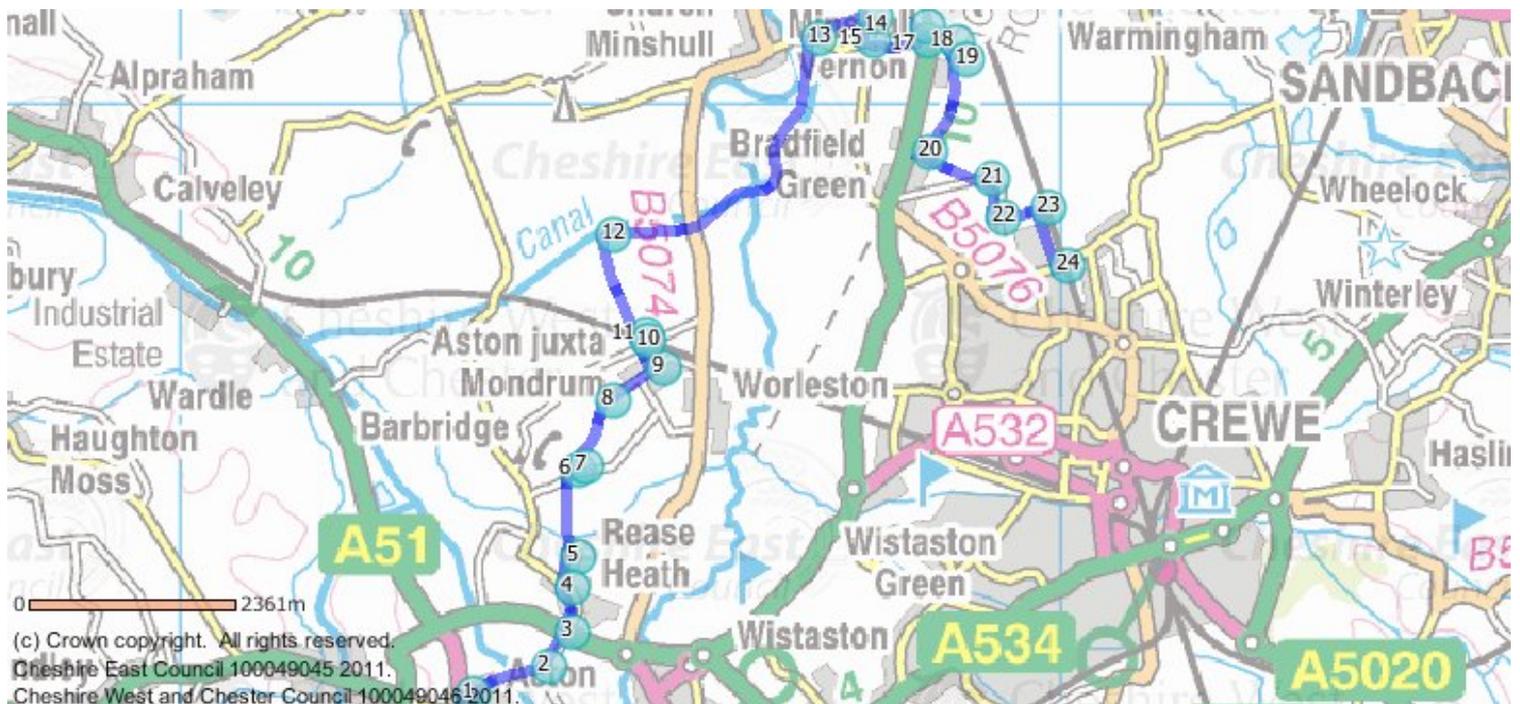


Walking the Trackways

A walk showing the strong links Crewe and Nantwich have with the development of the transport age.

Grade	Long Distance
Distance	17km/10.5miles
Time	5-7 hours
Start	Acton Church on the number 84 bus route, Crewe to Chester
Map	OS Explorer 257 & 267
Terrain	Fairly level terrain, mainly public rights of way across fields, canal towpath and some country lanes.
Barriers	Numerous stiles on each section.
Toilets	Nantwich & Crewe Town Centres
Contact	Tel: 01270 686029



Route Details

Ancient paths, Roman roads, canals and railways criss-cross the landscape, showing the strong links Crewe and Nantwich have with the development of the transport age. The route starts in the ancient village of Acton.

The Chester Road (A534) leading to Welsh Row has always been an important route into Nantwich. Welsh farmers drove their cattle along it to the market to trade for salt in medieval times. Royalist troops marched along it during the Civil War, in an unsuccessful attempt to besiege Nantwich.

The remains of a Roman road running from Middlewich to Whitchurch were excavated in the parish of Henhull in 1987. Hen Heol is Welsh for 'old street' and street is old English for Roman road. The salt industry in Cheshire was already thriving in Roman times and good roads were needed for easy transportation.

Reaseheath College was opened in 1921. From 1926, the partly black and white timbered hostel housed women from the former Worleston Dairy Institute, at nearby Aston Hall. The Dairy Institute's aim was to 'improve farmhouse cheese production' and was said to be the oldest dairy school in the country. A staggering 30.5 million kg of farmhouse cheese was made in Cheshire in 1907! Cheshire cheese production is still an important industry. The Nantwich Show, held every July, hosts the largest cheese display in Europe.

Originally Poole consisted of three manors - Barratt Poole, War-Poole and White-Poole, collectively known as 'pulses.' Notice how the manors are connected by footpaths. Many footpaths were developed in prehistoric times, as animals and people searched for food and shelter. Today there are almost 2,000 miles of public rights of way in Cheshire.

Opened in 1833, the Middlewich branch of the Shropshire Union Canal was built to link up with the Trent and Mersey Canal. Brickyard Bridge takes its name from a brick kiln works set up in 1842 in the next field. If you look carefully, you can still see where they excavated the clay.

Railways rapidly took over from the canals, due to their speed. The Grand Junction Railways Works opened in 1843 and developed into one of the greatest industrial complexes in the World! The first steam locomotive to be built there was the Columbine.

Crewe is also home to Rolls-Royce and Bentley. The Crewe factory was built in 1938 and is still one of the main employers in the area. Look out for these classy cars being test driven around the lanes of this walk! Cycling is also popular - it is said that Crewe has the highest number of cyclists for a town of its size in Britain!

This section of the circular walk finishes at Parkers Road bus stop. The Nantwich and Crewe Motor Bus Company's first open topped bus, registration number M 878, came into service on 15th July 1905.

Directions

The walk starts at Acton Church and finishes at Parkers Road, Coppenhall.

1. At the bottom of Wilbraham Road, take the path between houses on the left, over the canal bridge and follow it to the lane at Welshman's Green in Henhull.
2. Turn left along Welshman's Lane.
3. Go straight across at the junction onto Wettenhall Road past Reaseheath College.
4. Turn right down Cinder Lane.
5. After walking through the main entrance to Poole Hall, take the path to the left, just after the bridge.
6. Turn right at the lane.
7. Take the second footpath on the left.
8. Turn right into Church Road.
9. Take the next road on the left, after the school.
10. Go straight ahead at the road junction and along the farm drive at the rear of Aston Hall.
11. Turn right at farm track, go over the railway bridge and follow the track along the field edge.
12. At Brickyard Bridge on the Shropshire Union Canal, turn right in an easterly direction along the tow path.
13. Leave the tow path at Cross Lane bridge (No. 14). Cross over the bridge and take the path immediately on the left
14. Turn right at the main road.
15. Take the path on the left just before the junction of Cross Lane.
16. Turn left at the main road.
17. Take the footpath on the right past Moat House Farm.

18. Take the right fork in the lane towards the moated site and Larch Wood.
19. Cross the small bridge on the right and go left, following the field edge.
20. After entering a farm track, take the footpath on the left next to the brick building.
21. Turn left at Moss Lane.
22. Take the second footpath on the left.
23. Turn right at the railway line and follow it to the next road bridge.
24. Turn right to complete this section of the circular walk at Parkers Road bus stop.