

Rail Walks

in Knutsford and surrounding villages



LOTTERY FUNDED

The Knutsford Local Area Partnership and the Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association (MCRUA) welcome you to a collection of walks from local railway stations within the beautiful countryside of East Cheshire, which can be accessed by public transport without the need for a car. The circular walks start and finish at the stations of Plumley, Knutsford, Mobberley, Ashley and Chelford and are situated within the Partnership area boundary (opposite).

The walks vary in length, but some have options for short cuts or extensions. All offer options for rest and refreshments. There are no toilet facilities on these walks, but each route features at least one public house offering a range of snacks and meals as well as toilets.

All walks relate to either OS Explorer Map, sheets 267 or 268, scale 1:25,000.

Apart from the Knutsford walk, the routes are not accessible for those with pushchairs, wheelchairs or mobility scooters as they feature several stiles and kissing gates as well as uneven ground in places.

For details of walks within Cheshire East suitable for all abilities, the 'Walks for All' leaflet can be downloaded from

www.discovercheshire.co.uk

For the Plumley, Knutsford, Mobberley and Ashley walks, connecting train services run hourly Monday through to Saturday and two hourly on Sundays. Timetable 17 features all the train times for the Mid Cheshire Line, see

www.midcheshirerail.org.uk

Train times for Chelford can be found in Timetable 18 available from

www.crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk

For bus services phone Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or go to

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk







You can also contact Cheshire East Council on 0845 140 2666 or go to

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel





Information on the maps is shown as follows:

- Suggested route 
- Motorways 
- Major roads 
- Other roads 
- Railway line 
- Railway station 

Whilst every effort has been made to make the walk details as comprehensive as possible, no responsibility can be taken for any changes to the routes or facilities which occur after the publication of this booklet. (April 2011)

The Knutsford Local Area Partnership

The Knutsford Local Area Partnership, one of the seven partnerships which make up the Borough of Cheshire East, brings together a wide range of partner organisations and individuals from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and by working together, they focus on what really matters; delivering improved outcomes for local people and places.

Their role is to improve services, ensure that local people influence decision making and to actively engage and empower communities.

The Partnership has a number of small groups working on local projects and volunteers are always welcome.

More information can be found at www.pacecheshireeast.org

MCRUA and the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership hope that you enjoy these rail walks around the beautiful Mid Cheshire Countryside.



Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association (MCRUA)

The Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association with over 650 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.

MCRUA is also well known for the popular excursion trains, including steam specials that it has run over the years.

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 Delamere, Northwich, Plumley, Knutsford, Mobberley, Ashley, Altrincham and Stockport.

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.



The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership

The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership aims to promote usage of the Crewe-Manchester via Stockport and Airport rail lines, and improve the services and facilities along them. The Partnership, which brings together transport providers, local authorities, major employers and the local community, was launched in May 2007 and continues to highlight the role of the services in a local and regional transport context.

For more information and updates as the progress of the Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership in achieving improvements to the rail service, please visit the web-site at www.crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk.

Plumley Rail Trail route

This circular walk explores the beautiful countryside around the village of Plumley, within the parish of Plumley with Toft and Bexton.

The landscape is dominated by fields (for arable and dairy farming), hedges and large numbers of deciduous hedgerow trees with a scattering of small woods. There are two lakes, numerous field ponds and the delightful Peover Eye trout stream within the parish.

The walk takes you through some magnificent scenery, from streams and farmland to woodland and leafy lanes.

Situated within the Parish is Holford Hall, a magnificent large moated timber house built in 1620 for Mary Cholmondeley, the last heiress and survivor of the Holford family, on the death of her husband Hugh. It suffered from neglect and fell into disrepair in the nineteenth century. Owned by ICI for much of the last century, it is now restored and in private ownership.

DISTANCE: approximately 7 ³/₄ miles / 12 kilometres (with an option for a short cut to halve the walk). Allow 4 hours for the full walk

MAP: OS Explorer Map, sheet 267, scale 1: 25,000

GROUND CONDITIONS: The route is mostly flat but has numerous stiles and is therefore unsuitable for those with mobility problems. There are some wet and boggy areas and walking boots are a necessity.

STILES: Twelve (on full walk)

KISSING GATES: one

REFRESHMENTS: Available from the Golden Pheasant public house in Plumley at either the start or end of the walk





The route

1. Leave the railway station and turn left onto Plumley Moor Road, towards the Golden Pheasant public house. Continue along the road until you reach Beech House Farm, where you take the footpath signed opposite (approximately 300 yards).
2. Turn right, over the stile and walk in a straight line towards Trouthall Lane.
3. On reaching Trouthall Lane, turn right and then almost immediately left onto a road (signposted Lach Dennis).
4. Cross over the Peover Eye stream and after 300 yards, take the stile on your left. Keeping the hedge on your right hand side, you will cross a wooden bridge.
5. Keep walking in the same direction and head for a gate to the right of a white house. Exit the field by a stile onto Back Lane.
6. Turn left on the road and cross the Peover Eye again and continue on to the crossroads.

- 7.** Go straight over into Pinfold Lane and carry on ahead until you reach the black and white Holly Hedge Cottage on your left where the road turns right (approx half a mile).
- 8.** Turn left here down a dirt track and in 50 yards climb a high stile on your right and proceed with the hedge on your right through the first field. Follow the same direction through the second field to the railway embankment. Climb the embankment and at the top turn right and then descend the next embankment. Great care must be exercised crossing the railway – look and listen for trains before crossing.
- 9.** Carry on in the same direction, with a brook on your right, to Sudlow Lane.
- 10.** Turn left on the road, past Parkside Cottage and over a stile on your left into a field. The path heads towards a large oak tree and then skirts Royd Wood for approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. Bear left and keep the hedge on your right before crossing Benstall Brook to reach White House Farm.
- 11.** Pass through the farmyard and in 300 yards along the lane go over a stile to your left.



12. Keep the hedge to your right and turn right to cross a bridge over a deep ditch.
13. Carry on to reach Plumley Moor Road via a stile.
(At this point you can shorten the walk by about a half, by turning left along the road, passing the village shop to return to the station)
14. Continue the longer walk by crossing the road and climbing a stile ahead, passing between two electricity poles, through fields in the same direction and crossing three further stiles to reach the busy A556.
15. Turn left, staying on the same side of the main road, past Holford Farm and then immediately turn down a narrow tarmac lane on your left (once the main road between Plumley and Pickmere).
16. Cross the Peover Eye once again and turn right through a gate (the original footpath has been rerouted here and the new path is clearly signed).
17. Continue on the new path through woodland, with wire fences on either side. Holford Hall is visible to your left.
18. Continue on the path through a kissing gate and bear left onto a track. Stay on this track bearing left with Holford Hall on your left and then turn right. Ignore other footpath signs (although there is a short diversion on a bend over a stile, where a short path will afford wonderful views of Holford Hall and the surrounding moat).
19. Proceed through a metal gate into the next field.
20. Carry on along a well defined path and follow the path as it bears left between hedges.
21. Carry on down the hill to cross the Peover Eye. At the top of the incline turn right by a thatched cottage and proceed along Trouthall Lane (no road sign).
22. Continue under the railway bridge until you see a footpath marked on the left (approx $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the thatched cottage) opposite Trouthall Farm and make your way back through the fields until you reach Plumley Moor Road at Beech House Farm.
23. Turn left to reach the station.



VISITOR INFORMATION

REFRESHMENTS

The Golden Pheasant

Tel: 01565 722125

Monday to Saturday
11.30am – 11pm

Food served
11.30am-9pm

Sunday 11.30am – 8pm
Carvery served until 4pm

Knutsford Rail Trail route

DISTANCE: 5 miles / 8 km (3-4 hours plus stops) with an optional extension.

MAP: OS Explorer Map, sheet 268, scale 1: 25,000

This circular walk explores the beautiful and historic town of Knutsford as well as the grounds of Tatton Park. For more information about the Knutsford area, visit www.ivisitknutsford.co.uk

Knutsford was recorded in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book of 1086 as Cunetesford ("Canute's ford"). King Canute (Knútr in Old Norse) was the king of England (1016–1035) and later king of Denmark, Norway and parts of Sweden as well.

Knutsford was the model for Elizabeth Gaskell's novel Cranford. She lived in the town for some time and is buried in the Unitarian Chapel graveyard. Many of the places and people described in her books can be identified as being based on places and people in the town. In 2007 the BBC adapted the novel and produced the popular TV series, Cranford.

Tatton Park is one of the UK's most complete historic estates. The Mansion, Gardens, Farm, Old Hall, 1,000 acre deer park and speciality shops offer something for everyone. Tatton Park is one of the North West's most popular heritage attractions. It has a history dating back to Bronze Age farming and has been home to herds of





deer since the 13th century. In the late Tudor period Tatton was acquired by the Egerton family who owned the estate until the last Lord Egerton died without heirs in 1958. Maurice Egerton bequeathed the estate to the National Trust and in 1960 a lease was drawn up with Cheshire County Council who managed and financed the property on behalf of the National Trust until April 2009, when responsibility transferred to Cheshire East Council.

The walk combines a leisurely exploration of Knutsford Town and clearly defined footpaths through the grounds of Tatton Park where a range of optional, additional short walks highlight the beauty and history of the park.

The route is flat and can be accessed by wheelchairs and pushchairs, although patches of the parkland can be muddy. Good walking shoes are advisable.

There are many opportunities for refreshments both in Knutsford and Tatton Park, where toilet facilities are also available.



VISITOR INFORMATION

TATTON PARK

General Enquiries and opening times

Tel: 01625 374400

Visit: www.tattonpark.org.uk

(Please note the park is closed on Mondays in low season.)

The route

- 1.** Coming from the Chester direction, leave the station at the ticket office and turn right, down through the carpark and turn left into King Street.

Coming from the Manchester direction, leave the station on the level, through a small car park and turn left into Adams Hill and left again under the railway bridge into King Street.

This delightful route passes numerous attractive shops, cafes and restaurants.

- 2.** As you leave the town head towards the gate ahead, as this is the pedestrian entrance into Tatton Park.
- 3.** There are several tracks through the park which head towards the Mansion and the one to the right of the main drive affords beautiful views of Tatton Mere. Keep parallel to the main drive as it bears left and you pass Melchett Mere on your left hand side.
- 4.** Take the footpath on your left towards the Mansion which can be seen in the distance.
- 5.** Proceed past the Mansion and enter the courtyard, where there are excellent café and toilet facilities, as well as a chance to buy tickets to visit the Mansion and gardens.
- 6.** At this point, a number of optional extensions can be added to the walk and maps showing the routes can be picked up from the shop or Stables Restaurant or downloaded at www.tattonpark.org.uk. There is a nature trail which starts in the Stableyard and then follows numbered wooden posts (2–19) painted with an orange band, and if you chose this route you can leave the trail at point 17, where it joins your original route towards the Knutsford Gate.
- 7.** Rejoin the route signed Knutsford Gate and exit the park. Turn left into Drury Lane and then bear right down the hill. You will pass the Ruskin Rooms. There is an inscription on the building which commemorates General Patton's use of the building during a stay in Cheshire, which reads 'Welcome Club' for officers of the Third Army opened by General George Patton on 25th April 1944 prior to participation in the Liberation of Europe.
- 8.** Carry on past the attractive pastel cottages and admire the name plates which include 'Linen House' and 'Tower House'.
- 9.** Bear right at the bottom of the hill and follow the road with a brook to your right and glimpses of the Mere on your left. The road opens out as it passes the Moor, a popular site for families with a large children's play area.
- 10.** At the end of the road you will meet the junction with King Street and the Railway Station is in front of you.

Mobberley Rail Trail route

This circular walk explores the beautiful countryside in the Parish of Mobberley, one of the oldest parishes in England. The area is rich in history and the route passes the church of St Wilfrid and St Mary which dates back to 1245 and is certainly worthy of a visit.

The railway station was built in 1862, followed by the Railway Inn which was no doubt much appreciated by weary travellers! With another public house on the route, the Church Inn, excellent food and toilet facilities are readily available.

The walk combines a range of footpaths through pasture and arable fields, as well as country lanes and an impressive stretch which crosses the approach to the runway of Manchester Airport. Here is where the incoming planes loom at what feels like just a few feet overhead!

DISTANCE: approximately 4 miles/6 kilometres, allow at least 2 hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map, sheet 268, scale 1: 25,000

GROUND CONDITIONS: The route is mostly flat but has numerous stiles and is therefore unsuitable for wheelchair users or those with mobility problems. There are some wet and boggy areas and walking boots are a necessity.

STILES: Eighteen

KISSING GATES: Seven





The route

1. Leave the railway station by the platform for the Chester train and walk uphill a few metres to a gate and footpath sign on the left through a field.
2. Enter the field and follow the footpath along the left hand field margin until you come to a hedge at a right angle in front of you in approximately 200 metres. Turn diagonally right towards a lone gate with a footpath marker on it, in the middle of the field.
3. Proceed ahead to the corner of the field where the path leads through a small copse down to a stream.

4. Cross the stream by the bridge and proceed across the field and over the stile on to a lane.
5. Turn right along the lane.
6. At a road sign on the left indicating a sharp bend just past Owen House Farm, take the footpath to the left over a stile and bear slightly right across the field. A narrow gap in the fence indicates the route, which proceeds into a second field. Cross this field towards a stile and footpath sign on the far side.



7. Cross the stile and a stream between two ponds and carry on across the next field to another stile and footpath sign to the left of the pylon.
8. Enter the next field and, skirting the right hand side of the pond, head across the field to a stile (to the left of the gate). To your right you will see the lights of the airport runway and may like to spend some time watching the succession of planes as they roar overhead! Please take note that the runway is only in use at busy times of the day, (i.e. breakfast and tea time) so you may not always see the departure and arrival of the planes.
9. Cross the stile and then immediately cross a second stile to then cross a tarmac track to yet another stile. Crossing this stile leads to a path bordered by high hedges of dog rose, hawthorn, blackthorn and willow.

10. Climb the next stile and keep following the path, with farm buildings to your right to a further stile to join Lady Lane.
11. Turn right along the lane and take the first turning on the left (Davenport Lane). Immediately after Willow House, take the footpath to the right, through a kissing gate.
12. Proceed through 3 fields via 4 kissing gates. Mobberley Church can now be seen in the distance.
13. At the end of the 3rd field, turn right towards a double kissing gate at the field boundaries. Go through the gates and continue along the footpath towards the church, passing Mobberley Primary School playing field on your right.
14. Exit the field at the kissing gate into the car park of the Church Inn.
15. Turn right onto the road, taking time to visit the beautiful Church of St Wilfrid and St Mary.
16. Carry on a short distance along the road to a right hand bend, and then take a footpath on the left hand side of the road between a dairy farm and a bungalow.
17. Climb 2 stiles in quick succession onto a well marked track across a field and over a further stile into the next field.



- 18.** At the bottom of this field, climb a stile (to the left of a gate) and continue until almost the end of the next field. Climb a stile on the left and walk along the field boundary towards a factory complex. At the end of the field, on the right, climb another stile into the next field.
- 19.** Leave the field by a stile into a farm yard and continue on the marked path straight ahead.
- 20.** Pass through a gate into a field. Ignore a stile to your left and carry straight on and over another stile with steps down.
- 21.** Take a diagonal route through the field (following the arrow of the footpath marker), taking care as there are areas of mud and marshy ground. Head towards a gate where you will find a stile in the fence.
- 22.** Climb the stile and turn left (with field boundary on your left). Proceed to the bottom of the field, over another stile and descend some steps into the next field.
- 23.** Proceed to the other side of the field, taking care as the ground is boggy in parts. Pass through a gap in the fence and skirt the boundary of a private garden, crossing a stream with a pond to your right.
- 24.** Proceed to a small gate in the wall of the property. Turn left and walk along the drive-cum-road.
- 25.** Turn right onto a road with a river to your left and walk slightly uphill to a main road.
- 26.** Turn left at the main road (signposted Ashley).
- 27.** Take the first turning on the left along Station Road (signposted Mobberley Station) and return to your starting point, close to the Railway Inn.



VISITOR INFORMATION

REFRESHMENTS

The Church Inn (Dog friendly)

Tel: 01565 872651

Open for lunch Tuesday to Saturday

12 noon – 2.30pm,

Sundays 12 noon – 3pm

Open for evening meals Tuesday to

Saturday 6pm – 9pm

The Railway Inn (Dog friendly)

Tel: 01565 873155

Food service

Monday to Friday

12.00 noon – 2.30pm & 6-9.30pm

Saturday 12 noon - 9.30pm

Sundays 12 noon – 9pm

Ashley Rail Trail Route

The village of Ashley lies very close to both the M56 motorway and Manchester Ringway Airport, but retains a rural charm whilst serving a strong farming community.

DISTANCE: 3¾ miles / 6 kilometres, allow 1 ¾ to 2 hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map, sheet 268, scale 1: 25,000

GROUND CONDITIONS: The walk is almost flat and is on surfaced tracks except between Ryecroft Farm and Birkin Farm, which are just clearly marked footpaths.

STILES: One

KISSING GATES: Two

The Route

1. Proceed from the station up to the road at the top and turn right into Ashley Road. After approximately 100 yards, passing the church on your right, turn right on a sharp bend, through a gate onto a surfaced farm track heading north.
2. After a short distance, the track crosses the M56 via a bridge. Continue along this track, passing Ashley Hall Farm on your left. Shortly after the farm, the track becomes tarmac and eventually meets Ashley Road. Continue straight on along Ashley Road before taking the first turn left into Ashley Mill Lane.





3. In approximately 150 yards there is a fork where you take the lane on the left, signposted for Ryecroft Farm. Follow this road for nearly a mile until Ryecroft Farm is almost reached. There is a lone oak tree about half way with a conveniently placed picnic table beneath it which makes for an excellent refreshment stop!

4. Turn left through a kissing gate, just before the farm buildings, to follow the hedge line towards the M56, then after a short distance turn left again through another kissing gate. The path then heads parallel to the motorway with woodland to your right, until it turns right and the motorway is crossed by an over bridge.

5. After crossing the bridge immediately turn left onto the Bollin Valley Way footpath, which follows the motorway for about a fifth of a mile and then turns right following a field boundary. Follow the path beside the hedge which will eventually curve round to the left. Keep following this until a surfaced road is reached via a stile and carry on straight ahead to pass Birkin Farm on your right. Follow this road which winds its way until the station entrance is found on your left.





VISITOR INFORMATION

REFRESHMENTS

There is a public house in Ashley, the Greyhound, which welcomes walkers and is also dog friendly. It serves real ale and food. The public house is found by continuing along the road at the end of the walk, rather than turning into the station, and is on the corner after about 200 yards.

The Greyhound (Dog friendly)

Tel: 0161 941 2246

Open Monday to Saturday 11.30am - 11pm
Food served 12 noon - 2.30pm
and 6.00pm - 9.00pm

(Please note that no food will be served
on Monday or Tuesday evenings)

Sunday 12 noon - 10.30pm
Food served 12 noon - 7.00pm

Chelford Village Walk



DISTANCE: 3.9 miles / 6.3 kilometres. Allow 2.5 - 3 hours

MAP: OS Explorer Map, sheet 268, scale 1: 25,000

GROUND CONDITIONS: The walk is fairly flat and includes well marked tracks and footpaths as well as country lanes. There may be muddy patches and walking boots are recommended.

STILES: Two

KISSING GATES: Three **WICKET GATES:** Two

Chelford is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Celeford. At that time it was a very small village of only 80 acres.

Chelford village today is surrounded by rural farmland and is situated six miles southeast of Knutsford, close to the Capesthorne Estate. The local church, St John's, was consecrated in 1776 with the tower and spire added later in 1840. Chelford is also served by a post office and the Egerton Arms public house.



The Route

1. From Chelford Station, walk down Station Road and turn right on to Dixon Drive. Go past the Marshall's Market (on your right) and past the end of Elmstead Road (on your left) with the Medical Centre and Chelford School. After about 50 metres turn right on to a footpath which goes beneath the railway line through the cattle arch and follow the footpath in an easterly direction through the next two fields to join Alderley Road by the old Chelford School. Turn left along Alderley Road (A535) and cross safely to go through the kissing gate into the field.
2. Follow the wheel marks diagonally to the north east over a small rise to the next kissing gate. On your right are the sand excavations.





3. Follow the footpath around the sand workings with the lake on your left to cross the sand pit road through two gates. Keep on the path, with George's Wood (beautiful bluebells in spring) on your right, to pass through a kissing gate and turn right on to Stubby Lane, following this up the slight rise to Macclesfield Road.
4. At the junction of Stubby Lane and Macclesfield Road (A537) turn right and continue for about 50 metres before crossing the road with care to the Astle Farm track.
5. Carry on down the track, crossing Bag Brook, then turn right into a small lane and after about 50 metres, cross the stile on your left and take the field path, running westerly towards St. John's church. Look out for the magnificent oak tree, close to the path. Don't forget to look back to the east for a lovely view of the hills.
6. Eventually, you will cross a stile into the church car park and follow the path by St John's built in 1776 and the picturesque Church Cottages to turn right on to the A535. Follow the footway and after about 100 metres, cross the road with care on the bridge over Bag Brook and follow the footway to Chelford Corner Shoppe & Post Office. The Shoppe opened in 1705 and became a Post Office around 1854. Here you'll be able to get a selection of refreshments including ice cream and on weekday mornings, fantastic, freshly made bacon butties. A bench affords a welcome rest stop.

7. Once refreshed, turn left down Peover Lane and after about 200 metres, turn right on to the footpath (Gypsy Lane) which runs roughly north westerly towards Chelford Village Hall.
8. At the junction with the A535 Knutsford Road, cross carefully by the Village Hall and walk up the slight rise to cross the railway bridge to return to Chelford Station.
9. If you still have any energy, walk west towards Knutsford, on the footway by the A537 for another half mile for a well-earned pint or cup of tea at the Egerton Arms.



VISITOR INFORMATION



REFRESHMENTS

The Corner Shoppe & Post Office

Tel: 01625 861301

Monday to Friday 8.30am-7.00pm

Saturday 8.30am-6.00pm

The Egerton Arms

Tel: 01625 861366

Monday to Saturday 12 Noon-11.00pm

Food until 10.00pm

Sunday 12 Noon-10.30pm

Food until 10.00pm



Further suggestions and information on exploring the Cheshire East countryside can be found on the Discover Cheshire website at www.discovercheshire.co.uk or from the Public Rights of Way team:-

Public Rights of Way

Cheshire East Council
Phoenix House
Clough Road
Winsford
Cheshire CW7 4BD

TEL: 01606 271801 **EMAIL:** pro@cheshireeast.gov.uk **WEBSITE:** www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pro

Please contact us if you would like to receive this leaflet in an alternative format such as large print.

