

Receive HTML?



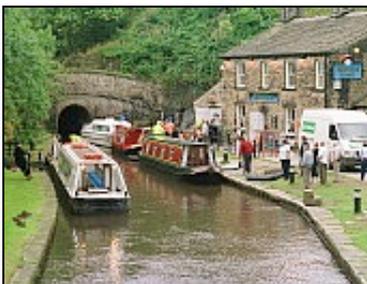
Yorkshire Photos

Huddersfield Narrow Canal Walk

Why not try a walk along the Huddersfield Narrow Canal – now fully navigable following extensive restoration work. The canal towpath makes a wonderful easy walk for all the family, and with easy links to transport services, the towpath is ideal for a linear walk, details of which are given below.

A little history on the canal

Begun in 1794 with plans to link it with the Ashton canal and the Huddersfield broad canal, this ambitious project became the highest stretch of canal in Britain at 645ft above sea level. The amazing Standedge Tunnel from Marsden to Diggle is over 3 miles long and was dug entirely by hand. Begun simultaneously from either end, at one point it was doubtful that the tunnel would meet in the middle, but eventually the problems which had beset the project were overcome. Thanks to some help from Thomas Telford and a few wiggles, the tunnel did join up and in 1811, some 12 years late, the canal was finally opened.



Before the introduction of motorised canal barges, the boats were towed by horses. In order to save money, the Standedge tunnel was built without a towpath which meant that the boatmen had to find another way of getting their boat through the tunnel. While the horses were led over the moor to the other end, the boatmen had to lie on the roof of the barge and use their legs to "walk" the boat through the narrow tunnel. This tiring process took over 4 hours to travel the 3 miles plus and it was this procedure which coined the phrase "legging it".

Following development of the railway, the canal fell into decline and finally disuse, with sections of it having been completely filled in and built over.

Thankfully, an amazing restoration project has been undertaken to re-open the canal along its entire length once more. This mammoth task, completed in 2001, saw town centres dug up (Staley Bridge), bridges extended, locks relocated and buildings tunnelled under. For a pictorial trip through the restoration project, visit this [link](#) (external site).

The Walk

Our walk was a station-to-station walk along the section between [Slaithwaite](#) and Marsden, a walk of about 3 miles (4 if visiting Standedge Tunnel). From Slaithwaite station, walk down to the town centre, and follow the renovated canal towpath over the new bridge. You will pass "Moonraker", a canal barge which has been converted into a floating caf, and some industrial buildings before shortly passing into rural countryside. You will come across several small cobbled bridges along the route, over which the horses would have walked as they towed the barges.

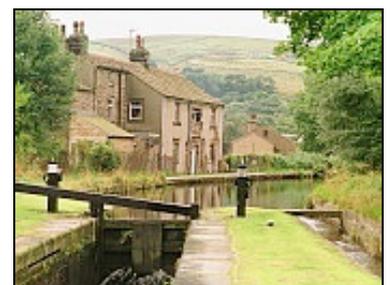


Approximately half way along, just beyond a road bridge, the canal broadens into a winding hole (the term for an area where boats can be turned around) and away to the left you will see a sign for "The Olive Branch" pub and restaurant in Lingards Wood. The pub only seems to open in the evenings and on Sundays, so if you want to visit it, you will have to time your walk accordingly. The pub wasn't open when we did this walk, but it does apparently have a good reputation for its meals.



Continuing along the towpath you will pass two reservoirs, one on either side of the canal. A little further on, the canal once again passes under a road bridge and the path emerges next to Lock 39E. You may have noticed a sign on the towpath, just before the bridge, for a shop. If you want to visit it, cross the footbridge and go out through a wooden gate. The shop is about 150 yards down the road.

Back on the towpath, a short distance further on, you will come to Marsden railway station. For refreshment, "The Railway" pub is immediately opposite the canal and serves meals, although we haven't tried it and therefore cannot comment upon the facilities.



You can choose to finish your walk here, or continue to the Standedge Visitor Centre and Tunnel End, approximately a mile further on. The visitor centre has interesting displays and also takes visitors on a short trip into the tunnel. A caf/pub, "Waters Edge" is located at the tunnel entrance but visitors should note that this shuts at 5pm when the visitor centre closes. For a friendlier welcome, a better choice is the [Tunnel End Inn](#), a short distance away. From the Inn, it is a 5-10 minute downhill walk along the road to Marsden station and the town centre to pick up transport links.

**If You Run Your Own Business,
This Information Will Shock You!**

» [Click here
for details](#)



half term
**HALF
PRICE**
on selected toys
see all »



half
price

Happyland
Store and Play
was £22 **now £11**

buy now ▶

offer ends 25th February

Copyright © Escapes Travel Guides 2004–2013
All Rights Reserved