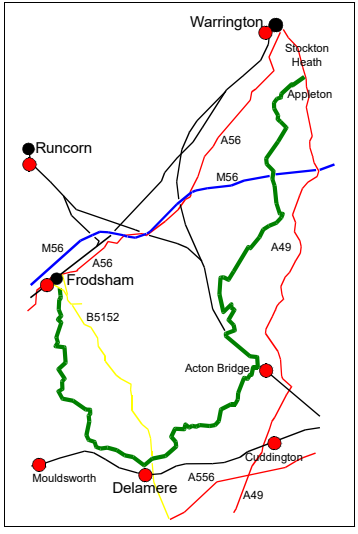
The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society

Waymarked Walks in Central Cheshire

The Delamere Way

21 miles of walking through Delamere Forest and the Weaver Valley



An easy, medium-distance trail between Frodsham and Stockton Heath

About the Delamere Way …

Distance:	**34 km or 21 miles**
Waymark:	Delamere Way on yellow arrow. See P6 or P24
Maps:	OS Explorer 267 and 276, 1:25k maps.
Start:	Church Street, Frodsham (B5152 SJ 5207 7759) – about 450m south of the town centre traffic lights.
Route:	Frodsham – Delamere Forest – Dutton Locks – Whitley – Hatton – Stockton Heath
Travel directions:	Leave the M56 at Junction 12 or 14 and travel into Frodsham on the A56. Take the B5152 in the town centre. The station car park is off Church Street, opposite Eddisbury Square. Bus to Stockton Heath Victoria Square and walk S up London Road (A49) to the London Bridge pub. (Some buses go past the pub.)
Parking:	In Frodsham, Stockton Heath, and in Delamere Forest at Hatchmere, Barnsbridge Gate or by the Station. *Beware of thieves, particularly in the forest.*
Public transport:	Train services to Warrington, Acton Bridge, Delamere and Frodsham stations. Bus services from Warrington, Stockton Heath, Chester, Runcorn, Frodsham and Northwich connect to points on the route. *Some services are infrequent, especially on Sundays*.
Refreshments:	Pubs near the route include: Ring O'Bells, Frodsham WA6 6 6BS 01928 732068 Hazel Pear, Acton Bridge CW8 3RA 01606 854434 Hatton Arms, Hatton (village centre) 01925 730314 London Bridge, Appleton WA4 5BG 01925 267904 Delamere Forest Cafe CW8 2JD 01606 537722

This guide was produced using information from http://openstreetmap.org/

More about the Delamere Way

The Delamere Way is one of the medium and long distance footpaths created by The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society and for which guide leaflets or books have been produced. It is named after the Delamere Forest through which it passes. The forest, which once covered much of Cheshire, is now managed by the Forestry Commission. It is the largest remnant of the ancient hunting forests of Mare and Mondrum, created nearly a thousand years ago by the Normans.

The path runs for 34 km (21 miles) from Frodsham in a broad loop south, then east and then north to the border between Appleton and Stockton Heath just south of Warrington. The first part, from Frodsham to Norley, runs through the sandstone country of Mid-Cheshire – including the Delamere Forest itself. The path then descends into the valley of the River Weaver, which it crosses at Dutton Locks, before rising onto the Cheshire plain, running northwards through Whitley to Stockton Heath.

Throughout its length, the Delamere Way provides easy walking through a representative cross-section of Cheshire landscapes.

Whilst this guide describes the Delamere Way itself, many circular walks are possible that allow the path to be walked in sections without back-tracking or the use of a second vehicle as a 'shuttle'. For those wishing further information – or to find company for walks – The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society welcomes enquiries. Further information is available on our web site at **http://www.mcfs.org.uk**

Acknowledgments to the team of writers and walkers: Joyce and Tony Harbottle, Mike Harris, Sinikka Savonen, Peter Waite and John White.

Additionally, for the 2026 edition revisions: Elisabeth Sullivan, Nick Banks, John White, Helen Ebbitt, Peter Waite and David Kendall

Web version Peter Waite

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide describes the walk in both directions.
For Frodsham to Stockton Heath please turn to page 6.
For Stockton Heath to Frodsham please turn to page 24

The use of Ordnance Survey 1:25000 maps to supplement the maps included in this guide is recommended. These provide more accurate and latest detail.

The following links provide on-line access to maps which can be printed to take with you as paper or electronic copies. Click on the link and it should open the appropriate OS 25k "Streetmap".

Frodsham ↔ Kingswood	5.0 km, 3.1 miles
Kingswood ↔ Blakemere	4.1 km, 2.5 miles
Blakemere ↔ Norley	4.2 km, 2.6 miles
Norley ↔ Onston	3.5 km, 2.2 miles
Onston ↔ Dutton Locks	4.6 km, 2.9 miles
Dutton Locks ↔ Marsh Lane	3.6 km, 2.2 miles
Marsh Lane ↔ Hatton	4.4 km, 2.7 miles
Hatton ↔ Stockton Heath	4.6 km, 2.8 miles

The following links are to OpenStreetMap street level maps.
You can zoom in and out and drag the map to any location.

OSM Frodsham OSM Stockton Heath

Frodsham

to

Stockton Heath



The first part of the Delamere Way climbs from its start at the B5152 to reach the highest point of the entire trail beside the reservoir at Harrol Edge. The views are a more than adequate compensation for the uphill start. The path then crosses the sandy former common land to Birch Hill before descending to the edge of the Delamere Forest.



1. The Sandstone Trail is a waymarked 56 km medium distance path opened in 1974 and now running from Frodsham to Whitchurch, just across the Shropshire border.

2. St Lawrence's Church, Frodsham, dates back to the 12th century and was once linked with the Cistercian Abbey at Vale Royal, near Northwich. The church was restored in the 1880s. It sits on the hill overlooking the river and marshes. The town moved downhill in the Middle Ages as the marshes were drained.

3. Heathercliffe Hotel: (closed) built in 1860 on the site of the old Beacon Hill quarry as a private house. It was once the home of Queen Alexandra of Yugoslavia, a Greek princess, first cousin to Prince Philip and second cousin to Queen Elizabeth II.

4. Shepherds Houses: the name is a reminder that this area used to be common land, with the straight sandy trails a remnant of the old tracks across the common.

5. Harrol Edge—at just over 150m above sea level, the highest point of the Delamere Way.

Frodsham to Kingswood 5.0 km, 3.1 miles

At the start of the Delamere Way (*), go R at the Sandstone Trail[1] finger post, up the steps and follow path to Frodsham church[2]. Cross Howey Lane and keep ahead up Bellemonte Road, 50m after the turning to Middle Walk on the R, after the road bends L, go R up many steps to the *Bellemonte Hotel* (pub).

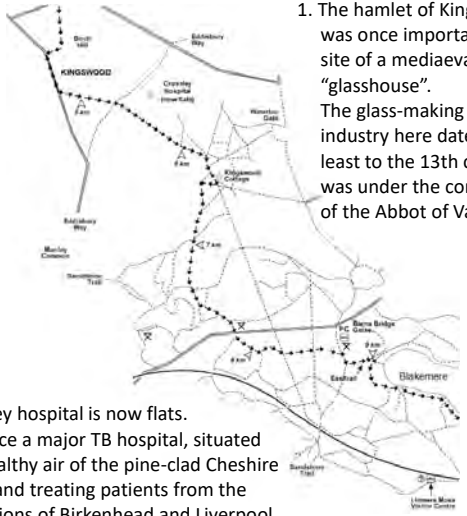
Go L through the car park then immediately right uphill past the pub and in 100m go L onto a path traversing the slope. After the Heathercliffe Hotel[3] (closed) on the right, cross the drive and drop down to go through a gate opposite. Go through the gate and continue to Simons Lane where you turn L.

50m after the entrance to Frodsham Woods (formerly Frodsham Golf Club) go R on a waymarked path. Follow hedge on R, then between hedges and fences. Cross farm track by a pair of stiles and then incline slightly L and uphill across a field to reach Manley Road.

Go R on the road for 200m to Shepherds Houses[4], then L up a track passing Harrol Edge[5] covered reservoir on the R. On reaching the corner of Dobers Lane, go R right down a further track (the finger post is incorrectly signed Eddisbury Way) to a road. Take the road R and at the next road junction go L and uphill to a crossroads. Go R for 150m, take a track on the L and where it bears L go straight ahead over a stile. Continue through gorse to stile at Birch Hill Cottage, go R down the track and then L on the road to reach the hamlet of Kingswood and Crossley Park apartments on the L.

(*) Getting to the start of the Delamere Way from Frodsham.
From the traffic lights in the centre of Frodsham, walk SE on Church St. (B5152), past the railway station then uphill for about 450m to go 45m past Churchfield Rd. on your R. The start of the Delamere Way (SJ 5207 7759) is up the steps on your R. (Churchfield Rd. becomes Red Lane at this point.)

This part of the trail runs through the Delamere Forest - an easy undulating path with varied woodland scenery. At the end of this stage, the walker gets a first glimpse of the former Blakemere Moss, which has been allowed to return to nature and is now a large mere – Blakemere.



1. The hamlet of Kingswood was once important as the site of a mediaeval "glasshouse". The glass-making industry here dates back at least to the 13th century and was under the control of the Abbot of Vale Royal.

2. Crossley hospital is now flats. It was once a major TB hospital, situated in the healthy air of the pine-clad Cheshire uplands and treating patients from the conurbations of Birkenhead and Liverpool.

3. The Delamere Forest is the largest remnant of the Norman hunting forests of Mara and Mondrum that once extended over much of the central Cheshire plain. Scattered through the forest are several meres (small lakes) and mosses occupying hollows formed by the melting of great blocks of ice remaining from the thick ice sheet that covered Cheshire in the Ice Age. The forest is now managed by the Forestry Commission and serves both forestry and as a forest park. Its more than 1300 acres is rich in flora and wildlife. According to the season, colour is provided by bluebells, foxgloves and heather. Birds and small mammals abound. There is a network of trails for walkers and cyclists; horse riding is allowed by permit.

Kingswood to Blakemere 4.1 km, 2.5 miles

Just past Crossley Park apartments, go L on track (signed "Kingswood[1] Hall"). In 400m cross the Eddisbury Way and continue on track beside woods, skirting the grounds of the former Crossley Hospital[2], to enter the Delamere Forest[3].

Shortly after the track passes disused filter beds on the R, go R at a T-junction and in 100m go straight ahead where a forest road leads off to the L. Pass the Forest Lodges Cafe (refreshments and toilets) then at a junction of several paths some 100m beyond Kingswood Cottage (on the L), just after a sign "No cycles beyond this point" (facing back against direction of travel), go sharp R and in 20m go R again just before a bridge with metal handrails.

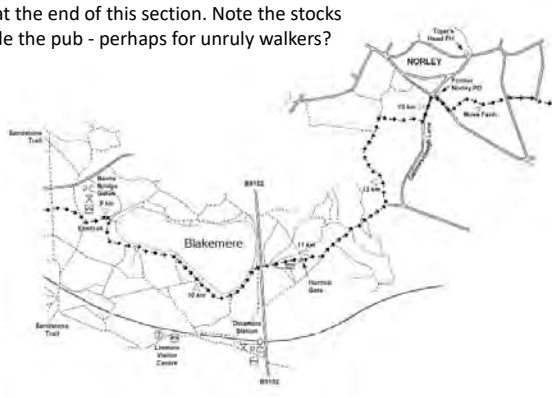
Follow a path by overhead power lines for 150m, the turn L at the forest edge and follow path through trees for 400m to reach a forest road. Keep straight on for 800m, crossing the waymarked Sandstone Trail and ignoring all side tracks to reach picnic table at Ashton Road.

Cross over to the track ahead and in 250m, just before this track bends R, turn L onto a lesser track *(this junction is easy to miss).* Continue for 250m to a path crossing, then slightly L, crossing another track, then straight on (the path becomes ill defined through the trees), bearing slightly R and then uphill to meet a wide forest road (the Sandstone Trail).

Go R for 100m then L along a track for 250m then, downhill past a bench to a path junction. There is a finger post at the junction and Blakemere lies ahead, screened by trees (a short path gives access).

At first the trail continues through the Delamere Forest on level ground beside Blakemere (shown as Blakemere Moss on some maps). A diversion to the south gives access to the Linmere Visitor Centre. After leaving the mere and crossing the B5152 the path becomes more undulating as it traverses the eastern part of the forest (Hart Hill). It eventually descends from the forest down an easy track before climbing Harthill Bank, across fields and along well-marked tracks to reach Gallowsclough Lane and the village of Norley.

1. Blakemere Moss: An ancient wetland that was drained by French prisoners during the Napoleonic wars two hundred years ago. It remained as marshy woodland until the last years of the 20th century, when it was allowed to return to nature to form the present mere - the largest in the forest - surrounded by marshes and rich in wildfowl and other wildlife.
2. Gallowsclough Lane: As might be imagined, this lane was the site of a mediaeval gallows. The slope to the south is called Gadsbank (*God's Bank)* - where felons prayed for forgiveness before they met their maker. A reminder of a harsher past when poachers in Delamere Forest might expect to breathe their last in Norley!
3. Norley: A typical mid-Cheshire village, Norley occupies a site overlooking the Weaver Valley to the north and east. Refreshments are available at the Tiger's Head pub a short distance to the north of the path at the end of this section. Note the stocks outside the pub - perhaps for unruly walkers?



Blakemere to Norley 4.2 km, 2.6 miles

At the finger post, go R - signed "Linmere Cycle Trail / Delamere Way". Follow the broad track for 300m as it curves around marsh on the left to reach a crossing of paths and then go half L to follow the good track close to the edge of Blakemere[1], which is screened by trees at first but comes into view later.

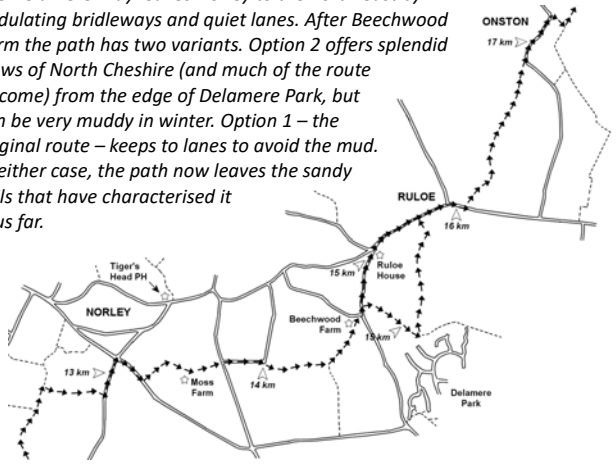
Just after the southernmost point, a good track sharp R leads to the new Visitor Centre (refreshments and toilets); pass the entrance to Go Ape, go over the railway bridge then R to reach the B5152 (Station Road – Delamere Station is 600m R). (This extension adds just over a mile to the route. Otherwise go straight ahead for a short distance to reach the B5152 as above.)

Cross the road and go straight ahead on a forest road and through a large car park area, leaving it by Harthill Gate (named on the barrier). Go slightly R to reach a T-junction, then bear half L. Follow the track and descend steeply to a junction of many paths; bear half L up a steep slope to reach the forest edge.

Leave the forest down the track ahead and, where it bears R near New Pool Cottage, go L along a grassy track to a stile. Cross over and bear L and uphill on a track, following the tractor ruts. On the far side of the field, bear R and follow the hedge to go through a gate in the field corner then follow the hedge on the L through gates and stiles. At the bottom of the slope, go ahead and uphill beside a small wood on the right.

Where the woodland ends, turn R at the corner of a fence onto a track running between the wood on the R and a meadow on the L. After passing a white house ("Woodstock") on the R, bear L on a lane and follow it to reach Gallowsclough Lane[2]. Go L on the lane and continue to the village of Norley[3], soon descending steeply to a crossroads.

The Delamere Way leaves Norley to the north-east by undulating bridleways and quiet lanes. After Beechwood Farm the path has two variants. Option 2 offers splendid views of North Cheshire (and much of the route to come) from the edge of Delamere Park, but can be very muddy in winter. Option 1 – the original route – keeps to lanes to avoid the mud. In either case, the path now leaves the sandy soils that have characterised it thus far.



Descending to the hamlet of Ruloe, it starts to cross an area of richer flatter farmland. Crossing several fields, most of which are used for pastoral rather than arable farming, the path reaches the hamlet of Onston.

1. Delamere Park: The former manor house (Delamere House), one time home of a branch of the Wilbraham family—a well-known Cheshire name—was demolished just before World War II and the park became first a US military camp and later a camp for displaced persons from Poland (many of whose descendants still live in the Northwich area). After a period of neglect, the park was developed as an award-winning housing development.

2. Onston: now in the parish of Crowton, Onston Hall was a small manor formerly in the parish of Weaverham and belonging to William de Rolter. It was for many years—until the early 1940s—the home of the Hignett family, who still live nearby.

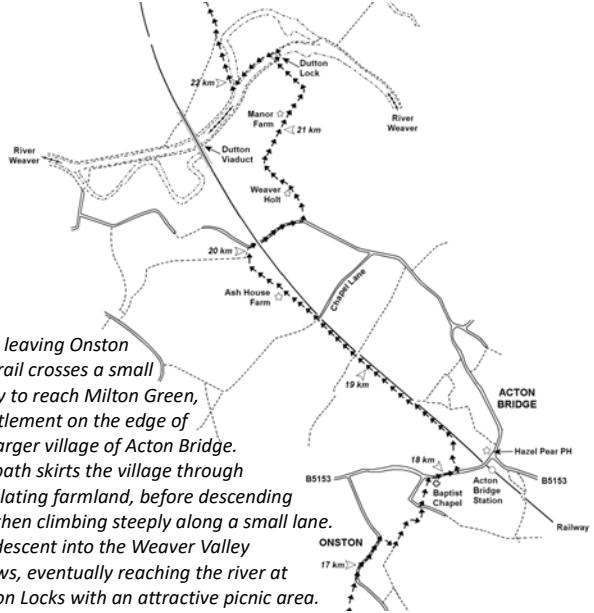
Norley to Onston 3.5 km, 2.2 miles

Go R onto Fingerpost Lane and in 150m L down a bridleway. Keep R of the wall where a drive forks L. After Moss Farm on the R, bear L through a gate onto a track to Cow Lane. Cross over and go ahead down Moss Lane. Where this turns L, keep ahead on a track then where it bears R continue ahead beside a stream until it turns R. Here bear L across a stile into a field and aim diagonally, passing a small pond on the L, to the gate into Beechwood Farm.

Go through the farm to reach Wood's Lane. Go L on the lane and in 25m go R over a stile (*). Aim for a gap in the line of trees, cross the stream and go uphill to a stile and then with the hedge on your R. At the top field corner, on the edge of Delamere Park[1], follow the finger of the 3-way post sharp L towards a large oak, then go slightly R to a stile. Climb over and descend diagonally L, converging with the bottom fence, then continue into the next field.

Head for a gate and bear L down a track to Bag Lane. Go R on the lane for 180m to Ruloe and the junction with Bent Lane (*). In a further 100m go L over a stile by a stream into a field. Keep the stream on your L, cross two more stiles, then bear R across the next field, following the line of a slight depression and passing two trees, to a gap. Bear R, aiming to the L of the pylon on the skyline. Cross a stile and keep on the same bearing across the next field to reach a stile onto Onston Lane and then go L through the hamlet of Onston[2].

(*) A wet season alternative is to continue on Wood's Lane to a crossroads and then R on Bag Lane to the junction with Bent Lane (*).



After leaving Onston the trail crosses a small valley to reach Milton Green, a settlement on the edge of the larger village of Acton Bridge. The path skirts the village through undulating farmland, before descending and then climbing steeply along a small lane. The descent into the Weaver Valley follows, eventually reaching the river at Dutton Locks with an attractive picnic area.

1. The River Weaver rises near the Peckforton Hills and runs in a broad southerly loop before heading north to join the River Mersey at Runcorn. Once an important artery for the industries of mid-Cheshire, industrial decline and the move to road transport has left the valley as a haven for wildlife and flowers in the midst of intensively farmed countryside.

2. Dutton Locks (completed in 1732) present the industrial archaeologist with a fascinating reminder of the former importance of waterways for transport in a quieter and more slow-paced era. Just upstream is the wreck of the MV Chica, a Norwegian sailing vessel that sank in 1993 during a refit. Footpaths lead downstream back to Frodsham, passing below the 20 arches of the Dutton Viaduct that dominates the skyline. This was first used in 1837 to carry the railway linking Birmingham to Manchester and Liverpool. Foundations of cotton waste acted as 'shock absorbers' for the stresses from trains passing overhead.

Onston to Dutton Locks 4.6 km, 2.9 miles

Pass Onston Hall on the L and where the lane goes L go R on a track for 100m. Go L through a gap into a field, then ahead and downhill. Nearing a white house go through the kissing gate onto a drive, bear R past a pond, cross the stream and go up a track to Sandfield Lane.

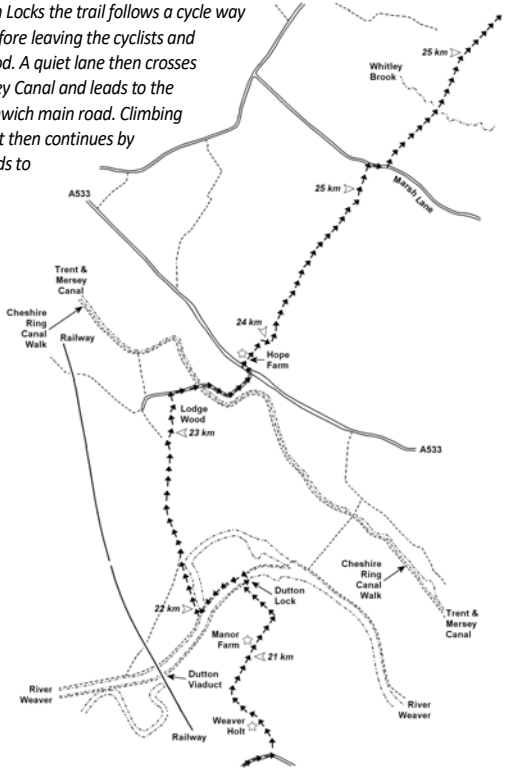
At the lane go sharp R and immediately L up the bank and over a stile. Cross the field beside the hedge to reach the B5153, just west of the chapel. Go R on the road for 170m then L down a track to a field with large oak trees. Aim slightly L across the field towards the railway line. Turn L beside the fence and railway line to a kissing gate at the end of the field. Continue beside the railway and at the railway bridge continue ahead with the railway still on your R.

Cross a stile onto a footpath and continue, passing a large footbridge on your R, eventually reaching Chapel Lane beside a third railway bridge. Cross the lane and go straight ahead down a drive and through the farmyard of Ash House. Take the track down the field to Cliff Lane, go R under the railway bridge.

Climb up the lane and in 280m, at a road junction, turn L pass Weaver Holt on the L. Where the road forks, keep L past a 'Private' sign (which does not apply to walkers); go past two small cottages and through a small gap at the end of the road to rejoin the surfaced drive.

Where this ends, go through a gate and soon cross an old stile to go ahead down a track. Cross a stile at the bottom and in 25m go L over another stile. Follow the hedge on the R and pass through a gate to reach the River Weaver[1] at Dutton Locks[2] (picnic area).

After leaving Dutton Locks the trail follows a cycle way across meadows before leaving the cyclists and entering Lodge Wood. A quiet lane then crosses the Trent and Mersey Canal and leads to the busy Runcorn-Northwich main road. Climbing gently all the time, it then continues by farm tracks and fields to Marsh Lane.



1. The Trent and Mersey Canal opened in 1777 and runs for 140 km from the River Trent near Derby to the River Mersey at Runcorn. Much of the impetus for the canal came from the Wedgwood potteries that used it to import china clay from Cornwall, to move Northwich salt (for glazing) to the potteries and to export the finished pottery. From the bridge on Lodge Lane, the towpath provides a walking route north to Preston Brook and the Bridgewater Canal and south to Acton Bridge and Northwich. This is part of the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk - a 155 km long distance path.

Dutton Locks to Marsh Lane 3.6 km, 2.2 miles

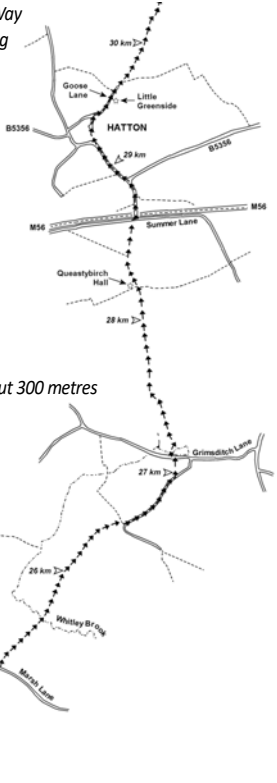
Cross the locks and turn L (downstream) following the bank of the Weaver Navigation. In 270m cross a wooden arched bridge and go R through a gate into a large field. Follow the signposted cycleway beside the former course of the River Weaver. Continue along the cycleway where it ceases to be surfaced, cross a field and pass through a gate onto a farm track. Bear slightly R along this track and in 100m leave the cycleway by crossing a stile on the R.

Follow the path around the field, between the barbed wire fence on the L and the copse on the right. In 120m turn R over a stile into Lodge Wood. Follow the path through the wood and cross the stream to pass a memorial on the L and arrive at Lodge Lane. Turn R on the lane and follow it across the Trent & Mersey Canal[1] and on to the main road (A533).

At the main road, turn L for 60m before crossing the main road (Note: take great care as visibility is poor.) to enter the track beside Hope Farm. Follow this as it turns R past a cottage and then L to pass a small wood on the R. Beyond the wood continue on the farm track, which ends (about 690m after leaving the main road) with a stile giving access to a field.

Keep ahead, with fence and hedge on the R, over a stile beside a pond and then across another field and over a second stile. Walk parallel to the power lines (visible off to the R) to a stile in the corner by a hedge. Cross this stile, follow the hedge on the R and cross a further stile to arrive at Marsh Lane.

After crossing Marsh Lane the Delamere Way runs through undulating farmland, crossing Whitley Brook and passing the former millpond beside the former Millstone pub on Grimsditch Lane. More field walking leads to farm tracks past Queastybirch Hall and then over the M56 motorway to reach the small village of Hatton.



The Cheshire/Warrington boundary is about 300 metres north of Grimsditch Lane. →

Marsh Lane. →

1. Hatton: Today a quiet village, it was the home of Sir Piers Dutton of Hatton. Sir Piers was vigorous in helping Henry VIII to dissolve the monasteries as part of his break with the Pope and the Catholic church, at one time putting down a riot at Norton Priory near Runcorn. He was thanked personally by the king and went on to build the 'new hall' at neighbouring Dutton.

Marsh Lane to Hatton 4.4 km, 2.7 miles

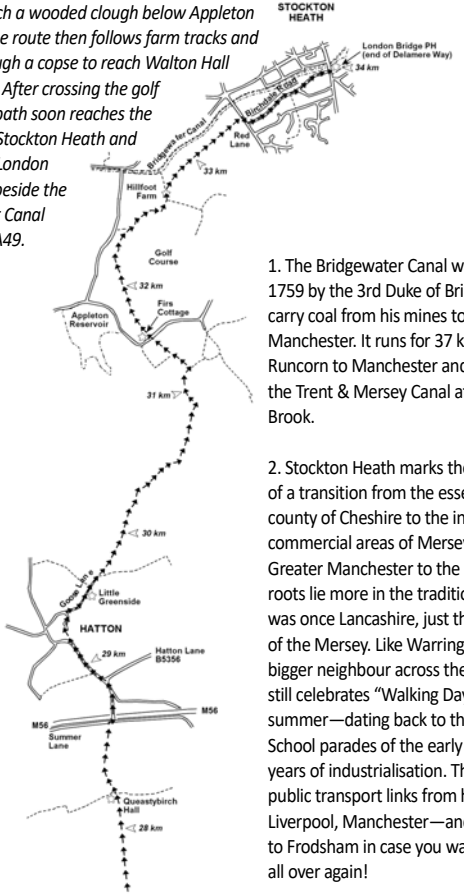
Go R for 100m and then cross a stile on the L. Go L of a pond and continue beside the hedge on the R to the end of a long field and cross a footbridge over Whitley Brook. Follow the hedge on the L and continue in the same direction on a track that eventually becomes a minor road. Just after passing a footpath sign on the L reach Greenhill Lane and go L at the road junction.

In about 450m, just after the road bends a little to the R, take the footpath to the L over a stile and cross the middle of a field to join the road again at Grimsditch Lane. Turn L then R just before the former pub onto a track between a pond and a cottage to emerge in a field. Follow the short fence on the L and bear slightly L to the field corner; aiming slightly to the R of the largest tree and to the L of distant farm buildings. Cross the stile just to the R of the tree, go ahead to a telegraph pole and then follow the fence on the L. At the end of the field enter a track, to arrive in about 700m at Queastybirch Hall.

Pass the farm and a little after passing a large barn on the L, where the metalled drive bears L, keep straight ahead over a stile into a field. Follow the hedge on the R and cross a further stile to climb steep steps up onto the road (Summer Lane).

Go R and immediately L across the M56 motorway bridge. Where this minor road meets a larger one (Hatton Lane, B5356) at a sharp bend bear L towards the village. About 250m after the 30 mph sign at the beginning of Hatton[1], where the road bends L take a narrow path ahead (slightly R across the green) between houses to emerge onto Gosling Close. Continue to the end of the road and go R onto Goose Lane.

After Hatton, the trail follows a bridleway across fields to reach a wooded clough below Appleton Reservoir The route then follows farm tracks and passes through a copse to reach Walton Hall Golf Course. After crossing the golf course, the path soon reaches the outskirts of Stockton Heath and ends at the London Bridge pub beside the Bridgewater Canal and on the A49.



1. The Bridgewater Canal was started in 1759 by the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater to carry coal from his mines to Manchester. It runs for 37 km from Runcorn to Manchester and links with the Trent & Mersey Canal at Preston Brook.

2. Stockton Heath marks the beginning of a transition from the essentially rural county of Cheshire to the industrial and commercial areas of Merseyside and Greater Manchester to the north. Its roots lie more in the traditions of what was once Lancashire, just the other side of the Mersey. Like Warrington, its bigger neighbour across the Mersey, it still celebrates "Walking Days" every summer—dating back to the Sunday School parades of the early Victorian years of industrialisation. There are public transport links from here to Liverpool, Manchester—and even back to Frodsham in case you want to start all over again!

Hatton to Stockton Heath 4.6 km, 2.8 miles

Go along Goose Lane which soon becomes a track. In 180m, at a junction, keep straight ahead with a fence and woodland on the L. At the end of the fence follow the track across a field to a gap in the opposite hedge. Continue across a second field then pass to the R of a copse ahead. Keep more or less straight ahead, with the hedge first on the L and then on the R, to a wooded valley. Cross the stream and climb to a track junction just before a white house.

Go L for 200m along a track to a L-hand bend and here go R on a path through trees to reach Park Lane. Cross the lane and go through a kissing gate to the R of Firs Cottage (signed for Stockton Heath) and onto Walton Hall Golf Course. Follow the boundary on L to a low wooden post the waymark. Keep ahead until the path goes R to a footbridge. Cross the bridge and continue to follow the waymarks, passing between willow trees on the L and a bunker on the R. On reaching a gravel track go slightly R, over a small bridge and then L off the track to a kissing gate that gives access onto a small lane.

Go R on the lane and continue on a path alongside the lane to emerge shortly before Hillfoot Farm, now a development of mews houses. Where a footpath goes R up the hill, continue straight ahead across the cobbled yard and leave it by a gate onto a track. On reaching the road (Red Lane), go R and in 50m L into Birchdale Road (no road name sign).

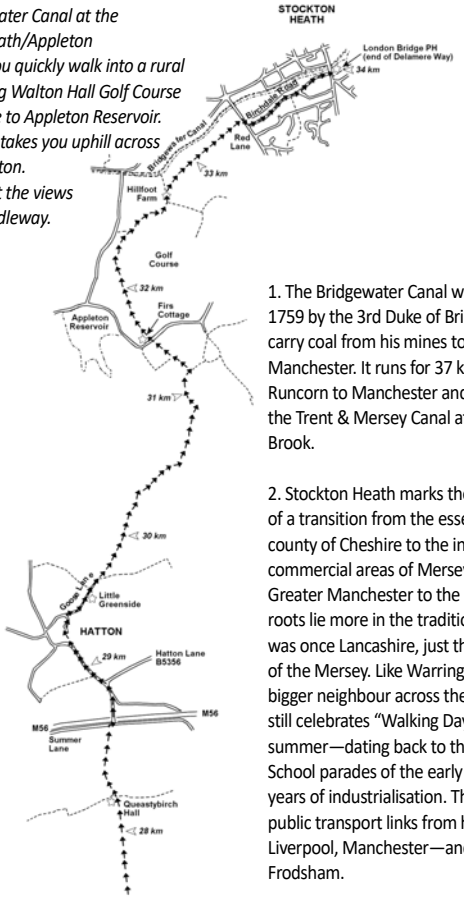
Follow this to the London Road (A49) then turn left to use the pedestrian crossing on the canal bridge to reach the London Bridge pub opposite. The pub is right beside the Bridgewater Canal[1] on the edge of Stockton Heath[2] (just in Appleton).

Stockton Heath

to

Frodsham

Leaving the London Bridge pub on the A49 beside the Bridgewater Canal at the Stockton Heath/Appleton boundary you quickly walk into a rural area crossing Walton Hall Golf Course to pass close to Appleton Reservoir. A bridleway takes you uphill across fields to Hatton. Look back at the views from the bridleway.



1. The Bridgewater Canal was started in 1759 by the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater to carry coal from his mines to Manchester. It runs for 37 km from Runcorn to Manchester and links with the Trent & Mersey Canal at Preston Brook.

2. Stockton Heath marks the beginning of a transition from the essentially rural county of Cheshire to the industrial and commercial areas of Merseyside and Greater Manchester to the north. Its roots lie more in the traditions of what was once Lancashire, just the other side of the Mersey. Like Warrington, its bigger neighbour across the Mersey, it still celebrates "Walking Days" every summer—dating back to the Sunday School parades of the early Victorian years of industrialisation. There are public transport links from here to Liverpool, Manchester—and to Frodsham.

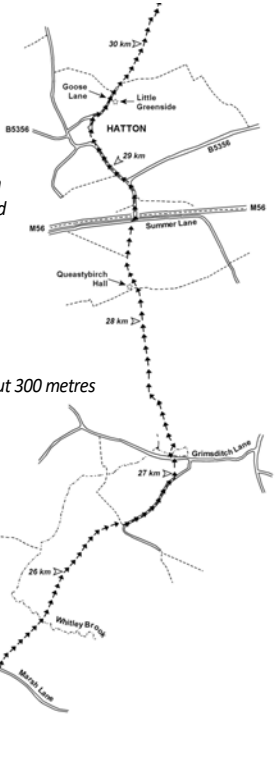
Stockton Heath to Hatton 4.6 km, 2.8 miles

From the London Bridge pub on the A49 Appleton/Stockton Heath[2], go R over the Bridgewater Canal[1] and use the crossing over the busy road. Double back over the bridge and turn R down Birchdale Road. At the end of the road, go R on Red Lane and in 50m L down a track signed for Hatton. After 600m go through a gate into Hillfoot Farm (mews housing), across a cobbled yard, through a gate at the far end onto a lane. Follow this and where it turns R continue on a path beside it on your L. Shortly after you rejoin the lane, before the R bend, turn L through a kissing gate onto Walton Hall Golf Course.

Cross a bridge over a stream and after a few metres on a gravel track bear L towards a willow tree, beside which is the first of a series of low posts with yellow waymarks. Continue slightly L beside the tee and bunker, leaving the small copse to the R and aiming for a waymarked post beside a weeping birch. Keep ahead to the next post at the beginning of a small birch copse, then go slightly L through the copse to the next post and then on to cross a small bridge. Go R and then L to follow the ditch for 430m to a kissing gate onto a lane.

Cross over diagonally to the R and go L through a kissing gate onto a track through young woodland. On reaching a wider track keep ahead to a T-junction (just before a white house ahead on the L) and go R on a track. Follow this through a wooded clough, across a stream, uphill between hedges and then along the edge of fields. After a wood and pond on the R, cross an open field to a gap in the hedge, then straight across a further field to a fence and copse on the R. At a junction keep ahead on the track, which soon becomes a minor road. In 150m at the memorial bench, go L onto an estate road (Gosling Close).

Leaving Hatton village you cross the M56 motorway taking farm tracks past Queastybirch Hall. Walking through undulating farmland you pass the former Millstone pub (with its millpond) on Grimsditch Lane to cross Whitley Brook and reach Marsh Lane.



The Cheshire/Warrington boundary is about 300 metres north of Grimsditch Lane. →

Marsh Lane. →

1. Hatton: Today a quiet village, it was the home of Sir Piers Dutton of Hatton. Sir Piers was vigorous in helping Henry VIII to dissolve the monasteries as part of his break with the Pope and the Catholic church, at one time putting down a riot at Norton Priory near Runcorn. He was thanked personally by the king and went on to build the 'new hall' at neighbouring Dutton.

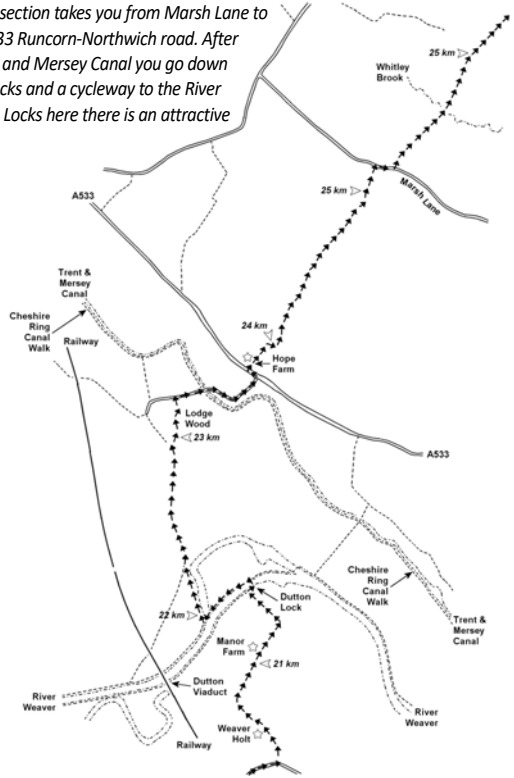
Hatton to Marsh Lane 4.4 km, 2.7 miles

In the village of Hatton[1], at the far end of Gosling Close take the narrow alley between the houses numbered 17 and 19 to reach Hatton Lane. Go L on the lane and, where it bears L, fork R into Pillmoss Lane and then cross the M56 motorway. At the T-junction with Summer Lane, go R and immediately L over a stile, down steep steps and over a stile into a field. Follow the hedge on the L to a second stile and then onto a farm road, passing a large barn on the R, to arrive at Queastybirch Hall.

Follow the lane ahead between hedges and at the end enter a field. Go ahead, following a fence on the R to a telegraph pole near a large tree. Bear L across the field to cross a stile (near a another large tree) into a large field. Cross this field heading straight for a distant electricity pole (the yellow hazard marker is visible) just to the L of trees and a white cottage. At the pole go L for a few metres, then R along a short hedge to reach a surfaced track with a pond on the L. Follow this to Grimsditch Lane.

Go L on the road and immediately R at finger post over a stile, cross the middle of the field to a stile in the opposite hedge and go over this onto Greenhill Lane. Go R and in 500m bear R at a junction onto a smaller lane. Follow the lane, which becomes a track between hedges and then go through a gate into a field. Continue with the hedge on your R to reach a footbridge over Whitley Brook. Continue along the edge of a large field with the hedge now on the L. After passing R of a pond cross a stile onto Marsh Lane.

A gentle downhill section takes you from Marsh Lane to cross the busy A533 Runcorn-Northwich road. After crossing the Trent and Mersey Canal you go down through fields, tracks and a cycleway to the River Weaver at Dutton Locks here there is an attractive picnic area.



1. The Trent and Mersey Canal opened in 1777 and runs for 140 km from the River Trent near Derby to the River Mersey at Runcorn. Much of the impetus for the canal came from the Wedgwood potteries that used it to import china clay from Cornwall, to move Northwich salt (for glazing) to the potteries and to export the finished pottery. From the bridge on Lodge Lane, the towpath provides a walking route north to Preston Brook and the Bridgewater Canal and south to Acton Bridge and Northwich. This is part of the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk – a 155km long distance path.

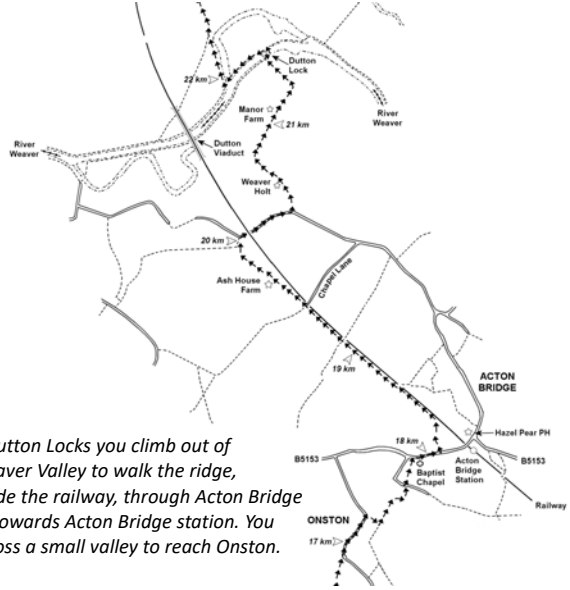
Marsh Lane to Dutton Locks 3.6 km, 2.2 miles

Go R on the lane and in 100m at a finger post go L over a stile into a field. Follow the hedge on the L and cross another stile. Continue until the hedge ends, then cross the field parallel to power lines on the L to cross a further stile in the field corner. Continue with the fence on the L and after a pond on the L go over yet another stile. Follow the hedge and fence on the L and at the end of the field cross a stile beside a gate to emerge onto a wide track. Follow this for just over 400m, then go R and L, past a cottage and then over a cattle grid to emerge in a further 200m onto the A533 (Northwich Road).

Cross the road immediately opposite the end of the track (it is dangerous to cross further to the L because of the blind summit). Go L for 60m along the road then go R into Lodge Lane and continue to the bridge over the Trent & Mersey Canal[1].

After 150m take the path on the L into Lodge Wood, follow it through the wood and over a stream to a stile and then continue beside a field. Cross a stile and go L on a track. In 100m take the R fork, cross a stream and go through a gate on the L, following a fingerpost marked 'Bridleway 5'. Bear L across the field and follow the track through a second gate, also signposted 'Bridleway 5'.

Keep following the broad track, keeping a wooded slope on the R. Pass between a large pond on the R and the old course of the River Weaver on the L, following the river downstream. Pass through a gate and cross the white wooden horse bridge on the L over the old river to arrive at the Weaver Navigation at Dutton Locks.



From Dutton Locks you climb out of the Weaver Valley to walk the ridge, alongside the railway, through Acton Bridge Parish towards Acton Bridge station. You then cross a small valley to reach Onston.

1. The River Weaver rises near the Peckforton Hills and runs in a broad southerly loop before heading north to join the River Mersey at Runcorn. Once an important artery for the industries of mid-Cheshire, industrial decline and the move to road transport has left the valley as a haven for wildlife and flowers in the midst of intensively farmed countryside.

2. Dutton Locks (completed in 1732) present the industrial archaeologist with a fascinating reminder of the former importance of waterways for transport in a quieter and more slow-paced era. Just upstream is the wreck of the MV Chica, a Norwegian sailing vessel that sank in 1993 during a refit. Footpaths lead downstream back to Frodsham, passing below the 20 arches of the Dutton Viaduct that dominates the skyline. This was first used in 1837 to carry the railway linking Birmingham to Manchester and Liverpool. Foundations of cotton waste acted as 'shock absorbers' for the stresses from trains passing overhead.

Dutton Locks to Onston 4.6 km, 2.9 miles

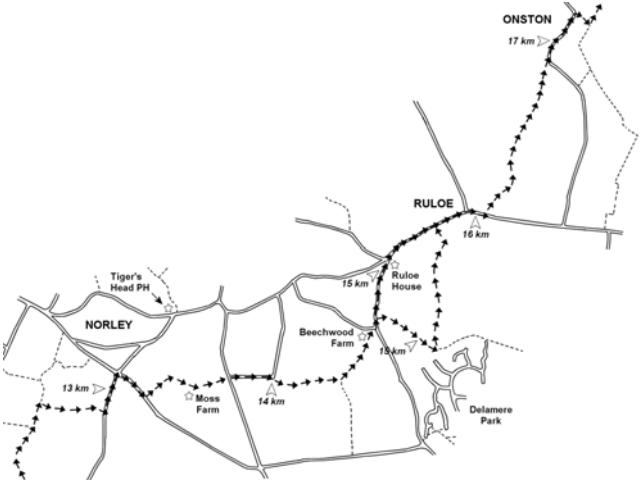
Cross the River Weaver[1] over Dutton Locks[2] and go through the gate in the facing hedge. Go L and soon cross a stile. Go R for 25m, cross a second stile onto a track and continue uphill to Manor Farm and then along a metalled farm road. Where this bears L, keep ahead through a small gap in the hedge to pass Maple Cottage on the R, then round a L-hand bend to rejoin the farm road. Keep ahead past Weaver Holt to Cliff Lane.

Go R on the lane, steeply downhill and under a railway bridge. In 80m, go L over a stile and follow a track uphill through a field to Ash House Farm. Cross the farmyard and continue on a minor road to reach Chapel Lane beside a railway bridge on the L. **Do not cross the railway,** but continue straight ahead with the railway on your L, passing a large green footbridge and then a third railway bridge (*). Still keep straight ahead with the railway on the L. Pass through a metal kissing gate and after a second kissing gate reach a stile on the L.

Do not cross the railway, but bear R across the field aiming for a utility pole in the corner of the field, leaving a large lone oak on your R. Leave the field by a track to reach the B3153 at Acton Bridge; cross with care, go R past a chapel, then over a stile on the L. Keep beside the hedge to another stile and steps down onto Sandfield Lane.

Go R and then sharp L (signed 'Cuddington'). Follow the track across a bridge, past a pond and just before a house ('Brookside') go L on a grassy track to a kissing gate into a field. Aim uphill towards a large oak tree and go through a gap onto a track. Go R and shortly L on Onston Lane to reach the hamlet of Onston.

(*) If the next section is blocked by vegetation, retrace your steps where necessary, walk further on the B5152 and take the path on the far side of the railway, from the side of the Hazel Pear pub to the track leading over the railway bridge (or vice versa).



From Onston cross several fairly flat fields, most of which are used for pastoral rather than arable farming, to the hamlet of Ruloe. You now have two options where option 1 (the original route) keeps to lanes to avoid the mud but option 2 offers splendid views. After Beechwood Farm the uphill route to Norley takes undulating bridleways and quiet lanes on sandy soils.

1. Delamere Park: The former manor house (Delamere House), one time home of a branch of the Wilbraham family—a well-known Cheshire name—was demolished just before World War II and the park became first a US military camp and later a camp for displaced persons from Poland (many of whose descendants still live in the Northwich area). After a period of neglect, the park was developed as an award-winning housing development.

2. Onston: now in the parish of Crowton, Onston Hall was a small manor formerly in the parish of Weaverham and belonging to William de Rolter. It was for many years—until the early 1940s—the home of the Hignett family, who still live nearby.

Onston to Norley 3.5 km, 2.2 miles

Leave Onston[2], past Onston Hall on the R, and in 150m cross a stile on the R into a large field. Aim diagonally, leaving just *one* of several large trees on your R, to cross a stile. In the next field aim for a gap (in line with a large willow in the distance). Go through the gap and follow a slight depression passing two solitary trees, then bear R to a stile in a field corner beside a stream. Follow this, crossing two more stiles, to reach Bag Lane at Ruloe.

Go R to the junction with Bent Lane R (*). In a further 170m, at a fingerpost, take the track L to a gate into a field. Follow the fence on the L, go through a gap and in the next field aim diagonally R uphill. Cross a stile at the top of the hill, aim for a large oak and at the tree bear L to the field corner at the edge of Delamere Park[1]. Descend sharp R along the field edge to a stile. Cross over and aim for a gap in the line of trees, cross the stream and bear L to a stile where you go L onto Wood's Lane (**).

In 25m, at a junction with a lane on the R, leave the roads going half-R down the drive to Beechwood Farm. Go through the farmyard and through a gate into an often muddy field. Cross diagonally, with the pond on your R, to a stile onto a track. Go R beside a stream, eventually bearing R to reach Moss Lane.

Keep ahead on the lane to reach Cow Lane and cross over onto the track ahead. At a gate just before Moss Farm go R, continue uphill to emerge on Fingerpost Lane and then go R to Norley crossroads.

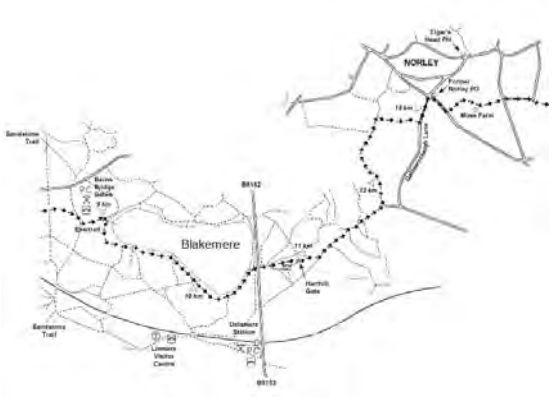
(*) A wet season alternative is to continue on Bag Lane to a crossroads and then bear L on Wood's Lane to reach the drive to Beechwood Farm (**).

You leave Norley via Gallowsclough Lane and quickly take field tracks to climb Harthill Bank and then Hart Hill in the eastern part of Delamere Forest. After crossing the B5152 you walk beside Blakemere (shown as Blakemere Moss on some maps). A diversion to the south gives access to the Linmere Visitor Centre.

1. Blakemere Moss: An ancient wetland that was drained by French prisoners during the Napoleonic wars two hundred years ago. It remained as marshy woodland until the last years of the 20th century, when it was allowed to return to nature to form the present mere - the largest in the forest - surrounded by marshes and rich in wildfowl and other wildlife.

2. Gallowsclough Lane: As might be imagined, this lane was the site of a mediaeval gallows. The slope to the south is called Gadsbank (*God's Bank)* - where felons prayed for forgiveness before they met their maker. A reminder of a harsher past when poachers in Delamere Forest might expect to breathe their last in Norley!

3. Norley: A typical mid-Cheshire village, Norley occupies a site overlooking the Weaver Valley to the north and east. Refreshments are available at the Tiger's Head pub a short distance to the north of the path at the end of this section. Note the stocks outside the pub - perhaps for unruly walkers?



Norley to Blakemere 4.2 km, 2.6 miles

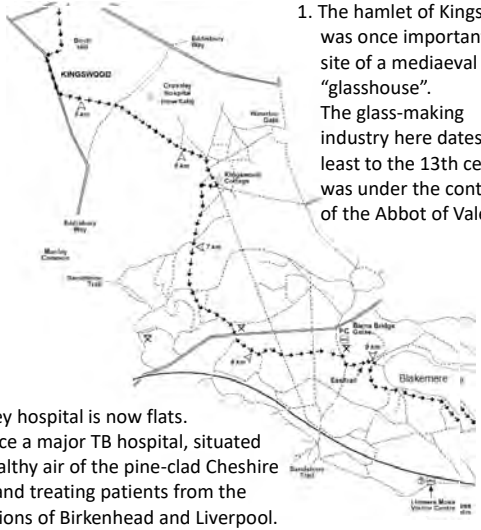
Go L at the Norley[3] crossroads onto Gallowsclough Lane[2]. In 200m go R on a driveway and then in 50m bear L (ignore drive to 'The Ryde'). In 90m, in front of a white house ('Woodstock'), bear R on a bridleway (not a driveway) leaving the house on your L.

Continue beside woodland to a T-junction. Go L (downhill), over a stile and then uphill between hedges to a gate into a field. Follow the hedge on the R and 40m after a second gate bear half L and downhill on a good path across the field. At the far corner of the field cross a stile and go R on a bridleway to a T-junction. Go R and uphill for 180m to pass through a gap into Delamere Forest.

Go ahead, at first steeply downhill and then uphill. After 600m, where the track forks, ignore the smaller track straight ahead (leading to the forest edge in a further 50m) and instead take the wider track that bears R at the fork, leaving several pine trees on your L but none on your R. In 160m, enter a large car park by Hart Hill Gate, aim straight ahead across it and leave by a wide track to reach the B5152 (Station Road – Delamere Station is 600m L) in about 75m.

Cross over and go ahead for 40m towards the mere (Blakemere[1]) and then bear L on a track with the lake alongside on the R. Shortly, a track half L leads to the new Visitor Centre (refreshments and toilets). Otherwise continue on a good track with the lake on the R, ignoring all paths to the L At a path crossing (fingerpost for 'Barnsbridge Gate') keep straight on. In 380m keep straight on, ignoring the broad track on the L, and soon bear R to reach, in a further 300m, a 2-way finger post signed 'Whitemoor - Linmere Cycle Trail'.

Leaving Blakemere, which has been allowed to naturally become a large mere, you walk on an easy undulating path with varied woodland scenery to reach the edge of the forest at Kingswood.



1. The hamlet of Kingswood was once important as the site of a mediaeval "glasshouse". The glass-making industry here dates back at least to the 13th century and was under the control of the Abbot of Vale Royal.

2. Crossley hospital is now flats. It was once a major TB hospital, situated in the healthy air of the pine-clad Cheshire uplands and treating patients from the conurbations of Birkenhead and Liverpool.

3. The Delamere Forest is the largest remnant of the Norman hunting forests of Mara and Mondrum that once extended over much of the central Cheshire plain. Scattered through the forest are several meres (small lakes) and mosses occupying hollows formed by the melting of great blocks of ice remaining from the thick ice sheet that covered Cheshire in the Ice Age. The forest is now managed by the Forestry Commission and serves both forestry and as a forest park. Its more than 1300 acres is rich in flora and wildlife. According to the season, colour is provided by bluebells, foxgloves and heather. Birds and small mammals abound. There is a network of trails for walkers and cyclists; horse riding is allowed by permit.

Blakemere to Kingswood 4.1 km, 2.5 miles

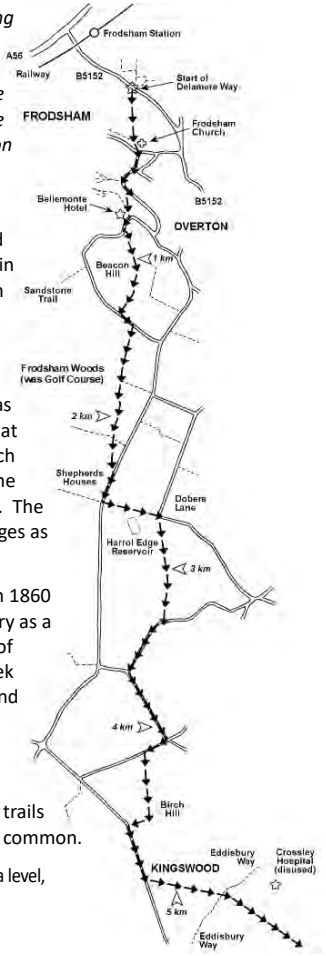
Go L at the finger post ('Whitemoor - Linmere Cycle Trail') climbing in a zigzag past a bench and on to a T-junction with a broad forest ride (the Sandstone Trail). Go R for 80m, then L onto a well-defined track into the trees. After a while this track is a bit unclear but keep always more or less straight ahead until it becomes clearer again as it emerges into younger woodland and in another 600m reaches a T-junction with a broad forest track; go R for 250m to arrive at Ashton Road.

Cross over and continue ahead down a forest track for 470m to the crossing with the Sandstone Trail. Keep straight on (*not* half L) and in 380m at a further crossing keep straight ahead on a narrow path through trees, ignoring broader paths back L and forward half R; the forest edge is soon visible not far away on the L. In 440m follow the path round a sharp bend to the R, then follow power lines to a path crossing with a concrete bridge just on the R. Go L and in 25m join another track then go L.

Pass Kingswood Cottage then Forest Lodges Cafe (refreshments and toilets) and in 100m, where the main track bears R, go straight ahead on a narrower path through trees.

In 80m at a path crossing (ignoring paths straight ahead and half R) go L on a path through conifers. In 200m keep straight ahead past filter beds, ignoring a path on the R. Keep the same general bearing on a track beside the forest edge and skirting the grounds of the former Crossley Hospital[2]. In 600m cross the Eddisbury Way and keep straight on for 430m to reach New Pale Road (Kingswood[1]) and go R to pass Crossley Park apartments.

Leaving Delamere Forest, the ascending path crosses the sandy former common land to Birch Hill and on to the walk high point beside Harrol Edge reservoir. The views, particularly of the Mersey Estuary, on the downhill section to Frodsham are more than adequate compensation for the uphill walk.



1. The Sandstone Trail is a waymarked 56 km medium distance path opened in 1974 and now running from Frodsham to Whitchurch, just across the Shropshire border.

2. St Lawrence's Church, Frodsham, dates back to the 12th century and was once linked with the Cistercian Abbey at Vale Royal, near Northwich. The church was restored in the 1880s. It sits on the hill overlooking the river and marshes. The town moved downhill in the Middle Ages as the marshes were drained.

3. Heathercliffe Hotel: (closed) built in 1860 on the site of the old Beacon Hill quarry as a private house. It was once the home of Queen Alexandra of Yugoslavia, a Greek princess, first cousin to Prince Philip and second cousin to Queen Elizabeth II.

4. Shepherds Houses: the name is a reminder that this area used to be common land, with the straight sandy trails a remnant of the old tracks across the common.

5. Harrol Edge—at just over 150m above sea level, the highest point of the Delamere Way.

Kingswood to Frodsham 5.0 km, 3.1 miles

In 200m after Crossley Park, just before power lines, go R up a drive (Birch Hill) and at the top go L over a stile. Follow the path through gorse to reach a stile onto a broad track and follow it to a road. Go R to a crossroads, then L and – at the next junction – downhill to the R. Just before the bottom of the hill take the track on the L *(this is incorrectly signed 'Eddisbury Way')*, climb to a road corner (Dobers Lane) and go L on a track past Harrol Edge[5] covered reservoir. Continue downhill to the road at Shepherds Houses[4].

Go R and in 150m cross a stile on the L into a field. Bear R, aiming for two phone masts on the horizon, to reach a pair of stiles at a farm track. Go ahead on a path between hedges and fences; after a stile keep beside the hedge on the L to reach Simons Lane. Go L past the entrance to Frodsham Woods (formerly Frodsham Golf Club drive) and in 50m go R onto a drive and then a track to a gate. Cross the drive of Heathercliffe Hotel[3] (closed) on the L and follow a clear path downhill to Bellemonte Road.

Go R and downhill, to the Bellemonte pub; go L at the corner of the building, cross the car park and, just as a drive begins, go R onto a narrow path. At a fork in 25m keep right and steeply downhill (steps in places) to Bellemonte Road.

Go L on the road and in about 80m join the Sandstone Trail[1], which emerges from Middle Walk (on the L). The rest of the route is shared with the Sandstone Trail.

Continue downhill to Frodsham church[2]. Cross the road and take the path ahead to pass the church on the R. Continue downhill to reach Red Lane (B5152) at the bottom of steps. This is the end of the Delamere Way.

Turn L and walk downhill for about 450m to reach the centre of Frodsham and the Railway Station.

The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society

The Society is a registered charity that has been caring for mid-Cheshire's public rights of way since 1961. It was formed to bring together people who enjoy walking and who are interested in keeping open and well signed the public rights of way in an area stretching roughly from Runcorn and Warrington in the north to the Shropshire border in the south and from the M6 motorway in the east to the Welsh border in the west. Its objectives also include the preservation and enhancement of the beauty of the countryside for the benefit of the public as well as the development and maintenance of a network of well-defined public footpaths for local and visitor use.

The Society works closely with the Public Rights of Way Units of the Highway Authorities in the area and whenever and wherever possible in cooperation with landowners and their tenants in order to maintain the public's right to use footpaths and bridleways while respecting the legitimate needs of those who live and work in the countryside, especially the farming community. We walk the paths, carry out waymarking and minor maintenance, report to the authorities on the condition of the paths and work with them to address problems arising.

The Society conducts walks every Wednesday and on some Sundays led by our own experienced walk leaders. Guests are always welcome to "give us a try" and new members are, of course, particularly welcome!

We have also developed a number of medium and long-distance footpaths in the county to encourage the public to experience the interest and beauty that is on offer – for free! – while contributing to a healthy lifestyle. At the time of writing these paths are:

Baker Way – 21 km (13 miles) from Chester station to Delamere Station.
Delamere Way – 34 km (21 miles) from Frodsham via Delamere Forest to Stockton Heath in south Warrington.
Eddisbury Way – 27 km (17 miles) from Frodsham to the Sandstone Trail at Higher Burwardsley.
Longster Trail – 19 km (12 miles) from Chester to Helsby Hill.
North Cheshire Way (printed book) – 113 km (70 miles) from Hooton Station (Wirral) to Disley Station near Stockport, with a spur from Chester to Croughton.
South Cheshire Way – 55 km (34 miles) from Mow Cop to Grindley Brook near Whitchurch.

The North Cheshire Way printed guidebook and the e-guidebooks are available from the Society for all of these walks. Further details of the Society and its walks are available on its website at: http://www.mcfs.org.uk

Further information .....

Trails such as The Delamere Way are shown on OS 25K maps using the green diamond symbol on the usual green lines. The trail name is written along the footpath line at various intervals.



Walkers should be aware that whilst the MCFS frequently replaces the yellow waymark discs, these and finger posts do go missing from time to time.

Since this booklet was last revised, stiles may have been replaced by kissing gates or gaps in the hedge and hedges may have been removed. Although farmers are obliged to reinstate footpaths crossing their fields, sometimes this does not happen and routes can become obscured, particularly in late summer. You should always endeavour to keep to the path even if it is through a crop.

Should you encounter any problems en route, please report them to: Rights of Way Unit, Cheshire West and Chester Council by e-mail
prow@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

For problems between Stockton Heath and about 330m north of Grimsditch Lane please contact Warrington Borough Council by email
prow@warrington.gov.uk

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and clarity, the MCFS cannot be held responsible for errors, omissions and post publication changes to the route.

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