

GREAT HAYWOOD JUNCTION TO STOKE TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL

1

TRIP TYPE: SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE: CYCLE FROM STAFFORD (OR RUGELEY) TO GREAT HAYWOOD JUNCTION, AND UP THE TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL TO STOKE

DISTANCE: 24.6 MILES

TIME: 3 HOURS, 8mph

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 4, pp 147-155

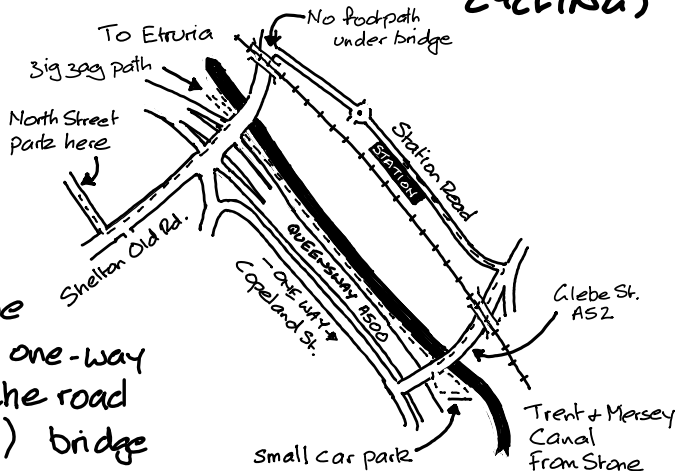
COSTS: FREE PARKING IN STOKE. TRAIN FROM STOKE TO STAFFORD £6.80 (OR RUGELEY TRENT VALLEY £11.60) 3 PER HOUR (1 PER HOUR).

DIFFICULTY: FAIR

OVERVIEW: There are a few choices to be made before commencing this ride. Although the ride proper starts from Great Haywood Junction, there are a number of ways to get there. The ride itself has poor conditions at first, up to Stone (bridge 90) then wide, flat and good all the way to Stoke.

1. STOKE TO GREAT HAYWOOD JUNCTION (6.5 MILES CYCLING)

Park your car on North Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 7DQ. This is a leafy side road with plenty of free parking. Cycle back to Sheldon Old Road, A5006. At the end turn left onto the one-way system. Continue as the road (now called Stoke Road) bridge



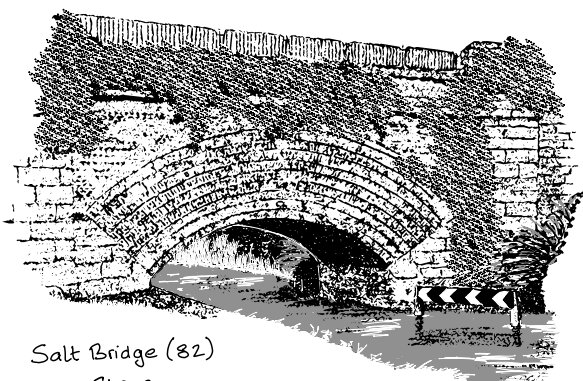
Crosses Queensway, then drop down the zig-zag path on the left to the canal towpath and turn right to head under the Stoke Road bridge (with the canal on your left). Go under the Glebe Street bridge and cut through the gap right into a small car park. Exit the car park up onto Glebe Street Bridge and turn right across the canal. Continue under the railway, and turn left at the roundabout to the station.

Note: there is a more straightforward route if you continue across the canal on A5006, Stoke Road, but the right turn to the station is difficult on a cycle, and there is no footpath to assist you.

Once at Stoke Station you have 3 choices:



OPTION 1: take the train to Stafford. Cross Victoria Park from the station, using the park bridge. Turn right on Mill Bank, and work your way through the one-way system and shops to the large A34 roundabout. Take the A518 Weston Road, turn right on St. Thomas Road, and left on Tixall Road. Follow this through Tixall, and turn right on Mill Lane to the canal. Go through the boatyard to the junction.



Salt Bridge (82)
near Stone

OPTION 2: take the train to Stafford. As option 1 to Tixall Road. Just before Wolseley Road turn right on Two Waters Way, which is a track. Cross the River Saw to Baswich Lane, then to the canal and turn left on

the towpath. Continue past Tixal Wide to the junction.

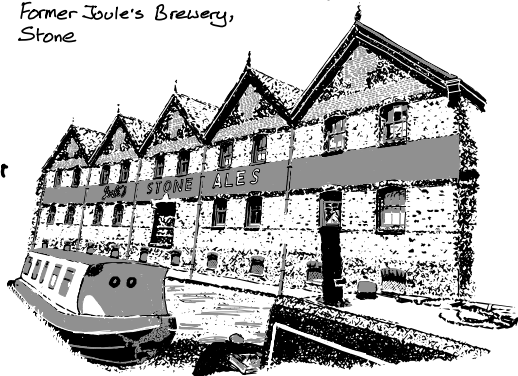
OPTION 3: take the train to Rugeley Trent Valley, leaving the station turn right on Colton Road. Cross the roundabout onto Station Road, B5013. At the bridge, drop down to the canal and head north (right). The canal runs more or less alongside the River Trent to the junction, about 5 miles.

2. GREAT HAYWOOD JUNCTION TO STOKE (18 MILES)

Former Joule's Brewery,
Stone

From Great Haywood Junction head north along the towpath, which is earth, sloping, narrow, with the occasional tree root. However, it is adequate.

After 400m there is a sheet metal bridge near a boat house. The towpath is on the left all the way except between



bridges 97-100, where it briefly changes sides.

Once at Bridge 90, Stone, the towpath is improved considerably all the way back to Stoke. Continue to bridge 113a, Osborn Bridge, where you dropped down when navigating to the station a few hours ago. If you reach Lock 36 you've gone too far.

After going under the bridge, take the zig-zag slope up to the bridge and Stoke Road A5006. Cross Queensway on the pavement and continue to North Street. Turn right back to your car.

If you have time I would highly recommend the half mile trip up Hartshill Road, A52, to the Jolly Potters, a superb traditional pub with a good selection of beers.