

Trent & Mersey Wellbeing Walk

Etruria to Harecastle Tunnel

walk time 1¾-2 hours
distance 6km / 3¾ miles

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, hop on a bus for your return, or turn around and walk back to discover a different view.








- towpath
- access point
- tunnel
- café
- pub
- point of interest
- nature reserve
- marina
- boat hire
- bus stop
- railway station







The Walk - Step by Step

This walk captures the excitement of a canal born for pottery. Josiah Wedgwood, world-renowned pottery manufacturer of the 1700s, needed a better way than bumpy packhorse tracks to get raw materials into his factories and transport his delicate products out. With Wedgwood as one of the main benefactors, the great engineer James Brindley was employed and the Trent & Mersey Canal opened in 1777. The Potteries could now explode into mass production and export to the world, starting their journey by canal boat. And it's still ceramics heaven with living heritage shaping the skyline.



-  Etruria Junction is where the Caldon Canal meets the Trent & Mersey Canal, in the bottle-oven landscape of the region celebrated famously across the globe as 'The Potteries'.
-  The Caldon slips quietly away eastwards from the junction, passing a formal statue of James Brindley, 'Father of English Canals'.
-  Etruria Industrial Museum is housed in the Grade II*-listed Jesse Shirley's Bone & Flint Mill. It was an important supplier to the pottery industry from the 1800s right up to 2011.
-  Follow the towpath, passing the forge where you might see a blacksmith at work, and head northwards from the three locks in the Stoke Lock Flight.
-  Just beyond the A53 bridge, rather modestly at the edge of a parking area, stands the Grade II*-listed Round House, built in 1769 and the last remaining part of the original Wedgwood Pottery Works. Cross the bridge to follow the towpath on the opposite bank alongside Festival Park.
-  Passing through increasingly leafy surroundings, the towpath swaps back to the opposite side of the canal at Turnover Bridge 119.
-  Just beyond Newport Lane Bridge 123, on the

opposite bank is the Grade II-listed Oliver's Mill, former calcining kilns where bone and flint were burned before grinding.

-  At Mill Bridge 125, a detour leads to the Grade II*-listed Middleport Pottery, rescued from closure by The Prince's Regeneration Trust and the last working Victorian pottery in Britain. Back on the towpath, there are views to the pottery across the canal.
-  Westport Lake is an important overwintering site for water birds and a stop-off for migrating birds, so you may be lucky enough to see birds such as Great Crested Grebe and Fieldfare or even the blue flash of a kingfisher. There's also a Visitor Centre and café.
-  You may notice a change in the colour of the canal water as you walk through a leafy stretch. Not unlike tomato soup, the water's rusty hue is blamed on seepage of iron ore from the first Harecastle Tunnel engineered by James Brindley in 1777, but abandoned due to subsidence in 1914.
-  The second tunnel, nearly 3,000 yards long and sitting alongside Brindley's, was built by Telford in 1827 and this is the route boaters use today. You could carry on up over the tunnel to the north entrance and get a train back from Kidsgrove. Otherwise hop on a bus or retrace your steps back to Etruria from a new perspective.

CANAL: Trent & Mersey

START: Etruria Junction
OS Grid ref: SJ871469 Postcode: ST1 4BT

FINISH: Harecastle Tunnel
OS Grid ref: SJ849517 Postcode: ST6 4PX

DISTANCE: 6km / 3¾ miles

APPROX TIME: 1¼-2 hours

PUB/CAFÉ: Toby Carvery in Festival Park,
Packing House Café in Middleport Pottery,
Westport Lake Café

PARKING: Nearest car parks –
Etruria Industrial Museum when open
(postcode: ST1 4BP),
Smithfield (postcode: ST1 4EP)
& Bathpool Southern (ST6 4QH)

TRAIN: Nearest train stations –
Stoke-on-Trent, Longport & Kidsgrove
National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 03457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk

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

