

THE WHITCHURCH WHEEL



Whitchurch has long been a centre of cheese making, and the wheel here refers to a 'wheel of cheese'. The circular route around the town has thus been called "The Whitchurch Wheel".

The walk may be followed clockwise or otherwise, and is well waymarked. Launched in the 40th (Ruby) Anniversary year of the Whitchurch Walkers, the route is marked with a distinctive roundel in ruby and yellow. (See photo). The route is highlighted in **yellow** on the maps of the walk.

The wheel is divided into seven 'slices'. There are seven spokes that can be used to access the Wheel. The centre of the wheel is the car park at Sherry Mill Hill SJ537 415 at the north end of **Jubilee Park**, which is also the start of the **Sandstone Trail** and on the **Shropshire Way**.

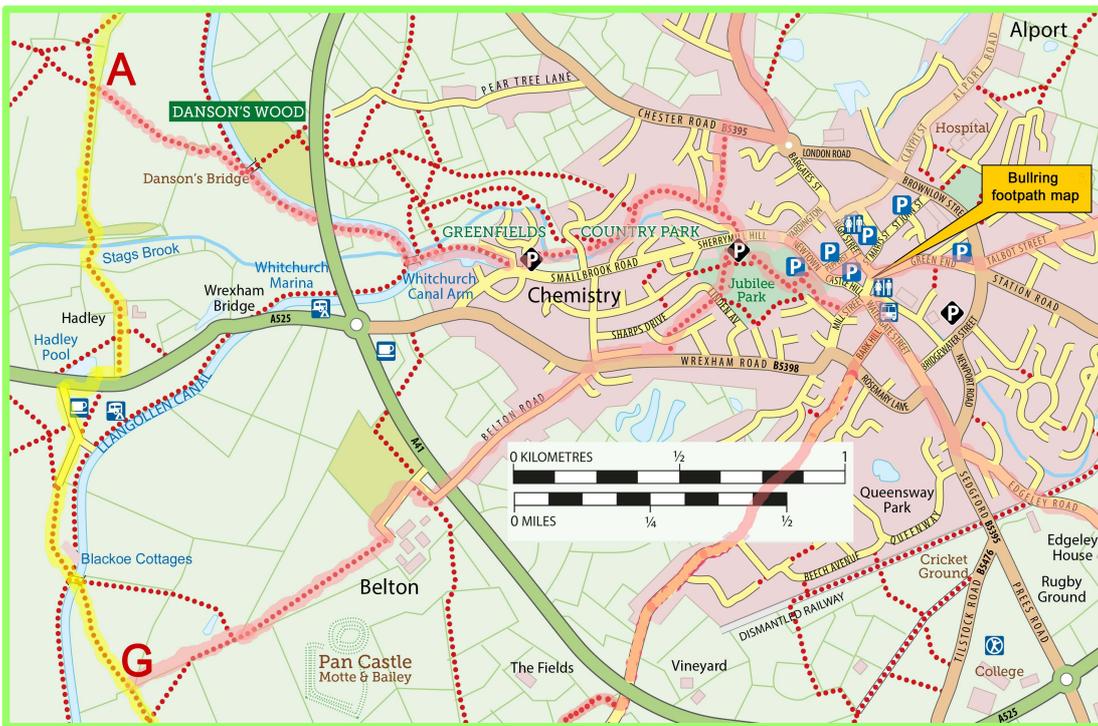
The terrain is easy, gently undulating, no sustained steep sections, mostly across farmland which can be muddy in places at times. It is well within the capabilities of any reasonably fit person, and can be done easily in a day.

It can also be walked as 'slices'. We have tried to use footpaths for the slices, but some have had to follow roads. These are highlighted in **pink** on the large-scale maps.



Wedge A-G anticlockwise

A SJ 518 420
G SJ 520 403



- Note that point A is at a crossing of paths. The Right of Way actually crosses the stile and one walks south with the hedge on your left. BUT, there are frequently problems here due to maize cropping, and it is easier to walk south with the hedge on your right for about 50 metres to a gate in the hedge. Go through this gate and walk with the hedge now on your left for about 100 metres to a gate and a stile.
- Cross the stile down a weedy gully (care as there are some uncovered drainage holes). The path comes to a footbridge.
- Cross the bridge and follow the waymarked path up to **Hadley Farm**; it is often very muddy here.
- Go down the farm drive to the busy **A525**, the Whitchurch to Wrexham road. Cross with care to the wide grass verge opposite, turn right, and proceed for a short way to the wide entrance of a driveway.
- At present there is a roadside **cafe** (Alfresco Cafe) here.
- Go down the drive (south) with an equestrian events course on your right, to a row of cottages on your left (**Blackoe Cottages**).
- Cross a steel footbridge over the canal. The path goes at a diagonal to the right across a large field to reach a stile and a small footbridge.
- You are now at **Point G** (west of **Belton Farm**, the home of Belton Cheese, made at the farm and sold both nationally and internationally).
- There are some extensive views from here towards the Welsh hills.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch:

Walk 10 covers this section anticlockwise although it takes an alternative route round **Hadley Pool**.



Wedge G-F anticlockwise

G SJ 520 403
F SJ 523 393



- Cross the stile at **point G** and walk with the hedge on your left until you reach a small wooded dingle.
- Cross the stile in the corner, turn right, and then over a stile on your right a short distance on.
- Cross the next field in the direction of the waymarker to a stile leading down into a deep **disused railway** cutting. This was the old Cambrian line from Whitchurch to Ellesmere, Oswestry and beyond.
- Go up the other side and cross two stiles, then along a large field with the hedge on your right to a gate and stile leading onto a lane opposite a barn conversion called "**Fern Bank**".
- Turn left along the lane, and right at the next junction (no signpost here).
- This is **point F**.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch:

Walk 10 covers this section anticlockwise



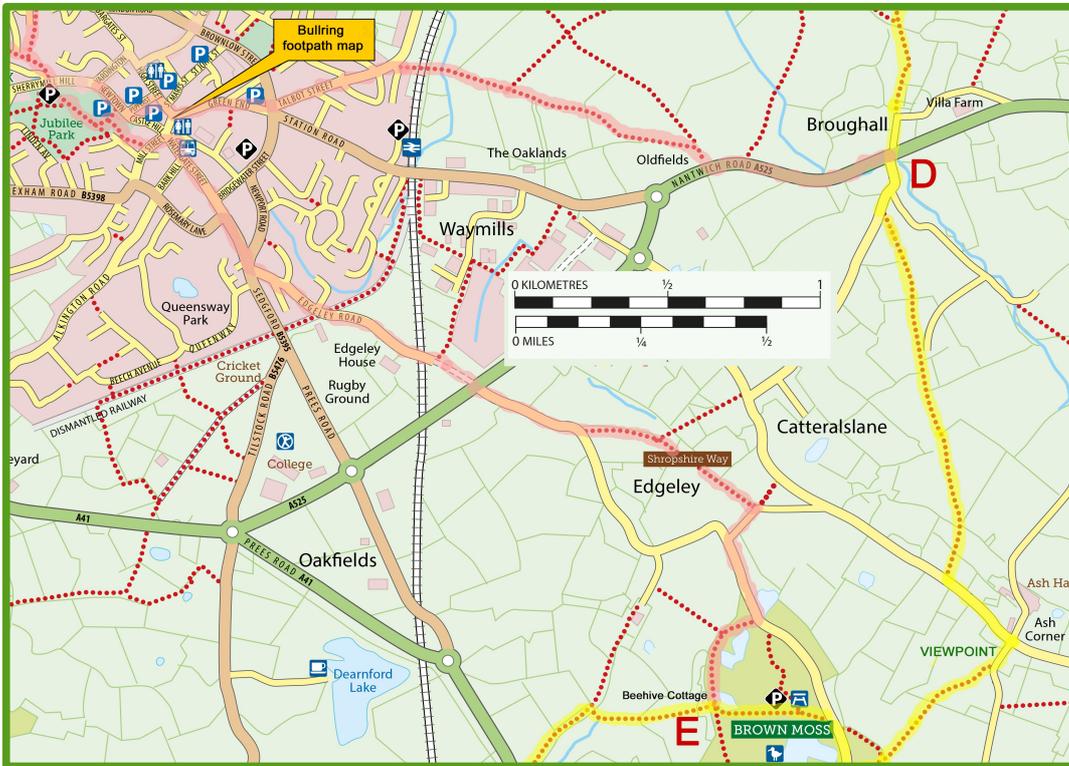
Wedge F-E anticlockwise

F SJ 523 393
E SJ 567 399

- If joining the Wheel at this point, turn left.
- Proceed along the lane in a southerly direction until reaching a shed on the left and a house opposite.
- Turn left at the T-junction following the lane, ignoring the footpath on the right. This leads to **Alkington Road**.
- Here there is a fine old Jacobean hall (**Alkington Hall**), and opposite is a farm (The Beeches).
- Go through the farmyard at the Beeches, due east; at the second gate (which is difficult to open) the route turns due south. There is no clear path across this large grass field, it more or less follows the field boundary.
- In the next field turn right and then left by a tree where the path crosses the field where a boundary has been removed. Try and follow the waymarkers.
- When you reach a large horse paddock go through the wooden wicket gate, and head for the next wicket gate. The path goes through the curtilage of a house to the road; this is the Whitchurch to **Tilstock Road** and can be quite busy so cross with care to a double wicket gate on the other side by a wall.
- On your left is **Dearnford Hall**, you pass through a paddock with planted trees, then by tall fences enclosing deer. Go along an arable field to reach the railway line. Care here as this is the main Shrewsbury to Crewe line.
- Cross the line and follow the farm track to the very busy A41 + A49 dual carriageway. Cross with great care, there is a central refuge. Cross to a wide brick lined entrance to a driveway.
- Here large garden ornaments are stored and sold. Pass through the yard to a gate that leads onto a green lane.
- About 200 metres on turn right at a stile, slightly downhill across grass to another stile, across a grass field that can at times be quite wet, to a stile leading onto an enclosed path by a cottage. The next stile brings you onto **Brown Moss** with **Beehive Cottage** on your left.
- This is **point E**.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch:

Walk 10 covers this section anticlockwise



Wedge E-D anticlockwise

E SJ 567 399
D SJ 565 414

- If joining the Wheel at this point, you need to start from the stile just south of **Beehive Cottage**.
- Bear very slightly right to a waymark post then straight ahead (east), through some trees, across a little bit of heath with a good view of the main pool, to trees where there is a car park. This leads onto a lane.
- Turn right; continue about 200 metres to a wooden signpost near to a bungalow (Boat House).
- Turn left through trees, and follow the waymarks to a kissing gate. This leads into a field, and another kissing gate and then up a slight rise towards the village of **Ash**. On a clear day there are very extensive views from here.
- At the next lane turn left, and then left again at the next lane junction. Proceed along the pavement for about 300 metres to a finger-post by a stile and near to a gateway.
- Turn right over the stile. At the present time this area is devoted to growing Christmas trees. Proceed straight across to a kissing gate, then at an angle across the corner of the field to another kissing gate. From here go across a largish field with undulations, towards some trees where there is a small footbridge and stile.
- The path from here is fairly straight, running north with the hedge to your right. It may be cropped or it may be grass. A stile by a gate opposite some houses leads onto a lane.
- Turn right down the lane, continue past a junction to the main road; the **A525** Whitchurch to Nantwich road, you are now at the little hamlet of **Broughall**. Cross with care to the telephone box opposite; this is **point D**.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch

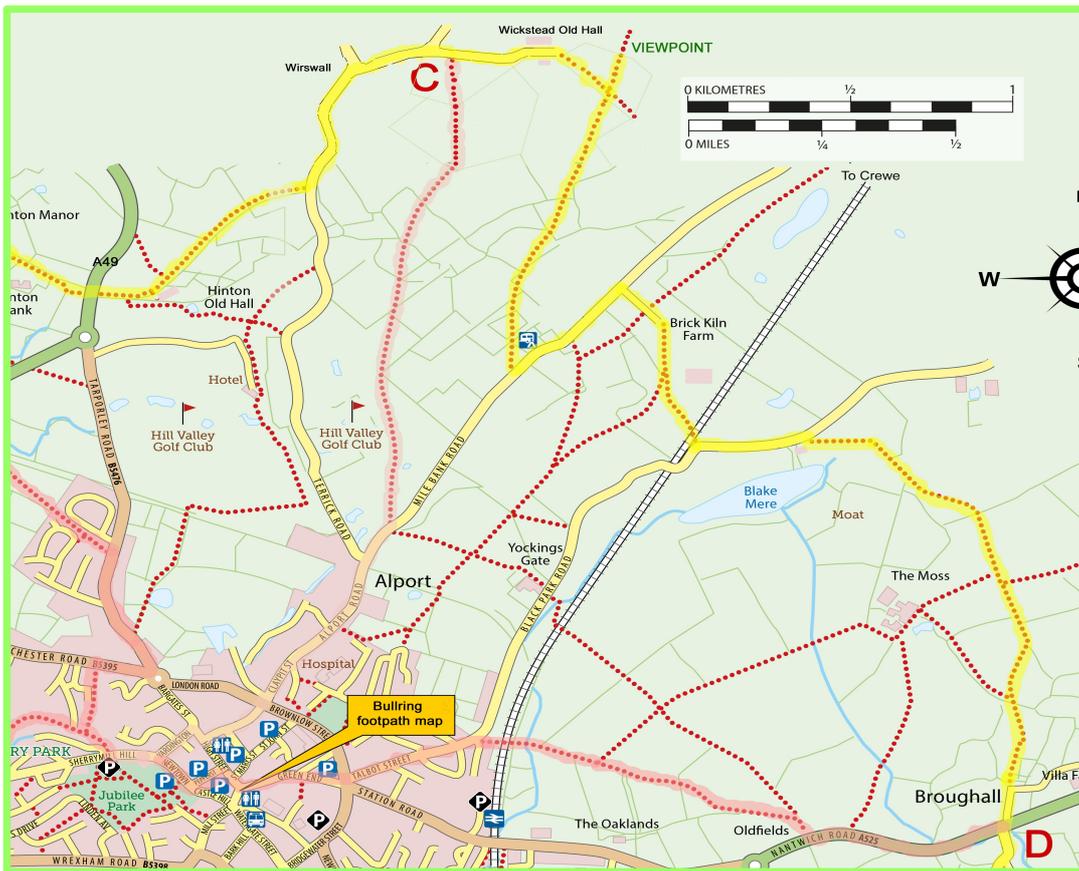
Walk 8 covers anticlockwise this section from **Brown Moss**



Wedge D-C anticlockwise

D SJ 565 414

C SJ 549 441



- Go along the lane, past some cottages, to where the lane bends abruptly to the right. Go ahead to a gate and pass through it, making sure to close it as it leads onto a busy road, Walk across a grass field to a wicket gate in a hedge.
- Bear slightly right up the slope and as you go over the crest a gate will come into view. Go through this, ignoring a stile to your right, to a bridle gate by a field gate. Go along the line of the hedge (to your right) to another metal bridle gate. You now get a glimpse of **Blakemere**. Bear left, towards a sandy bank ahead with the path going to its left. After another gate, the path follows the hedge to your left to reach an enclosed car park for the anglers visiting Blakemere.
- Through this and you are on a lane (**Black Park Road**). Left along the lane to a cottage on your right, turn right by the cottage through a bridle gate to cross the railway line. Make sure no trains are approaching and cross to a green lane opposite. Continue along the track past **Brick Kiln Farm**, a series of barn conversions, on the right, and go up the drive to a lane (**Mile Bank Road**).
- Turn left here. This road can be busy. There is a grass verge, and then a narrow pavement on the right, continue for about 450 metres to a fingerpost (that might be hidden), turn off right through the gate. Follow the path around a caravan park to a gate leading into a field. Bear right here to the next gate, and then another. As you go over the rise and a stile is seen; this is the border between Shropshire and Cheshire. Be careful: this stile is difficult to use.
There are no roundels on the next section but there are footpath waymarks.
- Go past a small wood to a crossing of paths with a wooden signpost by the stile.
- (If you have time a slight diversion will reward you with an extensive view over Cheshire; go ahead to a stile on a rise, and enjoy the view looking north, if clear you should be able to see Jodrell Bank. Return to the stile with the signpost.)
- Turn west and go through the farm (**Wickstead Old Hall**). Follow the gravelled farm drive: at a stile on your left is Point C.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch

Walk 3 [short route] covers clockwise the section from **Blakemere** to **Broughall**.



Wedge C-B anticlockwise

C SJ 549 441
B SJ 529 435

- From Point C continue down the drive to a lane, and turn left. Continue along this lane for about 750 metres (ignore the one on the right with a **Bishop Bennet Way** signpost). The lane bends around to the left, now heading due south. Turn right down a green lane (bridleway) by a bungalow.
- The green lane ends at a gate, go through this and through fields (**Hinton Old Hall** on your left) to a driveway, right here and along to the main road. *As you came down this slope you re-entered Shropshire.* Take care as this is a busy trunk road (**A49** Whitchurch to Warrington road); cross over to the sign-posted driveway.
- Go up the driveway and notice the farm on your left. This is **Hinton Bank Farm** where *Cheshire* and then *Blue Cheshire* cheeses were once made using milk from their herd of *Dairy Shorthorn* cattle.
- Keep to the track on the right, into a field (often with horses); there are some good views from here. Turn left off the drive via a stile and gate a gate, then right down a green lane known as the **Fairy Glen**.
- At the bottom bear left through a field gate.
- A short distance on there is a stile on your left – this is **Point B**

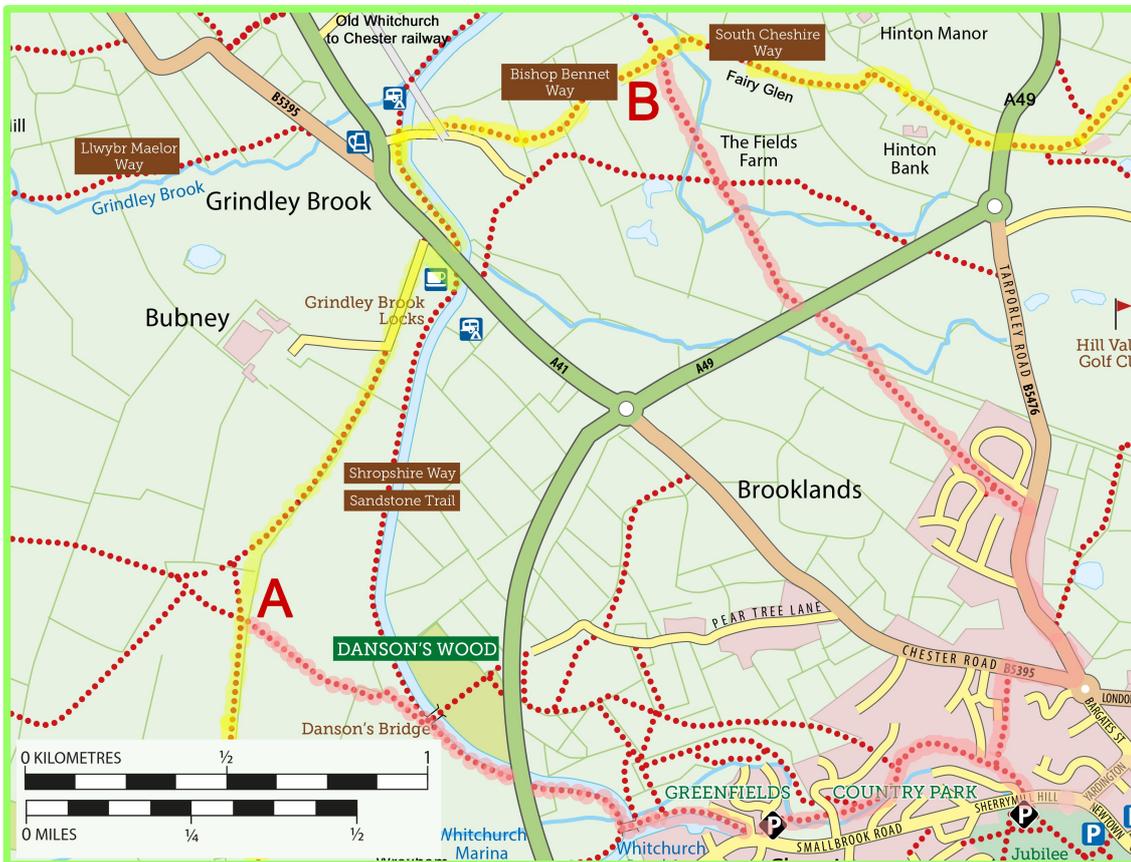
10 varied walks around Whitchurch

Walk 9 covers anticlockwise the section from **Hinton**, through the **Fairy Glen**, past **Point B**, to **Grindley Brook Locks**.



Wedge B-A anticlockwise

B SJ 529 435
A SJ 518 420



- Do not cross the stile at **Point B**, but continue to follow the SCW waymarks south-westwards to a gate by a disused railway embankment and a tall brick bridge that once carried the **Whitchurch to Chester railway**. Pass under the bridge, and then over the **Llangollen Canal**.
- *Across the main road from this bridge is the Horse and Jockey **public house** and the intersection of the **Shropshire Way, Sandstone Trail, Maelor Way** and the **South Cheshire Way**; the Crewe of the local footpath network!*
- Immediately on crossing the bridge (Bridge 28) turn left and after passing through a little wooden gate you are on the towpath, bear right along the towpath (i.e. go upstream), pass three locks, go under the road bridge at the foot of the **Grindley Brook** staircase of locks.
- Turn off the towpath after passing under the bridge. Here there is a **cafe** open during the summer season. Coming off the towpath bear around right to reach the pavement by the very busy **A41** Whitchurch to Chester road.
- Turn left and walk beside the road for about 100 metres.
- Go left up the drive way to **Bubney Farm**, NOTE where the drive turns around to the right, go ahead across grass to a stile. Then another stile leads onto the bend of a farm track.
- Note: the Right of Way should go ahead on the right hand side of the hedge, BUT the paths here have become so problematic it is advised to go down the farm track (SSW) with the hedge to your right until you come to a stile on your right. This is **Point A**.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch

Walk 9 covers anticlockwise the section from **Hinton**, past **Point B**, to **Grindley Brook Locks**.

