

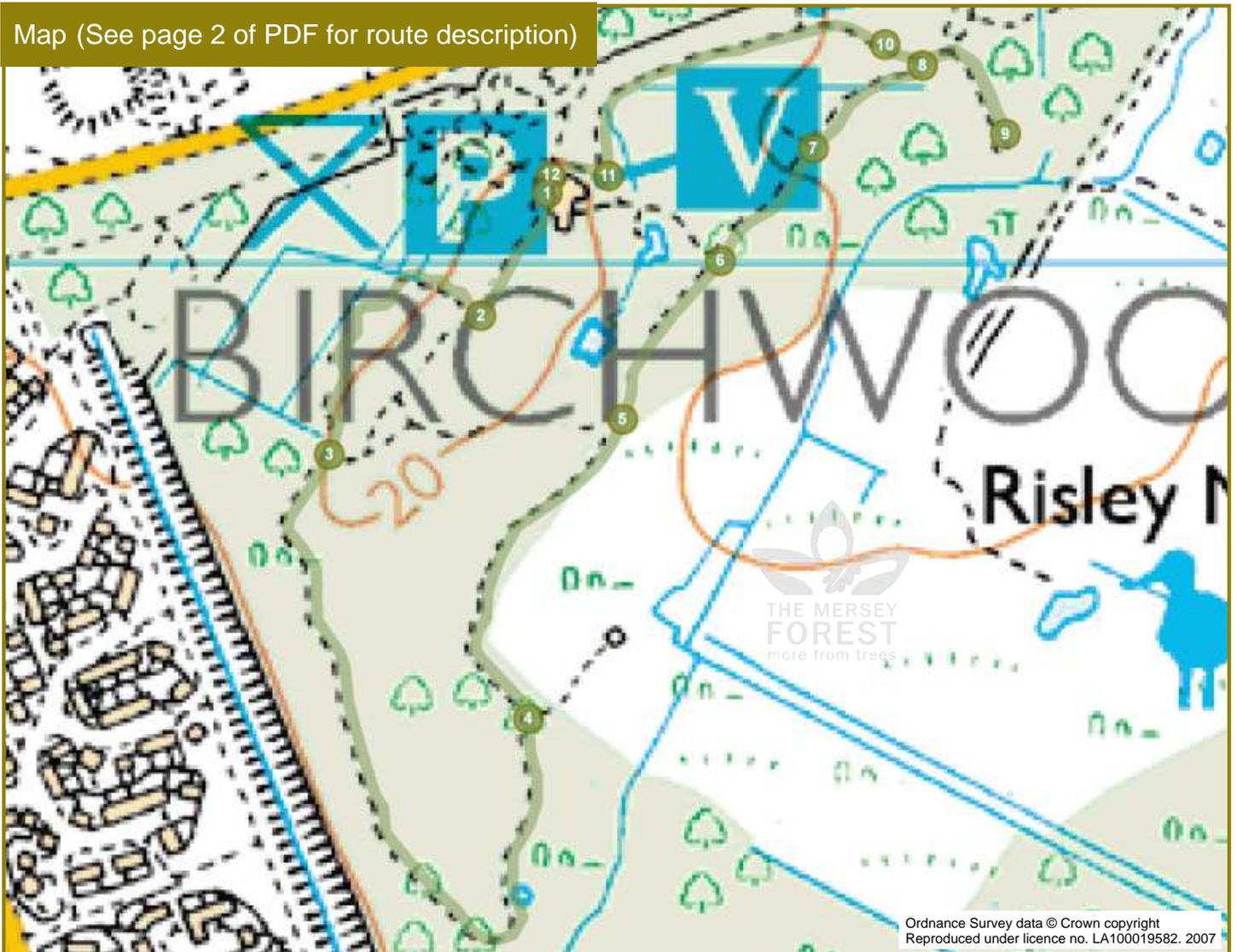
Risley Moss Local Nature Reserve

Route Summary

Explore Risley Moss Local Nature Reserve on a well surfaced path around this circular route.

Grade	Easy
Distance	2km / 1¼ miles
Accessibility	Fairly level hardpack surface, may be difficult for wheelchair users
Allow	1 hour
Start	Public car park in front of visitor centre, Risley Moss, Birchwood
Map	OS Explorer 276 Bolton, Wigan & Warrington

Map (See page 2 of PDF for route description)



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Route Details

Risley Moss is a remnant of the boggy landscape that was created by the ending of the last ice age. During the industrial revolution, large amounts of peat were stripped and after the Second World War, the Moss was used as a dump for ordnance including mines and high explosive shells. The importance of Risley Moss as a landscape feature and wildlife habitat has now been recognised and the area is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a designated Local Nature Reserve with a Green Flag Award. The main feature of the area is of course the moss itself, but there are also large areas of mature woodland to explore, comprising mainly of oak, ash and hazel. Fungi and many species of wildflower, including red campion and foxglove are abundant along the trail edge as well as in meadow areas that act as a haven for butterflies, bees and other insects. As many as 60 species of breeding birds and 50 visiting species can be observed on the moss in a good year, from the Mossland Hide, the Woodland Hide or the Observation Tower. On the ground, adders, slow worms and lizards hunt for prey whilst at the decked observation ponds newts, frogs, toads and dragonflies can be spotted.

Dotted close to the footpaths, around the Reserve are many wooden sculptures created by artists and local people.

The main path up from the car park to the visitor centre is quite steep, but there is a gentler access route from near the main gates.

Route Directions

1. Coming out of the visitor centre, turn left and set off down the path and into the woodland.
2. Bear left at the junction (or turn right for a slightly longer route along a narrow path with steps), then right twice.
3. At the next junction, fork left to continue forward, eventually passing a pond on the right.
4. Turn right to visit the Mossland Hide (accessible by wheelchair with some difficulty), or keep forward to continue the route.
5. Keep forward, passing the reed bed observation deck to the right and a wildflower meadow on the left.
6. Keep forward at the junction.
7. Turn left to visit the Woodland Hide (accessible by wheelchair) or continue forward on the route.
8. At the junction continue forward, forking right towards the Observation Tower.
9. The Observation Tower, which offers fantastic panoramic views over the moss and beyond. Retrace your steps to continue the route.
10. At the junction, fork right and pass a pond with an observation deck on the right.
11. Turn left to visit the large pond with a viewing platform or turn right to arrive back at the car park.

