A circular 5 km / 3 mile way-marked walk from Nantwich town centre exploring along the River Weaver and the Shropshire Union Canal
Stretch your legs on this pleasant walk from the town centre, taking in the Riverside Park, the Shropshire Union Canal and historic Welsh Row. Just follow the signs in either direction and get to know the countryside and its history within such easy reach.

River Weaver and Nantwich Lake
The area of the River Weaver in Nantwich has been modified over the centuries to serve a water mill, which was located at the western end of Mill Lane. The surviving remains of this mill probably occupy the site of a mill dating back to the 14th century. The mill was used for the production of cotton and, later, corn before being destroyed by fire in 1970.

Nantwich Lake was created in the 1970s as a way of controlling the brine flowing from nearby springs and frequent flooding problems. The riverside area is the home to the saline spring which feeds the outdoor brine swimming pool.

Shropshire Union Canal
Opened in 1835, the canal was originally known as the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal after the cities that it was designed to connect. Only a few years later, mergers and an Act of Parliament created the Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Company. The word “Railways” indicates the way in which transport methods were changing. The company’s engineer, W.A. Provis, realised that if railways were built along existing canal beds the construction costs would be halved. Actually, few railways were built and the Shropshire Union Canal system remains largely intact.

Engineer Thomas Telford’s original plan had been to take the canal straight across Dorfold Park and into Nantwich Basin which was the terminus of the Chester Canal. However, the owner of Dorfold Park was not persuaded and Telford was obliged to build a long embankment around the edge of the park and an aqueduct over the road. This was a difficult and costly business as the embankment repeatedly collapsed during construction.

As you pass under the bridges look out for the grooves in the iron work which protected the brickwork from abrasion due to grit on the horse-drawn boat ropes. You’ll also pass a mile marker opposite the broad section of canal. This area is known as Marsh Lane Wide and is said to have been the source of sand and gravel used in the canal’s construction.

At Marsh Lane Bridge note the stop-gates which are there to minimise loss of water in the event of a breach in the embankment and aqueduct. The lengthman, who was employed to look after a stretch of canal, lived in the nearby cottage so that in the event of a crisis he could quickly close the gates.

Welsh Row
Welsh Row was known as Frog Row in the medieval period. By the late 15th century the name of the street had changed to Welsh Row due to the presence of Welsh businessmen in town for the salt trade. Salt production has occurred in the area since Roman times and Nantwich continued to be significant in the trade until around the end of the 17th century. Artefacts from the salt trade are on display in the Nantwich Museum.
**Distance:** 5 km / 3 miles  
**Allow:** 1 ½ - 2 hours  
**Surfaces:** The paths along the river and canal are either tarmac or compacted stone and offer a width of between 1 and 2 metres. Between the river and the canal, you will be walking over grass fields, so wear appropriate footwear. The route is relatively flat throughout though uneven, with a set of steps at each end of the canal towpath. The steps at the canal aqueduct can be bypassed by using the adjacent ramp.  
**Furniture:** There are no stiles on the walk, only bridlegates of 1.5m width and one fieldgate, all with sprung catches. Benches are provided at intervals in the Riverside Park and along the canal.

**RESPECT**  
- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors  
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths  

**PROTECT**  
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home  
- Keep dogs under effective control  

**ENJOY**  
- Plan ahead and be prepared  
- Follow advice and local signs
Further suggestions on exploring the Cheshire East countryside can be found on Discover Cheshire [www.discovercheshire.co.uk](http://www.discovercheshire.co.uk) or from the Public Rights of Way team email: prow@cheshireeast.gov.uk tel: 01270 686029 [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/prow](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/prow)

**VISITOR INFORMATION**

**Location:** Nantwich Riverside Park is located close to the town centre.

**Parking:** Car parks can be found off Shrewbridge Road (CW5 7AF) and at Nantwich Lake (CW5 7AE).

**Public transport:** Nantwich is well connected by bus and rail services, and has a number of bus routes within the town itself.

**Refreshments and toilets:** There are facilities along Welsh Row and in the town centre.

The Nantwich Riverside Loop and this leaflet have been produced with help from Nantwich Civic Society, Shropshire Union Canal Society, WREN, Nantwich Town Council, Acton, Edleston and Henhull Parish Council, Nantwich in Bloom, Riverside Concern and many other partners.