

## THE REA VALLEY CYCLE PATH (AREA 4)

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On moving to the Selly Park area, I was pleasantly surprised to find a cycle route that kept me off the busy Birmingham roads. The full route runs from the city centre all the way to Waseley Country Park near the M5, a distance of around ten miles, but my photographic journey here just covers the section between Cannon Hill Park and Wychall Reservoir & Nature Reserve.

My journey began by the well-known red brick Victorian bridge at Cannon Hill Park. From there the route follows the Rea through Holders Lane Playing Fields, across Dads Lane and through parkland. It eventually meets the Worcester & Birmingham Canal just before Lifford Lane. Typically, because I had started out to illustrate the cycle route and the large number of people that use it for that purpose, I hadn't managed to see one cyclist so far!

Along the tow path I arrived at Kings Norton junction where the Worcester & Birmingham and the Stratford on Avon Canals meet. Just here is the grade 2 listed old toll house which sadly suffered from a fire some years ago and is presently being renovated. It's quite a tight turn there for canal traffic and I witnessed one narrowboat making that turn quite cautiously.

The route then splits away a little from the Rea for a while and travels across Kings Norton playing fields where I at last discovered a cyclist! Then after running through Kings Norton Park the Rea rejoins at Wychall Reservoir where my journey ended. It's described as a reservoir, but in all my past journeys I've never seen it full of water and it's really more dedicated to being a nature reserve.

The cycle route is used by cyclists and pedestrians alike and seems mostly busy with cyclists in the early morning and late afternoon, providing people with a more healthy and safe route to get to and from work.

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