Gritstone Trail
Walkers’ Guide

Follow the 35 mile / 56km trail through Cheshire’s Peak District

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk
Walking the Gritstone Trail

Stride out along the Gritstone Trail and sample some of the finest walking in Cheshire. There are stunning views in all directions from the gritstone ridges abutting the Cheshire plain. On a clear day you’ll see views to the Welsh hills and the cathedrals of Liverpool. Along the route there’s a variety of interesting landmarks and features.

Access Information
The Trail is very hilly but not mountainous, with several long climbs and some short, steep ascents and descents. There are many stiles, including ladder stiles along the way. Surfaces vary and can be rough, boggy or slippery. There are few facilities along the Trail so walkers need to be self sufficient in food and drink. The ability to read a map and use a compass is recommended although the route is well waymarked. Equipment should include walking boots, full waterproofs, warm clothing and a first aid kit. Before setting out always let someone know your intended route and estimated finish time. Mobile phones do not always work in some areas along the Trail.

Maps
Although the Trail is well waymarked you are strongly advised to use the Ordnance Survey Explorer map 268, Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton, and the Explorer OL1 Dark Peak map. Explorer map OL24 is also useful, as it includes the Peak District to the east as well as covering the Trail from Bollington to Rushton Spencer.

Where is the Gritstone Trail?
The Trail is located on the edge of the Peak District. Walking the Trail from north to south is recommended. The Trail starts at Disley railway station, to the south east of Manchester and follows the Pennine edge southwards to finish at Kidsgrove railway station near Stoke on Trent. Road links to both ends of the Trail are good and other main roads cross the Trail in the middle section. Manchester Airport is nearby.

Following Waymarks
The Trail is well waymarked using a mixture of fingerposts and yellow waymark discs with a ‘G’ in a footprint. Waymarks indicate the way to go as you stand directly in front of them. Often there is a clear path on the ground but sometimes the path is not obvious. Look out for stiles in hedges, fences or walls or waymark posts to guide you.

Out in the Country
Please keep to paths across farmland and leave all gates as you find them. Dogs must be kept under control so they are not a nuisance to other walkers, farm animals or wildlife.

The Trail uses both permissive paths and public rights of way. You should not experience any problems using the rights of way network, but if you do please report them to Countryside & Public Rights of Way on 01270 686029 or email prow@cheshireeast.gov.uk.
Disley to Tegg’s Nose 17 km / 10½ miles

Start at the railway station in Disley. Walk up the steps through the wood. Turn right onto Red Lane and then left onto Green Lane.

Follow Green Lane to the end and continue ahead across rough pasture. Turn right down the track to the bridge, cross the brook and continue ahead.

Enter Lyme Park by East lodge and follow the drive past the Hall to the car park. Follow the waymark up through the wood and along the path to the path if the park is closed follow the alternative route marked in green on the map.

Turn right and walk along Berristal Road.

Turn right onto the road, taking care on this stretch, and take the footpath on the left after Brink Farm. Follow the track and the waymarked path down to the bridge over Harrop Brook. Go up the hill to Hedgerow.

Turn right and walk down the track to Spukley Lane.

At the first left hand bend follow the footpath straight ahead, down some steps and alongside a stone wall. Turn right at the footpath junction, follow the path downhill to the road.

Turn left onto the road and right up the track. Turn left up the stone steps to White Nancy.

Follow the path along Kerridge Hill and bear left down the Hill to Tower Hill (858ft).

Turn left along the road and right onto Berristal Road. After about 60m, turn right up the footpath and follow the path over the ridge. Turn right and immediately right again over the bridge. Follow the path to Buxton Road (A537).

Turn left, cross the A537 with care and follow the path over the hill to Buxton Old Road. Turn right and left into Tegg’s Nose Country Park.

The Trail starts in the attractive village of Disley. From here it heads south along Green Lane with excellent views over Lyme Park. The whole area covered by the Trail used to be known as The Lyme meaning border country. The building on the Hill in the lake is the Hylands, an early 18th century hunting tower which has recently been restored. The Trail enters the park via the east gate and sweeps down past the Hall before climbing up to the moors. Look out for the famous red deer, possibly descended from the ancient herd which roamed the hunting forest of Mackinfield.

It’s worth a small detour at the top of the Hill to see the Bow Stones, thought to be the remains of Anglo Saxon crosses which marked the edge of an ancient kingdom. Sponds Hill is the highest point on the Trail at 410m / 1345 ft with fine views towards Kinder Scout and south along the Trail itself.

Bakewstonedale Road takes its name from the bakewales, used for baking cakes over an open fire, which were quarried here. There are many quarries along the Trail as griststone was used extensively for roads, house building and roofing. Some are still active today, with the stone mainly used for building.

A charming stone packhorse bridge crosses Harrop Brook. Packhorses were the main form of transport in the hills until the end of the eighteenth century.

A steep climb leads up to White Nancy, the famous landmark built in 1820 by the Gaskell to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo. White Nancy overlooks the mill town of Bollington where spinning and weaving were the main industries. From here the Trail follows the narrow ridge of Kerridge, which is still actively quarried.

From the footpath above Berristal Road glance over the valley at the remnants of natural oak woodland, an important home for wildlife. The final section of the Trail to Tegg’s Nose crosses many small meadows full of tormentil and speedwell. Later in the summer look out for delicate handbells. Nodding in the breeze.

Tegg’s Nose to Timbersbrook 24 km / 15½ miles

The summit of Tegg’s Nose is one of the best places along the Trail to take a closer look at the gritstone. The curves in the quarry face show how the rock was laid down under water over 250 million years ago. Working in the quarry was a tough job, hewing the rock by hand, often in harsh weather. So why not pop over to Tegg’s Nose and take in the fantastic views?

From the Visitor Centre follow the Griststone Trail through Tegg’s Nose Country Park and across the two reservoir dams.

Turn left onto Clarke Lane and right up the footpath alongside the watercourses. Cross the fields to Mag Lane.

Turn right, then left and follow the Trail across the fields to Mag Lane.

Cross over and follow the footpath to Holme Lane.

Turn right along the lane and take the second footpath on the left. Go past Forbark onto Croker Hill and go past the telecommunications tower. Take the first footpath on the left down to the A54.

Take care at the A54 road. Turn left and then cross the road to Minn End Lane. Walk along the Minn (to Hawskholes).

At Hawskholes take the footpath on the left and follow the path down into the Mill Brook valley. Cross the brook and go up the bank. Turn right at the path junction and follow the Trail to Barksfield Bridge.

Follow the track to the canal feeder and turn right along the footpath. Take the first footpath on your right across the fields to the A523.

Cross the road and follow the path opposite under the disused railway, go over the stream and turn right. Follow the path through the meadows to Raven’s Dough and walk up through the woodland to the road.

Turn left and walk up the road, around the corner and take the path on the left. Go up the hill to the road.

Turn left along Cloudside and first right up the track. Bear right off the track up the steps and follow the path to the top of The Cloud.

Turn left by the trig. point and follow the path down the hill to Godberryhole Lane.

Bear right and turn left down a path to Furstall Road. Turn left and right into Timbersbrook Park.

Canal feeder - Roushton Spencer alternative route

The canal feeder path can be very muddy in winter or after prolonged wet weather. The alternative route follows a track and roads and adds a further 1.3 km / ½ mile to the walk.

19a. Cross the canal feeder and follow the road uphill and straight ahead.

19b. Pass the cottages, at the cross roads continue on the road ahead, walking down onto a holloway and over a small stream. Bear right at the next road junction and walk down hill into the village.

19c. At the main road turn right and walk along the pavement for about 400 m / 440 yds. Cross over with care and walk down Station Lane to the Knot Inn.

19d. Walk past the Knot Inn and just before the corner turn right along the disused railway line.

19e. After about 1 km / ½ mile take the footpath to the left to rejoined the Griststone Trail which is also part of the Staffordshire Way at this point.
Timbersbrook to Kidsgrove  15 km / 9 1/3 miles

Timbersbrook Picnic Area was once the site of a large silk mill and dye works. From here the Trail crosses several fields to the Biddulph Valley Way. Today pedal power has replaced steam on the old railway line which once carried sand from Cheshire to the Potteries and coal back to Congleton.

Nick i'th'Hill is a pronounced dip in the ridge, believed to have been a melt water drainage channel in the last ice age. From here the final ridge walk follows Edge Hill, which is part of Congleton Edge. The edge was formed as a result of earth movements along the Red Rock Fault. Here the much older, often harder rocks of the Peak District and Pennines dip beneath the young sandstones and mudstones of the Cheshire plain. Look out for small patches of white clay at Pot Bank, once used to make pots and clay pipes.

The Old Man of Mow is a gritstone pillar over 20 m high, left standing as the stone around it was quarried away. Stone from here was used to build the school and church at Sandbach.

The folly of Mow Cop is another distinctive landmark, perched dramatically on an outcrop of millstone grit. It was built in 1754 by Squire Wilbraham to improve the view from Rode Hall.

Mow Cop is often referred to as the home of Primitive Methodism. The Memorial Church was built in 1862 on the site of the first open air meeting which took place on 31st May 1807 and attracted over 2000 people. It lasted from six in the morning until nine at night.

The Brake was part of an old tramway which carried coal from the collieries east of Mow Cop down to the Macclesfield Canal. The canal links the Peak Forest Canal at Marple Junction with the Trent & Mersey Canal at Hardwoods Wood, a distance of 44 km. The Trail finishes at Kidsgrove railway station but it is well worth carrying on along the Trent & Mersey Canal to see the entrance to Harecastle Tunnel. Here the water is bright orange, caused by iron-rich springs seeping into the water. Over 600 miners and bricklayers worked under dreadful conditions to build the 2 km long tunnel which emerges in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent.
Gritstone Trail - quick facts

Highlights
The variety of landscapes and landmarks along the route. Tracing your journey by looking back to landmarks and ridges you’ve already walked and those ahead you are yet to explore!

Only have one day for a walk ..... which section should you choose?
This really depends upon your interests. If solitude is your preference go for the middle section. For historic landmarks the Disley to Tegg’s Nose section is the one to choose. All the sections have fabulous views!

History
Enjoy the parkland landscape of Lyme Park used in the filming of Pride and Prejudice. Catch your breath by Bollington’s famous monument called White Nancy. At Tegg’s Nose learn about the local geology and the history of gritstone quarrying. Admire the distinctive folly of Mow Cop at the southern end of the walk. Stroll along the Macclesfield Canal which is noted for its beautiful stone bridges.

Accommodation
The Trail is usually walked over 3 days. Accommodation is best booked in advance, as the trail passes through quite remote areas. It may be possible to arrange transport to and from your accommodation.

Visit www.discovercheshire.com for information on accommodation along the Trail. For public transport information phone Traveline on 0871 2002233.

Have you enjoyed your walk?
To help us monitor and improve the Gritstone Trail please let us know.
Email: rangers@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Cheshire’s Peak District
A region brimming with glorious hills, historic houses, beautiful gardens, rich cultural attractions and quaint market towns. Come for a holiday or relaxing break; visit friends or family and discover Cheshire’s Peak District with its stylish restaurants, historic attractions and exhilarating walks. For things to see and do and for places to eat and sleep www.cheshirepeakdistrict.com is your very own travel guide.