

John Newnham Walk – Around the Severn Loop to follow a Hidden Brook



1 Around the Severn Loop to follow a Hidden Brook

This is a riverside walk along the north bank of the Severn loop, passing a suspension bridge, a toll bridge and an iron frame footbridge. We find the Reabrook and follow it upstream through the surprisingly rural Reabrook valley within Shrewsbury town; a good place for a picnic lunch. Tunnels take us under all major roads and then footbridges cross the railways. We return through historical Belle Vue to the Severn on the South side and pass close by Shrewsbury School.

Distance: 4.5 miles 3 hours

Grade: Easy

Terrain: Hard surface footpaths, meadow paths and very minor urban roads

Start and Finish point: Welsh Bridge Shrewsbury

Map: OS Explorer 241 Grid Ref: SJ489127

Parking: Frankwell car park

Directions

1. From the town end of the Welsh Bridge walk along Victoria Quay into the Quarry Park and follow the path along the river bank. *The first bridge is Porthill suspension bridge, a footbridge opened in 1923. Look out for a large wooden post with a huge hook as you approach the second bridge. This is the old ferry point.* You now pass under Kingsland Toll Bridge which is a listed building.
2. As you approach the third bridge take the left fork, passing the needle monument to a prominent nineteenth-century surgeon and MP, William Clement, then turn right to walk across the Greyfriars footbridge. Use the pedestrian crossing ahead and turn left along Longden Coleham. *Coleham Pumping Station Museum is on the opposite side of the road. This is worth a visit (when open) to see two restored steam powered beam engines in action. Opened in 1901, it was part of a scheme to clean up the river.*
3. Cross Belle Vue road and take the minor road in front of the Seven Stars pub leading to a path under a railway bridge. Another pedestrian crossing then takes you to Asda car park. Cross the car park with the store closely on your right. At the end of the building you will see the Reabrook in the gully ahead. Turn right along the footpath with the Reabrook on your left. After passing through the first gate do not use any of the gates through the fence along the river bank but keep closely to the buildings on your right. The path rises to a gate at the end of the buildings.
4. Go through the gate and turn left along the bank. *This is an embankment of an old railway called The Potts Line.* After 200yds and before you reach the road, descend to the left to find a

tunnel under the road. Go through the gate into the field. Continue following the stream, now on your right, to another road tunnel and open fields. *There are picnic tables in this area.*

5. As you reach the houses ahead, take the path to the right to find a footbridge. Go over the bridge and then through a road tunnel leaving the Reabrook behind.

6. Take the first left into Grove Road and continue in this direction along Adams Ridge to the end. Turn right and then first left into Primrose Drive.

7. Look for Buttercup Way on the right which will take you to a footbridge over the railway into Montague Place.

8. Go straight ahead for 100 m and take the right turn leading to another railway bridge. Proceed into Havelock Road. *This area is a maze of narrow little Victorian streets and squares with a variety of small and not so small houses. Criticised in the 19th Century for its lack of planning, the jumble of styles and sizes of property now has its own charm.* At the T junction turn right and then next left into Belle Vue Gardens.

9. At the cross roads go straight over Longden Road into Kingsland Road. *The old Trouncer's Brewery buildings are on your right, now luxury apartments.* Go down the Pengrove bank to a footpath on the right. You are back to banks of the Severn.

10. Passing the Boathouse take the path going uphill to the left and zigzag up to the top of the bank. You are now in front of the old Foundlings Hospital and subsequent workhouse with its clock tower – now Shrewsbury School.

Take a well deserved rest on one of the benches on the bank and enjoy the view! This aspect of Shrewsbury has been represented in many paintings over the centuries, see the engraving below. The avenue of trees around the river loop has existed for around 300 years and although the trees have been replaced from time to time, they remain a distinguishing feature just outside the old town walls. You will be able to identify the spires of St Mary's, St Alkmunds and also St Chad's church. The Pevsner Buildings of England series states: "St Chad's is an original and distinguished design; indeed one of the finest Neoclassical churches in Britain".

11. Take the path along the top with the school on your left. Pass through a small gate and continue until the path descends to the river bank.

12. Cross the Porthill suspension bridge noticing its bounce as you walk! Turn left for the Welsh Bridge and back to the start point.