

# RIDGE WOOD

A special place for people, plants and animals



## Factsheet

Ridge Wood lies in Yate, but the ridge it stands on marks the boundary between Yate and Chipping Sodbury. The height of the Ridge has made it a useful defence position for millennia. Maps show an Iron Age camp in roughly the same position that Hanson's offices now occupy. Roman artefacts have also been discovered.

### Quarrying

The Ridge is formed from limestones, mudstones and sandstones of Carboniferous age. Fossils have been found in it. Quarrying began because of the good quality of the limestone. It has been used for building, road-making and preparing fertilizers.

### Barnhill Quarry

First established in the 1850s, Barnhill Quarry was close to exhaustion within a century. From the 1960s it has been largely disused. The Quarry is an extraordinary gorge-like landscape. It remains as an enormous legacy to past industry.

### Ridge House

A fine old mansion once stood on the site now occupied by Hanson's headquarters. In the 1920s, nearby Barnhill Quarry became very active and blasts began to send rocks through the roof of Ridge House. It became too dangerous to live there. When the quarrying activity moved away from that part of the Ridge, the house was demolished and the office buildings were built in its place.

### Parkland Gardens

A "pleasure garden" with terraced lawns and rockeries linked by flights of ornamental steps was created around Ridge House. Glasshouses, including a conservatory and an orchid house were also built.

A woodland garden featuring fine specimen trees was also created. The most dramatic are the huge Wellingtonias. You can still see them - even from far away.

The Ridgewood housing estate was developed from part of the grounds during the 1920s-30s. A lodge belonging to the old house still stands on Station Road opposite The Ridgewood Centre.

### Wildlife

Some plants remain from the days of the gardens planted around Ridge House, but many native trees, plants and animals can be found all over Ridge Wood. Look out for common woodland birds and the more unusual tawny owls and woodpeckers. Spring is the best time to visit.

