

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**.

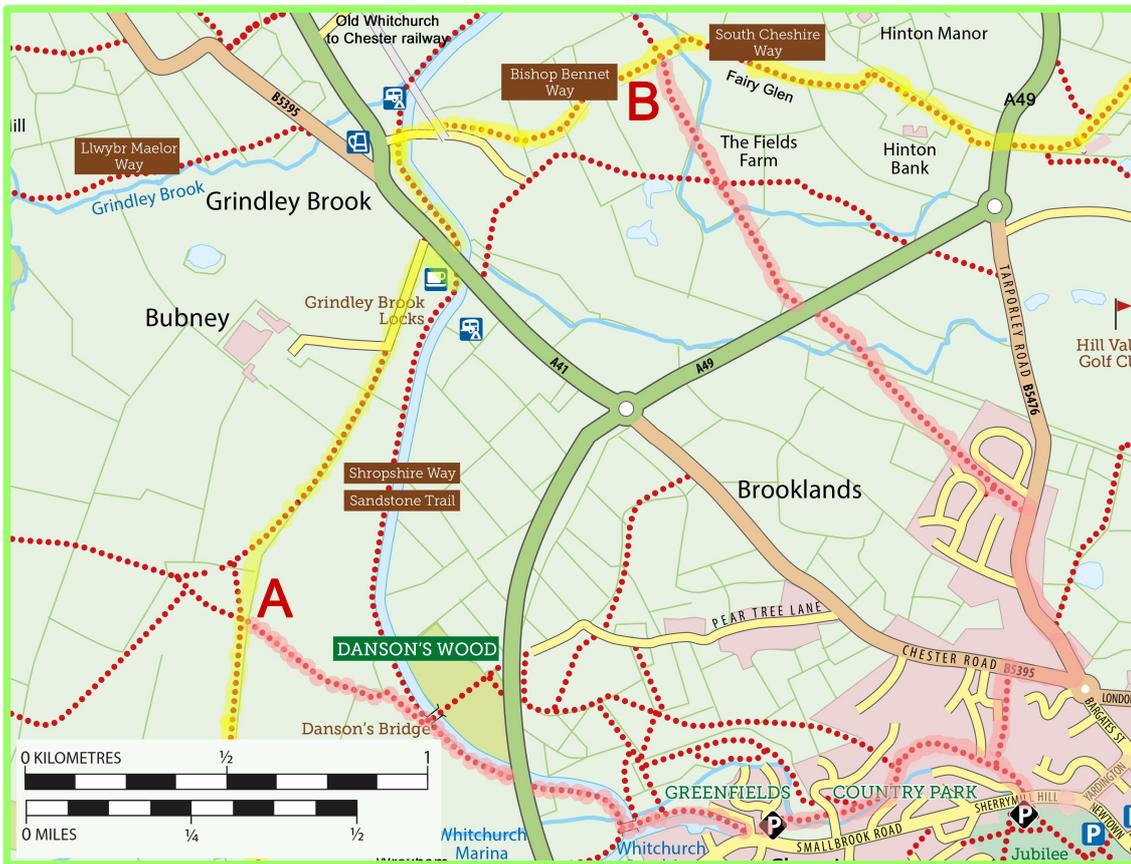
The terrain is easy, gently undulating, no sustained steep sections, mostly across farmland which can be muddy in places at times. It is well within the capabilities of any reasonably fit person, and can be done easily in a day.

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-B clockwise

A SJ 518 420
B SJ 529 435



- The Right of Way crosses the stile and continues north with the hedge on the right, but there are so many problems with this path it is suggested to go north along the farm track (hedge on the left). Where the track bends to the left, make for the stile to the right, across the grass, and after one more stile join the farm drive to reach the main road [A41] at **Grindley Brook**.
- Turn right and 100 metres on is the canal and the **Grindley Brook staircase locks**. Here is a **cafe**, open during the summer months.
- Join the tow path, turn left to go under the road bridge, pass three locks to the next bridge (Bridge 28).
- 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!
- Leave the tow path and go over this bridge. This bridleway is waymarked as the **South Cheshire Way (SCW)**, and it is also part of the **Bishop Bennett Way** bridleway route.
- Go under a tall bridge that once supported the **Whitchurch to Chester railway**. Pass through the gate to the left, through several fields following the waymarks. After about 550 metres pass a stile on your right. This is **Point B**.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch

Walk 9 covers anticlockwise the section from Hinton, past point B, to Grindley Brook locks.



Wedge B-C clockwise

B SJ 529 435
C SJ 549 441

- Do not go over the stile on your right but go forward a few metres to a gate, which leads onto a green lane that bears right. This is the **"Fairy Glen"** rising gently with banks and trees on each side. Continue up the lane until a house comes into view when you should take the gate on your left, go through this to reach a farm drive, turn right along the drive. *The farm on the right, Hinton Bank Farm, once made Cheshire and then Blue Cheshire cheeses using milk from their herd of Dairy Shorthorn cattle.*
- This leads to the busy **A49** road.
- Cross the road with care to another drive leading to **Hinton Old Hall**.
- Before the Hall go left through a gate onto a bridleway through fields to a short length of green lane to reach a lane (**Terrick Road**). *As you join the green lane you enter Cheshire.*
- Turn left along this lane, it is not busy but take care as the visibility is not good in places. This leads to the hamlet of **Wirswall**.
- Ignore the Bishop Bennett Way on your left; continue until you turn right up the drive leading to **Wickstead Old Hall**, there is a metal footpath signpost at the drive end. Just after entering this drive there is a stile to the right, this is **Point C**.

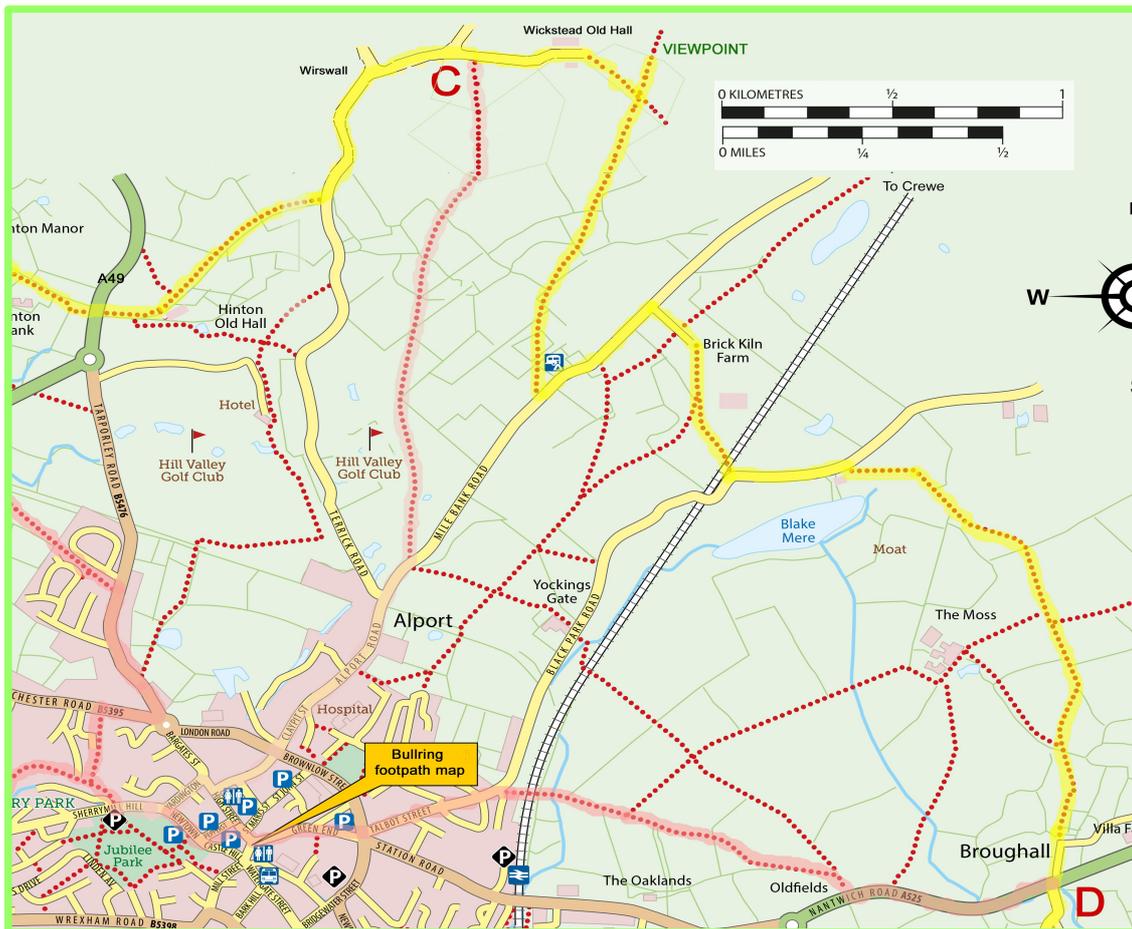
10 varied walks around Whitchurch

Walk 9 covers anticlockwise the section from Hinton, through the Fairy Glen, past point B, to Grindley Brook locks.



Wedge C-D clockwise

C SJ 549 441
D SJ 565 414



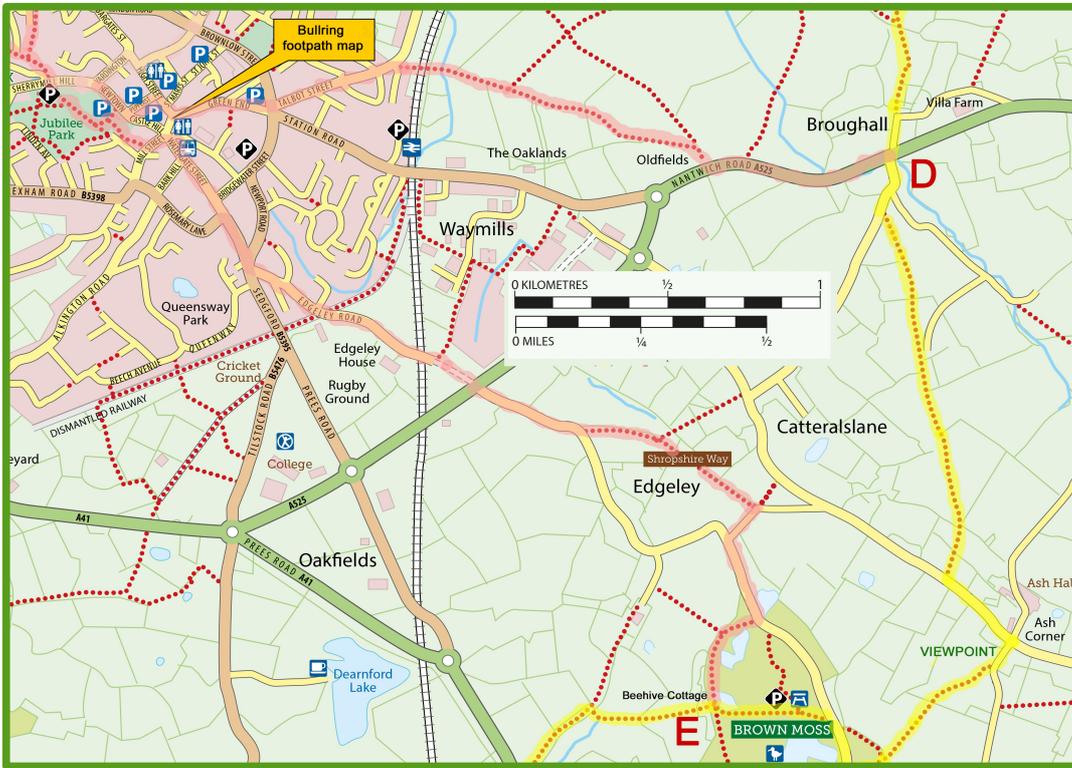
Note:

There are no roundels on the next few stiles but there are normal footpath waymarks.

- Continue along the drive to **Wickstead Old Hall** (a working farm with sheep, and cattle), go through the curtilage of the farm to a signpost at a stile.
- *If you have time for a little diversion for a very fine view: go left (NNE) for about 80 metres to the next stile; from here, on a clear day, you can see Jodrell Bank in Cheshire. Return to the signpost.*
- Now cross the stile continuing south, pass a small wood, to a somewhat awkward stile. Over this stile and you are back in Shropshire. The next kissing gate is in the same direction over the bank. Continue to the right of a **caravan park**, passing a tall hedge to **Mile Bank Road**. Turn left. Follow this road for about 450 metres, keeping alert for cars.
- Turn right down a drive, there is a sign post for a bridleway, this leads past **Brick Kiln Farm**, leading to a railway crossing. Take care here as it is the main line from Shrewsbury to Crewe. Over the line and you reach **Black Park Road**. Turn left, and go along this lane for about 450 metres, until you reach a fenced car park for the anglers of Blakemere. Turn right onto a bridleway. You will get a sighting of **Blakemere**. In medieval times there was a moated fortified house on the SE corner of the mere, the **site [moat]** is indicated on the map.
- The path bears around from east to south, cross a field to a gate, then more fields to reach the small village of **Broughall**, go ahead down a short stretch of lane to reach the A525 main road with a telephone box at the junction. This is **Point D**.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch

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



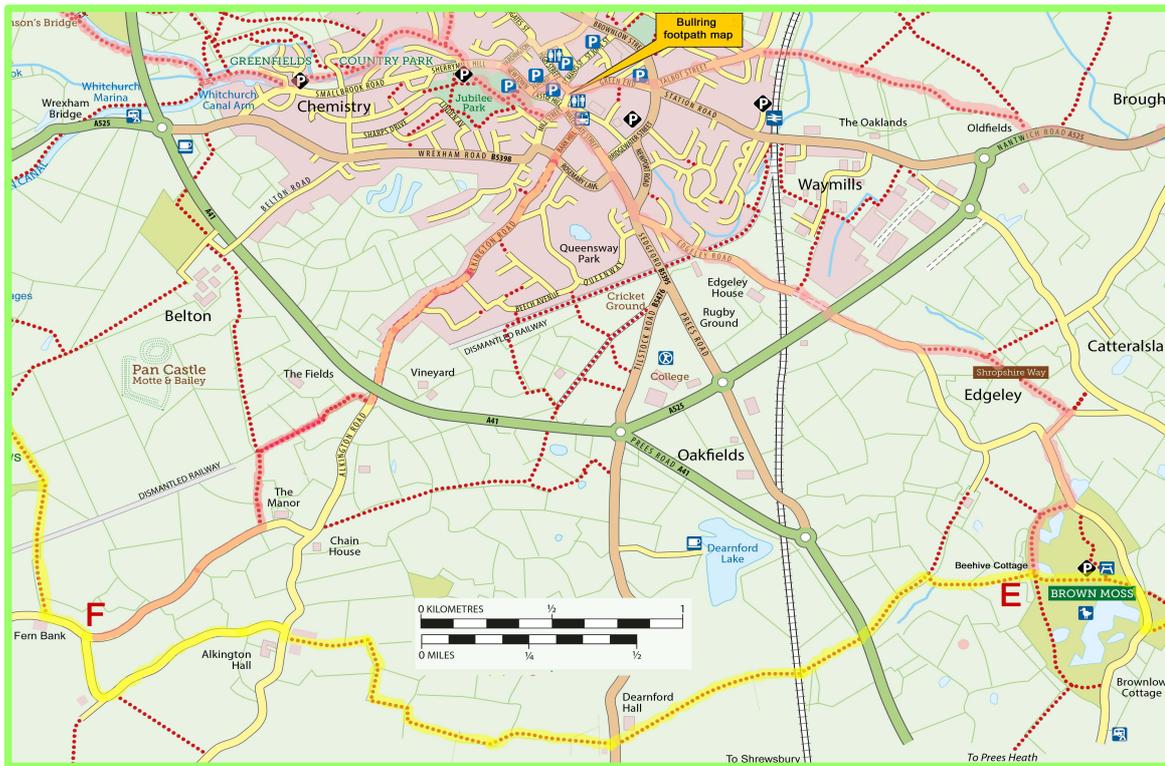
Wedge D-E clockwise

D SJ 565 414
E SJ 567 399

- Take care as this road is busy, cross to the **Catterals Lane** opposite. A short way on, take the right fork, and then go through a gate on your left. Continue across fields, keeping in a southerly direction. After a little footbridge there is a large field to cross, after the second kissing gate you reach a Christmas tree plantation, and then reach Ash Road. Turn left.
- At the crossroads, turn right, and go right through the first gate. Here there are extensive views in clear weather.
- Cross the field, a gentle descent, towards **Brown Moss**, a kissing gate leads into a wooded area; you can bear either left or right to reach a lane.
- Turn right along this lane. A good view across the Moss, sometimes the water is up to the lane, at other times it might just be a small pool.
- Turn left to the car park, going west.
- The path crosses a small area of heath, into trees (to the left is a small area of *swingmor* for those who are connoisseurs of bogs). Continue until you reach **Beehive Cottage**. [Point E] Leave the Moss by the path on its left. The first part is fenced on both sides.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch

Walk 8 covers anticlockwise this section to Brown Moss



Wedge E-F clockwise

E SJ 567 399
F SJ 523 393

- From **point E** leave the **Moss** by the path left of **Beehive Cottage**. The first part is fenced on both sides. It is then across fields that can be wet at times.
- Continue to a Restricted Byway; go left along this track to reach a place where large garden ornaments are stored and sold. Continue on to the dual carriageway (A41/49). Great care is needed to cross this as it is busy and the traffic is fast, but there is the advantage of a central refuge.
- Go down the track through the farm opposite, to reach the **railway line** (Shrewsbury to Crewe main line).
- Cross the line and continue through fields, west-south-west, coming to where there are well fenced paddocks with planted trees and a large building (**Dearnford Hall**) on the right.
- After a double wicket gate you are at a **Tilstock Road**, (which can be quite busy). Cross with care, following the waymarked path across a garden and then to the right hand far corner of the field behind.
- Many of the hedges on the next section have been removed; the line of the Public Right of Way follows the edge of the field with the hedge on your left except at the **arrow** where you go straight across the open field, turning to the right when you reach the far side.
- After two more fields, There is a gate which at the time of writing was very difficult to open. Pass through this and up a track to the farm called The Beeches at which point you reach a road (**Alkington Road**).
- Opposite The Beeches is a fine Jacobean hall – **Alkington Hall**.
- Turn right at the road and left along the lane next to the hall.
- After about 750 metres turn right at the junction, and at the next junction [**Point F**] turn left.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch:

Walk 10 covers this section anticlockwise



Wedge F-G clockwise

F SJ 523 393
G SJ 520 403

- If joining the Wheel at this point continue along the lane as it bears to the right.
- Opposite a converted farm house "**Fern Bank**" is a double gate and a stile.
- Turn right off the lane, through the next two fields until you come to a **disused railway** cutting. This is the remains of the Cambrian Line which ran from Whitchurch to Ellesmere and beyond.
- Cross the deep cutting, across a field diagonally to the right-hand corner to a wooded dingle.
- There are two stiles to cross round the east end of the wood, then continue north with a hedge to your right. The **Llangollen Canal** is down the slope on the left with the Welsh hills beyond.
- Continue to a small footbridge and stile.
- 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).

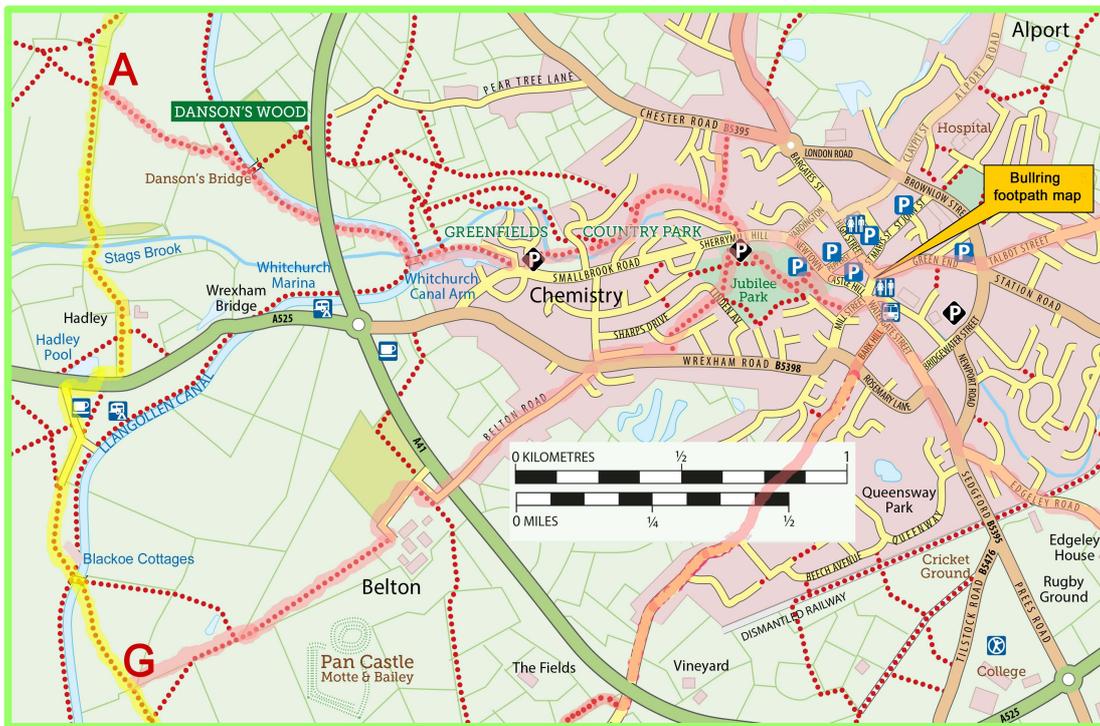
10 varied walks around Whitchurch:

Walk 10 covers this section anticlockwise



Wedge G-A clockwise

G SJ 520 403
A SJ 518 420



- The last section of the wheel if starting from **Point A**.
- There are some extensive views from here (**Point G**).
- The path goes at a diagonal across a field to a steel footbridge over the **canal**.
- Cross this bridge, cottages (**Blackoe Cottages**) on your right.
- The path now joins a drive, passing by an equestrian area, and there is a roadside **cafe** (Alfresco Cafe).
- You are now at the busy Whitchurch to Wrexham **A525** road.
- The grass verge here is wide, go a few metres to the right along the verge, and carefully cross to a drive leading to **Hadley Farm**, this is also a bridleway.
- Pass through part of the farm yard, and go down through fields (warning – it can be very muddy at times) to a footbridge*.
- Here you cross **Stags Brook** which since being crossed at Broughall has passed all the way through Whitchurch..
- Cross this bridge, up a shallow gully to a stile and gate into a very large field.
- The Right of Way continues with the hedge on your right, pass a gate, and continue to a stile on your right. This is **Point A**.
- At the stile mentioned above is a crossing of paths.

NOTES on the path around Point A:

- After the footbridge* you go up a weedy gully to a stile by a gate, and if the next field is cropped or difficult to walk, go ahead about 50 metres, and then through the gate on the right, onto a farm track and continue with the hedge on your left.

10 varied walks around Whitchurch:

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