

## A Walk to Church Minshull



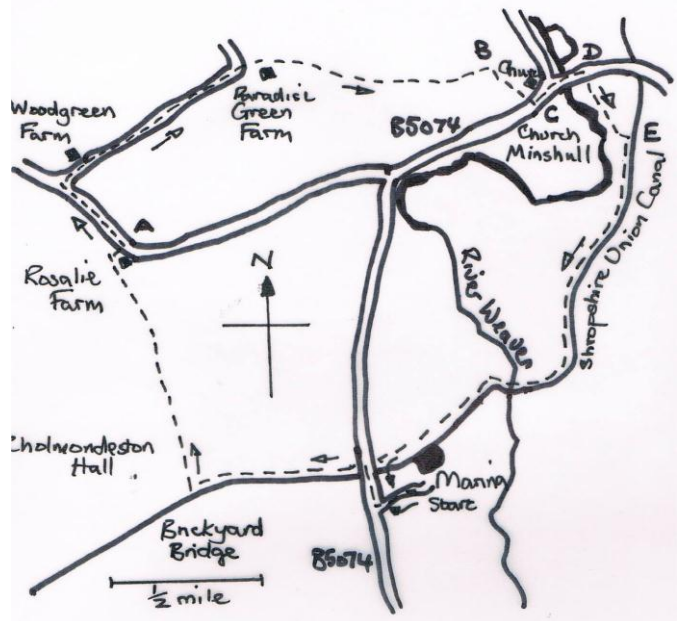
Aqueduct Marina photo courtesy of Bernie Stafford

Aqueduct Marina, the starting point for this walk, was opened in February 2009. The marina has 147 berths, a shop and a café set in beautiful Cheshire countryside. With comprehensive facilities for moorers, visiting boaters and anyone needing to do, or have done, any work on their boat, the marina is an excellent starting point for exploring the Cheshire canal system.

Starting and finishing at Church Minshull Aqueduct Marina, this walk takes in some of the prettiest local

countryside as well as the picturesque village of Church Minshull and the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal. Some alternative routes are also included at the end to add variation to the walk which is about five or six miles, depending on the exact route taken.

Built to join the Trent and Mersey Canal with the Chester Canal, the Middlewich Branch carried mainly coal, salt and goods to and from the potteries. Built quite late in the canal building era, like so many other canals, this canal wasn't as successful as predicted. Today, however, it is a very busy canal providing an essential link between the Trent and Mersey Canal at Middlewich and the Llangollen Canal as well as being part of the Four Counties Ring and linking to the popular Cheshire Ring boating route.



### The Route

Leaving the marina, walk to the end of the drive and turn north (right) onto the B5074 Church Minshull road and walk to the canal bridge. Cross the canal and turn down the steps on the right onto the towpath, then walk back under the bridge, with the canal on your left.

Walk along the towpath to Minshull Lock with its tiny (private) lock cottage alongside. Continue following the towpath, past the next brick bridge, Jackson's Bridge,



Minshull Lock

and turn off the canal at the higher, black and white footbridge that follows, Brickyard Bridge. Don't cross the bridge, but take the footpath in the opposite direction towards Rosalie Farm. The path keeps alongside the field boundaries until just before you reach the farm buildings where it crosses the hedge on your right via a stile into the farmhouse garden. Keep to the hedge and pass alongside the old farm buildings with the newer buildings on your left, then turn right to access the lane. When you reach the lane at Rosalie Farm, turn left (POINT A). Continue along the lane to



Minshull Hall

the first junction and turn right past Woodgreen Farm. The disc of the 25m Darnhall Radio Telescope which links into Jodrell Bank can be seen to the north. When the road bears sharp left, take the footpath to the right through Paradise Green and follow this path, keeping to the left when a path branches off to the right, until you reach Church Minshull. On the edge of the village the path again divides; (POINT B) take the right hand path taking you downhill, across a stream and then up alongside a house and garden to the B5074, from where you turn left to reach the Church and the pub (POINT C).



Church Minshull has a number of interesting buildings as well as the 18<sup>th</sup> century church at its centre including the black and white 1640 Old House. The pub, The Badger, is currently undergoing refurbishment so it isn't currently open.

Cross the main road through the village and take the road opposite the church, Cross Lane, towards Middlewich. This road soon crosses the River Weaver on a stone arched bridge (POINT D). Stay on the footway on the right of the road and then turn right onto a footpath that leaves the road where the footway ends. Follow this footpath to the river where

it turns left along the riverbank crossing a footbridge. The path climbs a bank into the woods, crossing a further footbridge. Stay on the main path, which dips down and then up again, when the river bends away to the right and continue until you reach the hedge by the canal towpath. Turn right and follow the hedge until you reach a stile where you can cross to the towpath and turn right so that the canal is on your left (POINT E).

The canal winds its way south and then heads out across the Weaver Valley on a tree covered embankment. The canal crosses the River Weaver on an aqueduct that can hardly be noticed from the towpath. Shortly after this there is a bridge hole with no bridge over it and then Aqueduct Marina can be seen on the opposite side of the canal. At the next bridge, leave the towpath, cross the bridge and retrace your steps to your starting point at Church Minshull Aqueduct Marina.



### Variations on the Route

From POINT A. For a slightly shorter walk, when you reach the lane at Rosalie Farm, turn right and follow the road almost due east towards Church Minshull. When you reach the B5074, turn left and follow the road to the village, the pub and the church (POINT C). Return to the main text.



From POINT B. The other path goes straight on and reaches the B5074 just north of the village, so turn right on reaching the road to return to the Church (POINT C). Return to the main text.

From POINT D. Continue along the Middlewich Road, uphill to the canal. At the canal, turn down onto the towpath and walk south with the canal on your left (POINT E). Return to the main text.

Chris Owen-Roberts  
June 2010