

Sandbach Footpath Group

TALL CHIMNEYS

About 5 miles or 8km via Hassall Green.
(750m or half a mile less via option 2)

Allow 2 to 3 hours.

As with all country walks, some paths are wet, muddy and uneven, so wear strong footwear and have clothing to suit the weather.

On narrow country lanes, take care to watch for traffic, and when walking on the road make sure you can see oncoming traffic.

If you intend to stop for refreshments at Malkins Bank Club House, you could park in the adjacent car park, otherwise park nearby.

Leave the Malkins Bank Golf Course car park and follow the canal towpath, with the canal on your right, for about 1km, until you reach Lock Cottage by lock 66 and Canal Bridge number 152, at the top of Cotton Lane.

At this point you have two options, left down Cotton Lane to Green Bank or, to make a short cut, go right over the Canal Bridge, number 152.

Option Green Bank

Go left down Cotton Lane and at the end is a small car park; this is Wheelock Green Bank.

From Green Bank, turn right up Crewe Road, keeping to the right-hand pavement, walk up the main road over the River Wheelock, through the village, to the canal bridge. Just over the bridge is an opening, with steps leading down to a footpath alongside the canal. (*Faded Signpost "Mill Hill La ½ mile".*)

Go down the steps to the canal and walk alongside the canal, with the canal on your right. Initially it is a narrow path, but it widens after about 100m. Ignoring the path left, which goes to Mill Hill Lane, we continue along the canal, over a little river bridge, then over a stile [ST1].

(The path to Mill Hill Lane turns left away from the canalside path just before the little river bridge. It goes over a footbridge, and follows the river valley to Mill Hill Lane by the old corn mill. The bridge under the old railway is the "Dancing Bridge", where country dancing was practised many years ago on the large flat area.)

About 100m after the stile [ST1], go over a bridge over a stream, then under the concrete and steel bypass.

Soon after the bypass go slightly uphill and through a gate [G1].

The canal bridge 152 should be to your right.

Option Canal Bridge

Go over the canal bridge number 152. This option would be about 1km shorter than the full length walk.

Main route after option Green Bank or Option Canal Bridge

Follow the track passing the Lock Cottage on your right and through a gate [G2]. Now walk between two fences, through an arboretum comprising many varieties of tree. You should soon reach the old railway arch. Go through a gate [G3] and through the archway.

Just through the archway and through another gate [G4], go forward curving slightly right until you approach the brook, going over a stile [ST2], unless the farm gate has been left open.

Pass under the electricity wires with the pole on your right, and follow the brook upstream as it meanders through the valley known locally as "The Bidneys".

Ignore the steel bridge over the brook and then, keeping the brook on your left, after about 750 metres from the railway arch, go up some steps, over a stile [ST3] and onto Hassall Road.

*Hassall Road is a narrow country Lane that can be busy at times, so **take care to watch for traffic** as you climb down the stile and when walking on the road make sure you can see oncoming traffic.*

At the road, turn left going uphill towards the houses but, just before you reach them, turn right at the track with a footpath sign. Follow the track between two hedges, keeping left to follow the hedge on your left.

Then, leaving the hedge, continue straight on, in line with the path, going downhill, cutting across the field. At the bottom of the field go down some steps and cross a plank bridge, a footbridge and a stile [ST4] to continue forward into a field. *(Ignore the path on your left, immediately after the bridges and stile. This is not an official public right of way, but leads to Colley Lane.)*

Follow the field path uphill keeping the hedge to your right. This is a long field, but keeping the hedge on your right, the path eventually bends left near Vicarage Farm. Go through the metal kissing gate [G5], across a small field to another metal kissing gate [G6]. Cross the metalled road and through yet another kissing gate [G7].

You should see, about 20m in front of you, a big old gnarled oak tree leaning at an angle.

Here you have two options, Forward to the right of the tree, or Left:

Option Forward: Go past and to the right of the leaning oak tree, initially with the fence about 20m to your right hand side, and then passing quite close to the house called "Tall Chimneys" on your right.

Notice the magnificent chimneys: almost every one is bricked in a different pattern. (Originally the house was the Vicarage of St Mary's Church in Sandbach, hence Vicarage Farm you passed earlier.

Just past the house, look out for a very nice tulip tree, hanging over the path, in the garden of Tall Chimneys. The tree, originating from North America, has very distinctive leaves, being cut off or square ended and in summer has greeny-yellow tulip-shaped flowers.

Through the kissing gate [G8] near Tall Chimneys and follow the path downhill with a fence either side. It leads into a pleasant glade of oak trees, mixed with hazels, hawthorns, beech and sycamore. The brook is on your right, in the valley. Go through the kissing gate [G9] on to the old coach road, Stannerhouse Lane, by the bridge over the brook. Go through another kissing gate [G10] immediately opposite. The brook should be on your right. You are now at the same point as the 'Option Left' route.

Option Left: *(Since the walk is called "Tall Chimneys", it is only for the sake of completeness that this option is included, as it by-passes Tall Chimneys!)*

Follow the field boundary on your left. The path bends round right and after about 300 metres goes left through a kissing gate [G11] and down some steps into a wood. Continue down more steps, to an old coach road, Stannerhouse Lane. Turn right at the old road and go down until you reach the bridge over the stream. Turn left through the kissing gate [G10] and the brook should be on your right. You are now at the same point as the 'Option Forward' route.

Main Route, after Option Forward or Option Left

Walk upstream with the brook on your right. Some parts here can be muddy, so choose a suitable route, keeping the brook on your right.

After about 200m, you may notice in passing a solitary, now disused stile with no fence. About 400 metres from the old coach road, Stannerhouse Lane, take the stile on the right [ST5] to a footbridge over the brook, followed immediately by another stile [ST6] and then across planks over a ditch.

Turn left after the bridge and stile and planks, the brook now being to your left and make your way uphill on the well trodden footpath.

Notice the alder trees on your left. These trees usually grow where it is damp. The ground underfoot in this area is very wet and Ragged Robin, Common Spotted Orchid, Meadowsweet and Red Campion might be seen growing here in spring and summer.

Continue on towards the motorway and about 100 metres before the motorway turn right and walk uphill over a stile [ST7] midway in a fence, about 20m to the right of a bright orange marker on a pole. Continue across the next field, walking parallel to the motorway and about 100 metres from it. Cross two stiles in quick succession [ST8, ST9] onto the road that bridges the motorway. Here again are two options

Option 1 : Turn left across the motorway bridge. Just across the bridge at the end of the crash barrier is a stile [ST10] on the right. Cross this stile, go forward 25m and left over a stile [ST11] into a field. Keeping the motorway fence to your right, after 100m cross a stile [ST12]. The path then follows the field boundary round to the left and then turning left at a corner. There is a stile [ST13], about 50 metres from the corner, onto a path, which leads to the houses of Charles Square at Hassall Green.

Heading for the diagonally opposite corner, cross the Square to the road out of Charles Square to emerge on to Smithy Grove. Turn right and go forward down the road, ignoring roads off to the left, until you come to the canal. *(The canal bridge is about 100 metres before the pink church of St Philip's at Hassall Green - see the Daisy Bank walk.)*

To return, cross the canal by the road bridge and turn right onto the towpath. Go forward along the towpath, with the canal on your right, under the motorway, all the way to Malkins Bank Golf Club. This is about 1.5km from Hassall Green.

Just a few metres before you reach the road bridge over the canal to the Golf Club, go through a wooden pedestrian gate [G12], leading directly from the canal towpath, to the car park and Golf Clubhouse, where you might stop for refreshments before driving off.

Option 2 :

Turn right on the road. Continue along the road, but after about 500m, at a bend in the road, it widens out at a layby and a track, with a stile [ST14] on the left hand side of the road.

Go over the stile [ST14] and forward with the field boundary to your right. Continue for about 250m until you almost reach the canal, where you turn right, over a stile [ST15], and the canal should now be on your left.

Still with the canal on your left, but moving gradually away from it, go over a stile [ST16] ahead, midway in a wooden fence, and turn immediately right. Go down a track, which leads to the road.

(This track seems to be a permissive path, but the right of way would be over another stile opposite the one in the wooden fence [ST15], then another and finally a third to the road. It ends up at the same point at the end of the track.)

Turn left onto Betchton Road, to return to Malkins bank Clubhouse, via the road bridge over the canal, perhaps lingering at the Clubhouse for deserved refreshments.

Option 2a : Turn right on to Betchton Road. Continue along the road, ignoring the path to the left which leads to the canal. Go past Woody Fields Farm, and you come to Woody Fields Cottages where there is the old coach road, Stannerhouse Lane, on the right. *(This would take you back to the track in the oak tree glade by the brook below Tall Chimneys.)*

Continue along Betchton Road, turning left to Malkins Bank Clubhouse, via the road bridge over the canal, perhaps lingering for deserved refreshments.

Sandbach Footpath Group

TALL CHIMNEYS, very short walk. 2.5km or 1.6 miles, allow about 1 hour

From Malkins Bank Clubhouse, use the road bridge to go over the canal and at Betchton Road look for the signposted footpath almost opposite, just before the row of houses.

Go over the stile [ST17] and follow the edge of the field with the hedge on your left. When the hedge turns away to the left carry straight on, diagonally across the field.

Jutting into the field is a triangular fenced off area. Work towards this, going to the left of it, with the fence and man-made pool on your right, until you reach the stile [ST18] at Hassall Road.

*Hassall Road is a narrow country Lane that can be busy at times, so **take care to watch for traffic** as you climb down the stile and when walking on the road make sure you can see oncoming traffic.*

Over the stile [ST18], turn right and go uphill towards the houses. Just before you reach them, turn right at the track with a footpath sign. Follow the track between two hedges, keeping left to follow the hedge on your left.

Then, leaving the hedge, continue straight on, in line with the path, going downhill, cutting across the field. At the bottom of the field go down some steps and cross a plank bridge, a footbridge and a stile [ST4] to continue forward into a field. *(Ignore the path on your left, immediately after the bridges and stile, this is not an official public right of way, but leads to Colley Lane.)*

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For notes on the chimneys and the Tulip Tree, please see a previous page.

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Turn right on to the old road, over the brook and uphill, reaching Betchton Road after about 500m.

Turn right on to Betchton Road and after about 500m, turn left into Malkins Bank Clubhouse, via the road bridge over the canal, perhaps lingering for refreshments.

Sandbach Footpath Group, Tall Chimneys walk

