

BRIDGE OF THE WENDOVER ARM

Low-rise heat over the morning woods.
River-crisp reflections of sky and hillside.
A last brood of coots and in the big field to the east, skylarks.
Breeding behaviour well into October.
Everything a little too warm-blooded.
Pop of tennis balls and bees, still,
on the rosemary flowers and Himalayan honeysuckle
outside the bankside house we've long coveted.
Roof tops of the town through a gap in the trees
the light barely there—crow-light for the jackdaws to roost by.
Plans and happenstance. Nobody near.
Spooked birds in military contrail—
some doubt in all that I can see, all I can hear.

Will Burns, 2022
Local Poet

Oliver's Bridge by Adele Price



WENDOVER CANAL

The Wendover Canal opened in 1797 and operated throughout the 19th Century. It closed to navigation in 1904. Originally intended to just provide a flow of water for the Grand Union Canal, it invariably had difficulties. Despite constant attempts to repair it, it always suffered from leaking. Today though it is a wonderful asset for the community and the environment. For further information about Wendover Canal visit the Wendover Canal Trust website at <https://wendovercanal.org.uk>.

HALTON LIGHT RAILWAY

The Halton light railway was opened in 1917 to supply heavy materials such as coal to the military camp. Once coal was replaced by oil as the main fuel for the boilers of the camp, its days were numbered. It closed on March 31st 1963.

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WENDOVER CANAL AND RAILWAY BRANCH LINE WALK

1

Wendover Canal begins where the water emerges from under Wharf Road, having flowed alongside the Heron Path from springs near St Mary's Parish Church. It is here, at the Canal Wharf, where barges were once unloaded and loaded, that our walk begins.

2

This is the point at which the Halton Light Railway crossed the canal. This branch line was built because the military station at Halton was expanding during the First World War. After 1918 and as the newly named 'RAF' Station continued to grow, the line was mainly used for the delivery of coal to the boilers of the Station. The train was affectionately known locally as 'The Puffing Billy'!

3

Cross the wooden foot bridge, (Oliver's Bridge), and continue along the route of the railway. You are now following the embankment on which the railway used to run for about four hundred metres, at the end of which you take the public footpath to the left down to the field.

4

Follow the path across the field towards Halton. At the edge of the field a small path will take you through to the next field from which you can see the Halton RAF Station. Do bear in mind that the footpath can be very muddy after wet weather.

A

The railway closed in 1963 and it is now difficult to see the route of the old line. But we do know exactly where the line terminated. It finished beside the 'Old Workshop' very close to, and about half way down Chestnut Avenue.

B

A branch line terminated very close to Tring Road opposite Babbington Road. It is not possible to enter the sites of these two places, one is on the 'closed without permission' section of the RAF station (A). The other is now the site of a care home (B).

5

Head for the bridge over the canal in the middle of Halton. Follow the track around the playing fields and join the road, head towards Chestnut Avenue and turn left, passing the village church on your right. Once at the bridge take the left turn onto the canal path towards Wendover. As you follow the canal it's perhaps worth considering the impact of restoring the canal to a navigable state, or leaving it as the beautiful environment it has become.

6

At this point you have the choice of turning right through a small area of woodland, taking the path to the Weston Turville reservoir, or continuing along the canal. Around the reservoir the path gives wonderful views of Coombe Hill and Wendover Woods.

7

Continuing along the canal you will now pass the stretch known as 'The Wides'. It was originally a mill pond for St John's Mill at Halton but is now a reed bed and home to a wide variety of wildlife. You may spot little egrets or mandarin ducks. Continuing after The Wides you will soon notice that you have returned to Oliver's Bridge, (2). If you so choose, you can turn right and follow the old railway line as far as the children's playground and back, or continue along the towpath to the canal wharf.

Weston Turville reservoir

The Wides

Oliver's Bridge

Canal Wharf

Wendover Library

Wendover station

KEY

★ START
END

→ PATHWAY

↔ OUTWARD & RETURN

— HALTON LIGHT RAILWAY

200m

St Michael's Church

RAF Halton

A

B

5

6

Chestnut Avenue

7

2

3

4

Wendover

