

Hall Lane for 150 yards and as the road bears right we head left along the farm track towards Astley. Follow this track for 500 yards and we reach the next mineral railway that crossed the farm track. The route of the railway can be seen from the hedgerows and trees to your left and right.

7. This railway allowed coal from the mines in Tyldesley to be transferred to the canal and can be seen on 1888-1913 OS maps. We will turn left here towards the Bridgewater Canal. After about 125 yards the field has been fenced off so we leave the railway and follow the path to the right until we have crossed the field. The railway we started to follow along Boothshall Way would have crossed this field to the sidings at the colliery. When the colliery was working, this area was covered with railway sidings as shown on the 1937-61 OS maps. After passing through the 2 kissing gates follow the path right towards Astley Colliery, the home of Lancashire Mining Museum.
8. When you reach the road turn left towards the canal bridge - this is the Leigh branch of the Bridgewater canal. After crossing the canal turn left, back towards Boothstown, and after 250 yards there is a turning point on the opposite bank. This allowed the narrowboats to turn round and load up with coal because the Tyldesley mineral railway reached the canal around this point. On the near bank there are steel posts in the bank that are a remnant of that time.
9. A further 250 yards towards Boothstown, Stirrup Brook crosses under the canal and this marks the boundary between Wigan and Salford. Just past this, on the left, you can see the line of trees dissecting the fields, marking the old mineral railway. Continue along the towpath, passing under Vicars Hall Lane and Moss House Lane.
10. 125 yards past Moss House Bridge there is a section of the opposite bank that is made of steel sheet piles. A copse of silver birch trees is here and the area is marked out with small concrete posts - this is where the underground canal from the Chaddock Level connected to the main canal. Continue along the towpath and leave at the next bridge, heading back towards Boothshall Way.
11. Cross the road opposite the entrance to the pub car park and take the footpath between the houses. At the end of this path there is a white cottage on the left named Wits End. This is what is left of the original Booths Hall, built around 1343. Turn left onto Landrace Drive to the junction with Booths Hall Road. If you look left at this junction, you can see the chimneys of the "new" Booths Hall, now a grade II listed building. Turn right and head up towards Leigh Road. Turn left at this junction and follow Simpson Road back to the starting point.

## Boothstown Coal Routes

Distance : 4 miles

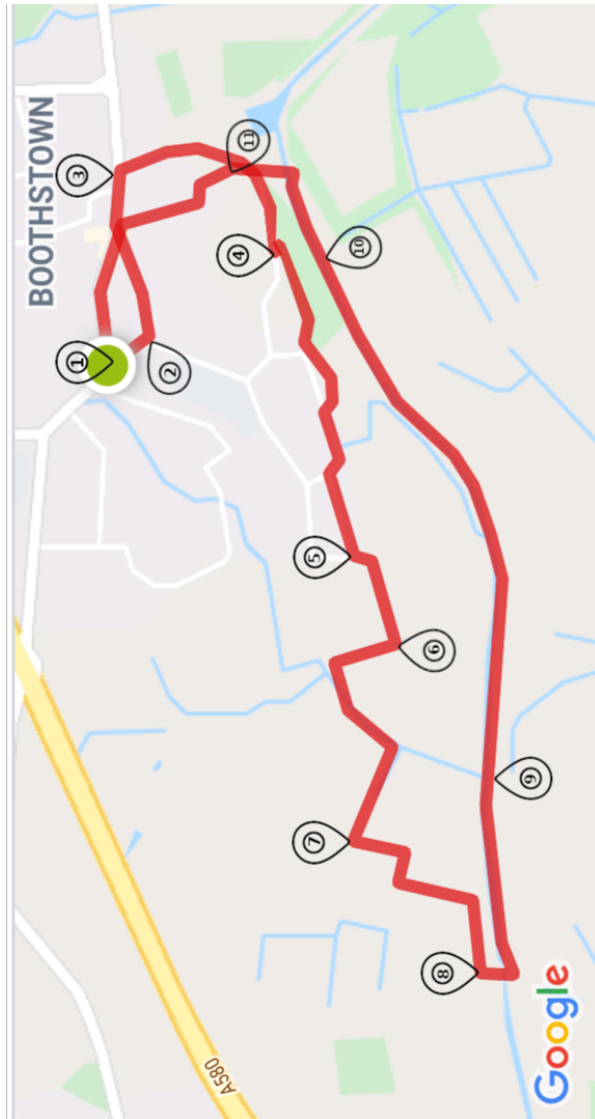
Level: Easy

## Description

Coal was an important aspect of the growth of Boothstown but, as the coal industry has declined and Boothstown has been developed, the industrial heritage is now mostly hidden. This walk attempts to follow some of the coal routes and includes two canals, two mineral railways and, for interest, two halls.

The route follows roads and fields and can be **muddy after rain**. If you're lucky, you may see owls, buzzards, kingfishers, cormorants, bats or deer depending on the time of day,

**Remember to leave nothing but footprints on your walk; take your rubbish home with you.**



1. The walk starts and ends at the Why Not? Cafe on Leigh Road. Standing with your back to the Why Not? turn right and follow Leigh Road, past the Coal & Cotton for 130 yards.
2. At this point crossover Boothshall Way and continue to follow Leigh Road staying on the right hand path. After ¼ mile you will get to the other end of Boothshall Way.
3. This is where the mineral railway from Walkden Yard and Mosley Common crossed Leigh Road to take coal down to the Bridgewater Canal. On either side of Leigh road, on the other side of Boothshall Way, you will see a small padlocked gate between stone pillars. These gates were not used for access but to mark where the Thirlmere Aquaduct crosses under the road. This is the main water supply from the Lake district to Manchester. Turn right down Boothshall Way and you are closely following the old railway route. Around the point of the second traffic calming scheme the railway would have gone straight on to the marina where coal was transferred into barges waiting below. This route has now been covered by houses. A later addition to the mineral railway continued to Astley and this is the route Boothshall Way follows now. Continue to follow the road, past the Mooring pub.
4. Just before the first house on the left, there is access into the nature reserve. This is where Boothshall Ways leaves the route of the railway. Enter the Nature Reserve and follow the path right behind the houses. As you come out of the trees, onto the grass area there is a pond on your left hand side. This pond is actually the entrance to the underground canal system, called the Chaddock Level. This canal used to connect directly to the Bridgewater Canal so the coal could be transported easily to Manchester. Continue to follow the path until you get to Moss House Lane. At this point we have to leave the railway for the time being. Turn right onto Moss House Lane and then left along Amberhill way. We are now walking to the right of the railway which would have gone along the edge of the football pitches if it was still here. Turn left off Amberhill Way along Godmond Hall Drive.
5. At the end of Godmond Hall Drive turn left and then, after 45 yards, turn right down the wide path between the houses. We are now back on the old railway route and this hasn't been built over because a surface water drain follows the old route and discharges into Stirrup Brook. Follow this path for 250yards and we get to Vicars Hall Lane.
6. As the path meets the lane, there is a large cast iron item in the ground. This was the level crossing for the railway. The railway went straight across the fields ahead, indicated by the line of trees but this is inaccessible now, and terminates at Stirrup Brook. Turn right along Vicars