

# WYRLEY & ESSINGTON CANAL, AND WEDNESBURY OAK LOOP

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TRIP TYPE : SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE : CYCLE THE WYRLEY & ESSINGTON CANAL, WOLVERHAMPTON  
MAINLINE, WEDNESBURY OAK LOOP, AND WALSALL CANAL,  
BACK TO THE START POINT AT WEDNESFIELD

DISTANCE : 24 MILES

TIME : 3 HOURS, 9 mph

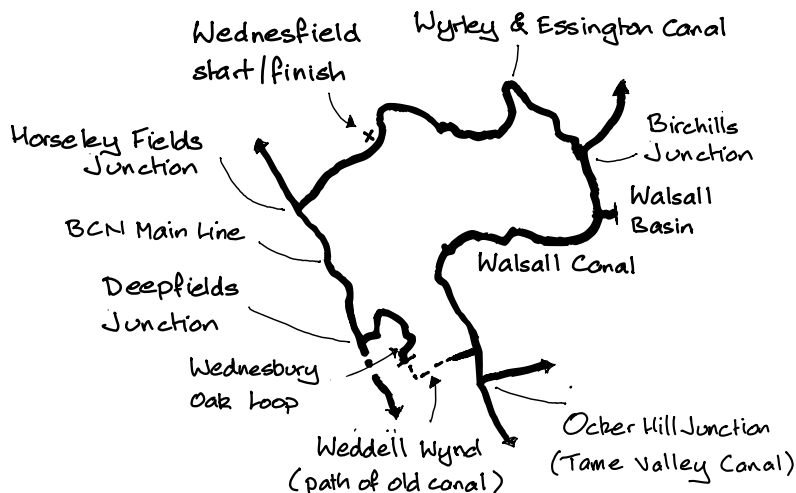
NICHOLSON : GUIDE 2 PP 50, 51, 54, 58

COSTS : FREE PARKING AT WEDNESFIELD. NO TRAINS  
INVOLVED AS THIS IS A CIRCULAR RIDE

DIFFICULTY : FAIR (THE ONE MODERATE SECTION AFTER  
WEDDELLS WYND CAN BE AVOIDED)

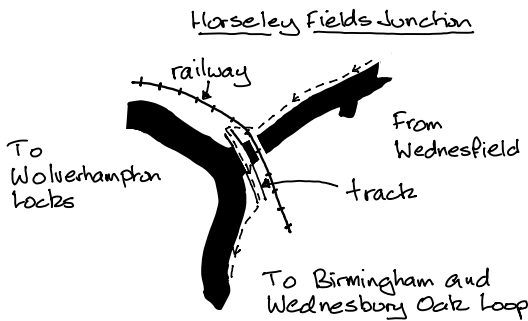
OVERVIEW : A circular ride with a good towpath all the way,  
with the exceptions of the path down the disused locks from  
Weddell Wynd to the Walsall Canal, and the final stretch: the  
Wyrley & Essington Canal from Birchills Junction to Wednesfield.

There are a number of radar gates, through which it would be  
difficult to manoeuvre a heavy electric bike.



## 1. WEDNESFIELD TO DEEPFIELDS JUNCTION (5M)

Park on Halecroft Avenue, Wednesfield, WV11 1TS, at the far end near the cadet hut to avoid blocking driveways. Cycle back to Highfield Road, turn left and down to the canal bridge. Cross the bridge, on your right is a short footpath leading down to the towpath. Head west on the Wyrley & Essington. Continue to Horseley Fields Junction, which is close to Wolverhampton city centre.



The junction is easy to miss if you go over (rather than under on the towpath) the bridge which immediately follows the railway bridge. You will end up going down Wolverhampton locks like I did, and if you reach the multi-storey car park that's

what you've done. Instead, as you head up to the level of the bridge which carries a track to a yard, turn left to cross the canal, drop down to the towpath and continue south on the Wolverhampton Mainline.

Continue on the left side of the canal to Deepfields Junction, where the Wednesbury Oak Loop joins on the left.

## 2. DEEPFIELDS JUNCTION TO MOORCROFT JUNCTION (3 MILES)

Turn left on the Wednesbury Oak loop, where the towpath continues on the left curving past suburban housing and

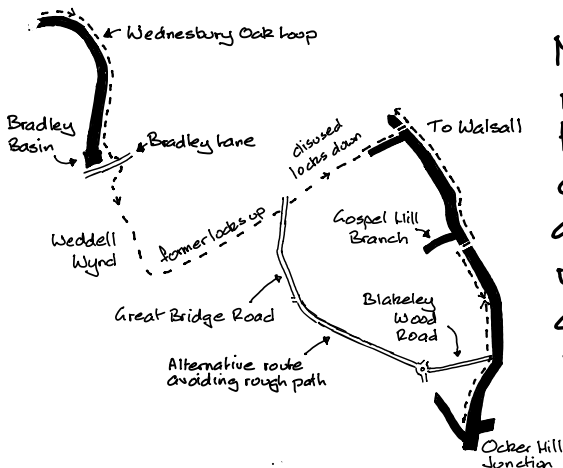
parkland for a mile and a half. The canal ends at Bradley Basin, where there is a Canal & River Trust yard. Just before the basin the path deviates off to the left through a wood. Follow the path to emerge onto Bradley Lane.



Across the road and slightly to the left is a rough path leading to open parkland (Weddell Wynd). Join the cinder track leading uphill, keeping to the left as you climb. The hill is the site of the old locks, where once upon a time the canal continued, to form a short cut through to the Walsall Canal.

At the corner turn sharp left and follow the straight track through to Great Bridge Road, A1098. Cross the road onto a narrow, bumpy path, which leads down past disused locks taking you back to the level of the Walsall Canal at Moorcroft Junction. This is the former Bradley Arm, and there are moves to reopen the whole of this section.

The bridge taking you across the Walsall Canal to the tow-path also carries a large water main.



Note: if you want to avoid the rough section down the old locks turn right on Great Bridge Road down to the roundabout. Go straight across this onto Blakeley Wood Rd. which takes you down to the canal close to Ocker Hill Junction. Turn right once you reach the towpath to get to the junction.

### 3. MOORCROFT JUNCTION TO OCKER HILL JUNCTION (3 MILES)

If you want to join up with the adjacent ride (Fazeley Junc. to Gas Street Basin) at the end of the Tame Valley Canal, turn right once over the water main bridge and head the mile and a half down to Ocker Hill Junction, the towpath changing sides just after the Gospel Oak Branch, which has no towpath. Once at the junction take a look around, have a Tunnock, and head back to Moorcroft Junction.

### 4. MOORCROFT JUNCTION TO WEDNESFIELD (9 M)

Head north with the good quality towpath (complete with the occasional radar gate) on the right all the way up to where the canal widens and the Walsall Town Arm bends off to the right. Cross the footbridge to the left bank to tackle the 3 Walsall locks, which are a bit of a climb. A further half mile and you arrive at Birchills Junction, the end of the Walsall Canal.

Bear left on the Wyrley & Essington. The towpath immediately becomes poorer, compacted earth & gravel, bumpy with tree roots in places, but still reasonable. You will pass Sneyd Junction and Holly Bank Basin, neither of which have towpaths so keep going. After 3 miles on the W&E you will arrive back at Pinfold Bridge, where you first joined the towpath. Double back after passing under the bridge, cross it and cycle up Lichfield Rd., then right on Halecroft Avenue back to your car. If you have time go for a pint at The Vine, just up Lichfield Rd., a Grade II listed heritage pub serving a good selection of Black Country beers.