

Walk 3 – Circular Walk from the Car Park at Anderton Nature Park

DISTANCE: 10.4km / 6.5 miles; TIME: 3 HOURS

Easy paths. Very little incline. Some mud in winter. Some steps.

1. With your back to the canal, set off down the path at the extreme left of the back of Anderton Nature Park car park. Very shortly pass a bench on the left; turn left at the small junction and then sharp right. You pass Fishermen's Ponds; one on each side. Pass a sculpture on your left. Walk to a fingerpost directing you left to 'Uplands, Dairy House Meadow and Marbury Country Park'.

2. Turn left and walk into Forestry Commission land; Uplands. Follow the path downhill and walk over a wooden bridge at the bottom. Continue through some woodland and then open land until you meet Marbury Lane (tarmac). A fingerpost to the left guides visitors to 'Marbury Country Park and Lion Salt works via the canal'. Turn left onto the Lane and cross the canal bridge.

3. Almost immediately, turn left onto a path and follow it alongside the canal through woodland (Hopyards). Just before you reach Marbury Lane again, turn left and follow the path down steps to a stream and then up steps back into Marbury Lane.

4. Cross Marbury Lane. A fingerpost points to 'Picnic Area and Budworth Mere'. Pass a children's play area on the left. Shortly, turn left at a crossroads, (a finger post points to Toilets and Rangers Office) and walk on the path with Lime Avenues to your right. Pass the meeting and picnic area ('The Lodge') and a toilet block, Rangers' Office and yard (with notice boards and information) and turn left.

5. Shortly, by some well-established beech trees, turn right down a number of flights of stone steps. The bird hide on Budworth Mere is immediately opposite. (Kingfishers often seen) Turn right and walk along the path and then turn left down steps to the Mere path by the Boathouse.

6. Walk alongside Budworth Mere until you reach a slipway (often with ducks). Turn right and follow the path as it goes left into Big Wood (passing Ice House, Dipping Pond, and Woodland Hide).

7. At a fingerpost, bear left, following the sign for 'Anderton Nature Park and Canal'. At the canal, walk over the black and white bridge. Turn left, and walk on the path signposted 'Dairy House Meadows and Neumann's

Flash'. Forge Pool can be seen below on the left as you pass a carved bench (In the shape of a great crested newt).

8. At a junction after a gate, turn left and walk up to Ashton's and Neumann's Flashes (finger post to Neumann's Flashes). At the bottom of a slight incline on the left, is a pond where a variety of dragonflies can be seen in the summer. Multiple chemical industry pipes are on the right. Follow the path upwards and to the right and down over a small bridge (over pipes) and turn left. (The path through the gate on the right leads to a bird hide which gives good views over Neumann's Flash. Flocks of waders are often on the water.)

9. Continue (past another small bird hide) until a road is ahead. Turn right through a gate (Pass a Viewpoint with an information board about Ashton's and Neumann's Flashes) up a short path on right). Follow the path (finger post to Marbury Lane), past a bird hide on the right, until you reach Marbury Lane. Turn right before the lane by notice boards giving information about the Flashes. Continue until you see a finger post on the right of the path pointing left to 'Marbury Lane and Anderton Nature Park' Go through the gap in the fence and, after about 30 metres, turn right and follow the path through a gate back onto Marbury Lane.

10. Turn right and cross Butterfinch Bridge. Turn left (large sign for 'Anderton Boat Lift and Nature Park'). A finger post on left points left to 'Haydn's Pool'. Very shortly turn right in front of a noticeboard (Sand Martins) and follow the path for a short while. Climb steps on the left to Haydn's Pool, which has a bird hide and Bird Interpretation Panel. There are newly created islands on the far side of the Pool for nesting wading birds.

11. Facing away from the hide, turn right along side the pool and walk on the path and down a flight of wooden steps on the left. Turn right at the bottom. Follow the path for half a mile or so, with the river on the left. The path forks just after a small wooden bridge – take the left fork and continue to follow the river. Pass Carden's Ferry black and white Footbridge on the left; which leads into Northwich. Continue on the path, passing a number of Fishermen's Pegs. Pass the Firing Range on the right (very noisy, but only on Saturday afternoons). A sign points to 'Boat Lift, Toilets and Picnic Area'.

12. The path going upwards to Anderton Nature Park car park is ahead and to the right. Pass the Dragonfly Pond, with information, on the right. At the top of the incline, go through wrought iron gates, designed by pupils from a local Special School (Russet School) with the artist, Stephen Charnock, to reach the Anderton Car Park.