

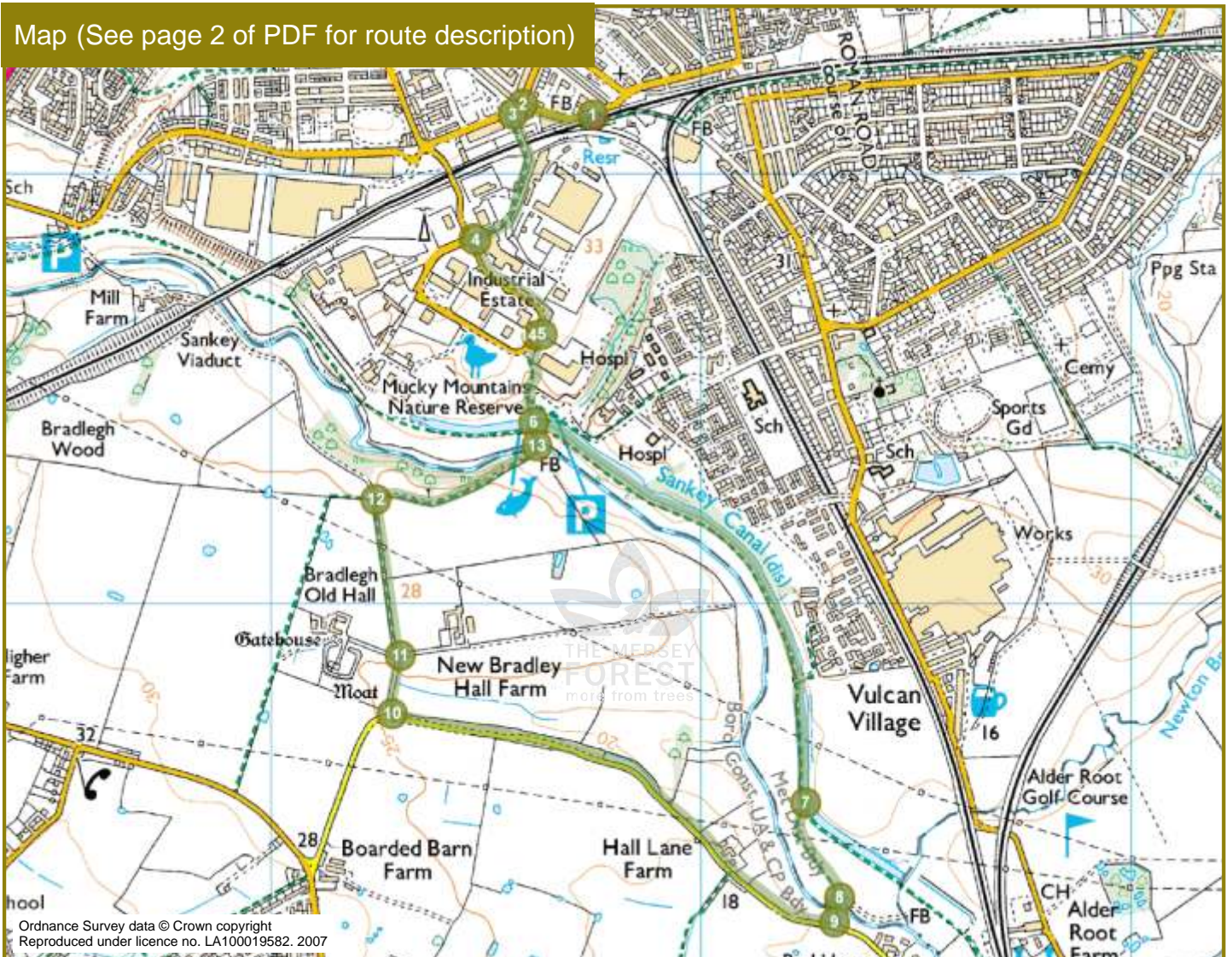
St Helens Canal

Route Summary

Following part of the towpath and passing close to an historic village, this route offer stretches of surprisingly attractive scenery.

Grade	Moderate
Distance	6km / 3½ miles
Accessibility	★
Allow	2 hours
Start	Earlestown railway station
Map	OS Explorer 276 Bolton, Wigan & Warrington

Map (See page 2 of PDF for route description)



Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright
Reproduced under licence no. LA100019582. 2007

St Helens Canal

Route Details

Many people confuse the St Helens Canal with the Sankey Brook, which is quite understandable as the canal does run parallel to the line of the brook; indeed it once provided water for the canal. Another source of water was the Carr Mill Dam which nowadays offers a magnificent haven for wildlife and waterfowl.

Beside the canal south of Earlestown is the historic Vulcan Village, once home to an important rubber industry. Its main fame, however, was focussed around the iron foundry which built locomotives for the Liverpool & Manchester Railway Company. Surrounding the village green are houses constructed in 1840 to house the workers. Not far away is the village church at Newton; near its porch is the tomb of Piers Naylor, a worker from the village, which carries the inscription:

*'My Engine now is Cold and Still
No Water does my Boiler Fill
My Coke affords its Flame no more
My days of Usefulness are O'er.'*

This may be true of the canal but it is fast becoming a linear nature trail. The waterway was designed by Henry Berry in 1755 and should rightfully be regarded as the first canal in Britain, although that accolade is usually given to Brindley's masterpiece, the Bridgewater Canal.



Route Directions

1. Turn left out of Earlestown station.
2. At the T junction turn left.
3. Take the first left, crossing the railway.
4. At the crossroads turn left.
5. At the second corner of the rectangle which this road forms, turn left on to a path to the canal.
6. Cross the canal and follow the far towpath to your left.
7. Take the path on the right after the place where the canal is filled in.
8. Cross Sankey Brook.
9. Turn right on Hall Lane. For most of the way there is a path through the woodland to the right of the road, but it is narrow and muddy.
10. Turn right where Hall Lane bends to the left.
11. Go straight on between Bradlegh Old Hall and New Bradley Hall Farm.
12. Turn right on to the track before the plantation.
13. Cross the brook and the canal again.
14. Turn right at the road.
15. Turn right at the crossroads and retrace your steps back to the station.