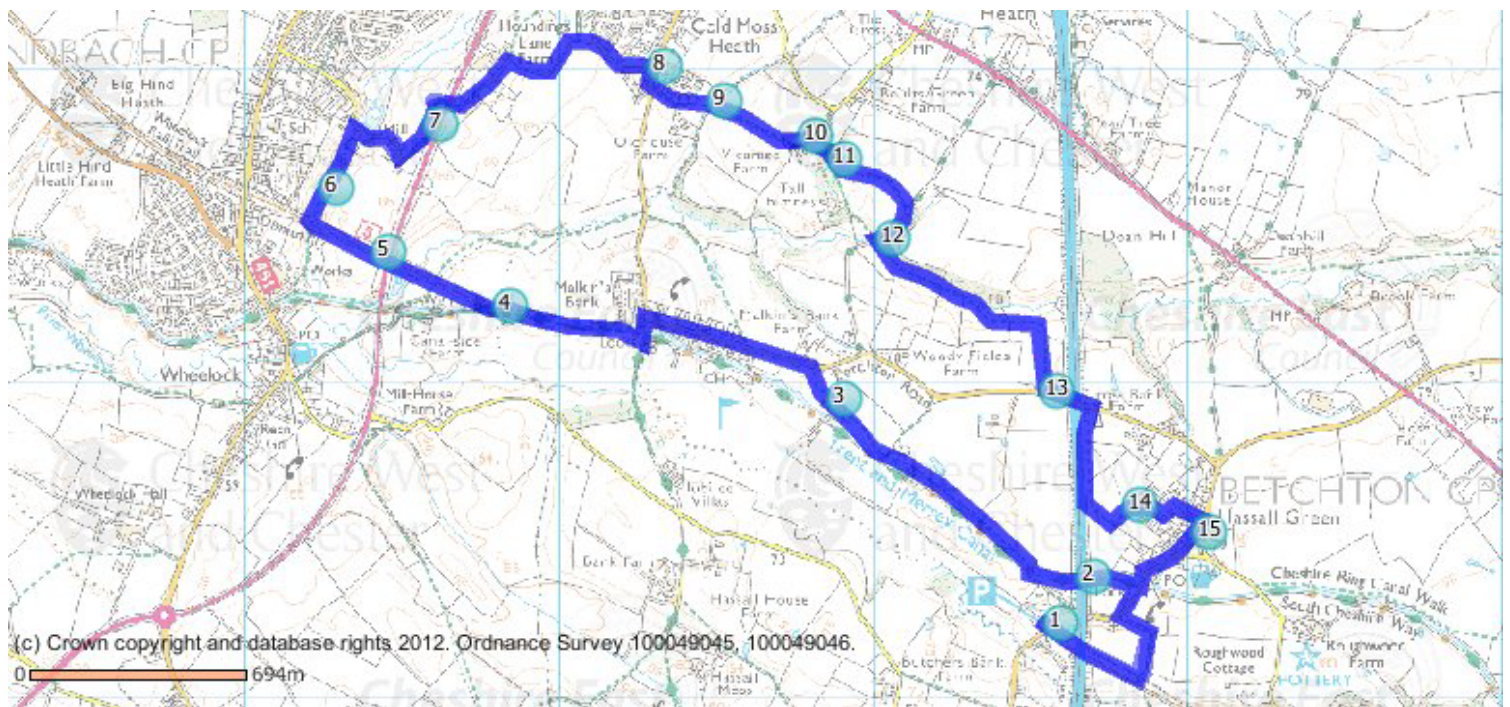


Malkins Bank Circular Walk

A route from Sandbach and Wheelock out to the countryside

Grade	Moderate
Distance	9.6 km / 6 miles
Time	3 hours
Start	Salt Line car park, or Sandbach or Wheelock
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Country footpaths and traffic-free routes
Barriers	Some stiles and slopes
Toilets	None on site
Contact	Public rights of way prow@cheshireeast.gov.uk tel. 01270 686029



Route Details

Industrial heritage into wildlife havens

This area once contained thriving industries due to large underground salt deposits. Large works were constructed and brine shafts sunk to extract the salt. The brine was pan dried into salt crystals which had many uses including the productions of soda, glass, soap and detergents.

Today, it is hard to imagine the salt works at Rode Heath Rise with steam billowing from the salt pans and boats being loaded with their cargoes. The canal formed a crucial link for the local industry. Salt was take from here whilst coat and pottery were brought up from Stoke. If you look closely at the towpath you can still find pottery in the path, as broken cargo was often thrown off the boats.

The countryside around Hassall Green is gentle, rolling farmland with pretty wooded valleys and flower rich hedgerows. Both the Salt Line and the canal, built to serve local industry, provide pleasant walks at any time of year. In spring listen out for blackcaps and willow warblers singing in the trees, whilst skylarks can often be heard high above.

Wildflowers mark the passing of the seasons. In late winter, bright yellow coltsfoot is common along the trails. In early spring, lesser celandine and wood anemone carpet the woods and primroses can be seen in the old railway cuttings. Bluebells, red campion and wild garlic provide colourful displays before the trees come into full leaf. Foxglove, oxeye daisy and St John's wort thrive in the strong midsummer sun. Knapweed, toadflax and scabious flower in later summer.

Flocks of redwings and fieldfares herald the onset of winter and if you are lucky you may hear a 'twittering' flock of long-tailed tits moving through the trees above your head.

Visitor Information

Location: Start at the Salt Line car park, best accessed off Hassall Road, between Alsager and Sandbach and is signposted off Betchton Road in Hassall Green. Postcode for satnav: CW11 4XT.

Alternatively, start in Wheelock or Sandbach and join the circular route from there.

Public transport: Public bus services operate to Hassall Green, Lawton Heath End and Alsager. Alternatively, both Sandbach and Wheelock are served by public transport.

Parking: There is a free car park off Alsager Road that is accessible for minibuses. There are no dedicated disabled parking bays. The car park closes at 8.30pm in summer and 5pm in winter.

Toilets: Toilets for patrons of refreshment stops only.

Refreshments: refreshments are available at public houses in Wheelock, Sandbach and Hassall Green.

Further information:

For further information on the route, contact the Public Rights of Way team on:

Tel: 01270 686029

Email: prow@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Directions

1. Cross the road and follow the Salt Line under the M6 bridge. After approximately 100 metres turn left along the footpath that joins the road by the pink church.
2. Turn right and walk up the hill to the canal and join the towpath.
3. Follow the towpath under M6 and walk for over 1.5 kms past Malkins Bank village.
4. After lock 64, follow the path which veers away from the canal along the hedge. Then take the wider path to the right over the canal bridge to join the Wheelock Rail Trail.
5. Walk along the Rail Trail and cross the A534 with care. Once safely across the road, carry on for a further 200m and then by a bridge turn left down a flight of steps and right at their base.
6. Follow the footpath under the bridge and across the meadows to Mill Hill Lane where you turn right.
7. Walk past Sandbach Mill and follow the winding lane uphill and past a farm. The road becomes Houndings Lane. Follow the road to the junction and turn right.
8. Take the next footpath on the left which follows a track. Bear left off the track along the field edge.
9. Cross a stream before walking over a field to the drive of the large house called Tall Chimneys.
10. Cross the drive and follow the footpath over the fields taking you to the left of Tall Chimneys and down a slope.
11. The footpath leads down to Stannerhouse Lane bridge in a pretty valley.
12. Cross the track at the bridge and take the footpath opposite, along the meadow until it crosses over the stream via a wooden bridge.
13. Follow the footpath up to the road and turn left crossing the M6, then turn right down a footpath which runs parallel to the M6.
14. The footpath leads to Hassall Green. Once in the village cross the play area and walk to the main road through the village where you turn right.
15. Continue along the road over the canal bridge and retrace your steps back to the Salt Line.