

Macclesfield Circular (via the Dane Valley)		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
18 th May 2021		
Current status	Document last updated Tuesday, 12 th October 2021	
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Macclesfield Circular (via the Dane Valley)

Start & Finish: Macclesfield Station

Macclesfield Station, map reference SJ 919 736, is 237 km northwest of Charing Cross, 133m above sea level and in **Cheshire East**.

Length: 28.9 km (18.0 mi).

Cumulative ascent/descent: 735m. For a longer or shorter walk, see *below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 8 out of 10

Time: 7 ½ hours walking time.

Transport: Macclesfield Station is on the Stafford to Manchester branch line off the West Coast Main Line from London Euston. Travel time from London is from 101 minutes Mon-Sat, but 2 ¼ hours on Sundays.

Saturday Walkers' Club: The walk is doable as a daywalk from London with a train no later than 09.20 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 118 (Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield)

OS Explorer Map: 268 (Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton) – just for the urban start – and OL24 (The Peak District – White Peak Area)

Walk Notes:

Varied walk, through pastures and wooded valleys and along some ridges, with many fascinating views of the Cheshire Plain and across to the surrounding high moors and gritstone ridges in the westerly Dark Peak area. Leave the town along a section of the Macclesfield Canal with its Roving Bridge and up along the Bollin River valley onto Ridge Hill and continue through rolling pastures and up onto Croker Hill, the ridge separating the pastoral landscapes of wooded valleys and grazing pastures of the westerly Peak District from the Cheshire Plain. After a short descent, you follow the Gritstone Trail up to and along the Wincle Minn (ridge) – or alternatively through the tight wooded Greasley Hollow part of the Shell Brook valley – to then follow an enchanting stretch of the Dane Valley upstream (shorter and longer options come into play around here) for lunch in Wincle.

From lunch, follow the Dane Valley at an elevated level further upstream towards the high moorlands, then return to Macclesfield up the tributary valleys of the Clough Brook and the Highmoor Brook, to scale up to the watershed to the Bollin Brook Valley. You follow a quiet lane along a ridge with more splendid views before descending through pastures and past one of the reservoirs feeding both Macclesfield and its canal. Pass through Langley village and go up one last rise: The Hollins, the hill overlooking Macclesfield. The route bursts with bluebells in season in dells, glades and cloughs and on hillsides and verges.

Several walk options make for a variety of shorter, longer, higher and lower routes.

Walk options:

Bus Line 14 (Macclesfield – Langley, about hourly Mon-Fri, every two hours Sat) **enables a start in Sutton Lane Ends** (cut 3.1 km and 60m ascent). From Macclesfield, alight at the **Church House** stop in Sutton Lane Ends. Walk back for about 100m to a four-way road junction by the **Church House Inn** opposite on the left and pick up the directions on page 5 at the single asterisk *).

An Alternative Routing early on follows the Macclesfield Canal for a slightly longer stretch and then follows Hollin Lane, this is overall a little easier to walk.

An Alternative Routing in the morning avoids the rise up onto Croker Hill and its exposed ridge and follows the Rossen Clough instead. This cuts 800m distance and 70m ascent.

An Alternative Routing mid-morning descends into the scenic but mud-prone Greasley Hollow instead of following the very quiet tarmac lane along the exposed ridge of the Wincle Minn.

A pre-lunch Shortcut off the Greasley Hollow route direct to Wincle cuts out a scenic stretch up the Dane Valley to Danebridge. This cuts 2.4 km/1.5 mi and 20m ascent.

A pre-lunch Extension follows the Gritstone Trail all the way into the Dane Valley and turns upstream along the Dane Valley Way for a longer stretch. This adds 1.6 km/1.0 mi and 20m ascent.

Bus Line 14 (Macclesfield – Langley, about hourly Mon-Fri, every two hours Sat) **enables a finish in Langley** (cut 3.6 km/2.4 mi and 95m ascent). The last bus from Langley Church runs at 17.27 Mon-Fri and 18.17 Sat (as of 11/2020).

Elevenses/Lunch (details last updated 10/05/2021)

Ye Olde King's Head 30 Bradley Smithy, Gurnett, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0HB (01625 611 444). Located 2.4 km into the walk.

Sutton Hall Sutton Hall, Bullocks Lane, Sutton, Macclesfield, SK11 0HE (01260 253 211, <https://www.brunningandprice.co.uk/suttonhall/>). A Brunning & Price pub restaurant in a historic Country House, located 2.8 km into the walk, along the Hollin Lane alternative.

Church House Inn Church Lane, Sutton, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0DS (01625 611 444). Located 3.2 km into the walk.

Wincle Beer Company Tolls Farm Barn, Dane Bridge, Wincle, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0QE (01260 227 777, <https://www.winclebeer.co.uk/>). Wincle Beer is located 17.2 km (10.7 mi) into the walk, on the banks of the River Dane. Open 10.00-16.30 daily.

The Ship Inn Barlow Hill, Wincle, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0QE (01260 227 217, <https://www.theshipinnwincle.com/>). The Ship Inn is located 17.6 km (10.9 mi) into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served 12.00-14.30 & 17.30-20.30 Mon-Thu, 12.00-14.30 & 17.30-21.00 Fri, 12.00-21.00 Sat and 12.00-18.30 Sun. A 16th century country pub in a picturesque village, on the border of the Peak District.

Tea (details last updated 23/04/2021)

The Rose & Crown Inn Buxton Road, Allgreave, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0BJ (01260 227 232, <http://www.roseandcrownallgreave.co.uk/>). The Rose & Crown Inn is located 580m off-route, 10.8 km (6.7 mi) from the end of the walk. Open 12.00-15.00 and 17.30-23.00 Tue-Fri, 12.00-23.00 Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun (-18.00 in winter). Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 Tue-Fri, 12.00-21.00 Sat and 12.00-18.00 Sun.

The Hanging Gate Inn Wincle Lane, Higher Sutton, Macclesfield SK11 0NG (<https://thehanginggate.com/>). The Hanging Gate is the highest pub in Cheshire and located 6.8 km (4.2 mi) from the end of the walk. Open 12.00-20.00 Thu-Mon. Reopened on 12/4/2021 after years of closure, and dating from 1621, it enjoys spectacular views across the Cheshire Plain and its name is believed to be a combination of the Scandinavian "gata", meaning pathway, and the fact that Royal Macclesfield Forest poachers were hanged here.

The Leather's Smithy Clarke Lane, Langley, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0NE (01260 252 313, <https://www.leathersmithy.co.uk/>). The Leather's Smithy is located 400m off-route, 4.9 km (3.1 mi) from the end of the walk. Open from noon daily. From the pub, *turn right* downhill along Clarke Lane and pick up the directions in 380m on page 11 in the text at the octuple asterisk *****).

St. Dunstan's Inn Main Road, Langley, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0BU (01260 252 615, <https://stdunstaninn.co.uk/>). St. Dunstan's is located 3.7 km (2.3 mi) from the end of the walk. Open 17.00-21.00 Mon, 17.00-23.00 Tue-Wed, 17.00-24.00 Thu, 12.00-15.00 & 17.00-01.00 Fri, 12.00-00.30 Sat and 12.00-22.30 Sun. Food served Thu-Sun.

The Dolphin 76 Windmill Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 7HS (01625 616 179, <https://www.robinsonsbrewery.com/pubs/the-dolphin-macclesfield/>). The Dolphin is a freshly renovated Robinson's pub and located 1.0 km from the end of the walk. Open all day every day.

Numerous other options in Macclesfield; some of the ones on the route are mentioned in the pdf.

Notes

Macclesfield

Macclesfield is a market town in Cheshire East on the edge of the Cheshire Plain with about 50,000 population. It lies on the River Bollin, with Macclesfield Forest to its east, and is around 26 km south of Manchester. The medieval town grew up on the hilltop around what is now St Michael's Church. It had a silk-button industry from at least the middle of the 17th century, and became a major silk-manufacturing centre from the mid-18th century, for a while being the world's biggest producer of finished silk, with 71 silk mills operating in 1832. To this day, "Silk Town" is Macclesfield's nickname.

The town is also the original home of Hovis bread makers, produced in Publicity Works Mill on the Macclesfield canal. *Hovis* derives from the Latin "homo-vitalis" (strength for man) as a way of providing cheap nutritious food for mill workers and was a very dry and dense wholemeal loaf very different from the modern version.

No proof exists that Macclesfield was ever a walled town, and the various streets with the suffix 'gate' in the name are believed to be derived from 'gata', Scandinavian for road, which became gate in Middle English. During the Civil War, in 1642 the town was occupied for the King by Sir Thomas Aston. And in the Jacobite Rising of 1745, Charles Stuart and his army marched through Macclesfield as they attempted to reach London. Macclesfield is said to be the only mill town to have escaped bombing in World War II.

A person from Macclesfield is sometimes referred to as a "Maxonian"; these include Blues Musician John Mayall and Ian Curtis and Stephen Morris of Joy Division.

Since 1997, Macclesfield has hosted the annual British Lawnmower Race, held in December.

Bollin Brook/River Bollin

The River Bollin is a 49 km (30 mi) major tributary of the River Mersey. The Bollin Brook springs on the hills surrounding Macclesfield Forest on the western edge of the Peak District, and it feeds a string of reservoirs that supply water to the town. Downriver from the reservoirs it is called River Bollin.

Further along its course it forms the boundary between Cheshire and Greater Manchester. It is culverted under the southern runway of Manchester Airport and joins the Manchester Ship Canal east of Warrington.

Gritstone Trail

The Gritstone Trail (or Cheshire Gritstone Trail, as there are other, less well established, routes in the Peak District under the same moniker) is a 56 km (35 mi) waymarked linear long-distance footpath which follows the most westerly hills of the Peak District from Disley Station via Macclesfield and Congleton to Kidsgrove Station. Managed by Cheshire East (although partly in Staffordshire), the trail involves 1,800m of ascent and is mainly outside the National Park. Most through-walkers take 3 days (stopping at Macclesfield and Congleton) to complete the trail, but an unofficial extension from Kidsgrove to the mainline railway station at Stoke-on-Trent, *The Kidsgrove to Stoke Ridgeway*, is described in a free ebook.

Jodrell Bank Observatory

The Jodrell Bank Observatory – originally the Jodrell Bank Experimental Station and from 1966 to 1999 the Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories – hosts a number of radio telescopes, and is part of the Centre for Astrophysics at the University of Manchester. The observatory was established in 1945 by Bernard Lovell, a radio astronomer, to investigate cosmic rays after his work on radar during WWII. It has since played an important role in the research of meteoroids, quasars, pulsars, masers and gravitational lenses, and was heavily involved with the tracking of space probes at the start of the Space Age.

The main telescope at the observatory is the Lovell Telescope with a diameter of 76m (the third largest steerable radio telescope in the world). There are three other active telescopes at the observatory: Mark II, and radio telescopes of 13m and 7m diameter.

On 7 July 2019, the observatory became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Peak District (National Park)

The Peak District is an upland area at the southernmost end of the Pennines.

The Peak District National Park is one of the UK's most popular, and is located within the boundaries of five counties (Derbys., Ches., Staffs., Yorks. and Greater Manchester). Founded in 1951, it was the first national Park in England. The Park spans an area of around 1,440 km² (550 mi²) and – despite its name – its terrain consists mainly of rolling hills, farmland, moorland and some gritstone escarpments (the "edges"). It is however significantly higher than much of the terrain in the surrounding area.

The Peak District is formed almost exclusively from sedimentary rocks dating from the Carboniferous period. They comprise the Carboniferous Limestone, the overlying Gritstone and finally the Coal Measures, though the latter occur only on the extreme margins of the area. In addition, there are infrequent outcrops of igneous rocks including lavas, tuffs and volcanic vent agglomerates.

The northern Dark Peak (whose geology is gritstone) is one of the most famous landmarks in the Peak District National Park, known for its exposed and isolated tracts of moorland, as well as its expansive rolling plateau which is covered by cotton grass bogs and heather moorlands. The soil of the area is composed of moorland

peat which provides the perfect environment for the plant life in the area. The areas to the flanks of the high moorland host numerous copses which are composed of Oak and Birch. The southern White Peak (whose geology is mainly limestone) is another distinctive area within the park due to its gently sloping Limestone plateau, crisscrossed by the Limestone Dales. The Dales provide the areas' drainage and vary in steepness throughout the area.

Peak District Boundary Walk

Created by the Friends of the Peak District, the Peak District Boundary Walk is a 305 km (190 mi) waymarked circular long-distance footpath which broadly follows the boundary of the National Park along existing footpaths, tracks, quiet lanes, former railway lines and a canal towpath. A guidebook and an extensive website help in breaking the journey into stages. <https://www.friendsofthepeak.org.uk/boundary-walk/>

Dane Valley/Dane River

The Dane River is a 56 km/35 mi long tributary of the River Weaver (and therefore the Mersey) that originates in the Peak District at Dane Head on Axe Edge Moor, close to the source of the River Goyt, just to the south west of Buxton. Flowing southwest, it forms county borders for around 16 km (Cheshire/Derbyshire, then Cheshire/Staffordshire), before flowing west through Congleton. The point on the river where the three counties meet, at Panniers' Pool Packhorse Bridge, is called Three Shire Heads. The bridge and the waterfalls on the River Dane southwards are very picturesque, and frequently feature on calendars.

The name of the river (earlier *Daven*) probably derives from the Old Welsh *dafn*, meaning a "drop or trickle", implying a slow-moving river.

The Dane is the longest, cleanest and possibly fastest flowing river flowing through Cheshire. It can optionally share its outflow between the Irish Sea and the North Sea with the aid of canal feeders.

Dane Valley Way

The Dane Valley Way is a 77 km (48 mi) waymarked linear long-distance footpath through Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, rising from the Pavilion Gardens in Buxton over 5 kilometres to the source of the River Dane at Dane Head in Derbyshire and then follows rights of way along or near the course of the river - generally downhill - to its confluence with the River Weaver (a Mersey tributary) in Cheshire at Northwich.

The initial section from Buxton climbs through Grinlow Woods to Solomon's Temple at the summit of Grin Hill, providing superb views across the Dark Peak. The trail crosses Axe Edge Moor (over 500m high, the highest traceable river source in the White Peak area, and the watershed between the Irish Sea and the North Sea), where the River Dane originates at Dane Head. It passes the scenic Three Shires Head (where Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire boundaries meet) with its stone footbridge and cascades. The path continues along the wooded Dane Valley through the hamlets of Gradbach, Danebridge and Wincle. It leaves the Peak District and continues through the Cheshire Plain, later involving a high degree of road walking.

WALK DIRECTIONS

After alighting from the train at **Macclesfield** Station on Platform 1, leave onto the station forecourt and *turn left* down a curving drive and in 50m *turn left* along **Sunderland Street**. In 160m cross **Pickford Street** and in 80m **Brook Street**. In 50m – by a fenced green and then a major four-way road junction just ahead, [!] you *turn left* along the cobbled **Park Green**, staying to the left of the green with its war memorial. In 80m you continue through some bollards and cross the **River Bollin** on a car wide bridge. On the far side, with Storm Brewing on the left, *turn right* along **Waterside** (road) along its left-hand pavement. In 70m, at a four-way junction under the viaduct of the dual-carriageway A523 **Silk Road**, you cross **Lower Bank Street** and continue in the same direction. In 100m the road gently rises and in 40m you *turn left* to cross the railway line and continue uphill along **Windmill Street**. In 170m you pass **St. Peter's Working Man's Institute** on the right and **St. Peter's Church** and a bus stop (line 58 to Buxton) on the left. In 50m you pass **Windmill Street Park with the King George Playing Field** on the right and in 50m pass **The Dolphin** pub on the left. Keep ascending the road and in 100m cross **Black Road**. In another 50m cross the **Macclesfield Canal** on the road and on the far side [!] **turn hard left** down a stepped path to join the towpath and *turn left* along it.

You **follow the canal for 1.2 km**, initially with the water on your right. **In more detail:** You go under **Bridge #40** and in 70m under **Bridge #41**, with a high buttressed wall on the left. The wall on the left diminishes in height and in about 400m you can see some fairways of the **Macclesfield Golf Club** on the left, covering the lower slope of **The Hollins**, the hill overlooking the town. Eventually walls rise on both sides of the canal and in 900m from Bridge 41, you go under **Bridge #43** and *turn up to the left* and back on yourself **along a spiral ramp** to cross the water and then turn down to the left with another ramp and continue in the previous direction, now to the right of the canal. [This type of bridge is called a **Roving Bridge**, and its purpose was to allow the towpath to change sides without having to unhitch the towline of the towing horses.] In 125m you pass a sign on the right, welcoming you to the **Gurnett Aqueduct**, which takes the canal across the valley of the Bollin. In another 30m, with a road visible on the left below, a stepped footpath bears down to the right down to the road.

Here you have a choice:

For a variation, including a slightly longer stretch along the canal and an all in a touch easier walk route, continue in the same direction and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Hollin Lane Alternative**.

For the Main Walk, [!] *turn right* down a stepped path to the road. By the **Ye Olde King's Head** pub, *turn hard left* to go under the aqueduct and follow the left-hand pavement of the road up through **Gurnett**, with the River Bollin on the right below. In 175m *fork left* along the left-hand pavement of **Jarman** (road), signed 'Langley 1', ignoring the continuation of the main road ('Wincle 4, Sutton ¼'). You have the river still on the right as well as a wooded area ('The Wilderness'), and in 125m the **Rosendale Brook** tributary joins the Bollin on the right. You will cross the brook later in the walk. In 170m you cross the Bollin on the road and keep ascending and in 270m reach a four-way road junction by the **Church House Inn** opposite.

*) Continue up the **Ridgehill** along Ridge Hill (road) to the left of the pub along a left-hand pavement, signed 'Wincle 4, Wildboarclough 5', in 10m passing a '**Quiet Lane**' marker post. Through the trees on the left, you can spot **Tegg's Nose** (SWC Walk 383 Macclesfield to Buxton) and **The Hollins** back on the left and in 350m **Judy Lane** joins from the right. You pass **Ridge Hill Farmhouse** on the right and in 200m ignore a footpath joining from

the left over a stile, up from Langley. In 380m, where another footpath joins from the left over a stile to the right of a metal field gate (may be seasonal), you **[!]** *turn right* down a gravel drive, signposted 'Foxbank' and signed 'Ridge Hall'. The drive curves to the left and in 130m at the end of a plantation on the right, you have fine views to the right up to a prominent transmission mast (the main walk route will pass it later). In 80m, by **Ridge Hall**, ignore a right turning gravel path to the main house to continue along tarmac towards – and then through – some outbuildings: in 40m go through a gateway at **Foxbank Barn** into a gravel courtyard and in 20m *turn right by a handpump* to in 15m pass a yellow marker on the wall on the left and *turn left* up some steps. *Turn right* immediately with another yellow marker along a paved path and in 15m go over a set of stiles 15m apart into a pasture.

Continue in the same direction gently downhill through a succession of pastures into **Rossen Dale**, in 50m going over a stile and heading for another one visible at the bottom of the drop, 120m away. In another 80m go over another stile to the right of a metal field gate in a belt of trees and *veer left* in the next pasture (215°). In 170m you go over a stile in a fence line and then through some trees and over another stile and through another pasture along a clear path along its right-hand boundary wood, with the **Rosendale Brook** running below. In 50m *turn right* through a metal field gate and follow a clear path down towards a road. You *turn left* with the path and brook, just before reaching the road and in 90m go through a metal kissing gate and *turn right* across a bridge over the brook onto the lane and *turn left* along its narrow grassy verge.

****)** In 125m ignore the right turning drive up to **Foxbank Farm** and in 80m – just before **Lowerhouse Farm** on the left – you come to a two-way signpost for the **Gritstone Trail** (GT) by a wooden kissing gate up some steps on the right.

Here you have a choice:

For a lower route, up along the **Rossen Clough** (cut 800m distance and 70m ascent), continue in the same direction along the road and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Rossen Clough Alternative**.

For the Main Walk, up the **Foxbank** onto the ridge leading up to the transmission masts and back down into the valley, *turn right* with the footpath up some steps and through a wooden kissing gate. You follow a clear path steeply up a hanging pasture, hugging its right-hand boundary fence, with the picturesque **Rossen Clough** and its stream on the left below. In 110m the path levels out for a stretch as you follow a flagged section for 50m by **Foxbank Farm** on the right. Follow the fence in a straight line, ignoring the curving drop away to the left and in 100m go over a stone slab stile to the right of a wooden field gate. In 30m *bear right* uphill with a marker post along the right-hand field boundary and in 110m continue in the same direction further up the **Fox Bank** by a marker post on the right at a wall corner. From near the top of this field you have fine views back to **High Moor** and **Shutlingsloe** (due E), **Axe Edge** and **Shining Tor** to its left (70°) and **Toot Hill** in the Macclesfield Forest to the left of that.

In the top-right field corner go through a double metal kissing gate and *turn left* further uphill with a GT marker post. You will now follow a **gentle ridge between the Rossen Clough and the Cheshire Plain** all the way to the **BT Tower** on **Croker Hill** (conceived in the 1950s as part of the 'Backbone' communication chain in case of Nuclear War). About halfway up this field you have fine views on the right over your shoulder (335°) of **Greater Manchester**, and in the top-left field corner you go through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction between fences, now with a disused quarry on the right below. In 80m **[!]** *turn left* steeply uphill with a marker on a fence post on the left, ignoring

a stile to the right of a metal field gate dead ahead (with a 'No Right of Way' marker, the path here has been diverted due to subsidence). In 50m *turn right* through a metal kissing gate and follow a left-hand field boundary gently uphill along the **Hill of Rossenclowes**.

You go over a brow and in the far field corner *turn right* with a marker post towards a metal kissing gate in the right-hand corner. Pass the redundant gate and *turn left* to follow a grassy track towards another kissing gate 50m away and then continue along a clear path. Away in the distance on the right, 14 km away (on 270°), you have the **Jodrell Bank Observatory** with its telescopes. Much further in the distance – on a good day – you can see **North Wales'** mountains. In 180m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall and continue in the same direction along a left-hand field boundary. In 150m go through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate with a GT marker and follow the right-hand boundary of the next field. In 200m ignore a metal field gate on the right and continue in the same direction along the right-hand boundary wall.

In 400m, by a lone boulder, down in the valley to the right you can spot the red brick viaduct taking the Macclesfield – Stoke railway over the River Dane and the Macclesfield Canal (240°). In another 150m at the end of the walled field, you go through a gate-within-a-field gate and continue along a car wide gravel track towards the radio station. On the left you have, from right-to-left, **Shutlingsloe** (70°), **another transmission mast** on a ridge (57°, by the A537 high up on the moors separating Macclesfield from Buxton), **Shining Tor** (48°), **Toot Hill** in the Macclesfield Forest on 35° and **Tegg's Nose** on 10°. In 120m a public footpath joins from the right and you continue along tarmac to in 160m pass the fenced radio station to its left. This is **the highest point of the walk**. In 90m, you *turn left* with a GT-signpost through a gate-within-a-field-gate and go downhill through a pasture along its right-hand boundary, with fine views on the half right towards the rocky scarps of **The Roaches and Hen Cloud** (SWC Walks 380 and 388 Macclesfield to Leek and Upper Hulme to Macclesfield).

In 250m leave the field in the bottom-right corner *bearing right* through a metal kissing gate and over a plank bridge then through a metal gate and cross a pasture in the same direction with a marker (although the right-of-way on the map runs along the left boundary). In 70m, go through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction with a marker through the next pasture to its far-left corner. In 110m pass a marker on a fence post and *bear right* along a car wide gravel track between fences. In 120m you go through a metal kissing gate and in 90m through another one onto the **A54** and *turn left* along its left-hand grassy margin with a signpost. In 110m, where a public footpath joins on the left through a metal kissing gate out of a pasture, you have fine views down the Rossen Clough on the left towards **Manchester and some ridges beyond**. **[!]** *Turn right* across the road to continue gently uphill along a tarmac track and over a cattle grid.

***) In 120m go through a metal field gate and *bear left* with the track between drystone walls, in the process entering the **Peak District National Park**. In 110m the track levels out and in another 70m you go through a metal field gate by a metal kissing gate and a footpath signpost on the left.

Here you have a choice:

For an equally scenic lower route through the wooded but mud-prone **Greasley Hollow** part of the Shell Brook valley, *turn left* through the gate and descend through a pasture and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Greasley Hollow Route**.

For the main walk route along the Wincle Minn (ridge), continue in the same direction along the tarmac Minn-End-Lane with the GT. In about 400m the terrain levels out (at spot

height 384m above sea, the highest point of the Minn) and you have the **Cheshire Plain** on the right below, and the **Shell Brook Valley** on the left below, with fine views in all directions, towards the **North Wales mountains** in the west, the distinctive nose of **The Cloud** near Congleton (240°), overlooking the train line from London, and on the left to **The Roaches and Hen Cloud** (125°). In 300m go over a cattle grid or through a metal field gate to the right and start to gently descend with the lane. [The couple of far round hill on 205° are the **Clee Hills in Shropshire**.] In 120m ignore a signposted footpath turning left through a wooden gate into a pasture and in 130m ignore a left turning drive. Continue in the same direction through a metal field gate with a high GT marker post into open land, immediately passing some redundant stone gate posts on the right.

Down in the valley to the right you can again spot the red brick railway viaduct, as well as the **Bosley Cloud** (hill). You go over a couple of small rises, after the first of which you can spot the **Bosley Reservoir** on the right below (feeding the Macclesfield Canal system, specifically the twelve Bosley locks). In 200m you pass some more redundant stone gate posts on the right and in 100m go over another small rise on the lane. In 50m ignore a left forking gravel track leading to Mareknowles farm (and signposted 50m further along as a public footpath) to continue along the tarmac lane, in 40m continuing through a metal field gate. In 400m, by a bench on the right and a footpath joining from the right, you *curve to the left* downhill with the lane and the GT. In 75m go through a metal field gate and follow the lane downhill, in 80m turning left with it, and in 30m turning right. In 40m ignore a tarmac drive on the left to **Kisswood Farm** and *turn right* with the lane, in 60m passing **Hawkslee House** on the left. In another 60m *turn left* with a GT signpost, ignoring a footpath on the right. In 15m go through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate and commence the descent from the Minn into the valley of the **Shell Brook** along a grassy strip between fence and hedge, with the Roaches and Hen Cloud dominating the view.

In 100m go through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction down a pasture along its right-hand fence (140°) and in 270m in the far-right corner leave it through a metal kissing gate and follow the fence in the next field. In 40m *bear left* with the fence to continue downhill (due E). In 270m in the bottom-right corner, go through a metal kissing gate and continue along a fence on the left. In 90m you go through a high metal kissing gate in a deer fence to the right of a metal field gate and *turn left* downhill along a clear path into the tight valley (the high standing stone on the right marks this as one of many **Jubilee Woods**, planted across the UK in 2012). In 100m you pass a pond on the left and turn right with the path and in 40m by a second pond, *turn left* through another high metal kissing gate in a deer fence. In 40m you cross **a conduit feeding Bosley Reservoir** and in 15m *bear to the left*, with the brook on the right below, and in 75m *turn right* with the path to cross the brook on an earthbridge and re-ascend on the other side. In 220m go through another high wooden gate in a deer fence and follow the path further uphill. In 40m the terrain levels out and in 80m by a two-way GT-signpost on the left at a path T-junction, you *turn right*. The **Greasley Hollow Route** has joined from the left through a high wooden gate in a deer fence.

****) You walk between trees initially (210°), along a sunken way and past a footpath marker post on the left and in 40m past a wooden bench on the right, then a ruined barn (**Dumkins** on the OS map). In 110m you reach a high wooden kissing gate on the left.

Here you have a choice:

For an Extension, further along the Gritstone Trail, into the Dane Valley and upstream along the Dane Valley Way for a longer stretch (add 1.6 km /1.0 mi and 20m ascent), continue in the same direction along the fence on the left and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension**.

For the Main Walk, *turn left* through the gate with a footpath marker into a large pasture and follow a clear track towards a stile to the right of a wooden field gate. In 140m go over the stile and continue in the same direction along a right-hand field boundary fence, in 60m passing a marker post. In another 60m, by a second marker post, *bear left* (105°) away from the boundary and in 150m go over a stile to the left of a wooden field gate onto a car wide farm track and *turn left* along it. In 20m ignore a stile in the fence on the right and follow the farm track for 250m around a few turns to **Whitelee Farm** house. *Turn right* here at a three-way footpath junction over a stile into a pasture and broadly follow its left-hand boundary downhill (in season, there are bluebells in abundance and some wild garlic on the left amongst the trees). In 170m in the bottom-left corner, leave the field over a stile to the left of a wooden field gate and in 30m go over another one into a large riverside meadow by the **River Dane** away on the right. *Turn right* along a fence and in 100m you step onto a two-railed metal footbridge across the river, with a magnificent weir on the left. [!] Turn around, back into the riverside meadow [!].

*****) *Turn right* in the meadow, now on the **Dane Valley Way**, and follow the river upstream, in 100m past the former **Whitelee Mill** site and that stepped weir on the right (this is where another conduit starts, feeding Rudyard Reservoir). In 400m the right-of-way exits the field in the slightly higher left-hand corner under an overhanging tree, but an easier lower route just passes into the next field. You follow the river meadow to the left, with **Timberhurst Wood** rising on the left. At the far end of the field, the valley narrows again and you ignore a footpath joining from the left by a marker post down through a wooden field gate 25m away. In 30m go through a metal kissing gate and follow a fenced path for 200m to some houses ('Pingle') on the left where you continue along the gravel drive leading away from those houses, between fences. You pass some weirs on the right with a lake of the **Danebridge Fisheries** on the left at a higher level. Eventually you pass the **Wincle Beer Company** in a very scenic spot near the pretty **Dane Bridge** (1869). Continue in the same direction to the road leading over the bridge.

Here you have a choice:

For a slightly shorter route, avoiding the lunch pub and some road walking, cross the road, go through a metal kissing gate and *turn left* up through a pasture. Higher up, follow the left-hand boundary wall and at the top of the rise, where the wall turns left, continue in the same direction across a grassy area towards a four-way signpost 60m away. *Turn right* at the signpost and pick up the direction below at the septuple asterisk *****).

For the walk continuation via The Ship Inn – *turn left up the road* into the hamlet of **Wincle** and in 280m you find the pub on the right. The Shortcut joins from down the lane.

*****) Out of the pub, *turn right* uphill along the road and in 40m (the shortcut joins from the left down some steps), *turn right* up some steps and cross a tarmac drive leading to **Mellor Knowl** (house) and go through a metal kissing gate into a grassy area. In 60m by a four-way footpath signpost, continue in the same direction alongside a wall on the left.

*****) In 40m continue in the same direction where the wall turns to the left. You *veer ever so slightly to the left* towards a footpath signpost 50m away and in another 50m – on the right – you can spot the **Hanging Stone** at the near end of **The Roaches**. In 40m go over a stile in the field boundary into a wood and follow a clear path through **Hog Clough** (plenty of bluebells in season). In 50m cross a footbridge over a stream to re-ascend through the wood with the path. In 60m leave the wood over a stile into a pasture and follow its left-hand boundary uphill. Over the top of the rise, keep following the left-hand boundary towards **Bartomley Farm** (on the OS map). At the farm, [!] *turn left* with a

marker over a stone slab stile (i.e.: **do not** continue to the right of the farm house), and *turn right* through the farmyard along a gravel car wide drive.

In 100m, where the farm drive turns up to the left, continue in the same direction by first *turning right* over a stile and then *turning left* in a pasture, and then in 10m *turning left* through a metal kissing gate and then *turning right* in another pasture to continue in the previous direction. You follow the right-hand field boundary fence of this large field high above the mostly audible River Dane, with splendid **views up the Dane Valley** (towards Back Forest, the Roaches Ridge and the bare hillsides of Midgley Hill and Birchenough Hill) and in 380m leave it through a metal kissing gate in a drystone wall and continue in the same direction to a high two-way signpost 70m away. [At the signpost, a **Permissive Path** forks right, down to the river and back up further along.]

In another 150m you pass a Peak & Northern Footpaths Society signpost and in 15m go over a stile. In 70m – just after passing through a narrow gap between a rock outcrop and a wall – you can glimpse the **Clough Brook** below on the right. The path has turned to the left, away from the Dane Valley and you are now heading up along the Clough Brook **into the Clough Brook valley**. **Shutlingsloe** has come into view dead ahead. In 80m you pass a marker post and then a two-way footpath signpost (the **Permissive Path** joins from the right). In 100m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a drystone wall on the right. In 100m go over a stile and pass to the left of **Allmeadows Farm** (on the OS map), in 40m going through a wooden field gate with a yellow marker. You continue along the tarmac farm drive and in 70m *turn right* along a road at a T-junction. In 370m cross the **A54** and continue in the same direction along the minor road, signed for 'Wildboarclough' (the **Rose & Crown Inn** is 580m off to the right along the A54).

In 70m *turn left* through a metal field gate with some markers and follow a car wide farm track. The track curves up to the left and after 100m on the track you *turn right* over a stile to the right of a metal field gate into a pasture and walk towards a stile in the opposite fence (350°), not far left of the bottom corner. Half right you can see some distant high moor, this is **Axe Edge Moor**, the watershed between Dark and White Peak and **the source of four main Peak District rivers: Dane, Dove, Wye and Goyt**. In 150m you go over the stile and *veer a little to the left* towards **Hammerton Knowl Farm**. Just before the farm go through a metal gate and in 15m continue in the same direction at a marked four-way footpath junction to continue through the farmyard, between a couple of stone barns. In 30m go down some steps and through a metal kissing gate to *bear left* with a yellow marker. You are now veering out of the **Clough Brook** valley and up the tributary valley of the **Highmoor Brook** (its source is on Piggford Moor on Shutlingsloe's flank).

In 80m go through a metal field gate and in 90m through another to continue through the yard of **Hazels Farm**, while staying to the left of the farm house. In 50m go through a metal field gate by a yellow marker on the building on the right and *bear left* along a concrete farm track. In about 400m, now on tarmac, just before the track turns to the left, you can hear (but not see) **a waterfall** gushing out of the hillside to the right below. After the left turn, the track enters the Access Land of **Cessbank Common**, and eventually it follows a fence. You **leave the Peak District National Park** and the gradient eases and the track then follows a wall on the left. The tarmac discontinues where track and wall turn left (by some gravestone on the right). In 100m there is a boundary stone 25m away on the right (from 1849). Finally, you go through a metal field gate or over a stile to the left of it onto a three-way junction of tarmac lanes. **Barlow Hill** (road) runs **along this gentle ridge** from Wincle towards the Macclesfield Forest and **Withenshaw Lane** descends opposite **into the Rossen Dale**. *Turn right* along the road **for 1.7 km to the Hanging**

Gate Inn on the left, with views on the right to Shutlingsloe and some high moors, and into the **Bollin Brook** valley and to the Cheshire plain and Manchester on the left.

[!] *Turn left* at the far end of the pub building with a yellow marker on an outbuilding and go down some steps and turn to the right with the stepped path to go through a metal kissing gate and follow a clear path to a metal kissing gate 40m away and continue in the same direction through another pasture. In 100m go through another metal kissing gate and in 40m go down some steps onto a tarmac lane and *turn left* downhill along it. In 150m *turn right* over a stone slab stile in a drystone wall along the signposted **Gritstone Trail** (it joins from the left 20m along) and continue downhill through a pasture along a left-hand fence. Continue in the same direction where the fence turns away to the left, cross a stream at the bottom of the drop (the first of several – and one of the furthest – tributaries of the **River Bollin** crossed on this stretch) and *veer left* through the next pasture, in 50m passing another marker post on the right. You follow a clear grass path and in 150m cross an often-dry stream and *veer left* with the path. In 100m go through a wooden kissing gate and continue along the top-right boundary of a sloping field. In 80m *veer right* with a Gritstone Trail marker post and in 60m go through a wooden field gate and follow a left-hand field boundary towards some gates by a wooden barn. In 50m, in quick succession, you go through a metal gate, a metal kissing gate and then a wooden kissing gate to *turn right* along a car wide track downhill to a farm. In 30m cross a stream and *turn left* with a marker on a roof beam.

You pass **Bollin Head Farm** to its left and in 30m [!] stay to the left of a wooden field gate with a yellow marker and follow a gravel path to the right of another house. In 140m cross a gravel drive and enter a field through a metal kissing gate. In 100m go through a set of metal kissing gates either side of a tarmac lane and continue through several pastures along a clear path, in 60m going through a metal kissing gate, in another 80m through a wooden gate in a drystone wall, in 80m crossing another Bollin tributary, in 70m going through a metal kissing gate and in 50m through a metal gate in a drystone wall by **Green Barn Farm** on the right. You *bear left* to pick up a car wide track and in 100m *turn right* through a wooden gate in a drystone wall with a Gritstone Trail marker (to the right of a wooden field gate). Follow a gravel track and in 25m stay to the left of a wooden field gate in a wall around **Throstle's Nest Farm** and follow the wall to in 40m go through a wooden gate and in 15m *turn left* along a drive. In 40m ignore a right running footpath into a wood (which over 400m leads via the **Ridgegate Reservoir** to **The Leather's Smithy** pub) and continue along the drive, with the outflow of the reservoir away on the right. This is the **Bollin Brook**, which further downstream changes name to the **River Bollin**. In 100m cross a cattle grid or go through a wooden gate to the right and in 75m cross another one and in 220m *turn left* at a T-junction with **Clarke Lane**.

*****) In 30m you continue along **Bottoms Reservoir**, the last of a string of reservoirs supplying drinking water to Macclesfield as well as water for the **Macclesfield Canal**, and in another 220m by a signpost for **Tegg's Nose**, the Gritstone Trail turns right. The lane drops below the water level with the reservoir still on the right behind an earth wall and in 180m you pass **Clarke Lane Farm** on the outskirts of **Langley** on your left. Continue gently downhill along the right-hand pavement and in 140m ignore Holehouse Lane on the right and in 80m Teggs Nose Mount (residential road) on the left. Continue along a row of cottages into the village and in 100m you pass **St. Dunstan's Inn** and in another 100m at a three-way junction, a **bus stop for services to Macclesfield** is 40m away on the left. *Turn right* along **Langley Road's** pavement and in 70m by the village hall you ignore the right turning **Coalpit Lane**. In 90m, cross the drive leading to **Langley Hall** and in another 20m cross a stream on the road. In 100m [!] *turn right* through a metal kissing gate and continue between a wall and a fence. In 70m you go through another

metal kissing gate and continue between fences. In 120m *turn right* with the path over a couple of bridges to cross first the **River Bollin** and then a tributary stream.

You now follow a clear grass path gently up a sloping pasture and in 200m *veer to the left* with it, further uphill. In 100m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction uphill. In 125m, by a two-way footpath signpost, *turn left* ('To Macclesfield'). You get fine views on the left through a couple of breaks in the trees of the Radio Station on the hill opposite the valley of the River Bollin and down into the valley, before the path continues between trees. In 100m you curve to the right and in 150m you emerge from the trees to continue gently uphill through a grassy area. In 170m at the brow of this rise, behind you are the last views (in all but the worst weathers) of the top of **Shutlingsloe** (on 115°), although from this side it does not look much like a 'Matterhorn'. You are on **The Hollins**, the hill **overlooking Macclesfield** (the centre is still out of sight though). Descend to a wooded area and in 130m go through a metal kissing gate with a footpath marker and continue through the trees.

In 100m, at a four-way junction, cross a track leading on the right to a green at **Macclesfield Golf Club**, and in 40m pass the fenced **Hollins Service Reservoir** away on the left. In 60m enter trees, cross a service track and start to descend a little and in 20m pass a footpath marker post with a bin attached to it! In 40m *veer right* with the path, with some fairways of the golf course on the right. In another 120m you leave the trees and continue along a narrow earthen path past a farm, after which you enjoy far views across the **Cheshire Plain** and down to the southerly parts of **Macclesfield** on the left below, as well as several holes of the golf club. In 120m you cross a gravel track by a large transformer mast on the right and in 40m *turn left* down some steps by a signpost through a wall gap onto a track. Continue a little to the left down some more steps to descend between walls. In 100m *bear right* and at a three-way junction, *turn right* along a car wide gravel drive (signed 'Public Path'), ignoring the public footpath ahead. In 120m, ignore the signposted public footpath re-joining from the left and cross the **Macclesfield Canal** on the lane and continue downhill along the cobbled **Richmond Hill** (road). In 60m, by **Black Road Stores** on the right, cross **Black Road** and – 20m to the right – go down some steps into **Windmill Street Park and King George Playing Field** to cross it towards its far-right corner (**The Dolphin** pub is away on the right).

Leave the park onto **Windmill Street** and *turn left*. You pass **St. Peter's Church** on the right and a bus stop (line 58 from Buxton) and **St. Peter's Working Man's Institute** on the left and cross the road at a convenient point. Immediately after passing Knight Street on the right and then crossing the railway line on a bridge, **[!]** *turn right* downhill along **Waterside** (road). In 140m go under the viaduct of the raised dual-carriageway A523 **Silk Road**, cross **Lower Bank Street** and continue in the same direction along **Waterside**. In 80m by **Storm Brewing**, *turn left* across the **Bollin** on a car wide bridge, go through some bollards and continue along a cobbled road (**Park Green**) between industrial buildings. In 80m, by a fenced green and a war memorial on the left, *turn right* along **Sunderland Street**. En route to the station 300m away, you pass various pubs, bars and restaurants: **The Jolly Sailor**, the **Treacle Tap**, **The George & Dragon**, **Spanish Caravan**, **The Queen's**. Continue past the station for **more pubs, bistros and restaurants**, either along the crescent in front of the station or up to the left along **Waters Green** or up along one of the narrow lanes or flights of steps rising up towards the **Old Town and the Market Place**.

London bound trains depart from the far Platform 2.

Hollin Lane Alternative

In 290m, just before **Canal Bridge #44** – *bear right* up a stepped footpath to **Bullocks Lane** and *turn left* to cross the bridge. Continue along the right-hand pavement and in 30m pass the tree-lined drive on the left to the **Sutton Hall** pub restaurant. In another 40m *turn left* across the road and continue up along a tarmac drive. In 170m *turn right* over a stile in a fence with a permissive path marker on a signpost and *veer left* diagonally across the pasture (150°), in 100m passing clear to the left of a lone large tree stump. Continue past a line of trees along a bend of the **Rosendale Brook** and then continue in the same direction towards a wire fence. In 60m pick up the fence on your right.

In another 60m leave the field in the far corner over a stile and down some steps and *turn right* along an earthen path to the right of the brook – in places taking a higher route to the right to skirt muddy stretches – until you emerge by a footpath signpost onto **Hall Lane**. Cross it and *turn right* uphill along its opposite pavement. In 70m you continue in the same direction at an oblique four-way junction. You then continue gently uphill along the left-hand pavement of **Hollin Lane up the Rossen Dale** for 1.5 km, where a public footpath joins from the left over a bridge across the brook, just before a farmhouse on the left.

Pick up the directions in the main text at the double asterisk **).

Rossen Clough Alternative (cut 800m distance and 70m ascent)

Immediately after crossing the **Rossen Clough** stream, you *bear right* along a tarmac car wide lane. In 30m, where a gravel drive joins from the left, you pass a bridleway signpost. Continue up along this tarmac drive for 1.0 km. In more detail: Initially you rise to and past **Lower Kinderfields Farm**, then descend to the level of the brook. You follow the stream through the bucolic **Rossen Clough** with the stream on your right, until in 850m from the farm you cross the stream on the lane. In 120m go over a cattle grid or a wooden gate to the left of it and in 50m you *turn left* through a double wooden field gate with a bridleway signpost, ignoring the continuation of the drive to **Civit Hills House**.

In 25m descend through a muddy area towards the brook in 35m and in 60m go through a metal gate left of a metal field gate. You pass a pond on the right and a marker post, with the farmhouse above on the right, and in 80m pass another marker post. *Bear right* to a wooden gate 50m away and then follow a fence on the right. In 50m ford a streamlet and go through a wooden gate and *bear right* uphill with a marker. In 40m continue to the left of a line of trees, with the brook below on the left and in 50m *turn left* downhill to the brook and *turn right* along it.

In 200m, with **Lower Pethills Farm** over on the other side of the brook, fork right away from the brook and in 80m pass a bridleway marker post and continue in the same direction, soon passing a barbed wire fenced small pond on the right. In 75m go through a metal gate into a large pasture and *veer left* towards **Higher Pethills Farm**, and in 120m go through a metal gate with a bridleway marker and continue between hedge and wall. In 40m *bear left* along a tarmac drive and in another 40m, just before crossing the brook again and where a footpath joins from the other side of the brook, you **[!]** *turn right* through a metal kissing gate and *veer right* within a sloping pasture to initially stay to the right of a boggy area and then follow the right-hand fence for 200m (ignore a car wide gap in the fence en route).

In the far-right field corner, by a metal gate and a marker post, you **[!]** *turn right* with the public footpath up along a car wide track between trees. In 80m *curve to the left* with the fence and a ditch on the left (you have **fine views behind** to Macclesfield Forest, Toot Hill and the Cheshire Plain beyond Macclesfield). In 50m *curve to the right* with the line of trees on the right and in 80m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and by a marker post. You *veer left* with the marker up a pasture on a bearing of 205° to a metal kissing gate by an electricity pole 230m away, just the other side of the gravel drive leading to the farm visible away on the right. In 70m go through another metal kissing gate and rise to another metal kissing gate 10m away by a road and a Gritstone Trail signpost. Cross the road to continue gently uphill over a cattle grid and along a tarmac track and pick up the directions in the main text at the triple asterisk *******).

Greasley Hollow Route

In 150m in the bottom field corner by a metal kissing gate, *turn right* along the fence with a footpath marker inside the field, ignoring a continuation of the track through the gate. In 50m ignore a metal field gate on the left and in 70m pass a marker on a gate post on the left. In 60m go through a metal field gate and in 110m *turn left* over a stile by some yellow markers on a gate post and follow a car wide track downhill. In 100m in the bottom corner of the field on the right, you *turn right* at a right angle by turning hard right back on yourself through a field gate and then turning left in a field. You follow the left-hand fence and in 40m go through a wooden gate and continue in the same direction. In 100m go through a high metal kissing gate in a deer fence with a yellow marker and emerge at the top of a valley, with a drop on the left.

In 30m *turn hard left* back on yourself by a marker post and follow a grassy track around the top of a tight valley. In 70m *turn right* by the first of a couple of marker posts to begin the descent down **Nabbs Hill** (on the OS map) along a grassy trail (175°), soon with steep drops on both sides. You have some views of Roaches and Hen Cloud ahead to the left and of a wooded ridge ahead. At the seeming bottom of the drop, you pass another marker post and go through a high wooden kissing gate in a deer fence to follow a clear path soon zigzagging down a steep wooded side (plenty of bluebells in season) over 90m to the level of the **Shell Brook**, which you cross on a two-railed wooden footbridge. Follow the path on the other side of the brook slowly winding its way to a metal kissing gate 100m away and – through the gate – *turn right* along a fence.

The path now skirts **Lower Greasley Farm** to its left, this section is badly drained and can be very mud-prone [a higher line in the pasture may provide a drier route]. In 200m you go over a stile to the left of a double field gate and *turn right* along a farm track. In 20m go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a grass track and through a redundant wooden gate, ignoring the farm track's right turn towards the farm house. Walk through a long and narrowing pasture along its left-hand boundary and in 320m leave it over a stile in a fence to follow an often very muddy path down to the brook 100m away (plenty of bluebells in season). You re-cross the **Shell Brook** over a two-railed wooden footbridge in this very bucolic spot where a tributary stream joins and *turn left* along the far side along a clear (and very mud-prone) path down the **Greasley Hollow**.

In 100m go over a stile in a fence and in 30m ford a stream coming down on the right. The path now veers away from the brook and in 180m a public footpath joins from the right, down from Minn-End-Lane. You *veer left* by a marker post with a **Peak District Boundary Walk** marker on the side and continue along the narrow path high above the brook below.

In 80m *fork right* at an indistinct fork up a bank through some grass and bracken, ignoring the slightly more obvious path along the drop. In 30m – at a marker post – *turn left* through more bracken and in 40m continue along a clear grass path again. In 80m you pass another marker post, just before you join a stream coming down the wooded hill on the right. In 125m you cross the **Shell Brook** on a two-railed footbridge, where the stream you were following joins it and where another tributary stream joins on the other bank.

Follow a clear grassy path uphill and in 60m, by a marker post on the right, *turn hard left uphill* towards an electricity pole to the right of a large farm (broadly easterly). Once you have climbed the immediate rise, you can spot a series of stiles ahead, 30m apart, and head for them. Past the stiles, you join a farm track heading left uphill and in 80m by a metal field gate and a metal gate ahead with a Permissive Path marker, you **ignore all of those** and **[!]** *turn right* over a stepless stile with a yellow marker to the right of another metal field gate and follow a left-hand field boundary (160°).

In 40m by a stile on the left, you have a choice:

For the direct route to the lunch options in Wincle (cuts 2.4 km/1.5 mi and 20m ascent), *turn left* over the stile and head up along the left-hand field boundary and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Shortcut within the Greasley Hollow Route**.

For the Main Walk route via the Dane Valley with a long stretch up the very scenic valley to Wincle, continue in the same direction along the fence on the left. In 180m you go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and *veer right* through the next pasture on a bearing of 200°, just to the right of a clump of trees. In 200m by what is in fact the end of a row of trees, you go over a stile in a fence and continue in the same direction through the adjacent pasture towards a marker post 130m away, past which you continue in the same direction downhill to the bottom-right field corner. In 100m go over a stile about 30m to the left of the corner and go through a couple of dips either side of an earth bank to then *turn right* along a public footpath by a marker post. In 25m go through a high wooden gate in a deer fence and *bear left* at a two-way **Gritstone Trail** signpost. The main route along the Wincle Minn has joined from the right.

Pick up the directions in the main text at the quadruple asterisk ****).

Shortcut within the Greasley Hollow Route (cuts 2.4 km/1.5 mi and 20m ascent)

In 130m go through some trees along a field boundary (there is a decrepit marker post on the left) and in the next field continue in the same direction for 25m and then *veer right* uphill by a broken marker post, your direction 100°, towards a stile to the left of a metal field gate and a large farm at the top of the rise beyond it at the top of the subsequent field. You aim for the farm (**Wincle Grange**, a Grade II*-listed 14th century farm house with Grade II-listed barns; the farm was built by the monks of Combermere Abbey but has been much altered since) and there go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate to the right of the main farm buildings and to the left of some outbuildings. Follow a track through the farmyard and several gates and then continue in the same direction along a tarmac lane at a bend. In 30m ignore a public footpath turning left through a metal field gate and in 60m start to descend with the lane.

In 70m curve to the left with the lane and in 35m **[!]** *turn right* through a wooden gate into a pasture by a footpath signpost and *veer left* through the field. In 110m at the bottom of

it, you go over a stone slab stile in a drystone wall and descend through a wood ('Please Keep to the Footpath'). The path is not always obvious, but ample signs leave you in little doubt where to go and you leave the wood over stone slabs into a pasture and drop to its bottom-right hand corner. In 110m you go over a stone slab stile and continue in the same direction across a tarmac drive and then through a wall gap and across a grassy area and in 75m over a stile onto a tarmac lane. The route continues ahead up some steps. But the recommended lunch stop **The Ship Inn** is 40m away on the right. The interesting **Wincle Beer Company** is 280m further down the road in a very scenic spot right on the **River Dane** by the pretty **Dane Bridge** (1869).

Pick up the directions in the main text at the sextuple asterisk *********).

Extension (add 1.6 km/1.0 mi and 20m ascent)

Ahead you have a wooded ridge on the other side of the **Dane Valley**, and **The Roaches** and **Hen Cloud** away on the left (SWC Walks 380 and 388). In 200m you go through a high wooden kissing gate in a deer fence and in 20m through a metal kissing gate. The **Shell Brook Valley** is visible again away to the right below as you go through a dropping pasture on a clear path. In 125m *bear right* with a GT marker post (245°) towards a couple of railed wooden bridges spanning often-muddy stretches and in 75m cross the bridges and in another 20m some boardwalks. You go over some more railed boardwalks spanning an area of springs and then follow an intermittent line of marker posts up and across a large pasture. Due W you can see a prominent hill, **The Cloud**, which sits on the Staffordshire/Cheshire border and overlooks Congleton and the railway line from London.

The clear path starts the descent into the Dane Valley and eventually enters trees and bears left. In 60m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a wooden field gate by a two-way GT marker post and continue in the same direction at a bend of a tarmac drive (by a 'Private' sign on the left). in 90m cross the **Dane River** on the **Barleighford Bridge** (in the process briefly leaving the Peak District National Park and **entering Staffordshire**) and in 20m cross a cattle grid (or a metal kissing gate to the left of it). You bend to the left with the drive and in 200m, where the drive turns right across a conduit (carrying water from the Dane to Rudyard Reservoir) and the GritstoneTrail turns right through a wooden kissing gate by a two-way signpost, you **[!]** continue in the same direction over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate. The **Dane Valley Way** has joined through that wooden kissing gate and you will follow it for 2.9 km to **Danebridge**.

In more detail: For 1.0 km you walk along a raised car wide bank between the conduit on the right and the meandering river on the left, ignoring a couple of bridges on the right across the conduit, and turning left with track and river towards a house in **Hammond's Hole** (on the OS map). Pass the house on its right-hand side and go over a stile to the left of a wooden gate and continue along a narrow, fenced footpath. The valley tightens and in 330m from the house you reach a bridge across the river on the left by a two-way signpost and a right turning path (signed 'Hollinshall and Hannel Farm'). **[!]** *Turn left* across the two-railed metal footbridge with a **Peak District Boundary Walk** marker on the reverse to pass a very scenic weir, with another stepped weir visible 100m upriver, and continue into the meadow on the far side. The Main Walk has joined from down the meadow.

Pick up the directions in the main text at the quintuple asterisk *********).