

# Pub Walk Dusty Miller, Wrenbury, Cheshire

by **STEVE GOODIER**



*Chris at the bar*

Wrenbury is one of south Cheshire's prettiest locations and has been popular with motorists and holidaymakers taking their narrow boats along the Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal for a many years.

However, the village is now being 'discovered' by walkers and cyclists too and makes a great place to visit if you are on a day's cycle touring in this area of the county - the increasingly popular Cheshire Cycleway runs through Wrenbury and attracts lots of cycling enthusiasts.

On foot the surrounding countryside becomes even more attractive and there are numerous possibilities for short or long circular walks to occupy a morning or a whole day if you wish.

If you walk the South Cheshire Way, you will pass through the village on your journey.

This is 'quintessential' Cheshire farmland and countryside at its very best and the going is gentle and pleasant.

The pretty Llangollen Canal runs roughly southwest to northeast through the village and most who ramble around here include at least one section of it in a day's outing.

For boaters, Wrenbury provides a grand 'overnighting' point with berths actually alongside our featured pub, the Dusty Miller.

There are some wonderful hand-operated 'lift-up' bridges that allow boats through and even a marina in an old grain storage mill - Wrenbury Mill. Here you can hire boats, moor your vessel or even have it repaired if need be.

The area around the Dusty Miller and the marina is a popular spot for visitors to just stand and watch the boat traffic and soak in the peace and prettiness of the area as a whole.

If you have never been to Wrenbury before and fancy putting on your boots and heading off for some delightful walking, then today's route may encourage you to do this.

Wrenbury, or Wrenbury Cum Frith to give it its



full and grand title, is to be found roughly five miles southwest of Nantwich and a similar distance northeast of Whitchurch.

As well as the Dusty Miller the village also boasts the Cotton Arms, which has a good sized camping and caravan site if you fancy bringing along your tent or van to make a weekend of it.

Wrenbury is an ancient and historic place to visit and was listed in the Domesday Book as 'Wareneberie', but was re-named 'Wrennebury' in 1230. The name is supposed to mean 'the old forest inhabited by wrens'.

St Margret's Church is a lovely old red sandstone building overlooking the village green and dates from

the early 16th century.

With a population somewhere around the 1,100 mark, Wrenbury is not a large village and lovely countryside is never far away. Whether you come here for the relaxing walking, as a cyclist stopping for an early morning breakfast at the Dusty Miller at the weekend or as a tourist with your family in the car, you will not be disappointed.

### The Dusty Miller

In 2011 the Dusty Miller saw a major refurbishment and the whole interior and exterior of the building were given a superb 'facelift' turning it into the bright and



#### CONTACT DETAILS

Dusty Miller, Cholmondeley Road, Wrenbury,  
Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8HG

**Telephone:** 01270 780537

**www.thedusty.co.uk**

**Email:** info@thedusty.co.uk

#### OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Sunday 12 noon to 11 pm

Closed on Monday

#### MEAL TIMES

Monday to Friday 12 - 3pm, 5.30- 9pm

Saturday and Sunday - all day, with breakfast  
starting only on these days at 9.30am.

#### PARKING

There are two spacious car parks separated by a brook and linked by two bridges - one for cars and one pedestrian. If you plan to do our walk and park here let the pub know in case there are any functions on that may make the car park busier than usual.

#### OUTSIDE FACILITIES

For summer evenings The inn also has a beer garden next to the Llangollen Canal and there is an elevated sun terrace at the front where you can sit and have a drink.



welcoming place you see today.

The inn is located right next to the Llangollen Canal and boaters moor alongside the building while waiting to go through the unusual and very photogenic hand operated 'lift-up' bridge that allows them to continue on their journey.

Originally a corn mill that dated back to the mid 18th century, it was converted to its current use in the 1970s, but many of the original features were retained to add character to overall appearance.

The Dusty Miller is the sort of place that you take to from the moment you pull into the two spacious car parks that are linked by two pretty bridges over a brook.

Hanging willows and mature trees shelter the parking areas and the imposing building itself looks very welcoming.

Once inside you are not disappointed as you find yourself in an attractive bar and dining area where the atmosphere is relaxed, friendly and welcoming.

Large arched windows in the dining room give you the chance to see the Llangollen Canal and watch the passing boat and foot traffic at your leisure.

And for those who prefer to sit outside if the weather is warm enough, there is a charming half-grass and half-gravelled beer garden with attractive seating set right next to the towpath on the canal.

*The Llangollen  
canal near the  
start of the walk*



A footbridge links the main pub with this outdoor area and on sunny afternoons and evenings it gets very full. And there's no need to go back through the bar to return to your car as a sloping ramp drops you back to the car park past the newly built pizza oven where there are also plants for sale.

As well as this there is a lovely sun terrace to the front of the inn, elevated above the car park where you can sit on comfortable wicker design chairs with large tables.

Underneath the main building near the front is a shop selling locally produced food and fare as well as a selection of walking books as the owners are keen to promote the walking opportunities nearby.

The shop is run by local farmer's daughter Becky, who knows the area well.

The bar and restaurant are efficiently and effectively run and managed by Chris and Lucinda, whose partner Neil is one of the owners and licensee's, and they do their very best to accommodate all and make everyone feel like old friends returning for another visit, which is indeed what many of the patrons are.

The pub attracts locals as well as tourists and has

an extensive bar and restaurant menu and a large and interesting wine list. Children are welcome and there is a menu just for them.

The inn prides itself on preparing food 'from scratch' and using locally produced ingredients as much as is possible.

There is a separate 'set' lunchtime menu and traditional Sunday Roast is served from 12 noon onwards, with a good selection of beers and a full range of spirits.

There is also a sandwich menu and recently breakfasts have been introduced from 9.30am on Saturdays and Sundays and are proving very popular. Free Wi-Fi is available and there is a private function room to hire.

It's worth taking time to read some of the reviews 'The Dusty' gets and you'll soon realise that a lot of people hold this traditional Cheshire inn in very high regard.

Our walk today starts and finishes in the pub car park so you can take some good countryside air and finish your day off with a nice meal and a quiet drink in stunning surroundings.



*The Llangollen canal near the start of the walk*

## The Walk

**1.** Exit the Dusty Miller Car park to go left towards the canal. Just before the 'lift-up' bridge and Wrenbury Mill, leave the road to go right past the 'Nantwich Town Council' sign. When the tarmac ends shortly take the towpath ahead past houses and behind the caravan site and Cotton Arms. Continue on the canal to pass another 'lift-up' bridge and follow the towpath to just before Bridge 18. Here go half-right up steps to leave the canal and rise to cross a stile. Go left over the bridge dropping down the track beyond. Pass through a gate/opening or use the stile to rise on the path ahead leaving it shortly to go right before a large tree and cross trackless ground to cross a stile left of three trees at a fence junction. Continue by the fence along the left edge of the field. Cross a stile and follow the arrow to go half-right towards a solitary tree. At the tree take a footpath left to veer half-left (follow the arrow direction) leaving the fence to cross the field past a marker post by a tree. Head right of a solitary red house and left of a line of red houses. Walk towards the left side of a large telegraph pole to continue down a grass path to exit via a gap to a road amongst houses.

**2.** Go left and immediately right on a 'no through road' signposted for 'the Wingate Centre'. Go left of house number 10 continuing on the surfaced lane. Just before Wrenbury Hall farm cross a stile right (or take a track half right before it through a gap/opening). Follow the track down the left side of the field. Just before a track junction at the field end go left over a stile by an old gate. Walk up the right side of the next field. At the right-hand corner cross a stile to a path junction. Go ahead (slightly right) following the right field boundary by a line of trees. Reach two gates in the right field corner and cross a bridge via two awkward stiles. Go ahead walking up the right side of the next field. Continue to cross a stile by a gate/opening. Curve half Right going right of the farm to exit to a lane via a gate.

**3.** Go ahead up the lane past Baddiley Hulse Farm. Continue on the lane to its end in houses. Pass St. Michaels Church and stay ahead on a rougher track ignoring a track going left and staying ahead towards a house. Just before the house (by a pond) go right following the marked footpath down a track. Near its end and a gate go left through a kissing gate. Cut half-right to pass through another kissing gate in a holly bush. Go half-left through another kissing gate to a path junction. Take the footpath ahead towards the obvious canal bridge. Cross this bridge via two stiles going left after it to go left again over a stile to reach the canal.

**4.** Go left under bridge 13 and follow the towpath to pass the three Baddiley locks which are spaced out.

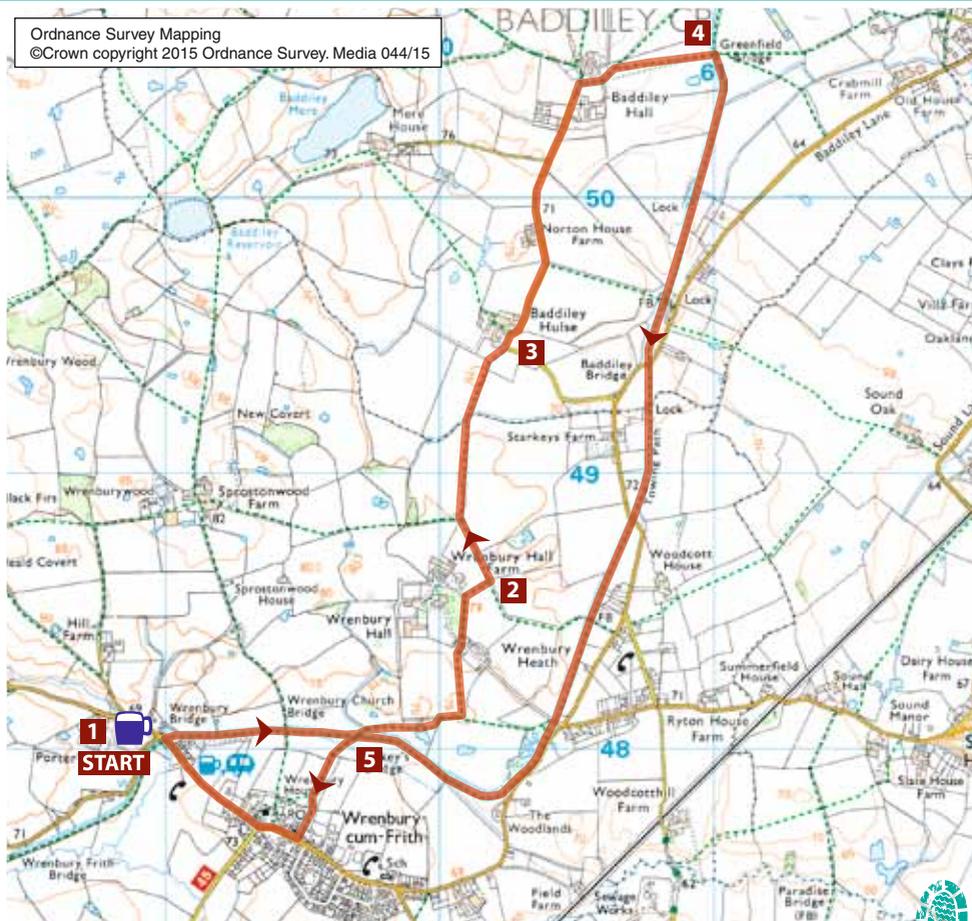


Continue on the towpath to pass under bridges 15 and 16. Continue by the canal on a muddier section of towpath and pass under bridge 17. Continue to re-join your outbound route at bridge 18. Leave canal again cutting back half left up steps to cross a stile to the track.

**5.** Go right to pass through a gate or cross a stile. Go ahead down the right field edge and continue to pass a gate and cross a stile in the right corner of the field

by another gate. Continue down the right side of the next field passing a stile right. Continue on the right side of the field into a narrow top section and reach a gate. Cross a stile in the left corner here and go right on a track. Continue to go over a stile by a gate and go ahead to pass through a gate or over a stile to reach the road in Wrenbury. Go right walking past the village stores, the church and the Cotton Arms to reach the Dusty Miller again.

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Wrenbury Marina

## Walk information

**Distance:** 9km/5.5 miles

**Start:** The Dusty Miller has two spacious car parks linked by a bridge over a brook.

Do let the pub know you are doing the walk from this magazine and there will be no problem parking.

**Map:** O.S. Explorer 257 (Crewe and Nantwich)

**Time:** Around 3 hours

**Worth noting:** This is an easy and straightforward walk using paths and tracks as well as a good section of the canal towpath. There are several trackless sections where careful map work is needed to stay on the right of way, so make sure you bring one along and know how to read it. There are quite a few stiles to negotiate and a very muddy section of canal towpath. Remember to wear boots and keep your dog on a lead. In high summer a walking pole may be useful to deal with overgrown vegetation.

