

Sandbach Footpath Group

HOLLINS GREEN via ALBION LOCK walk

About 4.4 miles, 7 km

Allow 2.5 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 as you climb down the stile to the road, and when walking on the road make sure you can see oncoming traffic.

Stiles.

There are up to 15 stiles on this walk (5 stiles less on the shorter route).

To find the starting point, follow Middlewich Road A533 from Sandbach, over the railway bridge, then second left into Mill Lane. Go over the canal and turn right, then immediately right into a small car park. If the car park is full, try Mill Lane. The right hand verge, about half way to the canal when approaching from the A533, should have space,

From the Mill Lane car park, turn left onto the canal towpath so the canal is on your right and go under bridge 162. After a while, the canal runs parallel to the A533. At the lock gates, number 68, go up the steps onto the bridge 163, and turn right, crossing over the canal. Take care crossing the busy road to the pavement on the opposite side and turn right. There is a new building site on the left hand side called Albion Lock. Turn left into the new estate and you should see a yellow waymark arrow directing you through the gate.

At the time of writing, we go through a gap in the wooden fence and then follow a path with temporary wire fencing on both sides. The fenced path turns to the right and then left towards the branch-line railway. Go through a gate and cross the line with care and go through another gate on the other side and we are now clear of the building site. This description will not always be correct due to work on the building site, so follow the fenced path, which the site is obliged to make obvious, to the gate leading to the railway.

After the railway go diagonally left across the field and over the next stile, which is a double stile with bridge, somewhat hidden in an arch of thicket. *If muddy in winter there may be a better route to this stile over to the right, or on the left by the hedge.* Follow, on about the same line, across the field to go over another double stile with bridge. Keep going in about the same direction, now with the hedge on your right. At the end of the hedge, continue in the same line and head for some farm buildings. Go over or round the stile, turn right and follow the farm drive. At the end of the drive, turn left onto Wood lane.

** A shorter walk could be to turn right onto Wood Lane, avoiding 5 stiles.*

Follow Wood Lane and at the end is Bradwall Road where we turn right. After about 300m, look for a finger post with a green arrow to the right and go over a little bridge with a stile into a field. Go straight across the field and, between a couple of trees and a wooden electricity pole you should be able to see the next stile to surmount. Then, head in the same direction to a solitary tree in the middle of the field. Continue beyond that in the same line and over another stile. You should see farm buildings to your right, but we continue straight, to climb over another stile in the opposite boundary. Then go very slightly right, heading just to the left of a big oak tree, to go over the adjacent stile and turn left onto Wood Lane.

** The shorter route, along Wood Lane, from this point, would be the same.*

After about 250m, just before the slope up to the railway bridge, turn to the right to follow a finger post with a green arrow and follow a farm track. Soon after joining a line of trees on the left of the track, go through a metal farm gate or through the metal kissing gate to one side. On the right, you should see a stand of mature woodland, but we stay on the track as it bends round to the left. Go slightly downhill to a line of trees that cross the track. Here we have muddy bridge over a little stream with two farm gates, one almost immediately after the other. If closed, use the stile or footpath gate provided.

Continue on the track, now with the hedge on your right. After about 250m, the track goes left over the mainline railway, but we continue straight through a gate in the same direction as before onto a grassy track. In about 200m you should see a bungalow on your right, go round or through a wooden kissing gate, and continue on the track in the same direction.

Ignore the track that bears left over another bridge crossing the mainline railway [about 100m after the bungalow]. We go up steps to the right, over a concrete pedestrian bridge to cross the branch-line [*it is the same branch-line we walked over previously*], and down the other side to follow the fenced path. At a tarmac lane we turn left, this being Elm Tree Lane. There are houses on the right and a cricket field further on, to the left.

At the main road [A533] turn left and, when convenient and safe to do so, cross over to the pavement on the other side.

On the right, notice Elm Tree Farm with its artistically bricked chimneys, spiral topiary in the garden and in spring a nice show of daffodils in the field between the farm and the road.

Just after the farm, turn right into Moss Lane.

Keep following Moss Lane, ignoring Clifton Road, Mulberry Gardens and Patrons Drive on the left, following the road round to the left. Ignore the other end of Patrons Drive on the left, then the road bends right and after about 100m you cross over the canal, turning to follow the towpath with the canal on your right, eventually returning to the starting point at Mill Lane.

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7km or 4.4 miles, allow 2.5 hours

