

Chesterfield Canal Walks Book

The Chesterfield Canal Trust has just published a book of walks along and around the canal.

Entitled *Walking along the Chesterfield Canal*, it has 76 pages with lots of maps, photographs and illustrations. It costs £10 and is available from the Trust's shop at Hollingwood Hub and online from its website – search for Chesterfield Canal Trust.

The book was written by David Blackburn who is a leading light in the Ramblers and who has been the Walks Officer for the Trust for about 25 years.

David said: "I have been walking along the Chesterfield Canal for many years and it has given me a great deal of pleasure. It a privilege to be able to share some of the walks I enjoy, and I hope they will give lots of pleasure to other walkers too. They vary in length, cover the whole canal towpath and also use footpaths in the surrounding countryside; most are easy, with just a few offering a little more of a challenge in areas where footpaths are less well used.

I hope users will find the walks in the book both interesting and enjoyable and tempt them to explore parts of the canal they have not visited before."

The 25 walks are circular and cover the full 46 mile length from Chesterfield to the River Trent. There are two particular features to the book. If you complete all the walks, you will have covered every inch of the towpath. Also, each walk can be combined with the next one in the book, giving longer walk options if you wish.

The walks are very varied. They give the opportunity to enjoy a variety of canal scenery and features and also to explore the paths and tracks, some used relatively infrequently, in the surrounding countryside. You can visit the villages and towns close by. Some walks, especially on the Derbyshire section, are in a more urban setting and pass through areas once devoted to the industries that made considerable use of the canal. That's all been swept away, and the canal follows a peaceful green corridor, with only a few scars from past industry remaining. In South Yorkshire there's a big flight of locks – more in a mile than any other canal in the country. It's surrounded by woodland and green fields and is amongst the most attractive lengths of canal in Britain. Some areas, especially beyond Worksop and Retford, have a quite remote feel as the canal passes through miles of agricultural land with several attractive villages close by.

There's a great deal for lovers of wildlife too, with lots of flowers and trees and many birds – on and out of the water. Kingfishers can be seen regularly, even in the more urban parts beyond Chesterfield. The graceful heron can often be seen looking out for fish for its next meal, whilst in some of the clear water sections, mainly in Nottinghamshire, an abundance of fish can be spotted. The canal is also home to the water vole, an increasingly threatened species. Do allow yourself time to stand and stare - the walks are best enjoyed if you are not rushed.

