

West Stockwith Walk

This is an easy 7 mile route that includes the canal towpath, field paths and quiet roads. Quite a lot of the route is surfaced and it is ideal for a brisk Autumn or Winter walk. You will see the giant flood barriers on the River Idle, the old pumping station that kept this low lying area dry along with a good section of towpath on this attractive, very quiet part of the canal. Towards the finish, there's the colourful basin at the end (or is it the start?) of the canal and the large lock leading down into the mighty River Trent.

Start at the small car park next to the parish church in West Stockwith village. Satnav DN10 4EY, OS Grid Ref 790947. There is a regular - though not frequent - bus service from Retford, though bus users may prefer to start at Misterton which has a more frequent service.

Directions

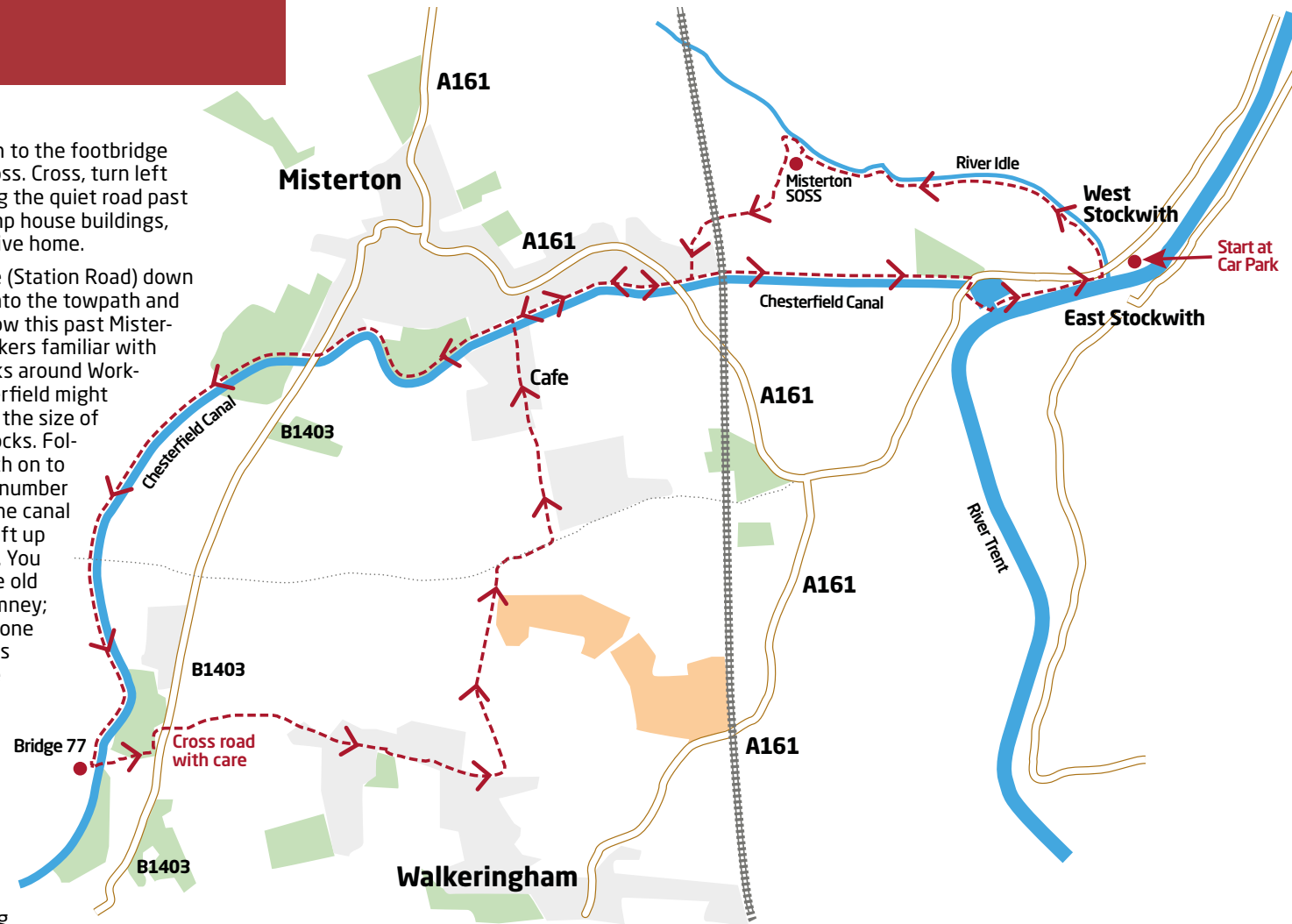
Cross the road from the car park and go through the door next to the river (this really is a public right of way). After the first flood barrier the path quickly joins the River Idle flood bank, giving elevated views over the flat countryside. You then come to the large sluice/pump building so vital to this area. Both barriers can be traversed by boats, though once regular visits by the Retford & Worksop Boat Club flotillas onto the river are now rare because of the high charges for opening the

barriers.

Follow the path to the footbridge at Misterton Soss. Cross, turn left then right along the quiet road past the former pump house buildings, now an attractive home.

Follow the lane (Station Road) down to the canal, onto the towpath and turn right. Follow this past Misterton Locks - walkers familiar with the narrow locks around Worksop and Chesterfield might be surprised at the size of these double locks. Follow the towpath on to Smiths Bridge, number 77, and leave the canal here, turning left up Brickyard Lane. You can still see the old brickworks chimney; the works was one of the last users of boats on the canal.

Turn left at the top and cross the busy road with care. After just a few yards, go right and follow the pavement along Fountain Hill Road into the rather strung-out village of Walkeringham. Continue past West Moor Road and along what is now North Moor Road. Where the road bends round to the right, take the clear track off left and after a few yards go left again at the signposted path. Follow this over the stiles and along the cultivated field edge into a rough grassy area. Watch for the path veering half right here, towards a high wire fence, then follow it to a stile and a wide track. The fenced area has a number of humps - these hide an underground fuel storage complex



dating from the Second World War which is still in use. Go right to the road, turning left down Grovewood Road. Shortly before the canal bridge is reached, there's a café - quite upmarket - that opened earlier in 2016 (The Pantry 8020).

At the canal bridge, follow the towpath to the right. The first short section is one used on the outward journey, but you soon come to the dead straight embankment leading to West Stockwith and there are usually plenty of boats moored along here. Join the road at

the bridge at West Stockwith, turn right then left through the gate into the basin area. Go straight ahead to the huge river lock, then take the bridge over the gates and follow the flood bank beside the River Trent - with a large tidal range here - back to road and the car park.

There are a couple of good pubs - one opposite the basin (The Waterfront) and another opposite the car park (The White Hart).

David Blackburn

