



Pagefield Iron Works

# WIGAN PIER TO APPLEY BRIDGE

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WIGAN PIER - SCOT LANE PONDS - CROOKE VILLAGE - OTTERS CROFT WOODS - GATHURST - DEAN WOOD AND APPLEY BRIDGE



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## ⑧ DEAN WOOD LOCK HOUSES

Just a few minutes on and you will come across a lovely cottage positioned besides a large lock system. This was once a toll collection point for the canal.

Ashurst Beacon can be seen to the south. The Beacon was once used by locals to warn of approaching invaders. The view from the top is well worth the effort getting there.

**Wigan Tourist Information**  
01942 827 619 [www.visitwigan.co.uk](http://www.visitwigan.co.uk)

**National Rail Enquiries**  
08457 48 49 50 [www.nationalrail.com](http://www.nationalrail.com)

## ⑨ DEAN WOOD

This is one of the few remaining large areas of ancient woodland in Wigan. Majestic Oak, Beech and Sycamore trees rise out of carpets of wild flowers such as Celadine, BlueBells and Wild Garlic.

*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](http://www.manchesterscountryside.com) Telephone: 0161 253 5111 email: [info@manchesterscountryside.com](mailto:info@manchesterscountryside.com)*

## ⑩ COPPICE BANK AND GREEN ALLEY WOODS

Soon after Dean Wood you pass by another area of deciduous woodland, cloaking the side of the Douglas Valley. Both these woods provide important Rookery and Heronry sites.

## ⑪ PARBOLD HILL AND ASHURST BEACON

If you were to continue your journey for another mile or so and take the path over the second canal footbridge, up along side the grounds of Parbold Hall, you will reach the top of Parbold Hill. From here you will experience one of Lancashire's great views.

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# WIGAN PIER TO APPLEY BRIDGE

## DISTANCE:

5.5 miles/9km

## WALK SUMMARY

Starting at the iconic Wigan Pier and meandering through the Douglas Valley. This is a lovely canal-side trail mixing attractive and rich natural industrial heritage.

## HOW TO GET THERE:

To get information on public transport contact:

GREATER MANCHESTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION 0871 200 2233 [www.tfgm.com](http://www.tfgm.com)



Wigan Pier



# 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 west on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal (heading to Liverpool). Pass by the Coal Tippler then under Wallgate Road Bridge. Although industry remains a prominent feature, the landscape begins to open up revealing quite pleasant greenery.

## ② PAGEFIELD IRON WORKS

5 minutes into your walk and you will see to your right a small number of industrial units. This land was owned by the Walker Family; who began manufacturing small colliery equipment. In 1945 the company was commissioned to manufacture tank and naval parts for the war effort. This resulted in a royal visit to the factory by King George VI.

## ③ SCOT LANE PONDS

As soon as you pass the impressive DW Stadium on your left, you enter a wide expanse of reed beds and small pools. Although attractive and a place of special scientific interest, the ponds are a legacy of Wigan's industrial past. Whilst on the towpath you should see Swans, Canada Geese, Water Rail in the reeds and Sky Larks over head.

## ④ DOUGLAS BANK COLLIERY

Over to the other side of the Canal three pits once connected to the canal by tram rails. It was the Douglas Bank Signal Box that stood here, that formed the basis of Formby Snr's Wigan Pier joke.

## ⑤ CROOKE VILLAGE

Two miles into the walk you will enter the small and quaint Crooke Village. Crooke Hall (no longer standing) was the seat of the Catterall Family from 1421 – 1713 and home to Robert Holt, developer of the Douglas Navigation.

Before you get to the village look right. A canal arm leaves the main branch. Today a new canal marina hosts barges and pleasure craft. However, the arm once directed boats to the Crooke Canal Tunnel. Built in the 18th Century and 600 yards long, the tunnel connected the canal to the Taylor Pit Shaft and an underground wharf.

## ⑥ OTTERS CROFT WOOD

Just out of the village, on the far side of the canal, is Otters Croft Wood. This fine oak woodland was formerly part of the extensive Standish Hall Estate. This woodland is not open to the public but a variety of birds, plant and wildlife can still be seen from the canal towpath.

## ⑦ THE ROBURITE FACTORY

Opposite the Baby Elephant restaurant was the Roburite Explosive Company, registered in 1887 as a manufacturer of explosives. The company had works on both sides of the canal with goods and staff transported across on an overhead narrow gauge railway specially constructed not to give off sparks. The company was taken over in 1918 by ICI and closed in 1981.