

GRANVILLE HERITAGE TRAIL

We invite you to explore the industrial history of North East Telford which lies hidden among its streets and green places.

Discover the contribution that Granville Leveson Gower, the second Earl Gower, his descendants the Dukes of Sutherland and the Lilleshall Company which he formed in 1802 had on the lives of ordinary working people.

Imagine the iron furnaces, mines, factories and the canals in their heyday.



Portrait of Granville Leveson Gower

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The waymarked route is steep in parts (with and without steps) and utilises beaten paths through green spaces which may be wet and slippery.

Exit the car park, cross the road and turn right along the path to the information board above the Donnington Wood tub boat canal. Go through the gate further on to your left. Fork left and follow the handrail leading to the remains of the canal.

1 **BUILT** by Earl Gower in 1768, the Donnington Wood Tub Boat Canal was one of the earliest canals in Britain. It ran 5½ miles from the coal mines at Donnington Wood to a coal wharf at Pave Lane where surplus coal was sold. This branch was used by horse drawn tub boats to transport raw materials in and smelted iron out of the Lodge furnaces. Other branches served the limestone quarries at Lilleshall.



Old Lodge Furnaces
Courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

Continue on and up the steps at the end. Follow the path almost straight ahead to the remains of the Lodge Furnaces.

IN 1822, the Lilleshall Company built two furnaces here to supplement those it had in Donnington Wood. A further furnace was added in 1846 and two more in 1859. They produced internationally recognised quality iron until 1888 when they were blown out for economic reasons.

Continue to the remains of the basement stables of the ironworks office on your right.

BUILT, originally, to store blasting powder used in nearby mines, this later formed the basement of the furnaces' ironworks office and was used as stabling for office workers' horses. Later the office was converted to a house which was finally demolished in the 1960s.

Turn right at the main path. On your left look for the remains of a brick privy.

ALTHOUGH close to the Lodge Furnaces it is thought that this was associated with a small mill or a coal washing plant later, in 1875, converted to a house. Look for the culvert next to the privy covering a stream entering the canal.

Continue on the main path past the header pool for the canal and the other end of the culvert.

Pass through a kissing gate and, at a T-junction, turn right and continue to a metal gate. The main route becomes steep here. (For a flatter route, follow the Hutchinson Trail through the gate and continue along what is the path of the old mineral railway for about 1km to re-join the main route).

Take lefthand path up a slope. Bear left and near the top of the long rise, fork left and left again. On the top of the slope is a meadow where you can see the Grange Colliery winding gear in the distance.

2 **ORIGINALLY** called the Albert and Alexandra, this pit was sunk in 1864 to exploit the deep coal seams east of the region's faultline which gave access to surface coal in earlier 'bell' pits. In 1951 it was linked underground with the Granville system, sunk in 1860, to drain and ventilate the latter and both were closed in 1979.

Cross the meadow and down the path. Turn right and continue for 120m and turn sharp left. Follow the main path and continue until the path meets the bridleway. Turn left, continue to a T-junction and turn left again (re-joining the Hutchinson Trail). After about 150m, fork left up a beaten path to a disused metalled road. Cross onto a surfaced path. Turn left, go up some steps, turn right over the bridge and up the steps ahead. Continue until you see St George's Parish church. Turn right along Church Street passing the church.

3 **BUILT** on the site of a Chapel of Ease (built 1806), the foundation stone of St George's Parish Church was laid by Lord Granville in 1862. The original design included an ambitious spire which was never built and



the resulting building was known locally as 'St George's Barn'. After sporadic fund raising between 1899 and 1928 the present tower was finally built.

Continue down the road to find St George's Institute to your right.

BUILT on land granted by the 4th Duke of Sutherland, the Institute served the local community with a library, a reading room, and a games and billiards room. Mrs Perrot, who laid the foundation stone was wife of William Perrot, the secretary of the Lilleshall Company. After 1927, the main Reading Room was rented as a cookery classroom for the local schools. A smaller one was created on the first floor and used by the county library until 1956. Billiards was still being played here in 1980 and the Good Neighbours (an old people's club) met here. It is now a number of residential flats.

Continue down Church Street and turn right immediately before the Cottage Springs public house and continue straight on into Dukes Way. Turn left then right into Urban Villas. Cross Gower Street, (named after Lord Gower) and take a look at the Gower Youth Club building.

4 **BUILT** by the Lilleshall Company in 1873 as a hospital for its workers, it was found to be too big and was converted, in 1879, for use as the Wrockwardine Wood Girls and Infants Board School – known locally as the 'Hospital School'. It enjoyed a new, but brief, lease of life accommodating the Gower Youth club and finally closed in 2006.

Turn right and pass Old Toll Gate on your left, the site of a tollgate on Gower Street then owned by the Lilleshall Company. The buildings ahead have the original facade of the Lilleshall Company's famous New Yard engineering works.



5 **BUILT** as the 'Phoenix Foundry' in 1861, it was described as a "great foundry and engineering factory" constructing "steam hammers, locomotives and all kinds of steam engines". Many of the company's own locomotives were

constructed here as were large engines of various types for customers as far away as Bombay and Shanghai. The company won a number of prizes for exhibits produced here for the London International Exhibition in 1862.

Go back up Gower Street and turn right into Albion Street.

6 **A SMALLER** hospital was built by The Lilleshall Company in Albion Street (nos 51 & 53) with 8 beds, a matron, a nursing sister and a female attendant. It had a separate mortuary, now used as a garage to the right of the properties.

Continue along Albion Street, turning right into West Street, then Hilton Terrace. Turn right at 'The Nabb' keeping to the main path.

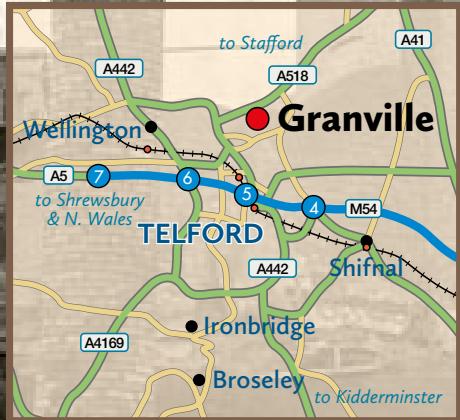
IN 1878, the Lilleshall Company purchased a public house in the Nabb called 'The Bird in Hand' to "safeguard the workers beer"!

As the path curves right at the top of a slight rise, you may see on the left an overgrown platform, the site of a tin chapel, similar to that in Blits Hill Victorian Town. At a signpost take the right fork (Restricted Byway) following the path.

7 **AS** you bear left, on your right you may see a deep cutting – the track of the old mineral railway. Where the track has been in-filled, you may just see the rusted remains of the girders which supported a footbridge across the railway known as "Tin Bridge".

Continue through the metal posts and turn left up a slope to a clearing. Take a break at the benches and picnic table.

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This leaflet was produced by the
Friends of Granville

For information contact 01952 384384
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www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk



Continue along the path and turn right onto a main path. go down some steps (ignore a path to the left) and, further on, look to your left where, close to the triangulation point, are the remains of the winding house complex for the Wrockwardine Wood inclined plane.

Winding house at Wrockwardine
Wood Inclined Plane



8 CONSTRUCTION began about 17th January 1791 after the Ironmaster, John Wilkinson had personally petitioned Parliament to extend the Shropshire Canal from Snedhill to form a junction with the Donnington Wood Canal.

Continue along the path, turn left at the bench. At the next path junction, look ahead and see the remains of an old bridge. Take the left hand path down the course of the incline plane. Follow this path, cross the road at the bottom, turn left under the bridge, and immediately right. Pass through a metal barrier to a kissing gate on your right (opposite the end of a cul-de-sac). Go through the gate into Central Hall.

9 THIS was once known as Cinder Hill being the cinders and slag from the nearby Donnington Wood blast furnaces. The current name derives from a name given to the tin chapel which once stood in the grounds.

Take the path ahead and, after a few metres penetrate the trees to your right and you will see the path of the Donnington Wood Tub Boat Canal again and a canal bridge which you have just walked over.

Return to the path and then fork left. Fork left again and emerge at a roundabout. Go up Bradley Road, follow it as it turns left. Carry straight on then take the footpath alongside the school. You will see St Matthew's Church ahead.

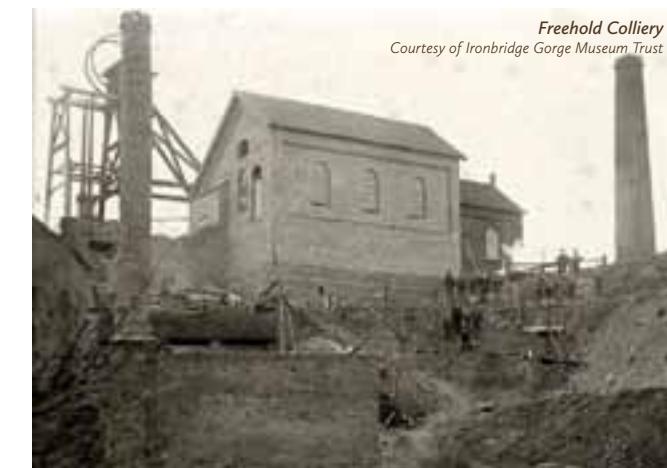
10 BUILT on the site of a Chapel of Ease the current church was built in 1842 by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the eminent architect of his age. Bagshaw's directory of

Shropshire- 1851 describes the church as "a neat modern structure, situate at Donnington Wood, built about the year 1844, at a cost of £2000. The seats are all free and unappropriated. The living is a perpetual curacy in the patronage of the vicar of Lilleshall."

Go down Church Road past the churchyard, turn right up the unmade lane. Turn right again and, where the lane curves to the left, take the path ahead through a metal barrier. Go under the bridge and enter Muxton Marsh SSSI via the stile to your right.

Follow the path, over the stile at the end and turn left keeping to the main path until a fork. Fork left and continue to a junction. Go to the top of the left hand of the two paths ahead. Through the trees on your right, you will see a deep depression where the remains of railway sidings buildings top the Freehold colliery pitmound. Take the right fork to have a better look.

Return to the path and turn right. Near here is the site of the Freehold colliery, now completely demolished.



Freehold Colliery
Courtesy of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

11 A SURVEY of 1857 suggests that the Lilleshall Company sank the pit around 1860. Being a relatively small operation with production costs being twice those of Muxton Bridge it is unlikely to have made a substantial profit and was closed, after flooding, in 1928.

Continue straight on. On reaching a fork, go right. Carry on, past a path to the left and take the left hand path at the next two forks in the trail, finally going down some steps and out of Muxton Marsh.

Cross the road at the blue metal arch to your right. Cross Ryder Drive and turn left into Granville Country Park. Follow the path up the steps. Continue to the next left fork. Turn left along a meandering path which eventually curves to the right. Turn left at a junction of paths continuing along and down some steps. At the bottom, turn left and follow the path to the remains of Muxton Bridge Colliery beam engine platform.

12 THIS engine pumped water drained from the Waxhill Barracks and Barnyard collieries as well as Muxton Bridge colliery into the nearby Donnington Wood tub boat canal at a rate of 9,350 gallons per hour. The engine may have been unhoused as the foundations show no signs of a covering structure.

Take the steps behind you which lead to a picnic area.

HERE are the capped shafts of the Muxton Bridge Colliery and, across the path, the remains of the Muxton Bridge Colliery Winding House which worked the cages in the shafts.

Continue through the picnic area and take a closer look at the Winding House.

SUNK in 1840, the Muxton Bridge pit was one of the Lilleshall Company's early deep mines. The winding house, constructed in 1884, once contained two high pressure steam engines for winding the paired shafts. Its position, close to the canal and, later, a mineral railway, was convenient for shipping of materials. Productivity improvements suggested in a report of 1899, appear not to have been carried out and it went out of production around 1905 and was finally closed around 1912.

Facing the Winding House turn left and you will see, just along the path on the left, the single rail remains of the mineral railway track.

Continue down the main path. Go through a gate on your left just before the gate which crosses the path. Amongst the trees see if you can find the overgrown remains of a Methodist Chapel associated with Waxhill colliery barracks which housed the colliery workers. The colliery itself and the barracks are now completely demolished.

13 THE colliery started life as a chartermaster pit around 1819. The Lilleshall Company then sank further shafts around 1828 and managed them directly. The colliery was closed down around 1899 when a



recommendation for increased production and better transport arrangements were, apparently, not implemented.

THE barracks, a single storey block of cottages set in three rows, was built next to the canal in 1804 and were occupied until the 1930s despite part demolition starting around 1900. The 1851 census lists 27 distinct families – a total population of 153. Professions included coal-miner, pit sinker, labourer and one engineer.

Return to the main path. Turn left and go through the wooden gate across the path. At some steps to your left you can either carry straight on to the car park or go up them and through the gate at the top. Bear left keeping the wire fence to your left and, at the viewing point, look down on the remains of Barnyard Colliery winding house.

14 BARNYARD Colliery took its name from the field name in which it was located. It probably started as a chartermaster pit around 1837 as a very small operation. The surviving structure was probably the winding house. An inclined plane ran down to the mineral railway and, possibly earlier, to the canal. A later branch of the mineral railway ran up to the colliery via another route to a tramway from the canal also ran to the colliery buildings via another route. By 1880 the colliery was in disuse.

Continue until a path to your right takes you away from the wire fence, then fork right again and find the wooden bench "On top of the world". Soak up the view before going to your left along the main path, through the gate and down the steps, which follow the line of the inclined plane, and, finally, back to the car park.

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A 12km (7½ mile) voyage of discovery into north east Telford's industrial past