

# FRODSHAM Festival of Walks 2021

REDISCOVER WHERE YOU LIVE

Remembering Joe Beswick (1931–2020)

## WALK 7: WEAVER VALLEY

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*The Weaver Valley between Frodsham and Acton Bridge is particularly rural and peaceful, not being crossed by any roads. It is especially beautiful during springtime with an abundance of wild flowers and water fowl however it is similarly beautiful when in its autumn colours.*

**Distance:** approx. 10 miles/16 km.

**Time:** 5 – 6 hours.

**Note:** This leisurely walk goes as far as Dutton Locks. Here are picnic tables and being the half way point is a suitable picnic stop.

These directions are for the north bank followed by the south bank. The walk can be done in the opposite direction. There are some narrow sections on the south bank. All paths can be muddy and slippery especially on the south side so it is advisable to wear suitable footwear. There are several stiles on the route.

As there is a lot of livestock on both sides of the river please ensure any dogs are kept under close control preferably on a lead.

**Start:** Mill Lane, just off A56 at Frodsham Stone Bridge. Parking is usually available beyond the garden centre entrance.

### DIRECTIONS

Walk along Mill Lane away from Frodsham to join the A56. Cross the road.

Cross the swing bridge (opened 1801, modified 1920's) and immediately turn R. through a small opening down to the River Weaver Navigation towpath.

*(As you walk along the towpaths notice sandstone horse troughs, mooring rings, locks, milestones and posts.)*

Follow the towpath to reach **Sutton Level Locks**, an old overgrown lock.

*(This is known locally as the **boat graveyard** as many carrying craft were abandoned there in the 1950's after a new deep cutting bypassed the locks making navigation more efficient in both directions. Occasionally boat wreckage can be seen.)*

Here there are two stiles – take the one on the L into the copse followed by another into a field. (Formerly a golf course)

*(The stile ahead leads to a permissive path along the River Weaver to Dutton Locks however due to its permissive status may be closed occasionally.)*

Keep to the right to follow the field and Beckett's Wood (note the clough/valley) to reach a stile in the corner.



Cross the stile and keep to the right field boundary to reach another stile.

Cross the stile and follow the short path to a stile onto Aston Lane.

Turn R and keep on the footpath past Chapel Wood, the school, St Peter's Church, Aston Lodge (poor condition) to take the second turn on the R which is on a sharp left bend with a grassy central triangle and Top Lodge on the right.

*(Aston is a very interesting village: **Aston Hall** built 1668 demolished 1938 with the grounds and gardens designed by Humphry Repton. **St Peter's Church**, Grade 1 listed, first built in 1200's has a 17C chancel and Georgian nave. Also monuments and memorials to the Aston family including Arthur a lifelong professional but unpopular and much feared soldier and supporter of Charles I. Church damaged in the Civil War and by a land mine in WW2, now restored.)*

Go down this lane past Aston Grange Farm where the lane becomes a rough track. About 1 mile after leaving Aston Lane by Top Lodge you reach gates leading into a field with the River Weaver beyond.

Go through the small gate and cross the field (often muddy) to the river bank.

Turn L and follow the river path to **Dutton Lock**.

*(On the way you pass **Pickering's Cut**, with the old lock keeper's cottage and remains of the lock built 1758/59. The boats by the cottages are used to get from one side of the river to the other.)*

**Dutton viaduct**, Grade 2 listed. Built in 1837 by Joseph Locke and George Stephenson. Built in sandstone blocks with 20 arches.

*The laminated timber footbridge known as the **Horse Bridge** was constructed 1915/16. The stream from the weir around the corner flows underneath to join the River Weaver.)*

At **Dutton Lock** – half way – picnic tables and a bench on the opposite bank.

*(Grade 2 listed. Complex lock system still in frequent use.)*

Cross the lock, turn R (*note the sandstone trough and pump here*) and follow the towpath and river bank back to Frodsham.

At **Pickering's Lock** there is a short diversion. Follow the path over the footbridge and original course of River Weaver then turn R going through the static caravan park, passing through a small gate into a garden followed by a gate into the field and back by the River Weaver.

Continue along the river bank back to Frodsham passing **Catton Hall**, **Frodsham Cut**, **Boden's Lock**, (distant weir) and **Community Orchard planted 1996** along the way.

*(**Catton Hall** was built on the site of Sir Arthur Aston's 17<sup>th</sup> century home. **Frodsham Cut** constructed around 1730 with Thomas Telford taking over the management of the project. **Boden's Lock** designed by Robert Pownall and George Leigh 1781, modified 1830. Used to be two lock keepers' cottages in what is now the **Community Orchard**.)*





*Boden's Lock*

Pass through the water sports area to reach the **Stone Bridge** (*listed, built 1850*) on the A56. Turn R crossing the road to reach Mill Lane, the starting point.

There are some wonderful woodlands along and close to the Weaver Valley which are superb during spring when the bluebells and ramsons (wild garlic) flower in profusion. Also look out for many other flowers including wood anemones, wood sorrel, orchids.

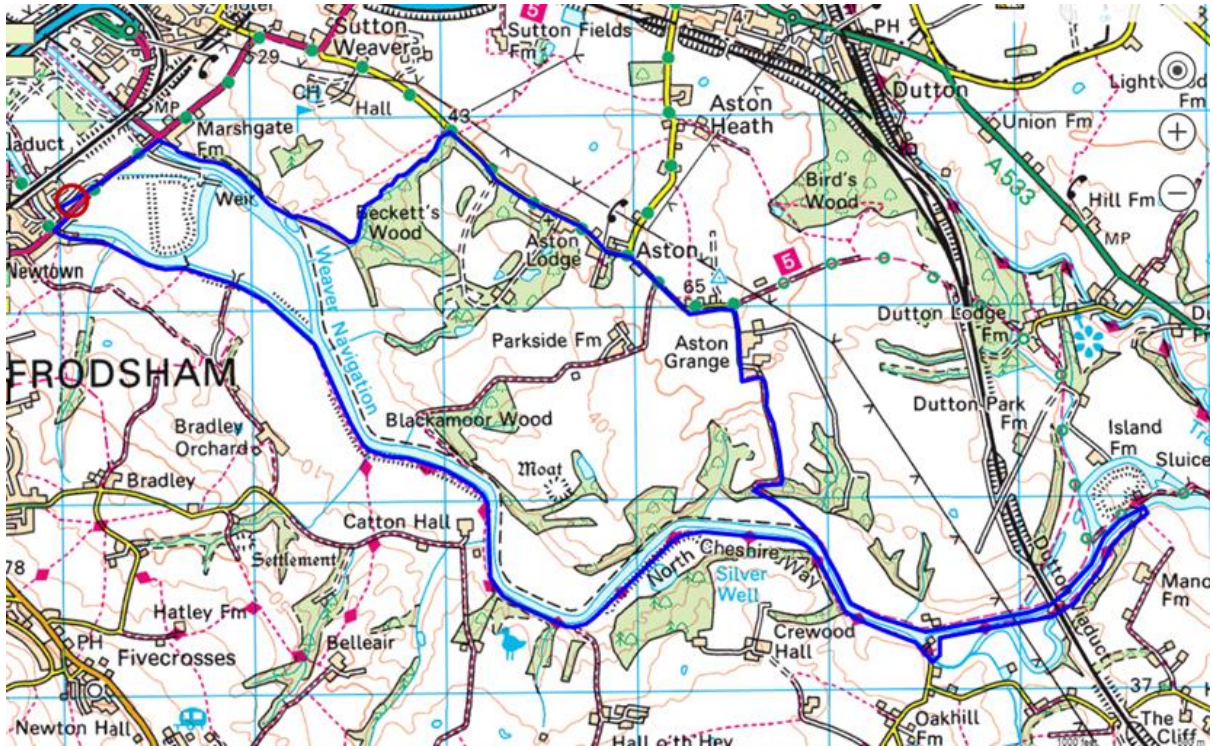
North Bank: Beckett's Wood, Chapel Wood, Bird's Wood, Long Acre Wood, Lodge Wood.

South Bank: Warburton's Wood, Hunter's Wood, Hob Hey Wood.

*Useful map – Ordnance Survey Explorer 267*

*More interesting information about points noted above in italics can be found on-line.*

*This walk has been adapted from Walks around Frodsham 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2011 compiled by Graham Bondi and published by Frodsham Town Council.*



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