

Rail Walks

in Greater Manchester

(Mid Cheshire Line)

**2020
UPDATE**



A MID CHESHIRE COMMUNITY
RAIL PARTNERSHIP PUBLICATION



The Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership and the Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association (MCRUA) welcome you to their rail walks booklet offering walks from stations along the Greater Manchester part of the Mid Cheshire Line.

The walks in this booklet are a series of fairly short walks, mainly over generally easy terrain and they are either circular walks from stations or between stations so that walkers can return to their starting point by tram or train. However as most of these walks follow the Bridgewater Canal they can be linked together to create longer routes.

The circular walk from Altrincham via Dunham Park can be continued towards Timperley and Sale by not leaving the canal after it passes underneath Manchester Road. The instructions for the next section can be found in the walk from Altrincham to Sale.

To continue to Manchester, without stopping at Cornbrook, simply remain on the canal path immediately before Cornbrook and then follow the instructions found in the Cornbrook to Piccadilly section.

If all the individual routes are made into a continuous walk the total distance is approximately 16 miles (26 kilometres). There are no stiles after the canal is reached, however there are steps on the walks.

There are no toilet facilities on these walks, but each route has opportunities to access local cafes, restaurants and pubs.

These walks are not accessible for those with prams or using wheelchairs because of steps, stiles and uneven, narrow canal towpaths on the routes.

The walks can be found on OS Explorer Map (1:25 000) **Sheet 268** *Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton* and **Sheet 277** *Manchester and Salford*.

There is no walk listed for Stockport, instead walkers are encouraged to explore the town centre and its historic buildings. The town centre is a short walk from the railway station.

Train services on the Mid Cheshire Line run hourly Monday through to Saturday and two hourly on Sundays. Northern Timetable 17 features all the train times for the Mid Cheshire Line and can be downloaded from www.midcheshirerail.org.uk

Information on the Metrolink trams can be found at: www.tfgm.com

Trams generally run every 6 to 12 minutes along the Altrincham to Piccadilly Line.

The Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership can be contacted at www.midcheshirerail.org.uk or email railofficer@midcheshirerail.org.uk.



Walking in the countryside

Use a map alongside the walk details and follow the directions and path markers. Do not cross fields of crops unless following the designated footpath.

Take care crossing the golf course, watching out for flying golf balls.

Take your litter home with you. Dropping litter and dumping rubbish are criminal offences.

Leave gates as you find them or follow instructions on signs. If walking in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates.

Wild animals, birds and farm animals can behave unpredictably - do not attempt to approach them or try to stroke them.

Keep dogs under close control but, if a farm animal chases you and your dog, it is safer to

let your dog off the lead – don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it.

Take care on the canal tow path – it can be narrow, uneven and very muddy in places.

Dogs are not allowed on Metrolink trams or the Metro Shuttle bus.

Support the local economy - for example, buy your supplies from local shops.

Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association (MCRUA)

The Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association with over 400 members is the rail user group for the Mid Cheshire Line. MCRUA is active in representing the interests of passengers on the Mid Cheshire Line from Chester to Manchester and those travelling between Crewe and Liverpool on the West Coast Main Line. They work to improve the service and its usage, and provide information on timetable changes and news on future developments.

For more information on MCRUA activities or joining the group, please look at www.mcrua.org.uk.

If you can't find what you are looking for then email enquiries@mcrua.org.uk for more information.

The Mid Cheshire Line

The line links the cities of Manchester and Chester running through the scenic Mid Cheshire countryside. There are 16 stations along the line including Stockport, Navigation Road, Altrincham, Hale, Ashley, Knutsford, Northwich and Delamere.

The line has a Community Rail Partnership founded in 2003 to promote increased usage and to develop and improve facilities along the route. Enthusiastic volunteers are always welcome to get involved at stations and events along the line.

To find out more about the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership and the opportunities for travelling on the Mid Cheshire Line, go to www.midcheshirerail.org.uk.

Information on the maps is shown as follows:

Motorway 

Major roads 

Other roads 

Railway line 

Railway station 

Metrolink 

Metrolink stop 

Suggested route 



Ashley to Hale

This walk takes you from Ashley Station, in rural Cheshire, to Hale Station on the outskirts of Greater Manchester.

DISTANCE: Approximately 2¾ miles (5½ kilometres). Allow up to 1½ hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map (1:25 000) Sheet 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton

GROUND CONDITIONS: The walk is mostly on paths with good drainage, but walking boots are recommended

STILES: None

KISSING GATES: None

REFRESHMENTS: 'The Greyhound' pub in Ashley. Many cafes, café/bars and restaurants in Hale

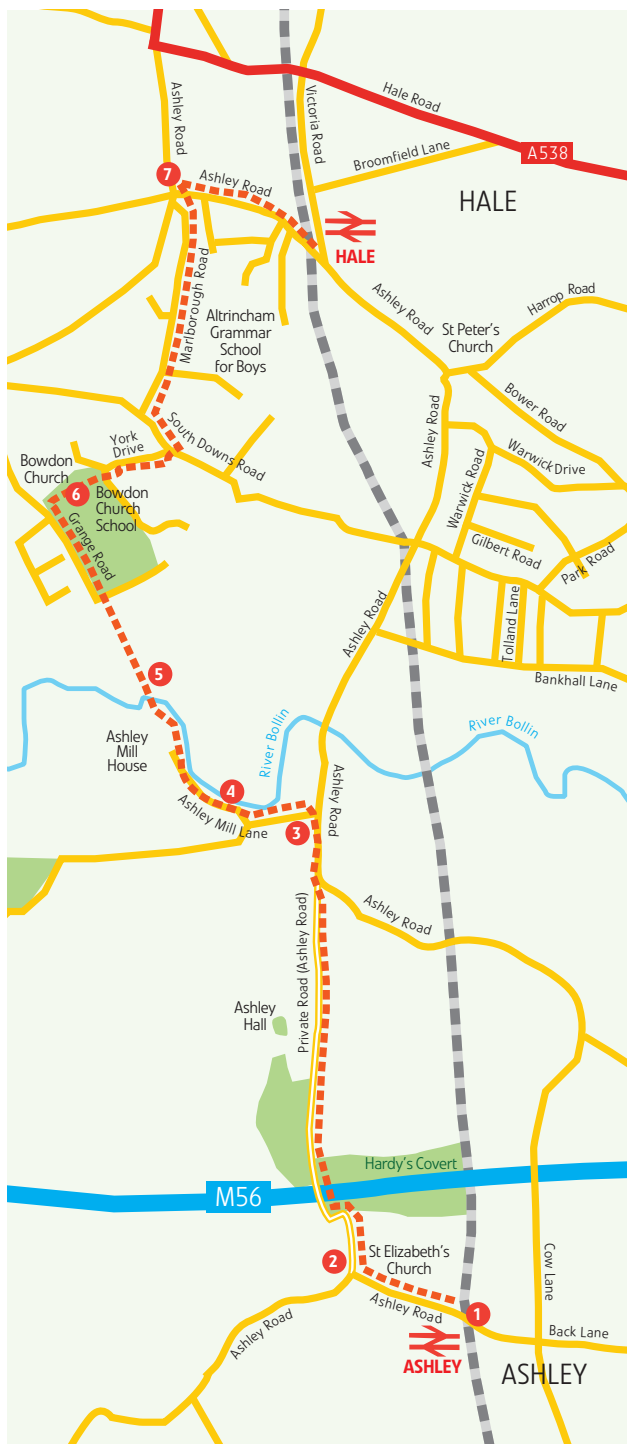


The route

1. Leave the station on to Ashley Road and turn right. Pass St Elizabeth's Church and then turn right just before a sharp turn in the road on to a lane signed Ashley Hall.



2. Continue on the private road which crosses the M56 and then pass the extensive former Ashley Farm complex. Ashley Hall itself is a listed building with parts which date back to the 16th century. On a clear day, you can see the Pennine hills to the east and the wooded escarpment of Bowdon straight ahead.





3. Continue on to Ashley Road (keeping left) and then turn left into Ashley Mill Lane. Immediately on the right is Coppice Barn, a fine oak cruck-frame building dating from the 16th century and currently part of a garden and landscaping business.



4. Follow the lane and keep right when the road forks. The road ends at Ashley Mill House. A steep cobbled path on the right leads to a footbridge over the river. Before the bridge is the site of Ashley Mill, swept away long ago in a severe flood.



5. Over the bridge, a wide path on the left initially follows the River Bollin and then rises (with helpful steps) and narrows to meet Grange Road.
6. Continue straight on, ignoring the entrances to Bowdon Church School on the right, and then take a footpath beyond the school on the right, opposite York Road. This narrow path leads to York Drive and then on to South Downs Road. Here turn left then right into Marlborough Road, home to Altrincham Boys' Grammar School and Altrincham Preparatory School. It follows the line of a former field path and is still marked as a footpath on the OS map.



7. Finally at the traffic lights, turn right into Ashley Road, with its sandstone Millennium Clock and back to Hale Station complete with level crossing.



Hale to Ashley

Hale Station, where you start this walk, is a Grade Two listed building and when built in 1862, by the Cheshire Midland Railway, was called Bowdon Peel Causeway.

DISTANCE: Approximately 3 miles (5 kilometres). Allow up to 1½ hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map (1:25 000) Sheet 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton

GROUND CONDITIONS: Muddy along the Bollin Valley in wet weather, walking boots are recommended

STILES: None

KISSING GATES: Two

REFRESHMENTS: 'The Greyhound' pub in Ashley. Many cafes, café/bars and restaurants in Hale

The route

1. Exit Hale Station either on to Victoria Road (to turn left down Ashley Road) or Ashley Road and head for the level crossing and onward through Hale village.





2. Keep to Ashley Road and after passing St Peter's Church on the left carry on and turn left into Warwick Road and then eventually turn left again into Gilbert Road.

3. At the end of the cul-de-sac follow a narrow path which leads on to Park Road. Cross over and into Tolland Lane, next to the shops. The name is believed to be from the open field of a medieval settlement.



4. At the end of Tolland Lane turn left into Bankhall Lane, eventually passing Bank Hall (Farm) on the right, a former moated site (now a nursery school).

5. Where Bankhall Lane bears to the left turn right on to a signposted path which leads to the Bollin Valley. Follow the path and after a steep section, the path turns to the left and soon follows the River Bollin upstream.



Further on, do not turn to the left off this path at the 3 way directional pathway sign but continue onwards to the metal footbridge over the river.



6. Cross the bridge, bear left following an indistinct path and in a short distance the path climbs up out of the wooded flood plain, passes the remains of a derelict stile and skirts the edge of the open fields.
7. Go through the gate into the field and continue with the hedge to the left. A second kissing gate leads to Castle Mill



Lane and here turn left. After the motorway bridge is Tanyard Farm and just beyond here turn right at the road junction into Tanyard Lane.



8. This becomes Back Lane and on the left is the former Ashley village school, now appropriately a nursery. Ahead is the Greyhound Public House for rest and recuperation. Beyond, in a short distance along Ashley Road, is Ashley Station.





Altrincham Circular

This walk can be either a circular walk from and to Altrincham Interchange or the start of a walk to Timperley the long way round.

DISTANCE: Approximately 6 miles
(9½ kilometres)

Allow approximately 2 ¼ hours

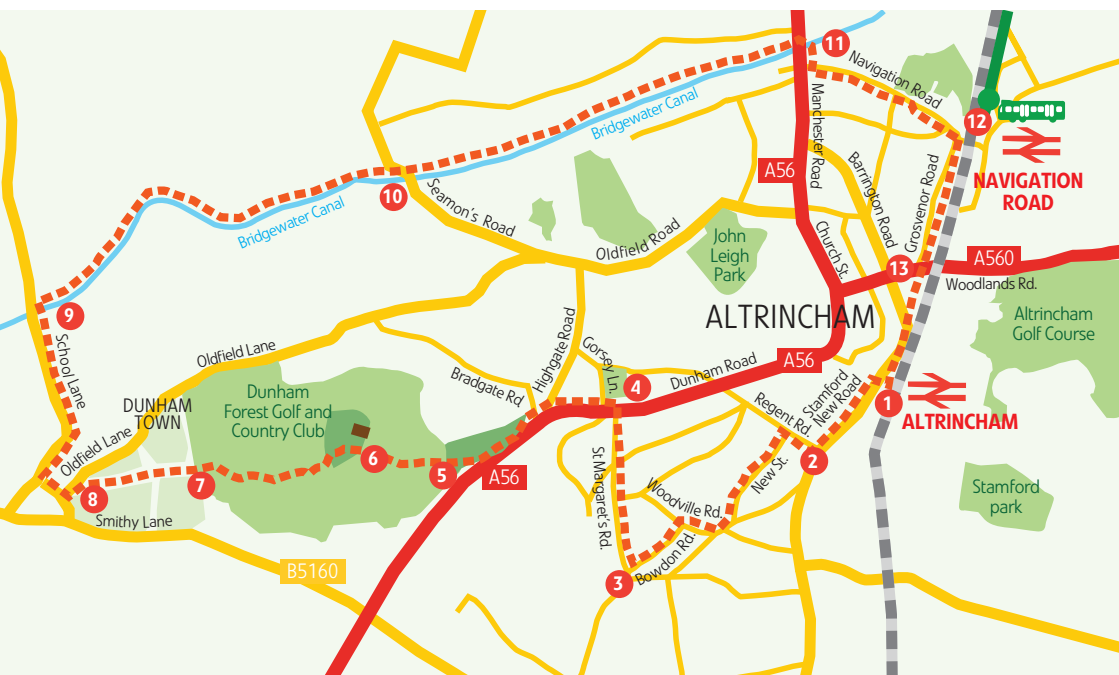
MAP: OS Explorer Map (1:25 000)
Sheet 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield
and Congleton

GROUND CONDITIONS: The walk is
mostly on paths with good drainage, but
walking boots are recommended as parts
of the canal tow path can be very muddy

STILES: One

KISSING GATES: One

REFRESHMENTS: Various pubs, cafes and
takeaways in Altrincham and several pubs
on the route



The route

1. Exit Altrincham Interchange from platform one and turn left around the bus stands and then proceed on to Stamford New Road. Turn left and at the traffic lights cross to the right and enter Cross Street. Where the street curves to the left, carry straight on to the pedestrianised section and at the junction turn left and proceed to the end of the pedestrian precinct.
2. Turn right at Regent Road, cross at the zebra crossing and then turn left into New Street and follow this to the end. Turn right into The Downs and almost immediately take the right fork into Woodville Road. After about 100 yards turn left into Bowdon Road.
3. At its end turn right into St Margaret's Road. Cross to the far side (here there is a footpath that goes into Devisdale which is worth exploring) and continue in the same

direction until the main road (A56) to Manchester is met, with St Margaret's Church opposite. It is necessary to cross this road but care is needed as it is a busy road.



4. When the road has been crossed turn left and proceed. Shortly three roads will be crossed, Gorsey Lane, Highgate Road and Bradgate Road. As Bradgate Road is crossed a footpath can be seen signposted to 'Dunham Town'. Take this path.



5. After a few yards take the right fork and after a while the footpath improves and effectively becomes a surfaced track. Continue in the same direction and shortly it will be observed that there is a golf course on both sides.
6. When the track leaves the wooded area follow it across the golf course fairway, bearing left, and taking care of flying golf balls coming from the right. Shortly after another wood is entered there is a depot for golf course workers on the right.



Bear left here and almost immediately after this take the signed footpath on the right. At the end of this wood, further fairways are encountered. There are metal oblong warning signs and these give the direction of travel, but again beware of flying golf balls.

7. At the end of this section a gate in the hedge will be observed. Go through this and then immediately turn right and follow this path through two fields.



8. At the end turn left onto Oldfield Lane and after about 60 yards there is a footpath on the right over a stile. Follow this until School Lane is met. Turn right here, past the old Post Office. Proceed past the Axe and Cleaver public house and Dunham Village Hall once a school.





- 9.** Immediately after this the road crosses the Bridgewater Canal. Care is needed as the road is single track here with no footpath. As soon as the bridge has been crossed turn right into the footpath and then turn left onto the bank of the canal.



- 10.** Follow the canal and in just under a mile a road overbridge is met, with a pub (Bay Malton) on the left. Continue to follow the canal and in about the same distance another road overbridge is met. To return to Altrincham leave the canal at this point, but to continue to Timperley stay on the canal and follow the instructions for the next walk.



- 11.** The exit from the canal is a few yards past the bridge. Turn left to the main road and then turn left back over the canal and left again at the Navigation public house into Navigation Road. Follow this until Navigation Road Station is met.
- 12.** From Navigation Road Station either the tram can be caught from the nearside platform or the train from the far platform. This avoids the last three quarters of a mile walk to Altrincham Interchange.
- 13.** Or to walk back to Altrincham, just before the level crossing barriers cross to the right and enter Grosvenor Road. Follow this until it meets Barrington Road at the Barrington Hotel. Keep on the left and walk back to the station.



Altrincham to Sale

This is a linear walk from Altrincham to Sale with an option to explore Timperley Flood Basin. It can be made in to a longer walk by doing the Altrincham circular walk first and staying on the canal.

DISTANCE: Approximately 3½ miles
(5½ kilometres)

Allow approximately 1½ hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map (1:25 000)
Sheet 277 Manchester and Salford

GROUND CONDITIONS: The walk is mostly on paths with good drainage, but walking boots are recommended as parts of the canal tow path can be muddy

STILES: None

KISSING GATES: None

REFRESHMENTS: Various pubs, cafes and takeaways in Altrincham, Navigation Road and Sale



The route

1. Leave Altrincham Interchange from platform one and turn right immediately, keeping the wall of the station on your right. Just after the end of the bus stands the Barrington Hotel will be observed. Take the road to the right of this, Grosvenor Road, and keep to the pavement on the left hand side.
 2. Follow this until Navigation Road Station is seen on the right. Cross the road in front of you, Navigation Road, and then turn left along it. Very shortly on the left hand side will be observed a carved full sized bear with a baby.
 3. Follow Navigation Road to its end and turn right at The Old Packet House onto Manchester Road and cross the bridge. Over the bridge take the first footpath on the right into the car park in front of the Sea Cadets premises and immediately at the end of this building take the footpath onto the tow path of the canal. This is the point at which the previous walk left the canal.
 4. Turn left on to the tow path. Immediately before the first overbridge is passed on the left will be seen notices about the Timperley flood basin.
- A short detour can be taken to observe parts of the basin. Immediately before the overbridge take the footpath on the left and follow this, keeping the embankment on the right and the ponds on the left. When the path turns left and crosses Timperley Brook follow this and turn left again to return to the canal tow path. This detour is about half a mile and might enable some interesting wild life to be seen around the ponds.
5. When the tow path is regained continue in the original direction. The next overbridge is at Timperley Station. To end the walk here, the path to the station is just before the bridge is reached. Take the path to the road above and the entrances to the station are on the opposite side of the road.
 6. To continue the walk proceed under the overbridge. After about three quarters of a mile on the left is Walton Park. This includes a miniature railway and on occasions, mainly weekends or bank holidays, this might be working.





Also the next building is the headquarters of the Trafford Rowing Club and some serious rowing might be observed along the canal.

After this, again on the left, is Brooklands Cemetery. The next overbridge is Marsland Road Bridge and is the location of Brooklands Station. To reach this station, if required, the exit from the tow path is on the far side of the bridge.



7. The final section of the walk continues along the tow path until the next overbridge is encountered. This is Sale and the station is adjacent to the bridge. The exit from the tow path is about one hundred yards past the bridge. To reach the station walk back along the open area behind the Sale Town Hall towards the main road, turn left on to the road and immediately in front the station entrance is there.



Sale to Cornbrook

This walk continues to follow the canal through a changing urban landscape where it is still possible to see kingfishers!

DISTANCE: Approximately 5½ miles
(9 kilometres)

Allow approximately 2 hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map (1:25 000)
Sheet 277 Manchester and Salford

GROUND CONDITIONS: The walk is
mostly on surfaced paths but there can
be puddles after wet weather.

STILES: None

KISSING GATES: None

REFRESHMENTS: Various pubs, cafes
and takeaways in Sale and two pubs on
the route

Avoid this walk if there is
a match at Old Trafford



The route

1. Exit Sale Station and immediately cross School Road by the pedestrian crossing and then turn left on the far pavement. Cross the Bridgewater Canal then turn right and proceed down the slope. At the bottom go onto the tow path and turn left. This is the point where the previous walk ends.
2. Follow the tow path to the first overbridge by the Bridge Inn which offers refreshments and is accessible from the tow path.



3. Continue along the tow path. The next overbridge is the M60 and just before this bridge the footpath keeps close to the canal while the cycle path keeps more to the left.

On the left at this point is the Crossford Bridge sports ground.



4. Continue along the tow path and shortly the River Mersey will be crossed. The next feature on the left is a cruising club which

has a sign on the wall stating that walkers are welcome. Continue along the tow path and the next overbridge is Edge Lane, with Stretford Station over the bridge and then on the left.

5. Shortly after this the canal bears left and then goes under Chester Road. Follow the canal and in approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile the path moves away from the water. Follow the path around the basin where barges and cruisers are stored and then return to the canal side. Pass under 3 bridges close together and immediately in front is a ramp. This is where the canal splits into two different branches. Go up the ramp and then down on to the right hand canal.
6. Keep walking along the canal under first a disused railway bridge and then two road bridges. Shortly after this on the right Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United can be seen. Be careful on this section as there are a number of bollards on the towpath.





7. After the stadium there are four road overbridges then there is another bridge with the name 'Throstle Nest Bridge' written in large letters on it. At this point it is necessary to change to the right hand side of the canal. This is done by using the bridge. Go a few yards past and then turn back up the ramp on the left, go over the bridge and then down the ramp on the other side to reach the tow path on the right hand side of the canal.

8. Very shortly on the right will be seen the railway line from the Liverpool direction and on the left is the tram line from Eccles and Media City. Then there is the tram station of



Pomona and the Manchester Ship Canal can also be seen on the left after Pomona Station. Continue along the tow path. A lock gate will be observed on the left which links the Bridgewater Canal to the Manchester Ship Canal. Shortly after there is a bridge with a set of steps leading up to the road.



9. At this point leave the canal by climbing the steps to the bridge and then at the road on the top turn right. The route in front appears to be obstructed but there is gap just round to the left hand side. Go through this and then turn left before the railway overbridges. The entrance to Cornbrook Station is the first open arch on the right. There are either four sets of stairs to climb or a lift to the platforms.

Cornbrook to Manchester Piccadilly

This walk is not very long but will allow you to see parts of Manchester not normally visited.

DISTANCE: Approximately 2½ miles (4 kilometres) Allow at least 1 hour

MAP: OS Explorer Map (1:25 000) Sheet 277 Manchester and Salford

GROUND CONDITIONS: The ground conditions are generally good, but care should be exercised crossing some of the paved areas as these can be slippery

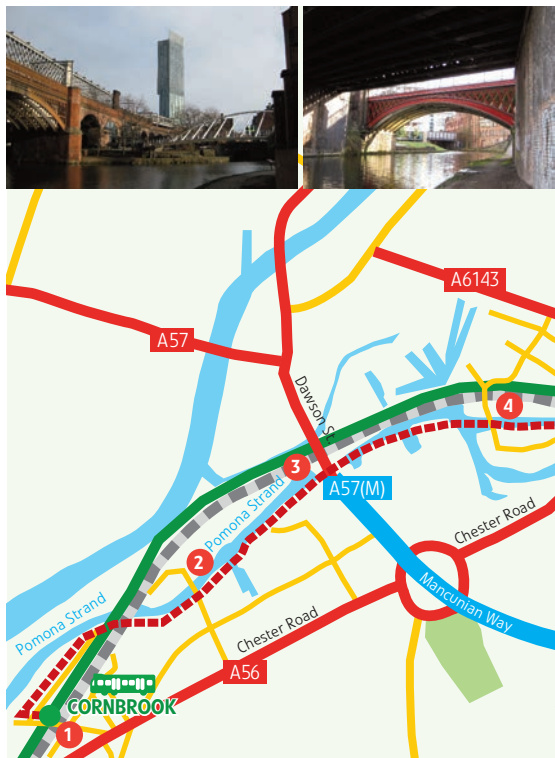
STILES: None

KISSING GATES: None but there are steps along the route

REFRESHMENTS: Many places in Castlefield and just off the canal – Bridgewater Hall, the City Centre, Canal Street and Piccadilly

The route

1. Exit Cornbrook Station down the stairs and out onto the service road outside. Turn left and then, at the T-junction under the bridge, turn right into what looks like a closed road. However closer examination will show a gap in the fence on the right hand corner. Go through this and almost immediately take the steep steps on the left hand side down to the canal footpath.





2. Turn right and pass under the bridge, follow the canal towpath. It shortly passes under a rail bridge and in due course crosses a number of small disused entrances to canal basins on the right.
3. The path then passes under the end of the Mancunian Way. Shortly after this there is a modern, curved footbridge over the canal - this is Castlefield. However, before crossing the bridge it is worth exploring the basin on the right. This is in fact the end of the

Bridgewater Canal and the River Medlock comes into the basin at the far end. The whole of this basin can be explored in under a quarter of an hour.

4. Now cross the curved footbridge into Catalan Square. The footpath passes through the middle of the tabled area in front of the bar. Recross the canal by the road bridge and immediately rejoin the canal towpath on the right hand side of the canal.



5. After a short distance the canal and the towpath goes into Deansgate tunnel. At the end of the tunnel there are a number of bars on the opposite bank. At the end of this stretch of buildings there is a footpath leading back right. To go to Deansgate-Castlefield Station (formerly G-Mex Station) use this path then cross the bridge back over the canal and the station is there.



6. To continue the walk just follow the canal. After a short distance Tib Lock, which is under a road bridge, is passed. Next the Bridgewater Basin will be observed on the left hand side of the canal. Then go under bridge 97 which is Princess Street and at this point cross the canal to the left hand side and walk along Canal Street which runs parallel to the canal. The next street crossed over is Sackville Street - to go to Piccadilly Gardens turn left along this street.

7. Continue alongside the canal, crossing Chorlton Street, and at the next bridge (Minshull Street) change to the right hand side of the canal and go down the ramp back on to the tow path to eventually pass under bridge 92.



Continue past lock 85 and as soon as lock 84 is reached turn right on to Dale Street and then right again to cross the canal. Take the first right turn through the car park and rejoin the canal on the left hand side.

8. At bridge 91A cross to the other bank. After crossing the bridge turn left to go back under the bridge now following the Rochdale Canal. Turn right onto the Ashton Canal and follow the canal under the building in front. The canal turns left and at the first bridge (number 2) climb the steps and then turn right onto the road, cross the canal and proceed downhill to the bottom.



9. Turn right here into Store Street, with a car park on the right, and continue along this street and proceed under the bridge. After this bridge turn right and proceed up the gentle slope to the traffic lights. Turn right here and Piccadilly Station is at the top of the rise.

At Piccadilly Station to catch trains to Stockport and Altrincham stay on the main concourse but to catch the Metrolink go to the right hand side of the concourse and then descend two levels to the tram station.

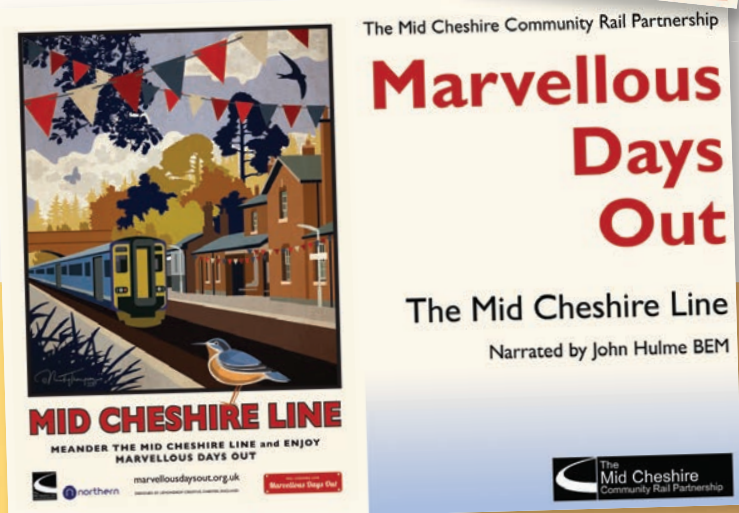
Find out more about our visitor attractions on the Mid Cheshire Line, connecting Chester to Manchester via Northwich, Knutsford, Altrincham and Stockport in our...

Marvellous Days Out on the Mid Cheshire Line publication

Inspired by Nicky Thompson's successful railway poster artwork, this 36 page full colour booklet is your ideal companion guide to this rail walks booklet.

AVAILABLE FROM
OUR STAFFED
STATIONS
AND LINESIDE
ATTRACTIONS

DOWNLOADABLE AT
MARVELLOUSDAYSOUT.ORG.UK



Stockport

Stockport Town Centre is a short walk from its station and offers opportunities for interesting urban walks and a visit to Stockport's historic landmarks and museums.

A good starting point is the Heritage Centre inside St Mary's Church in the Market Place which is open on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Further details of the Heritage Centre and its opening times along with other Stockport attractions can be found on the Stockport Things to Do page at www.marvellousdaysout.org.uk

Here is a taste of some of the heritage within the town and don't forget to take a look at Stockport's railway viaduct. Built in the early 1840's, it was then the world's largest viaduct having used some 11 million bricks in its construction.



Stockport Infirmary

Built in 1832 to a design by Richard Lane in the classical Greek style. There is an imposing central pedimented portico, with four large fluted Doric columns. Since its closure as a hospital in the latter part of the twentieth century, it has operated as offices, with only the facade maintained in its original state.





Town Hall

Built in 1904-1908 and designed by Sir Alfred Brumwell Thomas, who based his design mostly on Belfast City Hall. The hall is built in Portland stone in a free and exuberant "William and Mary" style. Its tall, tiered, central tower is based loosely on the style of Sir Christopher Wren's City Church Towers in London and its appearance has caused the building to be nicknamed "The Wedding Cake".



Stockport Central Library

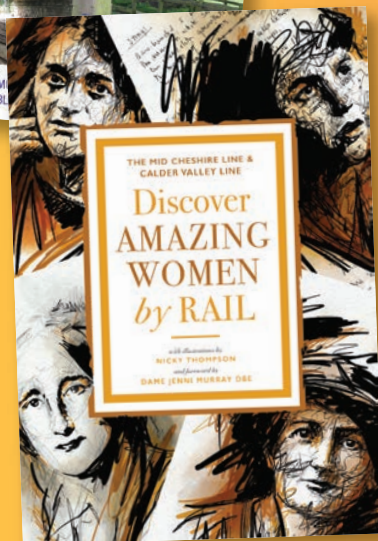
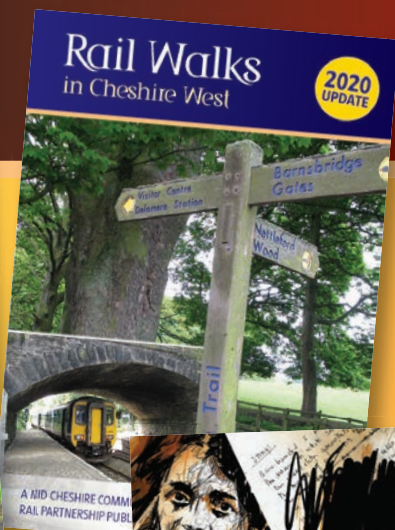
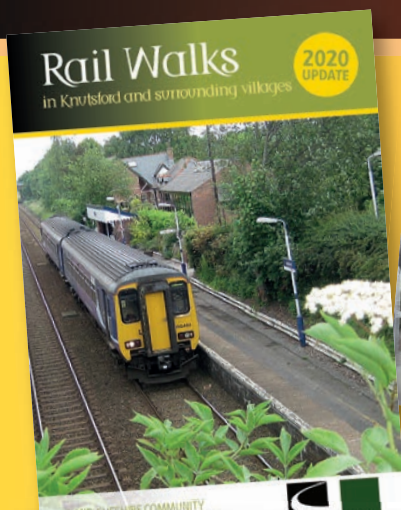
Built in 1912-1913 and funded by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, it was designed by architects Bradshaw, Gass and Hope in a free "William and Mary" style. It is built mainly of brick but with extensive use of white Portland stone for trimmings and carved details.



Market Hall

A splendid timber, glass and cast-iron Victorian structure built in 1861. The sides of the Hall were originally open and it was known as the "glass umbrella"; the sides were infilled with timber in the late 1890s.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS



For further information on exploring Mid Cheshire by train including downloadable copies of the above booklets visit

www.midcheshirerail.org.uk

www.marvellousdaysout.org.uk

www.amazingwomenbyrail.org.uk

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