

Birmingham Wellbeing Walk

Curzon Street to Aston Junction

walk time 25-35 minutes
distance 1.2km / ¾ mile



The Walk - Step by Step

The Digbeth Branch Canal connects the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal with the mighty Grand Union Canal, which runs all the way from Birmingham to London. This urban amble, coloured by bluebells and graffiti, takes you on a fascinating journey with great engineering minds of the past and future. Today, waterside universities overlook the engineering marvels of ancestors who built Britain's canals. At a time of exciting development for this area of Birmingham, this walk holds canal history in its bridges, locks and tunnels, and even in the shiny worn cobbles of the towpath itself.



-  Come down to the canal via the steps or ramp from Curzon Street.
- 1** To your left past Ashted Bottom Lock is the Grade II-listed Curzon Street Tunnel, crisscrossed by railway lines above.
- 2** On the opposite bank you'll see work being carried out to create part of the HS2 rail network. Once completed, it will cross the canal over Ashted Bottom Lock. Turn right to follow the towpath under Curzon Street Bridge then up the ramp by the next lock in the Ashted Lock Flight.
- 3** It's worth walking up to view the canal from above Belmont Row Bridge. You'll notice a lot of recent development here and, alongside the contemporary buildings, the former lock cottage overlooks the locks.
- 4** A couple more locks sit with the dynamic backdrop of contemporary and heritage architecture. The towpath then heads through the short Ashted Tunnel. It is very narrow and tight, both for boaters and walkers, so you may need to mind your head! Follow the ramp up past Ashted Top Lock immediately beyond the tunnel.
- 5** The towpath heads up and over a former entry where boats would have delivered and collected cargo from a factory here.

- 6** Between Heneage Street and Lister Street Bridges, the canal widens and also provides a 'winding hole' for boats to turn round if needed. The National College for Advanced Transport & Infrastructure and Aston University Engineering Academy are both canalside here – a fitting location given the remarkable engineering skills that were mastered to create the canals during the Industrial Revolution.
- 7** At Love Lane Bridge there is an unusual red spiral staircase leading up from the towpath to the road above. Beneath the bridge the brick-cobbled towpath has been worn smooth by countless feet and horses' hooves over the centuries. There's another 'up and over' bridge to a former basin before you reach Aston Junction where your walk ends.
-  Aston Junction is the junction between the Digbeth Branch Canal and the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal, which heads left under the tunnel-like bridge of the Aston Expressway towards the city centre, and also right via the 11 Aston Locks towards Salford Junction. A Grade II-listed cast-iron Horseley black and white bridge dated 1828 spans the canal. The brick bridge at Top Lock, also Grade II-listed, dates from the 1780s. It is a 'roving' bridge, so-called as it enabled working boatmen to save precious time by walking their horse up and over the bridge without needing to untie them from the boat entering the lock.

CANAL: Digbeth Branch
Birmingham Canal Navigations

START: Curzon Street Bridge
OS Grid ref: SP081872 Postcode: B4 7BD

FINISH: Aston Junction
OS Grid ref: SP076880 Postcode: B6 4BS

DISTANCE: 1.2km / ¾ mile

APPROX TIME: 25-35 minutes

PUB: Gosta Green and Sacks of Potatoes near Lister Street Bridge, Eagle & Ball near Belmont Row Bridge

PARKING: Nearest car parks – Eastside Car Park (postcode: B5 5RD), JustPark Holt Street (postcode: B7 4BH)

TRAIN: Nearest train stations – Birmingham Moor Street, Snow Hill & New Street
National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 03457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk

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

