

Circular Walk from Lilleshall Monument to Church Aston and Newport. 7.5 miles (12 km) (or 6.25 miles taking a short cut)

Note: this is a longer version of the Lilleshall to Church Aston Circular.

Begin the walk at the Lilleshall Monument, briefly following the Telford T50 50 Mile Trail. Turn your back to the Wrekin and walk towards the white trig point. Continue down a wide slope to the parking area at the bottom. Turn right then leave the Telford T50 50 Mile Trail by going down a narrow footpath with a hedge on both sides, towards a stile which opens onto a grassy play area. Cross the play area to a gate and turn left onto a lane. When you reach a pond on your right, just about opposite a house called 'Wind Crest', veer right on a narrow path keeping the pond on your right. This path then crosses a field towards an electricity pole by a stile, follow the obvious path beyond the stile.

This area is the site of opencast limestone workings. On your right and now hidden from view there used to be access points to some of the underground limestone workings; all filled in with concrete and closed up now.

Cross the main road and go straight ahead. Follow the road as it bears left and changes from tarmac to gravel. Look out for a footpath sign that directs you to the right between outbuildings. Continue through a gate to 'Old Coppice Lodge' and then through another gate that leads to 'Rock House' and Barrack Lane. When you reach the tarmac road bear right along Barrack Lane.

On your right you will notice a white gazebo. This covers a capped 45m deep brick-lined shaft used to access the underground limestone workings. You will shortly pass a stone-built building on the left - this was originally a square block of stables for the quarry horses.

As the road bears round to the left turn right down Sylvan Close. Continue along the track, then turn right through a narrow access alongside a 5-barred gate. Very soon, turn left along a narrow footpath. You are now on The Hutchison Way. Cross a farm track, go through the metal kissing gate, keep to the right and follow the wide clear track. Cross the stream on a wooden bridge and bear left following the edge of a cultivated field. Go through the wooden kissing gate, and up the bank to the main A518 road.

Turn right on the A518. When you reach the roundabout turn right into Pitchcroft Lane. Follow the lane for 1.25km, until you reach the top of a rise. Turn left through a metal kissing gate, cross the tarmac farm road and follow the footpath northwards approximately halfway between the two poles, until it joins a track. Turn left and cross over the main A518.

Take the footpath into the trees and bear immediately right. Go through a kissing gate and follow the path alongside the hedge on the left. Continue along the grassy track across the field and bear right at the fork. Go through a metal kissing gate and follow the fenced footpath around the side of the field. Keep right and walk to the road. Turn left and walk towards the centre of Newport along Station Rd. Continue on to the junction with Granville Road. [You could take a shortcut here by turning left and picking up the route again after 0.15km by turning left into Ashworth Way.] To follow the route, keep straight on into Upper Bar and continue until the mini roundabout at the

top of Stafford Street Turn right here down Stafford Street until the traffic lights, turn left here along Water Lane. Turn into the first public car park on your right. Cross the car park, turning left, then straight on towards the old canal. Turn left along the canal and follow it to the bridge on Lower Bar. Leave the canal turning left up Lower Bar, then fork left into High Street and return to the mini roundabout. Go straight on along Upper Bar to Wellington Road where you turn right, then left after 0.35km into Granville Road. Turn right into Ashworth Way [short cut picks up here] which becomes Wallshead Way and passes a very pleasant pool. At the T junction turn right, continue straight on, past the church until you reach the main road (Wellington Rd). Go straight ahead at the staggered crossroads to go down Moorfield Lane.

As the lane bends to the right take the farm track to the left. When the track starts to descend, you'll reach a crossroads of paths. Take the left-hand footpath between a field and a bank of trees. The path opens out onto a grassy plateau – Aston Hill. A nice place for a rest under the trees. Bear round to the left to follow the mown path through low trees. A grassy path with good views towards Lilleshall Monument opens up to your right.

[If you want to add another km or so to the walk then you could follow this grassy path down through a cultivated field to a lane. Turn left on the lane and follow it to a T-junction where you will pick up these walk directions again.]

Follow the left hand path keeping the hedge on your left. The path eventually joins Wellington Rd again. Turn right and walk towards the Last Inn pub. Just beyond the pub you should follow the old road straight ahead (a tarmac path that looks private) to avoid having to walk alongside the main road. You emerge from this track at a road junction. Walk straight ahead still following the old road. A road joins from the right – this is where you will re-join the walk directions if you've taken the different route off Aston Hill. Continue ahead until the old road ends and it becomes a pedestrian/cycle path. Look left and you will see a cut-through up the bank to cross the main A518 road. If you're happy to take this, then its perfectly acceptable.

[If it looks too overgrown for your liking then continue along the pedestrian/cycle path until you are able to cross the main A518 and backtrack to join the footpath just behind the end of the crash barrier.]

Ahead you will see the footpath sign taking you away from the road. Retrace your steps along the Hutchison Way down the bank, through the kissing gate, along the field edge and over the stream. Follow the path down to the bridge over the flooded quarry. Cross the bridge and bear sharply right up a steep narrow track.

This attractive lake is the flooded remains of the limestone quarry known as Collier's Side. The limestone extracted here was of superior quality and was used primarily as a flux for the iron industry. The steep narrow track was a tramway constructed across the quarry floor to link the inclines with the Lilleshall canal.

When you reach a fork in the tracks, look to the right and you will see a gate. You could spend a very happy 20 mins or so exploring the lime kilns and flooded quarry by walking down towards the gate and bearing right towards the restored kilns. There are a variety of walks and tracks in this area – none too strenuous and all interesting.

Back to the fork in the track – take the left fork to a kissing gate. Go slightly left beyond the gate then bear right on a narrow path between a fence on your right and a building on your left. When you emerge into the farmyard turn right across a short (often muddy) section to a narrow opening straight ahead of you. You are now following the line of the late C18th Lilleshall canal used to transport limestone to the blast furnace at Donnington Wood. After about 400m you join a wider track. Turn right and then almost immediately you come to a lane. This is Willmoor Lane.

Here we leave the Hutchison Way and turn right onto Willmoor Lane until it reaches the main road through Lilleshall village. Then turn left. If you want to re-join the T50 (Stage 7) just carry on this road which will eventually take you out of Lilleshall towards Muxton. Otherwise, cross the road after 50m and head towards a stile sandwiched between two houses with wooden steps up to it. Follow the path between a fence and hedge, then cross a small field on a usually well-walked path. Retrace your steps across the play area and up the hill to the Monument.