

Small Heath Park and Canal

7.8km (4.8 Miles)

Flat

Any bike

Paved - cycle paths & quiet roads



Key

Start/Finish

Coffee Shop

Play Park

Take Care

Lock Gate

Train Station

Route: On Road

Route: Traffic Free

Alternative Route: On Road

Alternative Route: Traffic Free

Railway Line

Cycle/Pedestrian Crossing



POINTS OF INTEREST

01 Moghul Gardens
Created by the TV series 'Charlie's Garden Army' in 2000, the Moghul Gardens may have fallen into disrepair, but still, with some imagination, you can see what had been created.

02 Small Heath Park/Victoria Park
When Queen Victoria officially opened the Birmingham Law Courts in 1887, she stopped briefly at Small Heath train station to the cheers and adoration of thousands of school children. She requested that the newly developed park nearby was to be called 'Victoria Park'. However, this name only lasted briefly and Small Heath Park became the recognised name.

03 British Small Arms (BSA)
British Small Arms, a group of fourteen gunsmiths that formed an alliance in 1861, realised that by working together they could benefit from sharing expertise and equipment. Following initial successes, they purchased 25 acres of land in Small Heath and built a gun factory where they secured very beneficial contracts.

In 1880, BSA realised that the manufacturing process was remarkably adaptable to making bicycles; they

began with the Otto Dicycle and went from there, but it never became a main source of income. They also experimented with early motorcycles and safety bicycles. It wasn't until 1919 that BSA cycles was set up, which was then bought by Raleigh in 1957.

04 Montgomery Street Corporation Yard
Montgomery Street Corporation Yard was built as a stone works by the Birmingham Corporation in the late 1800's. The stone would have been unloaded from narrowboats into the yard and then once broken down, transported across the city to cobble Birmingham's streets. The yard then became home to a 'Dust Destructor'; several large furnaces and an amazingly large chimney that burnt rubbish every day.

05 Fire!
Take a look up at the bridge and notice the red squares or gates on the bridge. These were installed by the fire service so that water could be extracted from the canals. This was especially useful during World War 2 where bombing raids led to many underground water pipes being broken, leaking or obliterated, meaning that getting water to fires became a hard task.

The fire service was able to open the gates and drop their hoses down into the canal to extract water to fill the fire engines or extract the water using hoses. These gates are still in use today.

06 The Grand Union Canal
The Grand Union Canal was created in 1929 through an amalgamation of the Grand Junction Canal and the Regents Canal companies. Joining these canal companies and modernising was the only way to compete with the developing railways. The Grand Union Canal connected Birmingham to the tidal waters of the Thames in London - an incredibly important trade route. However, the canal from Braunston in Leicester was only suitable for narrowboats, so a programme of widening the canals to take widebeam boats began. At the first lock you come to, you will be able to see the difference in canal widths; they only ever widened the canal to this lock.

07 Locks - but no keys?
As you will have noticed, the canal has been flat until now, but it's about to head down into Bordesley and then back up into the city centre. The great canal engineers needed to solve the problem of how to get the canal to go up and down the hills.

To do this they invented locks, which are always in pairs. One set of the lock gates are opened so the boats can enter, the gate is closed and then water is either added or taken away so the boat can change level to the new section of canal.

08 Small Heath Alliance
Better known as Birmingham City Football Club today, the Small Heath Alliance was the name for the club when it was formed in 1875. A fierce street gang, the 'Peaky Blinders', who were the subject of the TV series of the same name; would have known the club as the Small Heath Alliance. These well-dressed gang members operated many different operations, robbery, violence and illegal gambling to name a few across the city but are well known to have been based in the area around here.

09 Terraced housing
As we pass through this estate, most of the housing is modern with lots of outdoor space for families. When Small Heath was first developed in the late 19th century, the area consisted mostly of tightly packed terraced houses with very little outdoor space. These houses were first occupied mainly by Irish immigrants that came to Birmingham for work, and then following the Second World War, the area became home to many immigrants from the Indian sub-continent.

ROUTE DIRECTIONS

- 01 Start at the Moghul Garden in Small Heath Park then head out of the corner of the park at the southern end of the lake.
- 02 At the mini roundabout, take the second exit onto Waverley Road away from the park and follow this until you reach the bridge.
- 03 Use the bridge to cross over the main road. Once crossed, take care with the shallow steps and follow the path until you reach the canal.
- 04 Here, turn right onto the towpath and follow the canal, taking care to share the space with other users.
- 05 Continue along the canal until just before the fourth lock gate where a small path heads to the road (look out for the white advertising frame). Turn right and cross the road at the crossing.
- 06 Turn right, and follow the path round to the left. Taking care, cross the busy main road. Passing bollards, use the footpath into Dart Street cul-de-sac.
- 07 At the end of the street, turn right onto another shared-use footpath towards the road. Continue ahead along Arthur Street using the crossing to your left, and then straight over the crossroads followed by a short detour into and around Sara Park.
- 08 Upon exiting the park, follow Camelot Way to its junction with Jenkins Street. Take care turning right here along Jenkins Street before taking the second left onto Bolton Road using its cycle lane.
- 09 When Bolton Road curves away to the left, the cycle lane continues straight on. Please note, it may be hidden by a bush, making it not quite so obvious.
- 10 Follow the cycle lane over Golden Hillock Road before heading down the right-hand side of the mosque onto Byron Road where you will return to the southern edge of Small Heath Park.

Scan to follow the route digitally with OS Maps



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