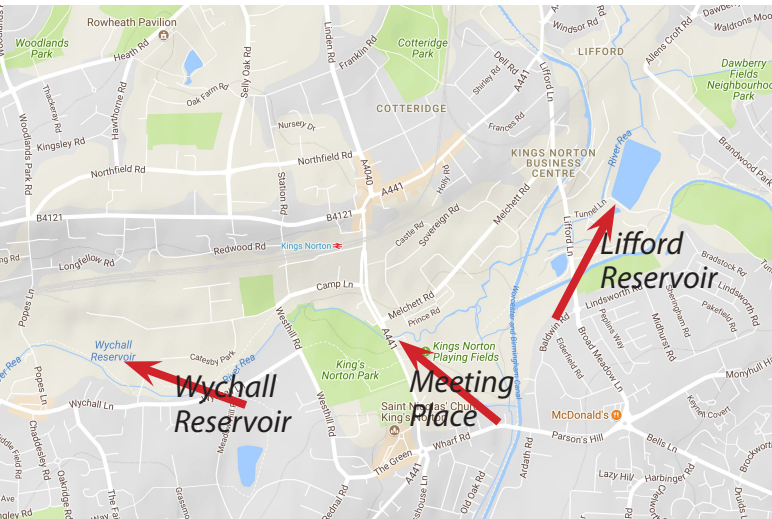


Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

SUMMER WALK

Following the
Worcester & Birmingham
Canal Feeder in Kings Norton
Visiting Lifford Reservoir &
Wychall Reservoir



Meet and start from Kings Norton Playing Fields Car Park, off Pershore Road South, on the right travelling towards Cotteridge just past a row of houses near the pelican crossing.

At this point the Canal Feeder passes under Pershore Road South from Kings Norton Park. The path on the right of the Playing Fields follows the feeder to join the point where it joins the Worcester & Birmingham Canal. Near the end of the path there is a bridge leading from Chapel Walk where there is a good view of the point where the feeder passes between two cottages. There is a wall at the end and water from the feeder goes into a pipe by the left hand cottage. When you reach the canal there is the overflow outlet and an access on the edge of the canal to the left. This is probably the spot where the water flows into the canal. Return to the path.

Just before you reach the Canal the Lint Brook, thought to be an AD699 Anglo-Saxon boundary, emerges from a culvert. The brook rises on the Hawksley Estate and was culverted when Wast Hill Tunnel was built. Excess water from the Canal flows into it from the canal overflow outlet. The brook joins the River Rea at the far side of the park.



Drinking at 'The Boat'

The cottages are on the right. Behind the wall between them is the Canal Feeder. Cottages Nos 1 & 3 were formerly a hostelry much frequented by canal folk called 'The Boat' (*Below Left*).

The building on this side of Wharf Road bridge used to provide stabling for the animals towing the boats.

On the other side of the bridge was a Coal & Lime Wharf and Kings Norton Brick Works was the opposite side of the canal (*Below*).



Kings Norton Brickworks

Follow the towpath to the left to the Junction House, built in 1796, as the tollhouse for Worcester & Birmingham Canal Company. The tariff board is above the door and there is a sign showing the distances and number of locks on the W&B Canal and the Stratford-upon-avon Canal built in 1793 which starts here. Baldwin's Paper Mill was situated at this junction (*below*).



Baldwin's Paper Mill



Guillotine Lock at Kings Norton

You can see the Guillotine Lock (*above*, a listed

and scheduled ancient monument from here. The Worcester & Birmingham Canal was 1 inch higher than the Stratford Canal so the guillotine lock was built to prevent loss between the 2 canals and to ensure the toll was paid.

On the edge of the canal leading to the Guillotine Lock the Canal & River Trust have constructed an area where animals such as water voles can reach the bank.

Working boats used to convey parties of adults and children on pleasure cruises. There is a delightful photo of a c.1900 Sunday School outing which set off from the guillotine lock to Hopwood (*below*).



Sunday School Outing

This area became known as Lifford after Baron Lifford and was the industrial heart of Kings Norton in 1836. Lifford Mill was originally a corn mill. The only original manufacturing business still surviving in the area is Joseph Sturges chemical works, which is now Mineral Technologies Inc. The 150 foot tall tower (*top of next page*), which is a local land mark, is a kiln which reduces high-quality limestone into compounds used in pills and paper.



Mineral Technologies Inc.



Boating Lake

There is a reservoir at Lifford, which became a boating lake (*below left*) in the 1930s. This was one of three built by the W&B Canal Company to compensate for the water extracted from the River Rea to feed the Canal.

It might be worth continuing along the W & B Canal towpath to the bridge over the River Rea where it has cut a deep gorge through the clay. Kings Norton Metal Company used to occupy the site on the left behind the wall. In 1918 & 1919 some 5 million Kings Norton British pennies (*right*) were minted there.

Join The Rea Valley National Cycle Route from the Junction House across the Playing Fields. There is a fine view of St Nicolas Church on the hill.



Penny minted in Kings Norton

Return to cars to drive to KN Park car park. Turn right onto Pershore Road South, keep in the left lane. Turn left into Camp Lane by the petrol station, sharp turn left into Westhill Road, the car park is on the left opposite Wychall Lane.

From the car park walk back towards Camp Lane and turn right across the grass beyond the wooded area. On the right, next to a rhododendron bush, you will find the Feeder which at this point, goes into a culvert and emerges in the Kings Norton Nature Reserve on the left hand side of Wychall Lane.

Walk back towards the car park and cross over to Wychall Lane. There is only a short stretch of the Feeder visible where it crosses this part of the Nature Reserve. It then goes under Meadow Hill Road and Wychall Lane to the source of the feeder.

Cross over Meadow Hill Road - the pavement is wider on the left hand side of the road - until you reach an open space and cross to the other side of the road. The source of the Canal Feeder from the River Rea emerges from a culvert at this point.

Those who want to explore further can walk across the grassed area towards Wychall Reservoir. Wychall Mill was a metal rolling mill. The steam engine which subsequently drove the rolling mill is in Birmingham Think Tank Museum. The Reservoir, which was another one built by W & B Canal Co., has become very silted up but it is an important part of the Nature Reserve. When you reach Popes Lane you can see where the Rea can overflow into the reservoir area to prevent flooding further down the river. The Popes used to own a garden centre in the area. The Nature Reserve continues on the other side of Popes Lane.

Anyone who has come by train could continue to follow the River Rea through a Recreational Ground to Northfield Station. Walk back to the car park along the Cycle route through the Nature Reserve. There is a Pelican Crossing over Westhill Road.

Interesting points about the River Rea: it rises in the Waseley Hills, Worcestershire, winds its way through Birmingham, at one time in the first 15 miles of the River it provided the water to run 18 mills, it flows into the River Tame which in turn joins the River Trent flowing due north to Humberside and out to the North Sea. Another stream which rises in the Waseley Hills flows into the River Severn to the Bristol Channel. Between them from small beginnings they divide England in half.

*Many thanks are due to WBDcs Member
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