

Sandbach Footpath Group

BROOK WOOD and HOUNDINGS LANE

About 4½ miles or 7km via Houndings Lane.

Allow 2½ to 3 hours.

(Shorter options are also described)

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.

Starting from Wheelock Green Bank

From Green Bank, walk along the main road [Crewe Road], keeping to the right-hand pavement, 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. At this point we follow the path left, away from the canal-side path, soon dropping down to a footbridge [FB1]. Over the footbridge, turn left and follow the valley with the stream on your left, to go through the archway under the old railway.

(The valley path can be muddy in wet weather.)

The large flat concrete area under the archway is also a bridge over the stream, and is known locally as the "Dancing Bridge", where country dancing was practised many years ago.

After the archway, go over or round a stile [ST1], soon followed by a footbridge, with the stream still on your left and then through some woods. In about 100m go over another stile and footbridge [ST2, FB1], then turn left into a field and continue along the valley in roughly the same direction.

Further along in the valley, go over a stile and footbridge [FB3, ST3] on your left. After the footbridge bear right through some woods, leading in about 100m to a narrow track with the stream immediately on your left.

At the end of the track, at Mill Hill Lane, turn left, and go uphill with houses first on the left, then on both sides. The gradient flattens out and after passing Mill Hill Drive on your right, look for the green railings of an electricity sub-station, where you turn right into a ginnel.

Follow the ginnel between fences for about 200m to emerge on to Coronation Crescent.

You might like to ponder after which Monarch's coronation the Crescent was named: George V (1911), George VI (1937) or Elizabeth II (1953), the dates in brackets being the year crowned. If you are interested, have a look at the link below, showing a map dated 1938, which might give you a clue.

<http://maps.nls.uk/view/101599255>

Turn right to follow the Crescent and at the end of the fencing on the right, look for the sign "Brook Wood - Coronation Wood". Enter the woods and either go down the steps or left.

Brook Wood was opened in 2014, after superb restoration and a lot of hard work by teams of volunteers from, amongst others, Sandbach Woodland & Wildlife Group, Sandbach U3A Environmental Group and Care4CE.

Brook Wood is a fairly narrow strip, but there are two paths in places, an upper path and a lower path. Both are very pleasant and it does not matter which you follow, but if you do the walk another time you can try the alternative.

Either path leads to the roundabout on the main A534, near the Homebase store. Take care to cross the busy A534 using the traffic island. On reaching the other side turn left on the pavement part way to the traffic lights at the crossroads.

Starting from Waitrose Lower Carpark. Cross the roads to the crash barrier.

The vehicle crash barrier should now be on your right.

Soon the crash barrier on your right ends and is replaced by railings.

About 60m after the end of the metal railings, follow a footpath green sign on a pole, turning sharp right, down a slope and in about 100m go through a kissing gate [G1].

After the kissing gate [G1] there are two paths, one forks left, the other straight on.

Ignore the one forking left which goes slightly uphill to the houses.

Instead, go forward parallel to the bypass, with the bypass to your right, but about 50m away. You should be able to see a tall grey metal pole serving as a mobile phone transmitter mast [MAST]. We are heading to the right of this.

Continue parallel to the bypass and after about 150m you should have the remains of a hedge and a line of trees on your left.

Go about 100m with the hedge on your left and you should approach the the tall grey transmitter mast. Go through a gap near the mast and turn right towards some farm buildings, aiming just to the left of the buildings.

Just to the left of the farm go through a gate to the road, Houndings Lane.

At the road, Houndings Lane, continue in about the same direction as before, passing the farm house and large barns on your right. Keep on the road, and zig-zag over the bypass then walk for a short distance with the bypass now to your left.

Go round a sharp right hand bend, over a cattle grid and downhill to the Old Mill buildings, called Sandbach Mill.

From the bridge over the stream, you can see the original mill pool behind the buildings and the sluice gate to the left of the mill building.

After the mill turn left down the narrow track that we walked earlier with the stream immediately on your right. Go through a few trees and over the footbridge and stile [FB2, ST3].

Turn right after the footbridge and stile, then over a stile [ST2, FB2] on your right into the woods, coming to the Dancing Bridge as before.

Here we have some options:

Option 1 (about 4 miles total), avoiding crossing over the bypass A534

Continue from the Dancing Bridge along the valley as before and over the footbridge [FB1] until you reach the canal, where you turn left, soon going through a kissing gate [G2]. This is not the towpath, but continue under the bypass, through a gate and turn right to go over a canal bridge, number 152, by lock 66.

After crossing the canal bridge turn left to follow the towpath (or, if you prefer, there is an alternative path to the right of the towpath).

Stay on path, with the canal on your left, until you reach the next road bridge, number 151, near lock 63.

Now go to Point A in Option 2

Option 2 (about 4 miles total)

Just after the Dancing Bridge, go up a flight of steps and turn right onto the Wheelock Rail Trail. At the bypass go through the gate, carefully cross the fast moving traffic, and through the gate on the other side.

Continue along the Rail Trail, until it goes over the canal, then proceed with the canal on your left until you reach the next road bridge, number 151, near lock 63.

Point A.

Turn right and follow the metalled track across the golf course. Beware of golfers teeing off from the high ground ahead and to your left.

On the track in the bottom of the valley, before you reach the River Wheelock, turn right through some tree plantings and continue with the River Wheelock on your left. Ignore the first footbridge on the left, but go over the second footbridge [FB3], hidden in a dip. The bridge is preceded by some awkward steps and the wooden bridge planks can be slippery when wet, so be careful.

Continue in the same line as the footbridge across another fairway (beware golf balls from the right) through some trees to a gate [G3].

The gate leads to Mill Lane. Turn right on the Lane, past the double bend, and at Mill Cottage, go left through the tunnel and follow the lane back to Wheelock Green Bank.

Option 3 (about 3 miles total)

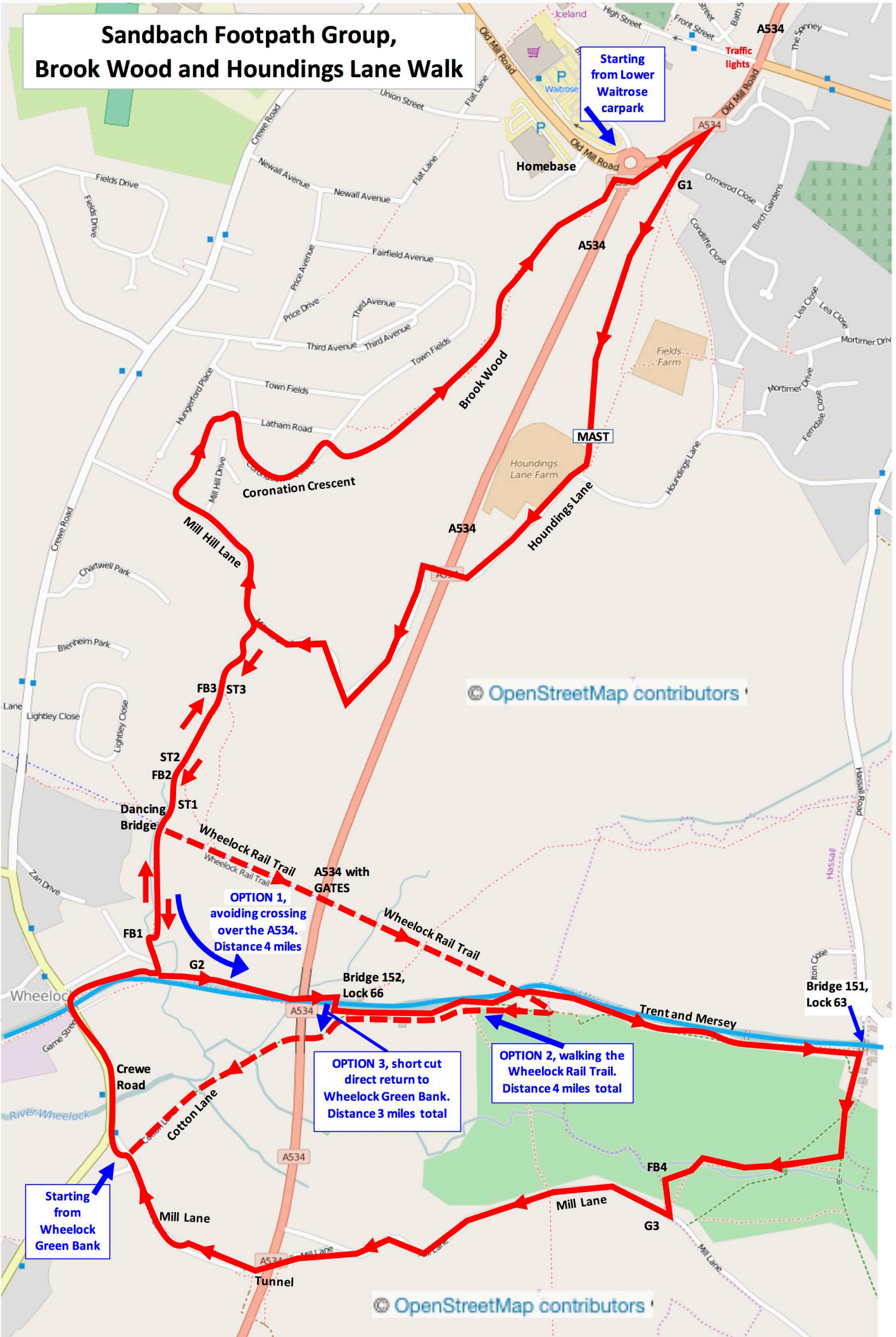
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After crossing the canal bridge continue straight down Cotton Lane to return to Wheelock Green Bank. If you started from Waitrose, go to the first page and continue.

In answer to the question on the date of Coronation Crescent. We think the houses were built in the mid 1950s, so it is probably named in honour the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Sandbach Footpath Group, Brook Wood and Houndings Lane Walk

Starting from Lower Waitrose carpark



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OPTION 1, avoiding crossing over the A534. Distance 4 miles

OPTION 3, short cut direct return to Wheelock Green Bank. Distance 3 miles total

OPTION 2, walking the Wheelock Rail Trail. Distance 4 miles total

Starting from Wheelock Green Bank

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