

Places to visit

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The Ranger Service protects, enhances, encourages and promotes the proper use of the Council's outdoor recreational facilities.

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Follow The Countryside Code

Helping everyone to respect, protect & enjoy our countryside.

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



www.nhs.uk/change4life

Walks from Nelson Pit Visitor Centre

9

Part 1 of the Middlewood Challenge

Facts

Distance

12.8 km (8 miles)

Time

About 3½ hours

Start

Nelson Pit Visitor Centre

Terrain

Easy - muddy in parts

Map

Ordnance Survey Explorer 268

Refreshments

Coffee Tavern and Boars Head pub near Nelson Pit.

Railway and Navigation pubs in Marple.

Bulls Head hotel at High Lane.

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Nelson Pit ▶ Middlewood Station
▶ Marple-Peak Forest Canal ▶ Macclesfield Canal

Introduction

The first part of two walks making the Middlewood Challenge, a 20-mile walk in the figure of eight. The second section of the Challenge is Walk 10 which is about 12 miles long and takes around 5 hours to walk. Total walking time for both parts is around 8½ hours.

Route

From Nelson Pit Visitor Centre turn right and walk down the steps to the Middlewood Way.

i The Middlewood Way is nearly 11 miles long and was originally the Macclesfield-Bollington-Marple railway line. It opened in 1869 and closed 101 years later in 1970.

1 As the top path joins the main path walk under bridge 16 and continue ahead.

2 Pass the entrance to Jackson's Brickworks.

i Jackson's Brickworks opened in 1924. By 1974 the factory was producing 180,000 bricks per week. After closure in 1979 the site remained derelict until 1996 when the local council developed the brickworks into a conservation area. The site is noted for greater crested newts and water voles.

3 Cross over the railway line and Middlewood station.

8 You are now on the towpath of the Macclesfield canal. The canal is on your right.

i The Macclesfield canal was opened 1831 at a cost of £320,000. The famous, self-taught architect Thomas Telford surveyed the route. It runs from Marple to Hall Green, a distance of 26¼ miles and is level at 518' above sea level for 16 miles. The Macclesfield canal forms part of the 97 mile Cheshire Ring reaching Kidsgrove in the south to Preston Brook near Warrington in the west and Manchester city centre in the north. The whole Ring has a towpath and is open to walkers.

9 Continue along the canal. Bridge numbers 1 and 2 are turnover bridges.

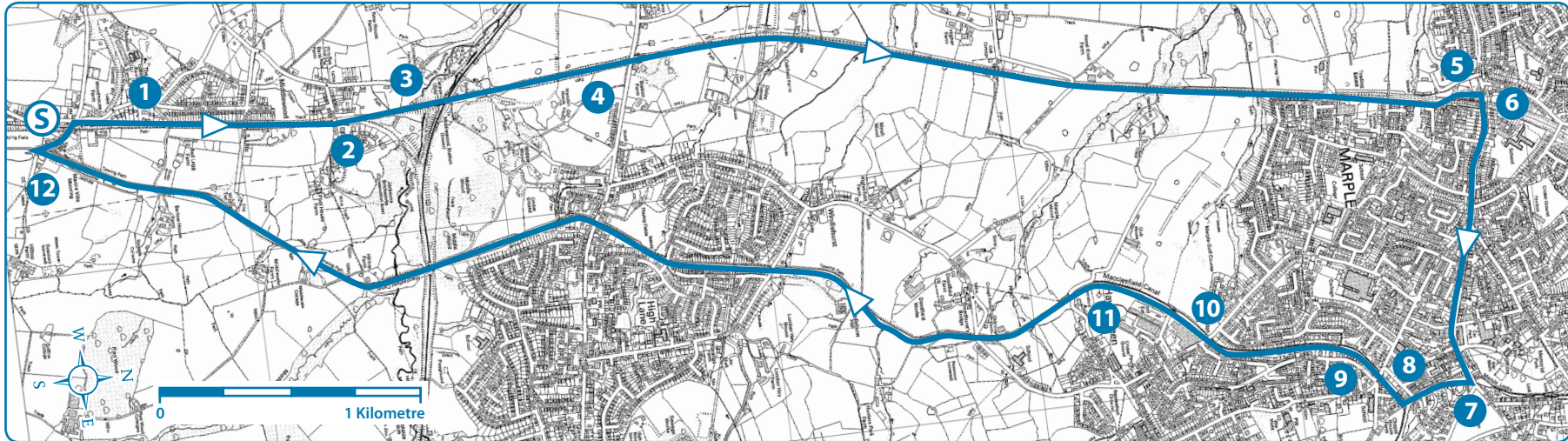
i A turnover bridge was designed to carry the towpath from one side of the canal to the other, without need to unhitch the horse's towline from the barge.

10 Just beyond bridge 4 there is a seat. Ideal for a break!

11 Continue along the towpath until bridge 15. On the way note the World War 2 Home Guard concrete bunker adjacent to bridge 13. Bridge 14 was designed as an 'adjustable bridge'; the parapet could be taken off and stone raised in the event of subsidence which was a common problem in the Poynton coal mining area.

12 Just before bridge 15 walk over the bridge adjacent to the Trading Post and turn immediately right through the gate facing Mount Vernon cottages. Turn right again and walk back to the Visitor Centre.





i Middlewood Upper station closed in 1970. The Lower station is on the Manchester to Buxton line. Neither the Upper nor Lower station has road access. The area was popular in the 1950s when there were teahouses in the local woods.

4 Walk through the oval shaped tunnel and continue ahead. The tunnel can be very muddy!

Did you know?

The name 'Cheshire' first appears in written records in year AD 980 as 'Legeceasterscir', 'The Shire of the City of Legions'. It is thought to date back to AD 920, when it is believed that Edward, the Elder of Essex created the county in the months following his seizing of the Mercian throne from his niece Aelfwyn.

5 Continue along the sandy path crossing a tar macadam road. At the end of the Middlewood Way reach a T-junction, with a waste disposal site on the left.

6 Turn right and walk to the main road. Turn right. You are now on Stockport Road. Pass the Railway pub and Rose Hill station. At the traffic lights go straight ahead signed for New Mills. Walk through Marple.

7 About 25 yards beyond the Navigation pub turn right onto Lockside and join the Peak Forest canal. Pass several locks on the left. Immediately after lock 16 walk up a slight incline; cross the bridge and turn right down the cobbled path. Caution: this path could be slippery when wet!

