



Stage 9: Ironbridge to Wellington



The Iron Bridge over the Severn

Ironbridge

You may wish to spend some time exploring this World Heritage site with its many museums based around the history of the Industrial Revolution.

The route out of Ironbridge climbs past the church and loops to a viewpoint before descending again to Coalbrookdale. There is plenty of industrial heritage to see here. It is where iron ore was first smelted by Abraham Darby using easily mined "coking coal" drawn from drift mines in the sides of the valley. As it contained far fewer impurities than normal coal, the iron it produced was of a superior quality. The last foundry, the Aga Works finally closed in November 2017.

One of Ironbridge Gorge museums is the Science Museum Enguity, located in the Coalbrookdale valley here. It has many interactive exhibits aimed at children but of interest to adults too.

Pass under the railway viaduct once carrying the coal trains to the power station and begin the long climb to Little Wenlock, a small village with a pub and a church, overlooking the Wrekin.



The Ercall Unconformity

The Wrekin and the Ercall

The ascent from the western end of the Wrekin is steep and requires a scramble in places. First there is Little Hill, then Needles Eye, before the summit at 407 metres.

The panorama of the Shropshire Plain stretches before you to the North with vistas as far as Cheshire on a clear day.

Zig-zagging down again you will arrive at Ercall Quarry a world-famous geological site and SSSI. The ascent of the Ercall hill goes between the

disused quarries and then you pass through the Ercall Wood Nature Reserve. The ancient woodland is protected by Shropshire Wildlife Trust and is home for a wide variety of species.

Approaching Wellington you will cross Watling Street going westwards to the Roman city of Viroconium. The ruins and visitor centre can be found at Wroxeter roughly six miles west of Wellington.

The route on the Shropshire Way now passes through Wellington Centre before turning towards Shrewsbury.



Walking on The Wrekin



Stage 9: Ironbridge to Wellington

