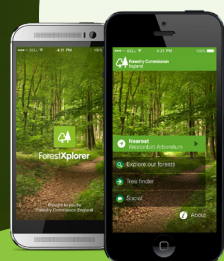


Map key

- Trail start
- Cafe Toilets
- Parking
- Cafe
- Forest track
- Public Footpath
- Public Bridleway
- Forest Walk
- Staffordshire Way

0 50m 100m

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ForestXplorer

Get free on the go information about your woodland with added **Twitter** and **Facebook** feeds. Get your photos featured in the app using **Instagram #**

Find out more at forestry.gov.uk/mobileapp

Forest Walk ● ●

Moderate trail (Easy route = =)

Once a part of a magnificent estate owned by the Earls of Shrewsbury, we've reinstated a lovely ramble around the valley. Follow the red banded posts to enjoy a circular 2.7km walk, starting and finishing at the Ramblers Retreat Cafe. Enjoy panoramic views and huge, rocky, sandstone outcrops carved out during the ice age along the route. The path can be muddy and is steep in places so please take care.

Unsuitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs. An alternative flat, easy route is to take the left hand path past the Ramblers Retreat and walk by the stream to the second lake and then return.

Staffordshire Way ● ●

This 92 mile walk, managed by Staffordshire County Council, passes through some of the finest countryside in the Midlands and runs down the centre of the valley.