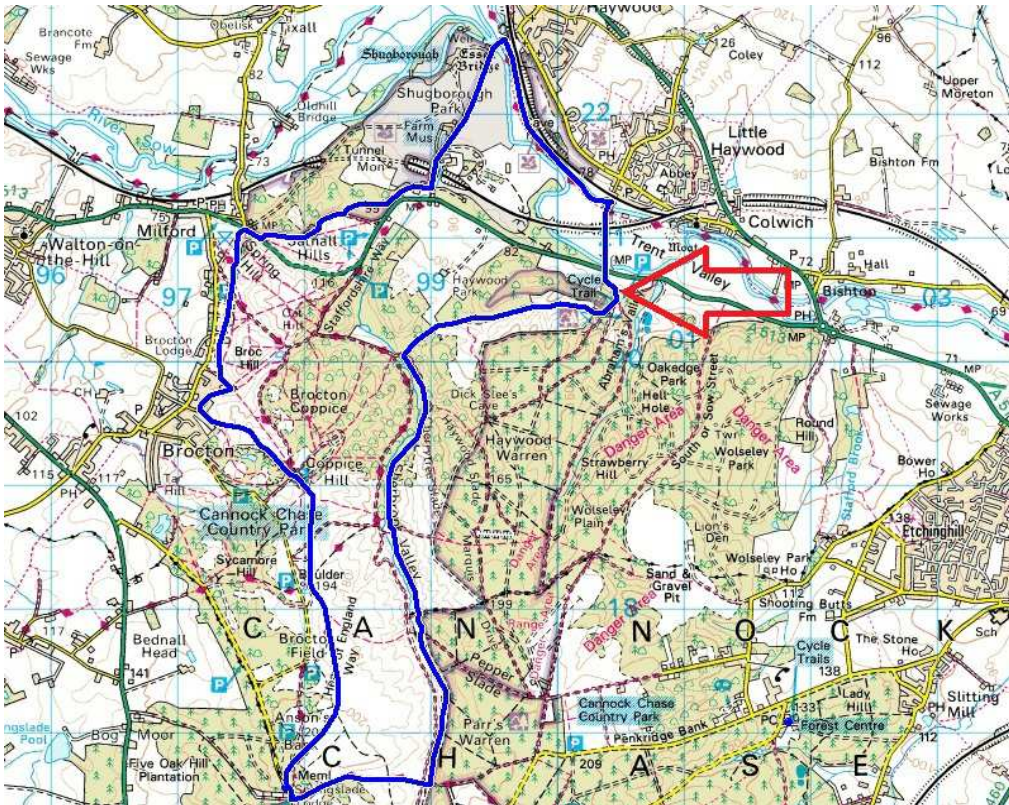


# 11 mile cross country on (and just off) northern end of Cannock Chase

Suitable for mountain bikes only.  
Mainly on dirt tracks: muddy, wet, some loose gravel.  
Three short steep uphill sections.  
A quiet lane and some tarmac through Shugborough Estate.  
A mile of rough canal towpath.  
Tyres with good, deep tread pattern recommended.



Map created from MemoryMap software. No copyright breach intended. Let me know if you are aware of a copyright problem.

Start (red arrow) Seven Springs car park.  
Off the A513 between Rugeley and Stafford.  
Google maps 52.782338,-1.994576.  
Free, unsurfaced car park. No facilities. Fairly well used by walkers.

Head off north back down the driveway to the A513.  
Cross with care and head into Meadow Lane straight ahead.  
After less than a mile, pass under the railway line and then reach the canal bridge.. The way onto the towpath is on the right.  
Drop down the steps onto the towpath and turn sharp left, back under the road bridge and along the rough dirt path.

After about 1 mile reach the lock at Trent Lane bridge.  
Immediately before the bridge turn left off the towpath and take the old causeway bridge over the river into the Shugborough Estate.  
Follow the tarmac road through the park heading southwest.  
The Hall is off to the right and then you pass by some farm buildings on either side and reach the bridge over the railway.  
Then the road bears right and climbs slightly.  
Ahead there is a left hand bend as the tarmac roadway leads to the A513. At this bend there is an option to take a woodland track straight ahead and climb steeply uphill into the wood.

After a few hundred yards, look to the left and find a steep track downhill to a gate.  
At the gate turn right and follow a wide bridleway uphill, that is obviously used by motor vehicles.  
This soon leads up to a covered reservoir on the hill top. There is a fence around the reservoir. Stay to the left of the fenced area, close to the fence and you will find a steep drop down a bridleway to the main A513 at Milford Common.  
Take care the path is steep and it's easy to pick up good speed but there's a left turn near the bottom by a stone wall and a drop onto the road. There is room to stop before the road but care is needed.

Turn right onto the main road and then look for a track up into the trees on the left before the open meadow of Milford Common.  
If a break is required then there are public toilets and a café / chip shop on the far side of the Common.  
Taking the track uphill into the trees it becomes narrow and steep and open out onto a grassy hill top.

Looking down to the right a large redbrick house is obvious with a steep driveway immediately to the right of it. Head for that driveway. The driveway is grassy and gravelly and steep but short. At the top, turn left and follow the gravel roadway that passes a number of houses and then up through some trees.

On the far side of the trees, the narrow path drops across open grass and then down through high bracken onto another gravel roadway. Take care on the steep section as it is difficult to see walkers and there are often people out there.

This section passes through the edge of Brocton on gravel roads. On the gravel road way turn left and then follow it right, passing some large houses. The roadway then drops down a slope to a T junction. Turn left up the steep slope. There are just a few houses on this rough road and then the path carries on into the trees.

Follow the obvious path up to the top of Coppice Hill where there is a road to a public car park. At the road, turn left and immediately right onto an obvious broad bridleway that usually has a wooden barrier across it with space for bikes and horses to get around. This track quickly opens up onto the top of a moor with wide open views over the Chase with Sherbrook Valley down to the left and the Pye Green Communications Tower in the distance ahead.

From here on there are numerous tracks off to the right and left at various points. Refer to the map and aim to bear mainly south which usually the straight on option. Avoid turns to the left that would drop down into the valley below. Avoid turns to the right that would join the road. Following a southerly heading the track stays generally on the ridge, climbing slightly. In bad and/or windy weather it is very exposed.

After a mile or so, following the straight ahead options at several track crossings the route becomes narrower and boggier until the very last section, dropping down to Springslade and the Katyn Memorial is always thick, wet, black mud. Where the track meets the road there is

a café at Springslade Lodge across the road, with customer toilets and excellent bacon butties.

If you went to Springslade Lodge cross back over the road. Take the tarmac driveway that is signed to the Katyn memorial. Past the memorial there is a wide, pebbly, track downhill all the way to Sherbrook Valley and it's possible to build up a good speed. Take care the surface is covered with a deep layer of rounded pebbles. In very heavy rain it becomes a flowing stream a few inches deep.

Reaching Sherbrook Valley there are paths on both sides of the stream heading downhill, northwards. The first of these (as you approach), on the west bank is signposted a blue route for cyclists. It's a fairly well maintained track with a slightly more predictable surface. The opposite side of the stream the track is just as wide but is less predictable and not at all maintained. It's in places, sandy, stony, muddy, potholed with a few steep drops and climbs. The blue route is more popular with cyclists and walkers. The other option is more popular with horses and runners and is my preferred option - basically it's more fun and messier! On the east bank (not the blue route) there are some parallel tracks that give options for some more technical riding twisting and over varied surfaces

Both tracks meet at the stepping stones about 1.5mile downstream. At the stepping stones, take the obvious wide track to the right heading east back to the start. This is a wide track, signposted as part of the blue route all the way to the Seven Springs car park. It rises and drops a bit with a potentially fast drop to the car park. Take care as there's a steepish left turn in towards the car park on a loose gravel surface just at the point where the most speed has been built up.

On my YouTube page there is a video of this route. Search for peatvdb on YouTube and the video is "never too wet to ride"

Or click: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co-ROxFsR98&feature=g-upl>

This route is offered by Pete Kelsall from [www.petekelsall.com](http://www.petekelsall.com) who has ridden it several times. Make your own assessment of its suitability for your level of riding experience and fitness. It is a ride with steep, unpredictable surfaces and is not waymarked. All rights of way are assumed from OS maps and are in common use. Check yourself if in any doubt. Comments welcome via my website.