



Walk: Woolston Park to Swithen Hill Wood on the River Mersey (Linear)

Points of interest

Woolston Park has 54 acres of open meadow, woodland, hidden gardens, children's play parks and a linear pathway following Spittle Brook. It is maintained by the Friends of Woolston Park.

New Cut Heritage Trail is an ongoing project to enhance a valuable group of local open spaces. It follows the once tow path of the New Cut Canal completed in 1821 to bypass a large bend in the River Mersey. The creation of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 meant decline and eventual dereliction for the New Cut.

Towing horses were a large part of its history with "Old Billy" the world's oldest horse at 62 dying in 1822. He worked on the Woolston "Old Cut" which was built in 1755 and is no longer visible. A lock, built at its lower end, was known as Powder Mill Lock, taking its name from the adjoining Gunpowder Mills that supplied the slave trade between Liverpool, West Africa and the Americas.

Woolston Lock was lovingly restored in 2019 with support from the Environment Agency and the New Cut Group. The Lock is at the eastern end of the "New Cut". There is a viewing platform over the River Mersey and the opportunity to immerse yourself in the heritage of the area.

Thelwall Viaduct opened in 1963 it is a steel composite girder viaduct that carries the M6 motorway over the River Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal.

River Mersey Once past the viaduct the scenes of the River are like a scene out of a Constable painting. A real picturesque spot for viewing wildlife especially wetland birds and if you are lucky Atlantic salmon and otters.

Swithen Hill Wood This broadleaved woodland is the destination turning point of the walk. Please note Swithen Hill Wood is a private woodlands and the public right of way passes adjacent to the east side.

↔ 11km / 7 miles including return

🕒 Allow up to 3 hours

👟 Pathways are in good order until after Thelwall viaduct where the terrain is narrower and close to the River edge. Boots or strong footwear are recommended.

🚲 Not suitable for cycling past Woolston Lock

🐕 Keep dogs on lead at all times

🦟 Insect repellent recommended in Summer



WOOLSTON
Parish Council

A pleasant walk up the River Mersey past the newly restored Woolston Locks to enjoy the unspoilt beauty of the river especially as you head in the Rixton direction.

Particularly important for bird life with over 130 different bird species recorded and if you are lucky you may see flying Atlantic salmon as they make their way upstream followed by the otter.

Start & finish: Woolston Park, off Somerset Way WA1 4LN. Parking next to the green hut.

Food & drink: On route there are picnic tables at Woolston Park South near Manchester Road SJ 63770 89041. Close to Woolston Park, there is www.cafe-ocho.com 64 Dam Lane, WA1 4EP.

Dog walking: Responsible dog walking is welcome but it is important to keep dogs on a lead at all times.

OS Explorer™: 276

Local transport:

Bus Service: Stop points for Holes Lane.

- Intercity bus service 100 from Go North West between Warrington Interchange and Manchester Shudehill Interchange.
- Local bus services 3 and 4 between Warrington Interchange and Woolston.

For more information

carbonlandscape.org.uk/explore
woolston-pc.gov.uk
newcuttrail.com

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Route

From the green cabin in **Woolston Park** SJ 64063 89902 head in a westerly direction for 150m towards the main pond / children's play park.

At Spittle Brook **do not** cross the bridge, take a left in a southerly direction for 400m and then cross **Green Lane**.

Continue in a southerly direction following Spittle Brook for 500m then cross the **A57 Manchester Road** at the traffic lights.

In front of you should see a Red Route Sign and a mown area with picnic benches in the left hand corner. This is **Woolston Park South** SJ 63770 89041. Turn left on the **New Cut Heritage Trail**.

Head in an easterly direction for 1.6km / 1 mile until you reach the newly restored **Woolston Locks** SJ 65423 88779.

Continue walking in an easterly direction following the course of the River Mersey and at the 1km mark you will walk under the **Thelwall Viaduct (M6)**.

Walk for a further 1.5km / just under a mile until you reach **Swithen Hill Wood** SJ 67459 89181.

Please note we do not recommend you go beyond the woods because of the high volume of traffic on Manchester Road at this point, with no crossing points and a narrow footpath. This is, however, close to the **Rixton Clay Pits Nature Reserve**.

From **Swithen Hill Wood** retrace your footsteps taking particular care to find the picnic benches at **Woolston Park South** (off the New Cut Trail as your landmark). Turn right and north back towards **Woolston Park**.