

Clement Wilson Park



Route description

This route explores parkland along the River Lagan on mostly level surfaced paths with a series of gradual ramps at Shaw's Bridge and tactile surfacing.

Distance

1.2 miles 1.9 km.

Average Time

20 - 30 mins.

Access

By bike - National Cycle Route 9 runs through the park.

By bus - Metro Services 8 (New Forge Lane), 93.

By car - Entrance to Shaw's Bridge car park off the A55 Outer Ring Road.

Trail Route

Cross the old Shaw's Bridge **(1)** and descend the ramps on your left.

Turn right at the bottom and follow the towpath, firstly alongside the river and then by the disused canal **(2)**.

The canal can be crossed using the humpback bridge or the flat wooden bridge. Both lead to the front of the lock-keeper's cottage **(3)**.

Turn left following the path to New Forge Lane via the wooden bridge over the River Lagan. This path is also part of the National Cycle Network **(3)** route and is shared with bicycles.

Be careful of traffic on New Forge Lane and follow the footpath for a short distance to reach Clement Wilson Park.

The raised surfaced path - known locally as the Burma Road **(4)** - leads back to the car park, passing under the new road bridge beside Shaw's Bridge.

Trail 08



History

The park dates back to 1929 when 25 acres were acquired by the Wilson family on purchase of an adjoining factory. The area was transformed into attractive gardens by Mr R Clement Wilson, Chairman of the Wilson Companies, forming the first “factory garden” in Northern Ireland. In 1975, it was acquired as a public park and named after the man who had had the idea of landscaping it for his employees.

Things of Interest

Shaw's Bridge (1)

The bridge took its name from Captain Shaw who built an oak bridge in 1655 to transport guns of Cromwell's army across the river. This was replaced in 1698 with a stone one, which subsequently collapsed. The present five-arch span bridge was built in 1709.

Lagan Canal (2)

The 26-mile Lagan canal was constructed in the 18th Century to transport bulk commodities between Belfast and Lough Neagh. The Lagan Navigation flourished during the 19th Century until rail and road competition made canals redundant; by the 1950s it was abandoned.

Lock-keepers House (2)

Standing beside the third lock, this is one of the few remaining lock-keepers' houses from the 18th century Lagan Navigation System. There are now plans afoot to restore the cottage to its former glory.

National Cycle Network (3)

National Cycle Network - Route 9 Lagan and Lough Cycle Way, runs through this park. The route links Newtownabbey to Lisburn via the centre of Belfast.

Burma Road (4)

This path gets its nick-name from the fact that it was constructed out of rubble from bomb damaged buildings after the Second World War. It runs along the course of a former mill race that led from the River Lagan to a factory at Newforge.

Look out for

- swallows, swifts and house martins flying over the river on summer evenings.
- common spotted orchids growing in some of the summer meadows.

For more information see the Barnett Demesne and Clement Wilson Park leaflet.