



Landgate



Scotmans Flash

⑥ DOVER LOCK

At Bamfurlong Road Bridge, cross over to the other side of the canal. Three quarters of a mile on and you will come across The Dover Lock Inn. It was here in 1820 that the Leigh Branch opened, connecting it to the Bridgewater Canal.

Dover and the nearby township of Abram were at the centre of Wigan's coal industry. The Maypole Pit in Abram saw one of the biggest colliery disasters when in 1908, 75 miners lost their lives

⑦ BICKERSHAW COLLIERY SITE

Moving further down the towpath (1½ miles past Dover Lock Inn) you will see, across the canal the Bickershaw Colliery Site. The site has an obvious mining tradition going back some 155 years. This was one of the largest mines in Lancashire with over 7 miles of pit shaft. In its heyday the pit employed over 1500 miners and produced 600,000 tonnes of coal per year. Bickershaw was Wigan's last pit, closing on the 27th March 1992. It has today been transformed into a vast expanse of beautiful woodland, green field and nature reserve.

⑧ PENNINGTON FLASH

Look right and you will see the largest of the Flashes. Pennington Flash is one of the north west's premier sites for bird watching, with over 230 species of bird recorded including Marsh Harrier, Spoon Bill, Leachs Petrel and the very rare Siberian Black Faced Bunting. You can drop down from the canal into the park with its 70 hectare lake, bridle paths, picnic areas and even a 9-hole golf course.

⑨ WELCH HILL MILL

As you leave Pennington, you quickly enter the built up town of Leigh. Welch Mill sat just beyond the first road bridge that you pass under. The mill, built in 1893 was home to Gamble and Smith, manufacturers of fine cotton.

⑩ MANSLEY'S ROPE WORKS

Mansleys has been replaced by a new wharf-side pub and offices. Mansleys manufactured fine rope whilst also retailing locally brewed beer! It burned down in 1912

⑪ LEIGH

The name Leigh means meadow, and reveals the town's rural origins. Up and until the late 1800s, Leigh was noted for its dairy produce, especially local cheeses (one of which was called the Leigh Toastie).

Industrialisation in the 18th and 19th centuries brought growth boosted by the new canal links. Leigh is the birth place of Thomas Highs (1720), who was thought to have invented the Spinning Jenny only to have the patent taken from him by James Hargreaves in 1770.

Wigan Tourist Information

01942 827 619 www.visitwigan.co.uk

National Rail Enquiries

08457 48 49 50 www.nationalrail.com

This walk forms part of a series of walks and trails developed by Manchester's Countryside. For more information on Manchester's Countryside, including downloads of the walks visit www.manchesterscountryside.com Telephone: 0161 253 5111 email: info@manchesterscountryside.com

WIGAN
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WIGAN PIER TO LEIGH BRIDGE

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WIGAN PIER TO LEIGH BRIDGE

DISTANCE:
7.75 miles

WALK SUMMARY

Starting at the iconic Wigan Pier and taking you through the unique collection of lakes and waterways known as Wigan Flashes and on through the Hey Brook Corridor to delightful Pennington. A canal-side trail rich in natural history and heritage.

HOW TO GET THERE:

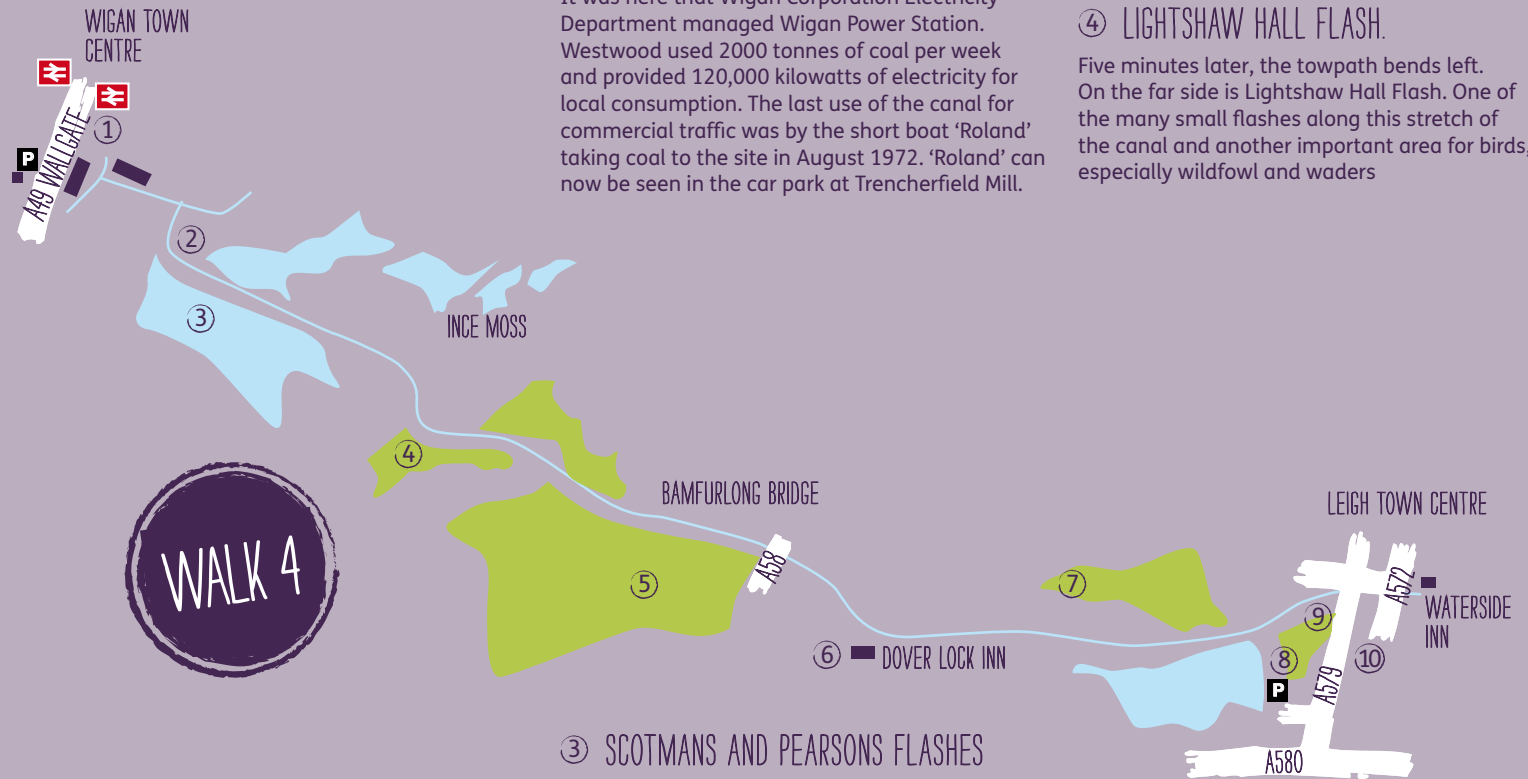
This trail has a railway station near its start. Regular busses connect Wigan and Leigh. To get information on public transport contact:

GREATER MANCHESTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION 0871 200 2233 www.tfgm.com



Pennington Flash

THE WALK



① WIGAN PIER

Begin your walk at the famous Wigan Pier that got its name from the canal side coal tippler which you will see opposite the main warehouse building. Wigan Pier was made famous by the two Georges. George Formby Snr who used the name as part of a Victorian music hall joke; and by George Orwell who in 1936 wrote *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

Head south on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Walk alongside the impressive Trencherfield Mill (1907). Follow the towpath underneath the road bridge. The canal splits a few minutes later. Take a right, crossing the footbridge onto the Leigh Branch.

② WESTWOOD POWER STATION

Look over the canal at the new office blocks. It was here that Wigan Corporation Electricity Department managed Wigan Power Station. Westwood used 2000 tonnes of coal per week and provided 120,000 kilowatts of electricity for local consumption. The last use of the canal for commercial traffic was by the short boat 'Roland' taking coal to the site in August 1972. 'Roland' can now be seen in the car park at Trencherfield Mill.

③ SCOTMANS AND PEARSONS FLASHES

A Flash is a unique industrial legacy to Wigan. There are many in and around Wigan (particularly present on this walk). Each are lakes formed as a result of mining subsidence.

Here the canal splits two flashes. Both are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. This is due to the abundance of rare plant species, several species of orchid, extensive reed beds and migrating birds such as Reed and Sedge Warbler. Scotmans (on the right) is the largest of the 'Wigan Flashes' although Pennington Flash near Leigh is the largest in the borough. Pearsons Flash is the lake on the opposite side of the canal. Pearsons provided the water for the cooling towers at Westwood.

As you reach the end of Scotmans Flash take the footbridge across the canal. (Alternatively you may decide to stay on this side of the canal and take one of the trails that cut through Scotmans

or run alongside the canal eventually accessing Lightshaw, Landgate and Three Sisters Recreation Areas).

④ LIGHTSHAW HALL FLASH.

Five minutes later, the towpath bends left. On the far side is Lightshaw Hall Flash. One of the many small flashes along this stretch of the canal and another important area for birds, especially wildfowl and waders

⑤ LANDGATE, THREE SISTERS AND BRYN HALL

Access to these areas is by a series of worn paths on the far side of the canal. (Vehicle access is from the A49 following signs for Three Sisters). There are ponds, lakes, woodland walks, cycling trails and bridleways. At the centre is Three Sisters Recreation Area. Three Sisters takes its name from three hills which were formed from coal slag heaps.

At Three Sisters you will find a small lake and Ranger Station. Here you can follow miles of way marked routes, some of which skirt the Three Sisters Racing Circuit – an internationally accredited motor racing circuit.