

Walk C - Stoke Flight and Woodgate (3¾ miles)

Charming canal side walk followed by mainly open countryside. The towpath runs alongside the Stoke Flight and then the bottom locks of the long Tardebigge Flight. In total the canal climbs over 420 feet from the Severn Valley to the Birmingham Plateau. Boots are desirable.

Parking (roadside) is available near the start of the walk at the Harris Business Park. The Navigation and the Queens Head will probably allow walkers to park but please check. There are three Geocaches on this walk.

1. Stoke Wharf, Navigation Inn – Walk south along Hanbury Road to the canal bridge. (There are refreshments here at the café on the Metal Ores Ind. Estate, open weekdays and Saturday morning). Turn left along towpath (upstream) opposite Black Prince Boat Yard and Picnic Site (by Lock 23). The towpath is not a public right-of-way but walkers are permitted to use it. Pass the canal side cottages at Whitford Bridge. At Stoke Top Lock (No 28) you can cross over and take the sign-posted path on the opposite side through to Avoncroft Museum – see our Walk B for more details.

2. Stoke Pound Lane – The Queens Head is on the opposite bank. Just further on is Tardebigge Bottom Lock which is the first in a series of 30 locks. It is the largest concentration of narrow locks in the country and they raise the canal some 69 metres.

3. Tardebigge Bottom Flight – At Lock 33 there is a footbridge crossing the entrance to the lock. Note how the bridge is designed so that it is only supported from one buttress. This was to allow the tow rope from the barge horse to slide underneath the planks at the other buttress. Just beyond far end of lock go right down the embankment to the wooden barrier in the hedge. Cross field to footbridge across stream. Go straight up the field to stile and footpath sign by side of farm building.

4. Copyholt Lane – Cross road and cross stile at the Footpath sign. Take the path which keeps straight on alongside the garden fence. Go through the kissing gate and go half left, go through gate in fence. Turn right alongside wire fence and old tree line. Go through the gate at bottom of field, about 20 yards to right of the farm gate. Head straight on and slightly to the left, aiming for the footpath sign by the hedge.

5. Path Junction - At the footpath sign go through the gate and cross a footbridge. Turn right across field to the junction of three hedges. Cross the footbridge and gate. Keep to right hand edge until you see a kissing gate just to the left of the garden of Orchard Farm. Cross next field and then cross a gated foot-bridge. Path continues parallel to Whitford Bridge Road to join road by second stile with footpath sign.

6. Whitford Bridge Road, Moors Farm – Cross the road by the footpath sign and go through opening on right alongside gate. Keep to the right of Steppingly cottage along enclosed garden path. Keep between pond and hedge. Cross stile and small field to foot-bridge. Turn left along drive passing a thatched cottage. Turn right into Woodgate Road by Woodgate Manor Farm (F/P sign)

7. Moorgate Road – Go straight ahead through gate with a footpath sign, aim for electricity pole directly ahead and then for a footbridge/gate in opposite hedge. Cross next field aiming for gate by corner of woodland, just in front of a large industrial building.

8. Harris Brushworks Woodland – Go through gate and turn sharp left, keeping just in the wood. Go down steps and alongside a building onto factory road. Opposite factory door J, turn left up steps. Path turns right alongside field. It then continues straight on between hedge and barbed wire fence and then alongside Appletrees house.

9. Hanbury Road – Turn right along road by footpath sign. (For Route D turn left into woodland alongside edge of Saxon industrial Park). Continue past Harris Brushworks (now owned by Orkla). The firm moved to its current location in 1947. Many of the local woodlands were planted originally to provide the brush handles.

10. Stoke Wharf – Cross the canal again to reach the Navigation.

This walk should take about 2 hours.

There is a bus 145/145a, Mon – Sat (Bromsgrove-Droitwich) to Stoke Prior Church about ¼ mile to the north of the Navigation Inn.

If you encounter any problems please ring Worcestershire County Council-Public Rights of Way Section 01905 768289 or visit http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20237/public_rights_of_way

For Tourist Information ring:

Droitwich Tourist Information Centre 01905 774312

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