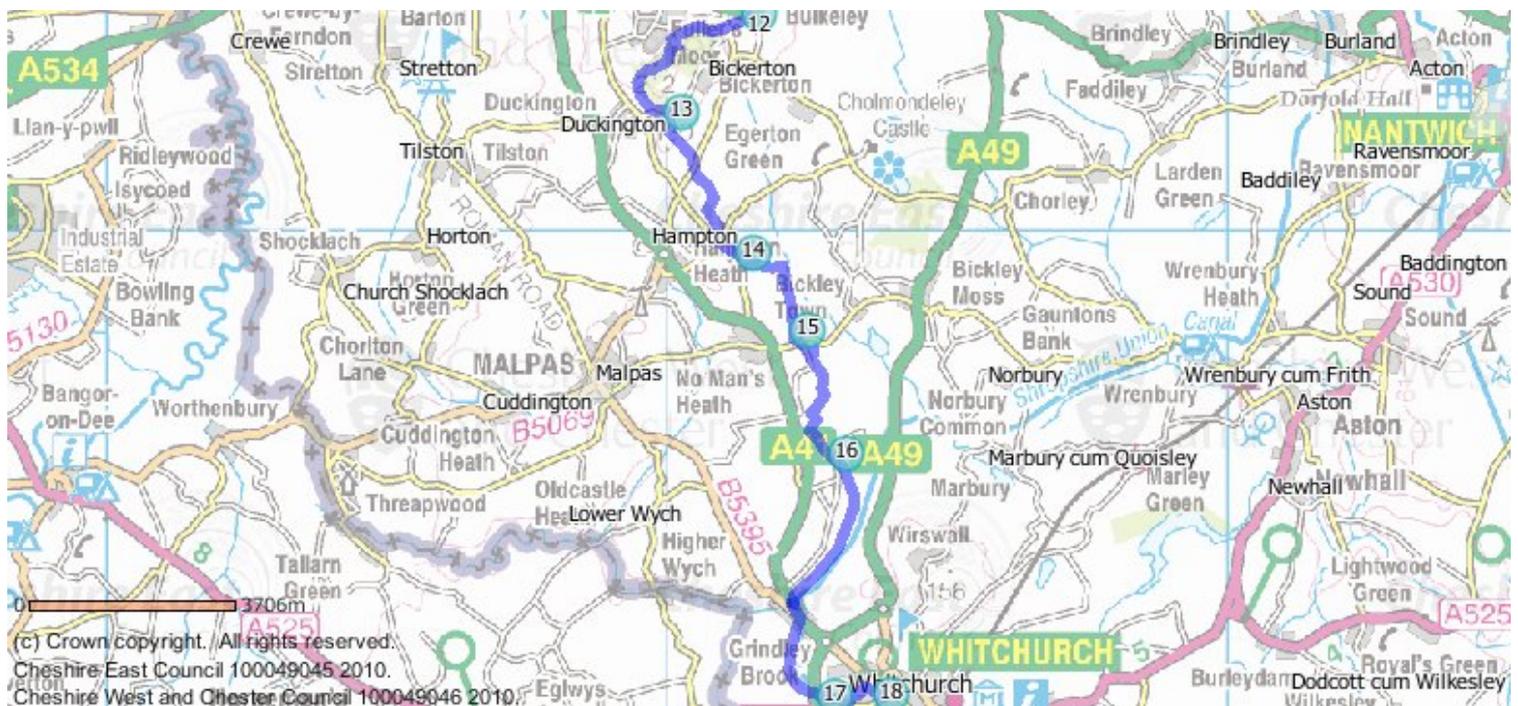


Sandstone Trail South

The southern section of the Sandstone Trail skirts the picturesque Bickerton Hill and Maiden Castle Iron Age Hill Fort, before continuing on its way towards the pretty town of Whitchurch, where the Trail finishes.

Grade	Long distance
Distance	19km/11 ¾ miles
Time	5-6 hours
Start	A534, near Bickerton
Map	OS Explorer 257
Terrain	Varies from minor roads and tracks to cross-field/field-edge paths. There are some steep gradients to negotiate. Parts of some paths will be less than 90cm wide.
Barriers	Several stiles and gates
Toilets	N/A
Contact	Cheshire West and Chester Council Tel: 01606 271736



Route Details

Sandstone Trail Walkers Guide – Southern Section

Bickerton to Whitchurch: 19km/11 ¾ miles

The southern section of the Sandstone Trail skirts the picturesque Bickerton Hill and Maiden Castle Iron Age Hill Fort, before continuing on its way towards the pretty town of Whitchurch, where the Trail finishes.

South of the A534 the Trail passes Bickerton Church which was originally built as a chapel of ease for people who found it difficult to travel to the parish church at Malpas. On Bickerton Hill look out for green hairstreak butterflies feeding on the bilberry in early summer.

Maiden Castle is a spectacular iron age fort, built on a splendid vantage point. You can still see remains of the earth banks which protect the huts inside. The Trail skirts Hether Wood before leaving the hills and heading out across the plain. South of Long Lane the large overgrown ponds you pass were originally dug for sand. Smaller ponds along the way tend to be pits dug for marl which was used as a fertilizer to sweeten the heavy soils.

Just south of Bickley Hall is a group of trees known as Barhill Fall. In 1687 a small rise collapsed with a 'huge noise' and yawning pit opened and filled with water. The culprit is believed to be a layer of salt which had gradually dissolved, causing the land above to crumble.

Wonderful yews and Cedar of Lebanon trees surround St Chad's Chapel, built in 1689. Services are held here on several occasions during the summer including Rogation Sunday, Ascension Day & Rushbearing Day.

The Trail joins the Llangollen Canal at Willey Moor Lock. Look out for water figwort and the delicately fragrant meadow-sweet alongside the towpath. Large hawk dragonflies patrol sections of the canal, keeping aerial intruders at bay.

Grindley Brook is the meeting point of several trails. The Maelor Way heads west, the south Cheshire Way east, and the Shropshire Way south. From here it is just a short trek into Whitchurch and the end of the southern section of the Sandstone Trail.

Directions

Sandstone Trail Walkers Guide – Southern Section

The Trail

12. Cross the A534 with care and go down the lane opposite. Go straight over the crossroads, past Bickerton Church and then right up the next track onto Bickerton Hill. Follow the path up through woods, past Kitty's Stone to Maiden Castle. Turn right down the steep path and carry on down a sunken lane. Turn left and follow the path around Hether Wood. Cross the stile on the right and go down to Goldford Lane.

13. Cross over and go down the track opposite. Skirt Larkton Hall then follow the farm drive to Long Lane. Cross and go over the stile opposite. Keep the ponds on your left and follow the stiles and waymarks to Shay Lane. Turn right along the lane to a stile on the left. Follow the edge of the fields, then head left over stiles to the lane at Hampton Green.

14. Continue up the track opposite, through the gates of Middle House, then off the drive by a stile on the left. Head down to a footbridge in the field corner. Go along the field edge, then bear left to another footbridge in the bottom corner. Turn right along the ditch, cross two more bridges, then follow the hedge. Continue up hill with the hedge on your right. At the top go diagonally right across the field to the road at Bickley Lane.

15. Turn right, then left down the next lane. Cross the stile on the left after 100m. Cross three large fields, then join the drive and go straight through Barhill Farm. Turn left over a stile and go through the fields to St Chad's Chapel. Continue over the stile to the right of the chapel and go through fields past Pearl Farm to Willey Moor Lane.

16. Cross the stile into the field opposite. Follow three field edges, cross a track and then three more fields to Willey Moor Lock pub. Turn right onto the Llangollen Canal towpath. Carry on for almost 5km along the towpath past Grindley Brook and Danson's Bridge to the canal junction where the Whitchurch arm leads off to the left.

17. Cross over the lift bridge and continue beyond the end of the canal below two bridges along the track which follows the valley bottom. Cross the road at Greenfield Rise and keep to the same small valley until out reach Jubilee Park car park near the foot of Sherrymill Hill and the end of the Trail.