

Six ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE – PORTLAND BASIN & CANAL

This walk passes some fine buildings, and includes a library with an art gallery above it and the industrial museum at the Portland Basin of the Huddersfield Canal.

Take the train from Eccles Station to Ashton-under-Lyne.

Outside the railway station cross the minor road, then go through the small garden. Turn left along the main road. After a short distance use the pelican crossing to go to the front of the Tameside MBC Offices.

There is a tourist information office inside.

Go left and then right down the side of the building to come onto the Market Square.

On your left is the historic market building being rebuilt following arson.

Next take the opportunity to browse the Market Square.

The market is held there seven days a week and the last Sunday of each month includes a farmers' market.

Leave the square at the diagonal corner from the Town Hall building and go a short distance down Warrington Street to where it is crossed by Old Street.

The National Westminster Bank has a large lion and key carved in its broken pediment and bears the Ashton motto 'labor omnia vincit' (work overcomes all). This was once the local Trustee Bank.

At this point turn right onto Old Street.

You pass the fine white tiled cinema building on the left.

At Oldham Road see the tiled 'Forester's Call' on your left.

This is a free house with real ales.

Cross Oldham Road to 'The Heginbotham Technical School and Free Library' building. Go in – it's a must! Go through to the back room of the library.

Notice the Assheton family coat of arms and motto later adopted by the town.

Beyond this room is the local history and documents library.

Go upstairs from the foyer to see the small art gallery.

This is open Tuesday to Saturday but p.m. only on the Thursday.

Outside the building turn right past 'The King's and Manchester Regiment' building. Keep going ahead. On your right you pass 'The Witchwood'.

This is a free house offering real ales and music evenings.

Continue into and across St Petersfield Square.

This is an attractive modern development.

At the far end of the square to the left is a distinctive large building.

This was the Ashton Public Baths. English Heritage is preventing its decay but a sympathetic use needs to be found for it.

At the main Stockport Road there are trees straight ahead. Go over two crossings taking you slightly left. Then turn right following the main road. *There are some large houses/offices on your left (one with an impressive portico) and a fine church behind the trees on your right.*

At the end of the row of houses/offices there is a stone sign pointing left to Portland Basin. Follow this sign. Go along Park Street to the end then turn right to go to the large chimney with a crowned top at the bottom of Margaret Street. Cross the canal bridge and go left along the canal towpath.

You are now between the Huddersfield Canal and the River Tame.

Go over the towpath bridge above the Macclesfield Branch Canal.

Go left over the footbridge to visit the Portland Basin Museum. The entrance is on the front of the warehouse.

This is open 10.00 to 17.00 Tuesday to Thursday, admission free. It houses period rooms and industrial exhibits including machine tools from the old Globe Ironworks at Stalybridge. There is also a café.

On leaving the museum, cross the footbridge again and turn left along the towpath. There is a mill building with combined tower and chimney by the canal. The towpath is blocked.

At this point go up to the main road and cross it at the lights towards Asda.

If you wish to shop you can end the walk here then go back straight into the town and market.

To continue the walk follow the green painted path along the right hand side of ASDA then between this and a viaduct to rejoin the towpath. *Notice the mix of surviving small industry and lost large industrial sites by the canal.*

Continue up a flight of locks. There is a gurgling gully at Oldham's Bridge then ascend the steps onto Armentieres Square in the centre of Stalybridge. U-turn right back above the canal to join Melbourne Street. Turn right and go to the bottom where you turn left. Follow this road and go under the railway bridge. The entrance to Stalybridge Station is on the left.

CLASSIFICATION: MEDIUM LENGTH, EASY,
SHOPS, MUSEUMS, ARCHITECTURE, PUBS,
RAIL FARE – category one

Maps: Manchester A-Z