

THE COCK AND GREYHOUND WHITCHURCH TRAIL, SHROPSHIRE



Moderate Terrain

5 miles
Circular
2.5 hours

160815



Access Notes



1. The route has a few steady climbs and descents throughout but there are no particularly steep sections.
2. The paths can be very muddy in winter and some parts can be a little overgrown in the summer so shorts are not recommended (unless you're immune to nettles).
3. You will need to negotiate several gates plus 7 stiles (some of which are entirely enclosed with wire fencing so dogs will need a lift over).
4. You will be sharing some of the fields with sheep and cattle so take particular care with dogs.
5. The canal is deep and busy with boat traffic so take care with young children on this part.

A 5 mile circular pub walk from The Cock and Greyhound in Whitchurch, Shropshire.

The Cock and Greyhound, one of the oldest inns in Whitchurch, is a beautifully restored British pub serving local cask ales, food from local farms and producers, and quality affordable wines, in all its proud glory. The walking route heads north through farmland and a golf course before returning alongside the Shropshire Union Canal, taking in sections of the South Cheshire Way and the Sandstone Trail along the way. There's lots of variety on route with wildlife, boatlife, farmlife and golf-life to enjoy on your journey.

Getting there

Whitchurch is located in North Shropshire, close to the borders with Wales and Cheshire. The town is 20 miles north of Shrewsbury and 20 miles south of Chester. NOTE: There are several other towns in Britain named Whitchurch, so do make sure you are heading to the correct one. The walk starts and finishes from The Cock and Greyhound on Bargates, opposite the church. The pub has its own small car park at the rear, but if you are planning to walk at busy times please consider parking elsewhere in the town to help other visitors. There is a free car park near the end of the walking route, at the junction between Waterside Close and Sherrymill Hill.

Approximate post code **SY13 1LL**

Walk Sections



Start to Golf Course



Leave the pub's rear car park via the vehicle entrance, cross over the road and turn left along the pavement.

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Follow this heading downhill, passing the former Grammar School on the right. The school was originally founded in 1550 and the present ornate red and black patterned brick building is a reconstruction built in 1848, using a Tudor style believed to be similar to the original. Today, the building is private apartments.

At the first mini-roundabout, cross over the side road to go straight ahead (NOTE: if the traffic is busy, there is a pedestrian crossing with lights just down to the right). At the second roundabout, go along the small surfaced track ahead (passing the properties Bargates and The Croft on your right) to continue along the right-hand pavement of Taporley Road. Follow the pavement steadily uphill and, immediately before Meadow Court on the right, you will see a small wooden fingerpost marking a footpath to the right.

Turn right through this gate and walk directly ahead through the rough meadow, staying close to the fence on the left. In the bottom corner, cross the stile and follow the path which leads you along the left-hand edge of a large pond. Keep ahead and at the end of the field you will come to a pair of stiles ahead, cross these to enter the next pasture (which may be holding sheep). Continue through this pasture staying close to the line of the fence on the right. At the far end, cross the stile, walk directly ahead through the narrow field and you will come to the next stile ahead. Cross this to reach the edge of the grounds of Terrick Hall and its golf course.

1 → 2 Golf Course to Hinton Old Hall



NOTE: This next section of the route follows several rights of way across this golf course, so please show respect for the golfers by allowing them to play their shots before you proceed and take care to avoid any flying stray golf balls.

Walk directly ahead through the trees and you will emerge to the edge of the golf course, with a tee on the right. Go directly ahead over the fairway to pick up the next waymarker post within the belt of trees. Turn right here to join the tarmac path winding through the golf course. If you look across to the right you will be able to see the skyline of Whitchurch, dominated by the tower of the church which sits alongside the Cock and Greyhound.

Just before the tarmac path leads you between an oak (on the right) and a chestnut tree (on your left), you will see a waymarker post on the left. Fork left here, passing just to the left of the chestnut tree, crossing the fairway to reach the next belt of trees. Beyond these trees, turn left to follow another tarmac path heading uphill. Follow the path which leads you into the complex of leisure buildings. Pass to the left of the glazed building which holds an indoor pool and stay on the path closest to the hotel on the right.

Follow the path right under a glass walkway to reach a tarmac access lane. Bear left and then immediately right (passing to the left of a green corrugated building). Follow this tarmac path past

a beautiful old property on the right. Fairly soon afterwards (immediately before a pond) you will see a waymarker post, turn left across the fairway. Bear left along another tarmac path, follow it over a ditch and then turn immediately right to reach the next waymarker post.

You need to take the path marked as straight ahead at this point, crossing back over the ditch and then following the line of the ditch on your left. As you approach a large pond ahead, rejoin the tarmac path which leads you left over the ditch and then swings right.

The path leads you through the edge of a belt of trees. As you emerge from these, leave the tarmac path and continue along the grass verge staying close to the right-hand tree line. 30 metres down the slope (at a small waymarker post) turn right through the conifers to reach a stile. Cross this and the next one a short distance ahead, to reach a T-junction with the access drive for Hinton Old Hall (visible to your right).

2 → 3 Hinton Old Hall to Grindley Brook Locks



Turn left along the drive and follow it out to reach a junction with the main road. Cross over with extreme care and go directly ahead onto the tarmac lane (signed as a bridleway and part of the South Cheshire Way). Pass through the small gate (which sits just to the right of the wider vehicle gate) and follow the access lane ahead.

Pass a number of houses on the left and then, immediately before a cattle grid ahead, fork left through a wide wooden gate (do not worry that the public footpath signs are missing here). Walk diagonally across the field to reach the furthest bottom corner. Pass through the wide metal gate and bear right to join the tree-lined stone track.

Where one branch of the track swings left into a field, ignore this and simply keep ahead along the grassy track leading you down through the trees. As you emerge from this section you will come to a crossroads with a dirt access track for the adjacent fields. Go straight ahead, through the metal gate to enter a hillside pasture (which may be holding cattle). Walk directly ahead, following the left-hand fence line (and ignoring the stile also on the left). Pass through a gate ahead and continue along the left-hand edge of a second pasture (where you will see the buildings of Grindley Brook Farm on the left).

Go ahead through the next gate and cross the pasture diagonally right (between 1 and 2 o'clock). Towards the far side of the field, continue with the fence line for an access drive running on your left. In the corner, pass through the metal gate to merge with this drive. Follow the drive under an arched bridge (which carries a dismantled railway overhead) and then over the canal bridge. Immediately afterwards, turn left to reach the towpath alongside Grindley Brook Locks.

3 → 4

Grindley Brook Locks to Lift Bridge



Walk ahead along the towpath, with the Shropshire Union Canal running on the left. The towpath leads you past the series of six locks known as Grindley Brook Locks. The latter three locks are a staircase formation, meaning one lock runs directly into the next, creating an extra challenge for those navigating by canal boat. This makes a great spot to pause and enjoy the busy life of the canal should you wish.

Beyond the hustle and bustle of the locks and service area, the towpath continues along a more tranquil stretch of the Shropshire Union Canal. The Shropshire Union Canal is a complex network of waterways and this branch was re-named as the Llangollen Canal in the 1980s to promote its use for leisure. This section of the canal towpath also forms the last part of the Sandstone Trail, a 34 mile long-distance path which runs from Frodsham in Cheshire to Whitchurch in Shropshire.

After passing under Bridge 30A, which carries an A-road overhead, the towpath swings left and then right to reach a black and white lift bridge (No. 31).

4 → 5

Lift Bridge to End



Turn left over this bridge to cross the canal and then walk ahead, following the left-hand towpath of the Whitchurch Arm of the Llangollen Canal. This short arm of the canal operated commercial traffic until 1936 and is now managed by Whitchurch Waterway Trust, a group of volunteers. Ignore the path into the nature reserve on the left, simply keep ahead along the towpath.

Where the canal ends, keep directly ahead passing under an old canal bridge and follow the stone path ahead through sections of wild meadow and hedgerow. Across to the left is a stream, Staggs Brook. Whitchurch is an important hotspot for native watervoles which have suffered national decline in recent

years, thanks to habitat loss and predation by the alien species American mink.

As you emerge out to the road, turn left and then immediately right to continue along the footpath through the meadows, still part of the Sandstone Trail. At the T-junction keep right, following the path through Whitchurch Waterway Country Park. Staggs Brook, now running to the right, is a haven for wildlife and provides a green corridor running into the heart of Whitchurch. Otters are regular users of the brook and you may just be lucky enough to see a flash of blue as a kingfisher patrols the banks.

Continue straight ahead on the stone path which leads you past a new housing development, The Brambles. At the road junction, go straight ahead, signed for The Town. Follow the stone path through a section of trees and out to a junction with the main road, Sherrymill Hill. (You will see the car park mentioned in the introduction opposite, so start the directions here if this is where you have chosen to park).

Turn left along the pavement (passing the car park to the right) and at the mini-roundabout, bear left alongside Castle Court. Just before you reach the church ahead, you will come to the Cock and Greyhound on the left for some well-earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

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