



RAIL Trails



Shirley to The Lakes

Image by Alex Matravars

On this trail from Shirley you'll follow the tranquil towpath of the **Stratford-upon-Avon Canal**, cross Christmas tree plantations, farmland and forests, and skirt Dickens Heath before reaching **Earlswood Lakes**.

The Lakes are home to a wide variety of birds and wildlife which you'll spot as you amble alongside the waters and adjacent forest. Admire the historic engine house and stroll down to the **Craft Centre** for a range of unique, handmade gifts, ceramics, interiors and jewellery as well as a tea room.

There are plenty of options for stocking up on provisions along the way. In Shirley you'll find shops, cafés and restaurants along the busy Stratford Road. Or closer to the station there's the **Two Mugs** pub or **Frankie's café**. A short diversion into Dickens Heath and you'll find **Moreton's Kitchen Bar & Deli** and the **Coffee Cloud**. There are also some great pubs near Earlswood, including the **Bulls Head** country pub, the **Blue Bell Cider House** and the extremely convenient **Reservoir**.

Further Information:



Visit www.visitsolihull.co.uk for more information on what to see in and around the area.



Shirley is on the North Warwickshire Line running between Birmingham & Stratford-upon-Avon. There's a twice hourly service to Birmingham Moor Street and an hourly service south to Stratford-Upon-Avon (via The Lakes, Henley-in-Arden and all stations in between). There is also an hourly service that terminates at Whitlock's End.

Toilets are available at this station, although you will need to venture into Shirley for refreshments and ATMs.

Want More?

This is just one of a range of 36 self-guided walks from railway stations in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.



Discover the Heart of England by rail at: www.heartcommunityrail.org.uk/railtrails



Design by: www.blackspiraldesign.co.uk



Image by Colour Rail

RAIL Trails



Discover The Heart of England by Rail



Shirley

Image by Lovestruck on Flickr

3 Hours 5 Miles Easy

Start: Shirley Finish: The Lakes

Follow the towpath along the Stratford-upon-Avon canal, cross Christmas tree plantations, farmland and forests to reach Earlswood Lakes.

www.heartcommunityrail.org.uk/railtrails



Image by Ade62

A. Stratford-upon-Avon Canal

These days a tranquil meander of 25 miles between Birmingham and Stratford, The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal was originally a hive of activity, shipping stone, coal and other goods by narrow boat.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk



Image by The Bulls Head

B. The Bulls Head

A traditional, dog friendly, country pub, serving home-cooked dishes prepared with locally sourced and seasonal ingredients, exuding true West Midland character. Brewing up to five different ales here each month, it's a perfect pit stop!

www.bullsheadearlwood.co.uk



Image by canaldriversidepubs.co.uk

C. The Reservoir

Smack bang on your route, this is an unpretentious, family friendly pub. Whether you fancy a burger or breakfast, a pie or a steak, a curry or a delicious dessert, the Reservoir has you covered!

www.hungryhorse.co.uk



Image by Ozzy Delaney

D. Earlswood Lakes

The stars of this walk are the three 22 acre reservoirs - Terry's, Windmill and Engine Pool. All three are stocked with fish whilst Terry's Pool is a wildlife reserve. Oodles of trails and interpretation too!

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk



Image by Earlswood Lakes Craft Centre

E. Earlswood Lakes Craft Centre

Eclectic to say the least! Swing by for pottery painting, an exotic animal handling experience, a Bead & Button Bazaar, beauty and holistic treatments, woodturning, cabinet making, jewellery workshops, and more. Plus the Manor Tea Rooms!

www.facebook.com/earlswoodlakescraftcentre/



Image by pubsthenandnow

F. Blue Bell Cider House

You can't beat the location at this historic 17th century pub sitting beside the Stratford-upon-Avon canal. They serve home-cooked food, including a Sunday carvery, and a wide variety of drinks.

www.bluebellciderhouse.org

Did you know?



You might well have suspected, but **Earlswood Lakes** are in fact man-made. They were constructed in the 1820s to supply water to the Stratford canal.

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Trail Directions

1. Turn left out of station to pedestrian crossing, cross road, on opposite side turn right then turn left into Hunscombe Close. After last house on left, turn left and ahead down footpath to left of row of garages. At end of footpath, turn right on pavement. Road bends left, then left again. At end of grassy area on right, just past South Solihull Community Group noticeboard, turn right onto link road then turn left on left-hand pavement of parallel road. Cross road where safe and continue on right-hand pavement.
2. At road corner, cross entrance of Whitlocks End Farm to gap in fence, turn right, through gate and ahead on path to left of drive, which immediately bends left. Follow path as it bends right after houses. Ahead on drive, past The Cart House on left and The Jinney Ring on right. Where tarmac drive ends, ahead on gravel track, and at fork with grit pile and litter bin in front, fork right, passing gate with "Private Land" sign on left. Follow this track through plantation of Christmas trees to reach bridge over canal. Do not cross bridge, but turn right down steps and turn left on canal towpath to pass under bridge.
3. Ahead on towpath for 2 miles. After passing Lady Lane Wharf on opposite side and derelict white house on same side, before bridge 17, bear left up slope to road.
4. Turn right on road, cross bridge over canal, cross road and continue on left-hand pavement. In 300 yards, at junction, cross side road (Salter Street) and continue on left-hand pavement of Shutt Lane as it bends to the right. In 250 yards, road bends left. Where left-hand pavement ends, cross road and continue on right-hand pavement. In a further 550 yards, reach crossroads. Cross road to Reservoir pub ahead, then turn right (signposted Wythall, Manor Farm Craft Centre, Ambleside Garden Centre).
5. In 50 yards, by lamppost and just before road forks, turn left on path through trees (beware anchored cable – trip hazard) to reach stream on right with reservoir beyond. Bear left along stream to reach stepping stones, cross stream, up bank and turn left on path along bank with reservoir on right. In 600 yards, at path junction at corner of reservoir, turn right over wooden footbridge to keep reservoir on right.
6. At next corner, through wooden kissing gate and turn right on track over brick bridge. Follow this track for 300 yards to reach road.
7. Cross road and turn left on right-hand pavement. Ahead 450 yards, crossing side roads, to reach paths to The Lakes station. For trains towards Stratford, turn right on path before bridge to platform 1. For trains towards Birmingham, cross bridge and turn right on path to platform 2.

Symbols Key

	Public Toilets		Nature Reserve
	Station		Gardens
	Pub		Church
	Information Centre		Historic Monument
	Museum		Route of trail
	Castle		Waypoint
			Point of interest



Did you know?



Fishermen have reported having their lines cut and witnessed attacks on ducks by a creature known as the **Earlwood Lake Monster**. It was, in fact, an alligator snapping turtle, proved when a 33 pound specimen was caught in 2008. The turtle is not native to the UK and it is believed it was previously a pet! The "monster" was eventually taken to West Midlands Safari park to take part in a captive breeding programme.

Want an online map?

Scan the QR code or [visit explore.osmaps.com](http://www.explore.osmaps.com)



Ready for another Trail?

Discover more at www.heartcommunityrail.org.uk/railtrails

