



# Walk 3: To Broughall (pronounced Broffal) and back

Distance: **4 miles / 6.4km** • Duration: about **2¾ hours**

Start point: **Whitchurch Civic Centre**

A walk over varied but mainly field (some cropped) terrain with some slopes. The going can be muddy and wet in some areas.

## Forgotten lines

Whitchurch was a junction of the Whitchurch to Tattenhall branch line which linked the Chester to Crewe and Shrewsbury to Chester lines. It was part of the London and North Western network. As well as its own passenger and freight services, this line was a useful short cut for freight traffic to and from Chester and North Wales avoiding Crewe. It was closed on 16 September 1957.

## Bridge by Brymbo (1857)

The cast iron bridge at point **4** which takes the Shrewsbury-Crewe line over Black Park Rd was made by the Brymbo Ironworks.



John Wilkinson's original Brymbo Ironworks near Wrexham was resurrected as a successful industrial concern in 1841 – 16 years before this bridge was constructed. In 1854 the directors took each other to court to gain sole control of the company. Allegedly, Robert Roy and Henry Robertson decided to settle their dispute with a horse race. The owner of the horse that reached the ironworks first could buy the other out. The workforce favoured Robertson and ensured that his horse won. Robertson went on to transform Brymbo into a major steel works.



Top: **Dennis Fire Engine 1925** outside Whitchurch Fire Station. Above: **The old Fire Station (point 2)** was built in 1900 and was paid for and run by local Assurance Companies. It is currently a dentist's.

## Route Description

From the Civic Centre **1** go down the High Street, turn left at the bottom into Green End and then left again into Deermoss Lane. Go over the pedestrian crossing opposite the old Fire Station (currently a dentist's) **2** and take the path to the left of the building alongside a playing field.

Cross over into Elizabeth Street and carry on to the end where you turn left into George Street. Here you will see a gate **3** at the end, leading into a field. It is possible that this section of path may be subject to a diversion order at some point. Follow the

waymarked path across two fields then cross an old brick/stone Whitchurch to Chester railway bridge into another field. At a waymarked stile, turn diagonally right and down towards a stile at the roadside.

Turn left along the road and under an iron railway bridge **4** marked Brymbo 1857. Carry on along the lane until you come to meet and turn on to a bridleway on your right **5**. Follow the waymarked route through gates across three fields to a stile on your left **6**. Given a clear day there is a fine view over Blakemere towards the town.

At this point you must decide what

## Suspension Bridge

The suspension bridge over the Shrewsbury-Crewe railway line is over a century old and is a unique grade II listed structure. It was closed for over a year in 1997 having been declared unsafe. Local groups including the Whitchurch Walkers campaigned to save the bridge and eventually Railtrack agreed to a complete renovation. The Institute of Civil Engineers declared the bridge to be 'a Victorian gem'.

The A-frame wooden vertical supports with iron bracing and joints are linked at the base to curved stone foundation blocks by iron rods. The decking has wooden planks set into an iron frame with thin iron balustrades. The original suspension cables were made of forged iron link chains from which the flat decking was hung by iron rods.

Looking along the line to the south you can see Whitchurch station and to the north the remains of the goods yards where originally horse-drawn carts would have delivered and taken away the freight carried by trains. Horses are not good at reversing which is why such a large space was needed to allow a broad sweep for forward turning.



you want to do. The longer route to the east is interesting but challenging due to a number of only semi-accessible hedge and ditch crossings plus a slurry-filled lane all of which are subject to ongoing negotiations with the local farmer. The shorter route is altogether easier and more direct but means you miss some attractive countryside.

### The shorter route:

Do not cross the stile but carry on ahead through more bridleway gates to a field gate on to a quiet lane. Go down the lane to meet the busy A525 Nantwich-Whitchurch road **7**.

### The longer route:

Turn left by crossing the stile and keep the hedgeline to your right passing a small pond on your right. At the far right hand end of the field cross a stile and carry on with the hedge to your right towards a black and white cottage (Lower Lodge) and after about 150 metres turn right across a stile by a large tree into the next field **A**. This area can get very wet!

Follow the hedgeline to your left and cross the stile in the far left hand corner. There is another stile ahead but don't cross this – instead turn right and go up to the top right hand corner where you will cross a ditch and a double stile. Turn right and follow the hedgeline to yet another double stile and ditch **B**. Cross this, keep to the hedgeline and head for the next stile in the right hand corner of the field.

Cross this and bear left, up and diagonally across to a stile to the right of a gate by some trees **C**. Walk up the right hand side of the field, through a gate in the top right hand corner into the next field and along the hedgeline to your left up the hill to a gate.

You are now on a concrete track **D** but it can be calf deep in slurry even at the edge. Go down through the next gate and turn right on to a lane by Villa Farm. Continue along past Old Hall Farm to join the main A525 Nantwich-Whitchurch road **7**.

The longer and shorter routes come together here.

Turn right on to the main road and continue on the pavement ignoring the first footpath sign and turn right at the next footpath sign by a bungalow called Moss Lea **8**.

A grassy track runs to the left of the bungalow down to a stile; cross this and go past a little brick stable. Follow the line of telegraph poles across the field to a stile – cross this and go straight on to the suspension bridge **9** ahead. Walk over this and turn left down Talbot Street to meet the traffic lights at the top of Green End. Cross over and retrace your steps back to the Civic Centre.

