

Welcome to Bittesby Country Park

Welcome to Bittesby Country Park, a harmonious blend of diverse wildlife habitats, agricultural, community space, and educational engagement.

Legend

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The medieval village of Bittesby and a Victorian railway

The medieval village of Bittesby lay in the centre of what is now the country park. It used to be part of a manorial estate which has existed since at least AD 1053. The first owner we know of was a Saxon called Leofwin, who was Bishop of Litchfield. Almost one thousand years later the estate was owned by Lord and Lady O'Hagan in the early 20th century. About 25 families lived in Bittesby in the 13th century and the village spread along the edge of a stream for about 400m. The population of the village did not grow much for the next 200 years but by the 15th century was starting to shrink. And by the 17th century the village had been totally abandoned.

Today the main area of the village survives as earthworks, the humps and bumps you can see in the area around you. The site is protected under law as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM1012563). The village was surrounded by fields in which people grew crops until they were evicted and the area was abandoned, largely in the 15th century and the land was used for sheep farming.

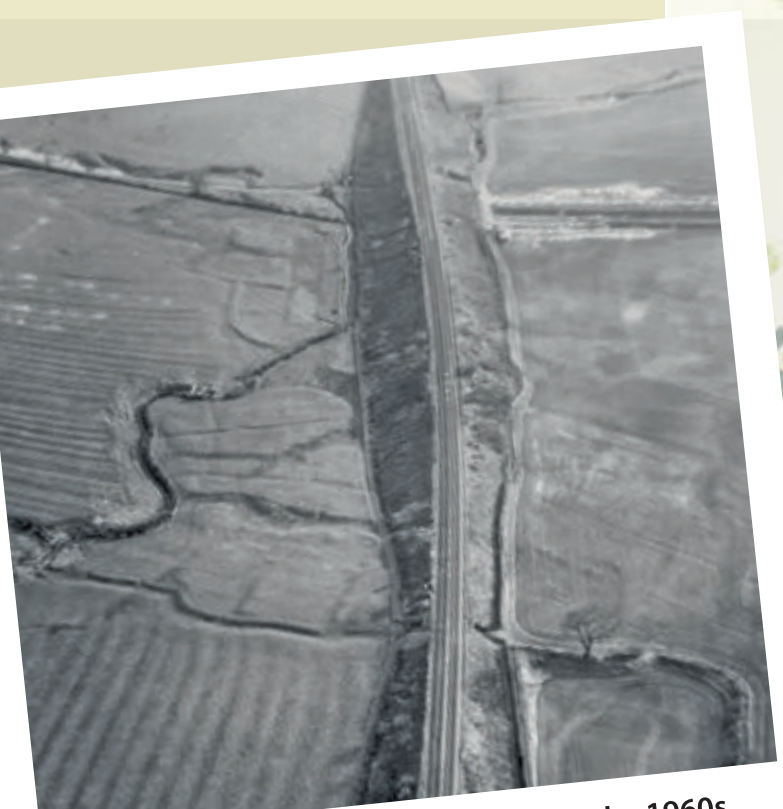
In 1838 building work on the railway line you can see to the west started and diverted the stream which the village was centred around. The Railway line was built by the Midland Counties Railway to bring coal and passengers from Nottingham and Derby to Rugby. The first part of the line opened on the 4th June 1839 between Derby and Nottingham. The section of railway running through the country park was opened a year later on the 1st July 1840. The railway was closed in 1961 and mostly demolished in the late 1970s and 1980s.

SPOT THE SPECIES
Brown long-eared bat
Plecotus auritus

Railway bridge

When the railway was being built a possible Roman villa was uncovered, which included a probable bathhouse and a tessellated pavement. (A decorative floor made from lots of small blocks of coloured stone). We do not know exactly where the villa was found but we think it was somewhere to the west of the medieval village.

SPOT THE SPECIES
Brown Hare -
Lepus europaeus



Aerial photograph, presumably taken in the 1960s, showing Bittesby deserted medieval village and ridge and furrow earthworks (west of the embankment)



Aerial photograph, of embankment

