

ROSE HILL STATION – MARPLE DALE – CHADKIRK BRIDGE – CHADKIRK CHAPEL – PEAK FOREST CANAL – SEVEN STILES FOOTPATH– ROSE HILL STATION

Notes: - Total distance 5.75 miles; easy tracks, bridleways, footpaths and canal towpaths; some steep sections; some parts can be muddy in wet weather; walking boots recommended

Start: - Rose Hill railway station – trains from Manchester Piccadilly via Hyde, every half hour until early evening; no Sunday service

Buses: 383/384 (Stockport-Marple-Romiley-Stockport)
358 (Stockport-Marple-New Mills-Hayfield)
375 (Stockport-Mellor)

Stage 1

Turn left off the station platform, cross the car park to Railway Road and turn towards Stockport Road, passing the car park of The Railway, a fine Robinson's pub that serves food at lunchtime. Cross Stockport Road at the Toucan crossing and walk straight ahead into Dale Road.

This area was formerly part of the Marple Hall estate of the Bradshaw-Isherwood family and Dale Road marks the edge the 50's and 60's residential development. Continue down Dale Road for half a mile when it narrows at a pair of stone gateposts and becomes a country lane

Distance so far: 0.5 miles

Stage 2

Dale Road now begins to wind down towards the Goyt valley. Continue past the entrance to Marple Dale Hall nursing home. The setting becomes more rural and you will be starting to drop quite steeply. The River Goyt is to the right and can be heard down below in the valley and occasionally seen through the trees.

The lane is the access to two farms and a number of cottages so it is in reasonably good condition and the walking is easy.

Having been walking in a northerly direction since the station, the track now swings west to run alongside the Goyt, but still well above the river. To the right can be seen Manchester Canoe Club. This part of the Goyt is very popular with canoeists. Continue walking until you reach the entrance to Lower Dale Farm.

Distance so far: 1.25 miles

Stage 3

The path does not go through the farmyard but goes to the right of the entrance, between the farm buildings and the river. Having now left the lane, the route becomes a footpath only.

The path skirts the farm and continues its fall to river level. This part of the route can be quite muddy in wet weather. Beyond the farm the path runs alongside the river in a delightful wooded valley. Look out for kingfishers, which are often seen on this stretch of the Goyt.

After about a third of a mile you will come to the new Chadkirk Bridge. This was built in 2012 as part of the national Connect2 group of projects. It provides a new link between two parts of the National Cycle Network, route NCN 55. The new bridleway, also part of the project can be seen continuing along the river, past the bridge, to Rose Hill station via the site of Marple Hall (it provides a shorter walk, total 3.25 miles, back to the station)

Distance so far 1.75 miles

Stage 4

There is much of interest around the bridge and you should take advantage of the viewing platforms in the middle. Under the bridge are the remains of Chadkirk Weir which used to provide water for Chadkirk Mill, half a mile downstream. Note also the ford, just downstream of the bridge. This is still used to get tractors and other equipment between the two parts of the Chadkirk estate. In the right season, look out for salmon running up-river to spawn.

After crossing the bridge continue through the picnic area. Note the commemorative bench, which acknowledges Sustrans leadership of the Connect2 project. The silhouette figures on the back represent local historical figures.

Continue until you reach a kissing gate on a metalled road, Vale Road. Go straight across the road and through another kissing gate and on to a path that leads one to the right, parallel to Vale Road. After .25 miles you will reach Chadkirk Chapel.
www.stockport.gov.uk/services/leisureculture/museumsandgalleries/chadkirkchapelcountryestate

Distance so far: 2.5 miles

Stage 5

Leave Chadkirk Chapel and return to Vale Road. Turn right, cross a bridge over a stream, past St Chad's Well (on the left and the site of a traditional well-dressing in July) and walk up a steep hill, which is heading towards the canal. Just after the road

levels out, look out for a set of steep, stone steps on the right, opposite a row of cottages.

Climb these steps up to the Peak Forest Canal and turn right on to the towpath. The canal towpath here is part of the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk and European Long Distance Route E2.

The canal was opened in 1800 except for the locks which were completed in 1804. Like all narrow canals of that era, to avoid locks, it hugs the hillside and follows the contour. Falling steeply away to the right is Kirk Wood. On the opposite bank, the gardens of houses, high above the canal, tumble attractively down to the water's edge.

After 0.75 of a mile on the towpath you will see first, across the canal, a small paper mill and then you come to Hyde Bank Tunnel. There is no towpath through the tunnel and the path now climbs up and over the canal.

Distance travelled so far 3.25 miles

Stage 6

The path goes under a handsome stone bridge, over which runs the carriage drive to Oakwood Hall. The track then joins a lane (actually Oakwood Road).

Continue along the lane (Oakwood Road) and where it forks take the right fork into Hydebank. You will soon come to the top of a flight of large wooden steps, which will take you back down to the canal at the other end of the tunnel.

The canal here is wooded on both sides. After 0.25 miles you will come to a stone bridge which used to give access to the original Marple (Compstall) railway station. It was near to neither Marple nor Compstall and lasted from 1862 to only 1865. It was only built because the viaduct, which you will see shortly, was proving difficult to build and delayed the railway reaching Marple proper.

Just after this bridge is an odd bit of very narrow, straight canal. It was originally built as a tunnel but gave continuous maintenance problems and so it was eventually opened out, leaving it as it is today.

Beyond this you arrive at one of the gems of the British canal network, Marple Aqueduct. Built in late 1799 it is now a listed Ancient Monument. At present it is difficult to get a good view of the aqueduct from river level but there are plans to create a viewing and picnic by the river 95 feet below the canal. From the aqueduct towpath you also get a fine view of the railway viaduct, parallel to and 50 feet higher than the canal.

Distance travelled 4.25 miles

Stage 7

At the far end (the eastern end) of the aqueduct there is a good interpretation board that gives a short history of the aqueduct and its engineer, Benjamin Outram.

From the aqueduct the towpath crosses over the canal and leads straight on to another wonder of the waterways, the 16 lock Marple flight, which lifts the canal 220 feet to the Peak Forest's summit level. The canal here is in delightful woodland, including beech and oak.

Continue up the canal until you come to lock 7 (the lock number is painted on the balance beam). Turn right over the bridge below the lock gates, cross the metalled road (actually the line of the former tramway that pre-dated the locks) and straight on to the footpath up to the un-metalled part of Grosvenor Road. You are now on the route of the old Seven Stiles Footpath.

Go along Grosvenor Road and at the 'T' junction go straight across on to the marked footpath, allotments on your left. Follow this footpath as it winds through another residential area built on the former Bradshaw-Isherwood estate. You eventually come to Bowden Lane. Turn right, cross the railway bridge, turn left and retrace your original route along Dale Road and across Stockport Road at the Toucan crossing. Return to Rose Hill station either direct or via the bar of The Railway. You've earned a drink.

Distance travelled 5.75 miles

Disclaimer

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