

Walk No. 4

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A Circular Walk to Pettypool Woods and the Whitegate Way

An attractive woodland and lakeside walk, providing extensive opportunities to observe both woodland and water birds. The walk finishes by passing the Cheshire Hunt kennels.

4 miles, say 1½ to 2 hours.

Start at Kennel Lane, grid ref. SJ 601 701. Parking is possible along Kennel Lane.

Having gone down Kennel Lane away from the A556 and parked, look for a sign-posted farm gate on the left just to the right of a large oak tree and about 1/3 mile from Chester Road. Do not get confused with the new paths which run around the edge of the recently completed sand quarry.

Walk away from Kennel Woods following the fence on the left-hand side of the field. At the end of the field follow a track to the left, through a gate with a fishing pond on your right, to arrive at Dalefords Lane. Ignore the track to the right leading to Daleford Farm and a caravan site.

Daleford Lane is named after an old ford in the dip of the lane to Marton. Daleford Manor was a hunting lodge attached to the Cheshire Forest Kennels.

Cross the lane carefully, watching out for speeding traffic, and through a kissing gate opposite heading through oak trees up to a fence corner.

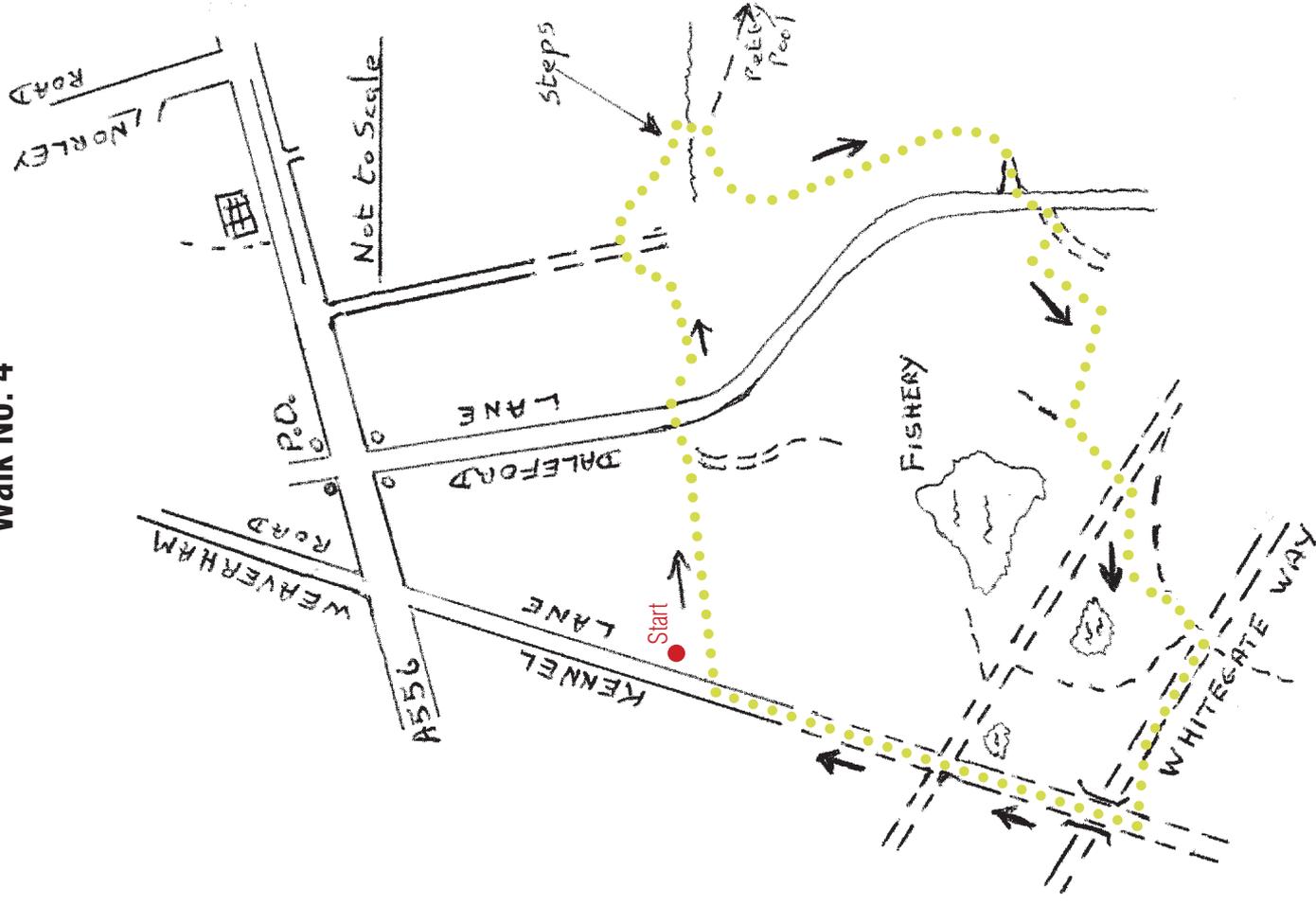
Follow the fence on the left to the next stile in the corner by the former police "skid pan", which is soon to be

developed as a "Joshua Tree" charity home providing short breaks and support for sick children and their families. After about 15 yards turn right and cross the end of Cockpit Lane and go over another stile into Pettypool Woods.

Cockpit Lane is the site of one of several cockpits in Cuddington and Sandiway.

Enjoy the woodland path, which soon slopes down gently at first, then steeper before flattening out again to follow a stream on the right. Bear right down wooden steps and then turn right at the signpost, over the stream and straight on up the wooded hill to meet a Forestry Commission track.

Woodland species of bird that may be seen here include nuthatch, greater spotted woodpecker, goldcrest, tree creeper, great tit, blue tit, coal tit and long-tailed tit.



(A worthwhile diversion is possible here to see Pettypool, adding half a mile to the walk. Turn left down the track and soon the lake can be seen on the left. Retrace your steps back up the track to resume the walk.)

Pettypool was one of the main fisheries associated with Vale Royal Abbey. Pettypool House, now demolished, stood alongside the pool and was built by Lord Delamere of Vale Royal. During the war this area was a major camp for American forces.

Turn right up the track and continue until you arrive at Dalefords Lane. Turn left along the lane, watching out for speeding traffic, and shortly turn right down a track signed "Lapwing Hall Farm" to find a stile on the right leading between a fence and a hedge to a stile into a field.

Turn left along the side of the house to a gate and then walk diagonally across the large field towards the small clump of pine trees. Pass through the gate and turn left on to a path through the trees. The lake on your right, seen through the bushes, is the remains of the old sand quarry workings.

The lake hosts numerous water fowl; in the summer the walk provides the excitement of seeing our summer warblers, swift, martins and swallows.

On leaving the trees go over a stile (avoiding the fisherman's car park on your right) and follow the path to a wide track. Go left here and



shortly double back right on another track that leads to Whitegate Way at New Church Crossing with a further quarry lake on the right now used by anglers. Turn right on to the Whitegate Way and walk along either on the main path shared with bicycles and horses or on the prettier small footpath on the right-hand side.

The Whitegate Way is the track bed of the former Winsford & Over branch railway. It joined the main Chester-Manchester line at Ravensclough Waste, Cuddington.

On reaching the arch bridge go up the slope to the left and turn right over the bridge past the Scout Camp on the right and a barrier at the crossroads. Continue straight on up the slope to pass the Cheshire Hunt Kennels on the left. You can just, only just, see the monument to the famous dog "Blue Cap" at the rear of the kennels. You are now back in Kennel Lane and another half mile brings you back to your starting point.

