





Dog Friendly Pub Walk





Merry Hill to Delph

 walk time 30-40 minutes
distance 1.6km / 1 mile



WALKING TIPS

-  Walking times are approx, measured on an average pace of two miles an hour.
-  Follow the water and enjoy walking at your own pace... but allow time to simply sit and stare along the way.
-  Walk one way and hop on a bus for your return, or turn around and walk back to discover a different view.

-  towpath
-  access point
-  pub
-  parking
-  bus stop
-  railway station

The Walk - Step by Step

Setting off from Merry Hill Shopping Centre, the canal takes you quietly away from consumer mayhem. This area once thrived on industries that boomed from the success of local coalmines, yet today's leisurely towpath trails effortlessly from an old established industrial landscape into gentle green pockets whistling with wildlife and narrowboats. The landscape at Delph Locks will play with your thoughts, rocking them between your connection to nature in this lush oasis and the sheer physics rapping from marvellous engineering.



START The towpath meanders Brierley Hill's Waterfront, a complex of offices, hotels and bars, with moorings and a marina.

- 1 The striking blue footbridge is named Lord Dudley's Bridge and was officially opened in 1994 by Michael Portillo, then Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Lord Dudley had been the principal promoter of the Dudley Canals, as he wanted to link his limeworks and Tipton colliery to the Birmingham Canal Navigations.
- 2 At the end of the Waterfront, the scene opens up in front of you. Follow the embankment past a long stretch of moorings overlooking the wide-eyed expanse of Merry Hill shopping centre below. The shopping centre was built on the former site of Round Oak Steel Works (which closed in 1983 after nearly 200 years making steel) and nearby Merry Hill Farm. Continue under two metal bridges and round the next bend to Delph Top Lock.
- 3 An unexpected green scene awaits beyond the lock under the road bridge. As you walk over the roving cast-iron bridge at the top of the flight, you'll notice evidence of the original canal and lock flight heading off to the left – this overgrown area has become a haven for wildlife so look and listen for moorhen, coot, ducks, hedgerow birds and perhaps even a heron. The bridge is Grade II-listed and was cast in iron in 1858 by Horseley Iron Works in Tipton. Look closely at the grooves worn into the bridge from the ropes of generations of boat horses pulling boats laden with cargo. It's almost impossible not to inger on the bridge to peer down over the striding lock flight, set in its incongruously leafy landscape.
- 4 Although since 1858 only eight locks have made up the flight, Delph Locks is still known locally as 'Nine Locks'. When the flight was originally built in 1779 by engineer Thomas

Dadford, there were nine locks, but after subsidence problems due to deep coal mining, a new lock flight of eight was built straight down the hill in the 1850s. The top and bottom locks are both from the original build, with six new locks in between. The name of the pub at the foot of the locks, the Tenth Lock, only adds to the confusion. Due to the amount of collieries in the Black Country, the locks were also known as the Black Delph flight. The entire Grade II-listed lock flight, original lock arm, stables and lock house were designated a Conservation Area in 1976. Sways of green grass and trees border the locks, and water sparkles over high waterfall overflows - wafting a sweet sense of calm and tranquillity as you walk down the flight.

- 5 Next to lock 3, the stables once housed up to 14 horses and are reputedly the last remaining canal stables in the Black Country. The original lock house for the flight is down a short path from the canal and stables. It has a half-octagonal end to enable boat movements up and down the flight to be monitored from the house. Built in 1779 to house the lock keeper for the flight, it is one of only a few remaining canal houses of this type.
- END** At Black Delph Bridge, the Dudley No.1 joins the Stourbridge Canal with little fuss. Delph Road is often called the 'real ales Riviera' of Dudley, due to the amount and variety of pubs along it. Bathams, one of the oldest Black Country family breweries, has its tap house (the Vine Inn, also known as the 'Bull and Bladder') on Delph Road. Come off the towpath here to hop on a bus for your return – or turn around and amble back up the hill to relive the joys of this route from a different viewpoint.

CANAL: Dudley No.1

START: The Waterfront
OS Grid ref: SO923873 Postcode: DY5 1XR

FINISH: Black Delph Bridge
OS Grid ref: SO916864 Postcode: DY5 2BD

DISTANCE: 1.6km / 1 mile
(double if walk back to start)

APPROX TIME: 30-40 minutes

PUB: The Vine on Delph Road, The Garrison on the Waterfront

PARKING: Car park at Merry Hill.
Postcode: DY5 1UR

TRAIN: Nearest train station: Cradley Heath
National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 03457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk

BUS: Traveline
Tel: 0871 2002233 www.traveline.info

