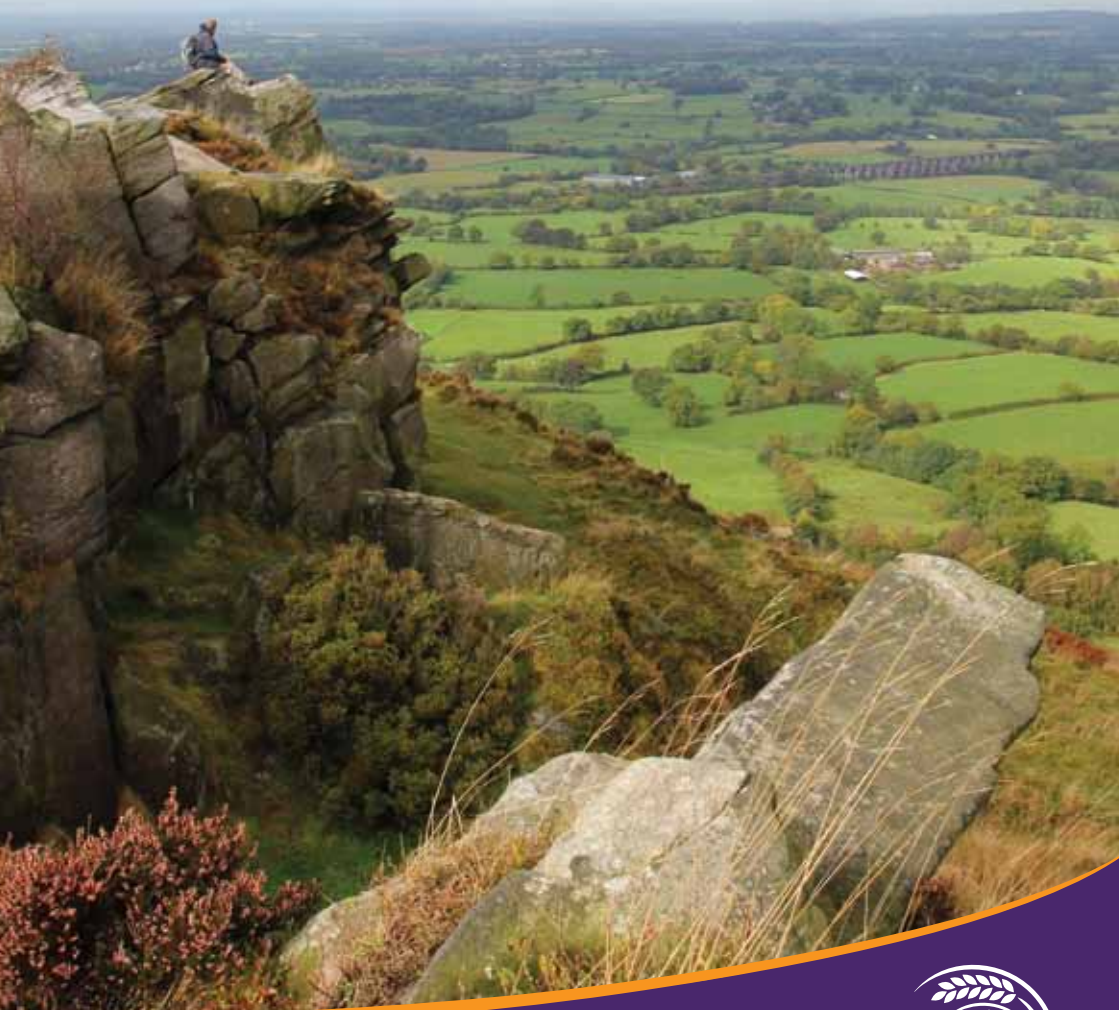


# Gritstone Trail

## Walkers' Guide

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



[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**Cheshire East**  
Council

# 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.



# 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.



## 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.



## 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](mailto:prow@cheshireeast.gov.uk).

# Disley to Tegg's Nose 17 km / 10½ miles

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 Enter Lyme Park by East Lodge and follow the drive past the Hall to the car park. Follow the waymarks up through the wood and along the path to the road. If the park is closed follow the alternative route marked in green on the map.
- 4 Turn right and walk along Sponds Hill to Bakestonedale Road.
- 5 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.
- 6 Turn right and walk down the track to Spuley Lane. Turn left and go over the staggered crossroads into Oakenbank Lane.
- 7 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.
- 8 Turn left onto the road and right up the track. Turn left up the stone steps to White Nancy.
- 9 Follow the path along Kerridge Hill and bear left down the hill to Tower Hill (B5470).
- 10 Turn left along the road and right into 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 stile. Follow the path to Buxton Old Road (A537).
- 11 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 is the Cage, 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 Macclesfield.

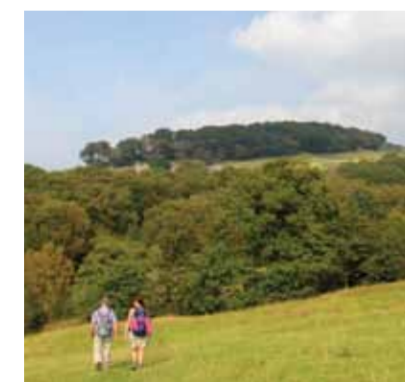
It's worth a small detour at the top of the hill to see the Bow Stones, thought to be the remains of Anglo Saxon crosses which marked the edge of an ancient kingdom. Sponds Hill is the highest point on the Trail at 410 m / 1345 ft with fine views towards Kinder Scout and south along the Trail itself.

Bakestonedale Road takes its name from the bakestones, used for baking cakes over an open fire, which were quarried here. There are many quarries along the Trail as gritstone 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 Gaskells 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 harebells nodding in the breeze.



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# Tegg's Nose to Timbersbrook 24 km / 15½ miles

- 12 From the Visitor Centre follow the Gritstone Trail through Tegg's Nose Country Park and across the two reservoir dams.
- 13 Turn left onto Clarke Lane and right up the footpath alongside the waterworks. Cross the fields to the lane.
- 14 Turn right, then left and follow the Trail across the fields to Meg Lane.
- 15 Cross over and follow the footpath to Hollin Lane.
- 16 Turn right along the lane and take the second footpath on the left. Go up Foxbank onto Croker Hill and go past the telecommunications tower. Take the first footpath on the left down to the A54.
- 17 Take care at the A54 road. Turn left and then cross the road to Minn End Lane. Walk along the Minn to Hawkslee.
- 18 At Hawkslee take the footpath on the left and follow the path down into the Shell Brook valley. Cross the brook and go up the bank. Turn right at the path junction and follow the Trail to Barleighford Bridge.
- 19 Follow the track to the canal feeder and turn right along the footpath. Take the first footpath on the right across the fields to the A523.
- 20 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 Clough and walk up through the woodland to the road.
- 21 Turn left and walk up the road, around the corner and take the path on the left. Go up the hill to the road.
- 22 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.
- 23 Turn left by the trig. point and follow the path down the hill to Gosberryhole Lane.
- 24 Bear right and turn left down a path to Tunstall Road. Turn left and right into Timbersbrook Picnic Area.

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. Soon the Trail drops into the shelter of the woodland. Listen out for the drumming of the woodpeckers, marking their territories in the spring. Bottoms Reservoir and Tegg's Nose Reservoir were built in 1850 and 1871 respectively. They helped provide a steady flow of water down the River Bollin to power the mills of Macclesfield.

Legend says Meg Lane End was home to ruthless highway men who stalked the lonely hill passes to rob weary travellers. It's worth pausing on the steep climb up Foxbank to admire the views behind. Croker Hill, topped with the distinctive telecommunications tower, is the most exposed section of the route where the soil barely covers the bedrock.

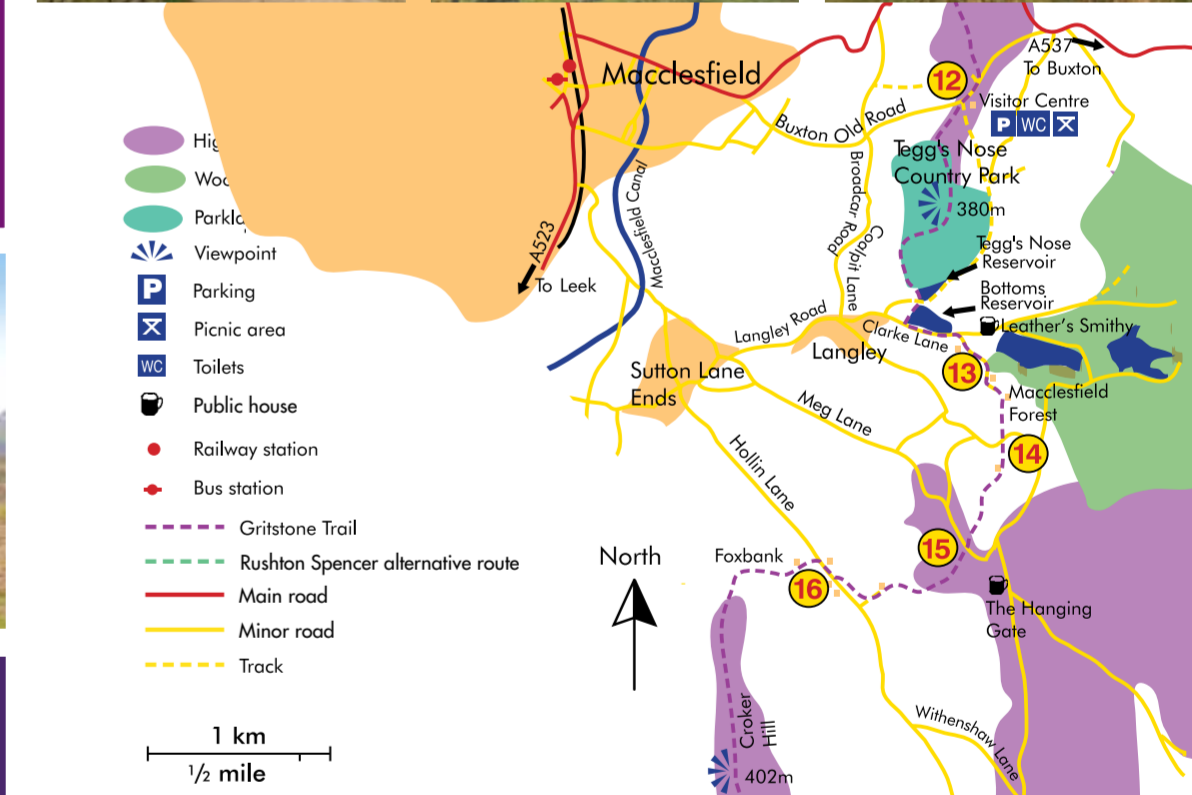
Shell Brook runs through a deep, pretty valley which is especially attractive in the autumn when the trees are ablaze with colour.

The Trail crosses the River Dane at Barleighford Bridge and then follows the canal feeder. Butterflies and dragonflies enjoy the warmth and shelter here, feeding or resting in the afternoon sunshine.

The feeder itself goes to Rudyard Lake and then flows on to supply the Caldron Canal at Leek.

Look out for holly and mountain ash on the steep climb through Raven's Clough to the summit of The Cloud (343 m / 1125 ft). Folklore tells how a giant king once stood with one foot on Shutlingsloe and the other on The Cloud. As he stepped off The Cloud he left his shoe behind which became the rocky summit.

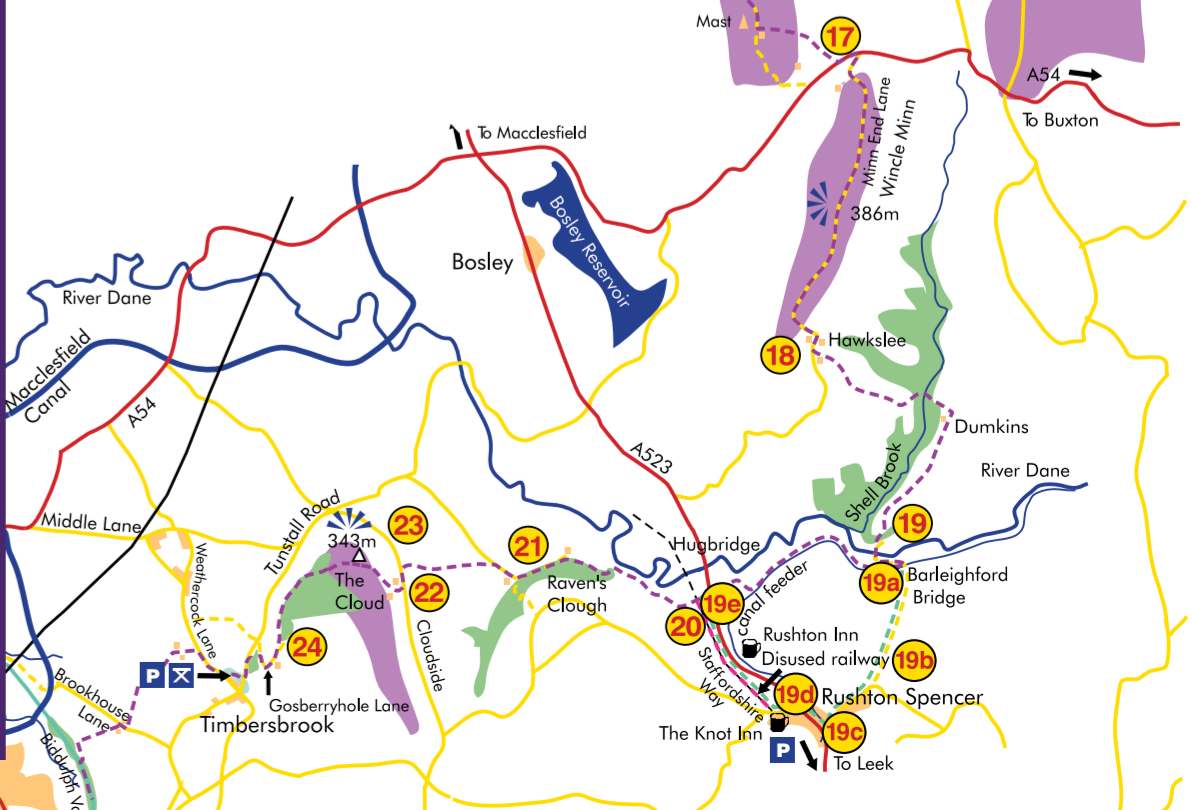
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## Canal feeder - Rushton Spencer alternative route

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 / ¾ 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 into a hollow and over a small stream. Bear right at the next road junction and walk downhill 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 / ¾ mile take the footpath to the left to rejoin the Gritstone Trail which is also part of the Staffordshire Way at this point.



# Timbersbrook to Kidsgrove 15 km / 9½ miles



- 25 Turn right out of Timbersbrook Picnic Area into Weathercock Lane. Take the first footpath on the left and cross several fields to Brookhouse Lane.
- 26 Turn right then take the first footpath on the left through the farmyard. Go across the fields and turn left alongside the Biddulph Valley Way.
- 27 Join the Biddulph Valley Way and carry on for approximately 2 km. Look out for the path going down the steps on the left. Turn right and go under the bridge and follow the track to the farm.
- 28 Follow the footpath over the fields, into the woods and up the track to Nick i'th'Hill.
- 29 Turn left along the bridleway to the road at Pot Bank.
- 30 Carry on along the ridge on Congleton Road.
- 31 Bear right off Congleton Road down the path through the wood. Cross the field and carry on past the Old Man of Mow.
- 32 Cross Castle Road and follow the Trail past the folly at Mow Cop.
- 33 Turn left out of the car park and take the second road on the right. Cross the next road and take the footpath straight ahead by the side of Mow Cop Methodist Church. Turn left onto the bridleway and then right down a footpath to Mount Pleasant Road.
- 34 Cross over Mount Pleasant Road and continue ahead down Meadowside Lane. Bear left onto Spring Bank and follow the pavement downhill to the junction with Station Road.
- 35 Bear left, crossing the canal bridge and road with care, to join the canal towpath. Follow the canal towpath to Red Bull.
- 36 Turn right down the steps before the aqueduct and turn left along the towpath of the Trent & Mersey Canal. Follow the towpath to Kidsgrove railway station.

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.

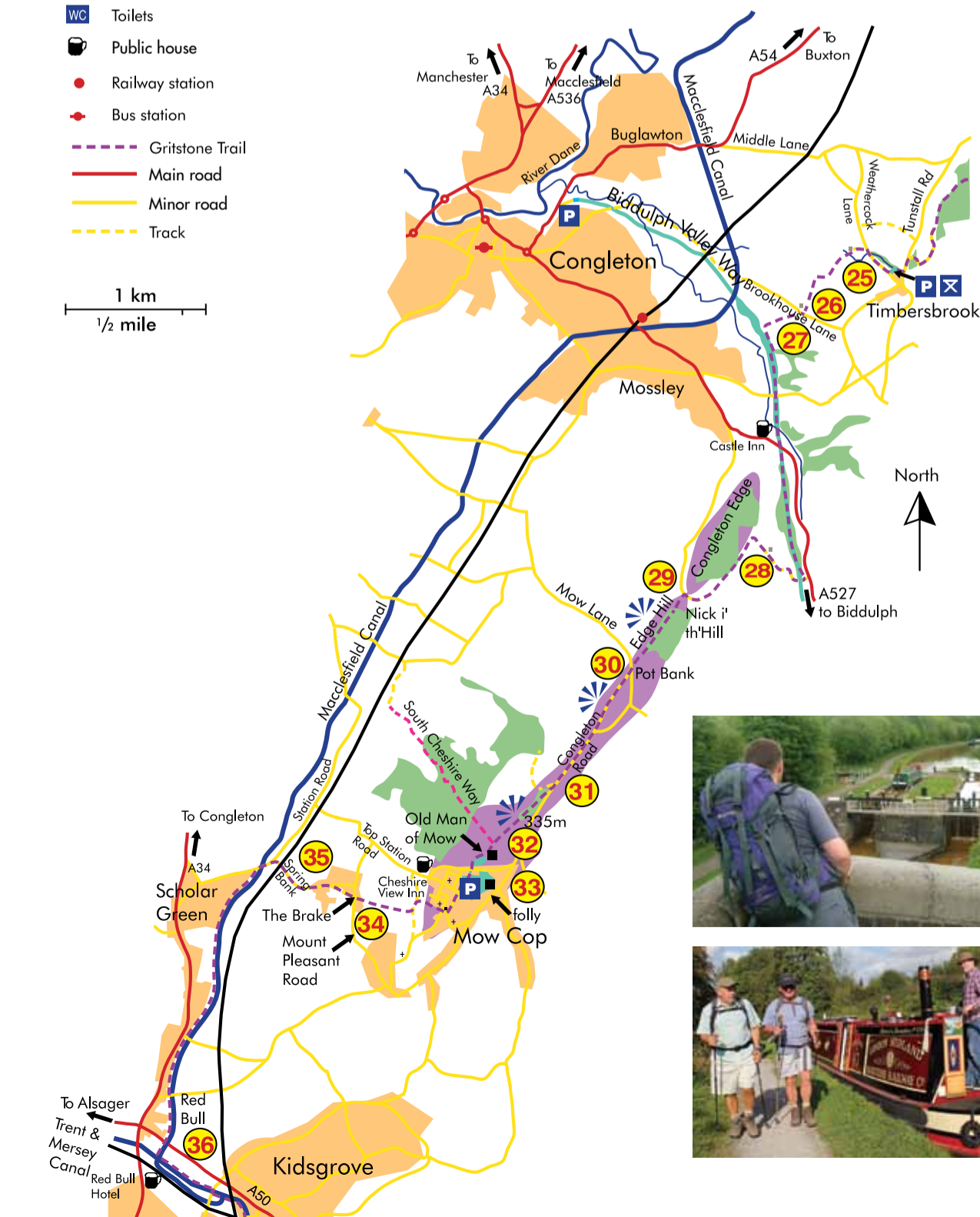
The folly of Mow Cop is another distinctive landmark, perched dramatically on an outcrop of millstone grit. It was built in 1754 by Squire Wilbraham to improve the view from Rode Hall.

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 Hardings 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](http://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](mailto:rangers@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



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