

Tyrley Loop (Purple route)

About 5 ½ miles (1 ½ on roads)

Allow 2 ½ - 3 hours

1. Park at Hales Club in the village of Hales. Exit the car park and turn right towards the church. At the church take the unmade road on the right alongside the walled grounds of Hales Hall. Just past the new house which is on the right, cross a stile and enter a field. Walk down the field and over a stile next to the field gate. Continue straight down the field to cross over a stile at the left of another farm gate.

2. Head down to the far end of the field past a pond on the right, and at the right-hand corner, cross a stile and a footbridge over COAL BROOK. Walk on, keeping the fence and hedge to the right, and cross another footbridge and stile. With your back to the stile, look ahead to a group of trees 200m away and head for the left-hand corner just beyond a large oak tree. On reaching the corner, turn half-left and walk up the field for about 300m to the right of an H-type electricity pole and into the corner of the field. Cross over a small stream and follow a cart track up into the wood. (Often the farmer leaves a courtesy path through the field just crossed, and if this has been provided, it should be used to avoid damage to crops). Walk up the cart track for about 50m. On the right-hand bank, by a prominent signpost, you should see some steps cut into the bank. Climb up the steps, go over a stile, turn right and continue along the path which runs alongside the wood.

3. Walk on to the far end of the hedge line and turn half left to notice a large power pole about 150 m away and barns to the left. Walk over the field, passing the power pole on right and new barns on the left. Turn right along the side of a hedge and

carry on with OLD SPRINGS FARM buildings on the left. At the corner of the field go through the metal gate and continue through the copse keeping to the right until you reach a road.

4. Turn left along the road and in 200m turn right at the junction and continue along the road to TYRLEY WHARF. Cross over the canal bridge (No. 60), go left down the path towards the canal and proceed along the towpath and back under the bridge. This is the SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL, built between 1826 and 1835, the last major work of the celebrated engineer, Thomas Telford.



Originally named the Birmingham-Liverpool Junction, and designed to short-cut Brindley's Trent-Mersey Canal; it reduced the journey by 20 miles and 30 locks and goods could then be delivered from Birmingham to Liverpool in 45 hours. Telford changed from the methods of earlier canal builders and, instead of following the land contours, cut his canal on a direct line. This resulted in deep cuttings and steep embankments which can be seen along the tow path.

Carry on along the towpath past 4 locks and under bridge No. 61, which bears the date 1829. Soon, to the left, the trees disappear and Market Drayton and its parish church can be seen on a prominent mound. Look out now for a sign to 'town centre' and proceed down the steep stone steps on the

side of BERRISFORD BRIDGE. Turn right and go under the bridge; look up and notice the craftsmanship of stone masons of 150 years ago.

5. From here there are two public footpaths to Almington. We take the route round to the right, along the tarmac road. In about 250m the road bends sharply to the left. After crossing over a bridge, leave the road by a stile on the left just past PAPERMILL COTTAGE, and enter a field. Follow a hedge on the left and at the end of the hedge carry on along the foot of the bank with the COAL BROOK to the left. Cross over a stile at the end of the field and follow the path through a coppice to meet the brook. Go over a series of stiles. Cross by the narrow footbridge, crossable on the left, (ignoring the wider cattle bridge) and walk on into the wood, keeping the hedge to the right. When a cart track appears from the left, turn right and follow the lane between hedges for about 400 m. You will pass a sign-post for "Bennion Way", a footpath dedicated to ex-Councillor Bert Bennion to recognise his 40 years of public service for Tyrley ward.

6. Shortly a building is seen on the right with some white railings. Walk past the entrance to the house and as the tarmac road bears left, go straight on along a narrower path beside a hedge. Turn right over a stile beside a gate and in 15m bear left through a wooden wicket gate and down to the stream. Cross the stream and follow a well-trodden path and, after crossing over a small stone footbridge, go straight ahead.

7. Follow the lane for about 250m to emerge at the side of ALMINGTON HALL on to a tarmac road. Cross over and take the road signposted 'Hales' and in 1200m arrive back at the starting point, Hales Club.