

Macclesfield to Leek			Upper Hulme Ending							
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check	1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check					
15 <sup>th</sup> June 2021			19 <sup>th</sup> April 2021							
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## Macclesfield to Leek (via Shutlingsloe, Lud's Church & the Roaches)

**Start:** Macclesfield Station

**Finish:** Leek Bus Station

Macclesfield Station, map reference SJ 919 736, is 237 km northwest of Charing Cross, 133m above sea level and in **Cheshire East**. Leek Bus Station, map reference SJ 986 563, is 18 km southeast of Macclesfield, 192m above sea level and in **Staffordshire**.

**Length:** 27.7 km (17.2 mi).

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 934/875m. For a shorter or longer walk, see below **Walk Options**.

**Toughness:** 9 out of 10

**Time:** 7 1/4 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 1/4 hours on Sundays. Relevant bus lines serving Leek are: **109** (Leek – Macclesfield) with 5 buses a day Mon-Sat and lines **16** and **18** Leek – Hanley (half-hourly Mon-Sat, hourly on Sun); Hanley Bus Station has frequent buses to Stoke Station (which is a 2.3 km walk away).

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** The walk is doable as a daywalk from London with a train no later than 09.00 hours.

**OS Landranger Map:** 118 (Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield) and 119 (Buxton & Matlock)

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

### Walk Notes:

A tour de force of highlights in the Cheshire/Staffordshire borderlands within easy reach of London. You rise quickly out of the historic Silk Town of Macclesfield over The Hollins, a modest hill with fine views over the Cheshire Plain and across the valley of the River Bollin to pass a string of reservoirs and enter the enchanting Macclesfield Forest. A steep ascent through the woods brings you out onto the open High Moor and a following easy ascent of the 'Cheshire Matterhorn': Shutlingsloe.

From there descend steeply into the scenic Clough Brook valley and walk back up across another modest hill with quiet pastures into the very scenic Dane Valley by Gradbach Mill, almost at the halfway point.

From the river level rise steadily through Back Forest to explore the unique and magical Lud's Church chasm, a 100m long and up to 18m deep, mossy cleft in the wooded hillside. Ascend to the Ridge, part of a 6-kilometre long curved ridge which includes the famous gritstone escarpment of the Roaches and the quite sensational Hen Cloud, a tilted standalone rockface.

You continue through pastures and over another modest hill with fine views to the historic market town of Leek, lastly through a Country Park right onto the market place and thence through the Old Town to the bus station. Buses at the start or from alternative endings on the A53 enable shorter walks.

## **Walk Options:**

**Bus Line 14** (Macclesfield – Langley, about hourly Mon-Fri, every two hours Sat) **enables a start in Langley** (cut 3.6 km/2.4 mi and 95m ascent). Alight at the final stop by Langley Church and go back down the road (Cock Hall Lane) for 40m to a three-way junction and *turn right* along Main Road ( $50^\circ$ , signed 'Macc. Forest 1 ¼'). Pick up the directions on page 6 at the single asterisk \*).

**An Alternative Route on Shutlingsloe** avoids the final steep ascent to the summit (cut 45m ascent).

**An Alternative Route to the one through Lud's Church Chasm passes the Hanging Stone**, an outstanding viewing point jutting out from the ridge over the Dane Valley, this adds 2.1 km.

**An Ascent up the striking hilly outcrop of Hen Cloud** adds 500m each way and 66m ascent.

**Alternative Endings lead to bus stops on the A53 for Line 108** (Mon-Sat, with the last buses running mid-afternoon Mon-Fri and later afternoon Sat) to Leek (for connections to Macclesfield or on to Hanley for Stoke-on-Trent station) or to Buxton (for Line 58 connecting to Macclesfield):

- **either in Upper Hulme** (scenic along a tight river valley); cut 6.9 km/4.3 mi and 125m ascent;
- **or in Blackshaw Moor** (flat through pastures and along a road); cut 5.2 km/3.2 mi and 125m ascent.

**At the end of the walk in Leek, you can take buses either back to Macclesfield, or on to Hanley**, for Stoke-on-Trent Station (which is closer to London). There are frequent buses linking Hanley Bus Station to Stoke Station, but **a pleasant 2.3 km walking route is described** in text and also available as a gpx file.

## **Elevenses** (details last updated 09/11/2020)

**The Forest Snug Food Van** Trentabank Reservoir Car Park, *Macclesfield Forest Visitor Centre, Langley, Cheshire, SK11 0NS* (07743 909 339). The Forest Snug is located 6.0 km (3.7 mi) into the walk. Open weekends and school holidays.

## **Lunch** (details last updated 12/10/2021)

**The Crag Inn** Wildboarclough, *Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0BD* (01260 227 239). The Crag Inn is located 9.8 km (6.1 mi) into the walk. Opening Hours: Fri-Sun from noon. No food served.

**The Riverside Café** Gradbach Mill, *Gradbach, Quarnford, Staffordshire SK17 0SU* (01260 227 000, <https://www.gradbach.co.uk/riverside-cafe/>). The Riverside Café is located 13.0 km (8.0 mi) into the walk, on the banks of the River Dane. Open Easter to October 10.00-16.00 weekends and Bank Holidays, but 7 days during summer school holidays.

## **Tea all options** (details last updated 30/10/2020)

**Roaches Tea Rooms and Restaurant** Paddock Farm, *Roach Road, Upper Hulme, Leek, Staffordshire Moorlands ST13 8TY* (01538 300 345, <http://www.roachestearooms.co.uk/>). The Roaches Tea Rooms are located 650m off route, 19.7 km into the walk, on the lane leading to Upper Hulme. Open daily 09.00-17.00.

## **Tea Upper Hulme Ending** (details last updated 07/09/2022)

**Ye Olde Rock Inn** Old Buxton Road, *Upper Hulme, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8TY* (01538 300 324, <https://www.yeolderockinn.com/>). Open Wed-Sun from 12.00 to late. Food served to 20.00.

## **Tea Blackshaw Moor Ending** (details last updated 30/10/2020)

**Three Horseshoes Country Inn & Spa** Blackshaw Moor, *Leek, Staffordshire Peak District, ST13 8TW* (01538 300 296, <https://www.3shoesinn.co.uk/>). Open all day, food served from 18.00 Mon-Thu and all-day Fri-Sun.

## **Tea Leek Ending** (details last updated 06/11/2020)

**The Lazy Trout** Meerbrook, *Leek, Staffordshire Peak District, ST13 8SN* (01538 300 385). The Trout is located 5.8 km/3.6 mi from the end of the walk. Open all day, food served from 18.00 Mon-Thu and all-day Fri-Sun.

**The Abbey Inn** Abbey Green Road, *Leek, Staffordshire Peak District, ST13 8SA* (01538 382 865, <https://theabbeyinnleek.co.uk/>). The Abbey Inn is located 2.4 km/1.5 mi from the end of the walk. Open Wed-Fri from 17.30 and all-day Sat-Sun, food served from 17.30 Wed-Fri, all day Sat and to 17.00 Sun.

**Numerous options in Leek**; 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 17<sup>th</sup> century, and became a major silk-manufacturing centre from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Shutlingsloe

Shutlingsloe is a hill to the south of Macclesfield Forest, on the edge of the Peak District and within the Peak District National Park. A steep-sided hill with a distinctive profile, it is sometimes referred to as the 'Matterhorn of Cheshire', and it is the third highest peak in the historic county with an elevation of 506m, commanding a wide panorama across the Cheshire Plain and over the Peak District. In clear conditions the view extends as far as the Mersey Estuary and the Welsh Clwydian Hills more than 60 km to the west, and the cooling towers of the power stations on the banks of the River Trent 80 km to the south southeast.

The name of the hill derives from old English 'Scyttel's hlaw' meaning 'Scyttel's (personal name) hill' and is one of several 'low' names in the Peak District, from the same Old English root that gives rise to the name "Law" for many hills in southern Scotland.

The hill is formed from alternating layers of mudstones and coarse sandstones (referred to as 'gritstones'), which were laid down in a delta system in the Carboniferous period. The summit tor is formed from Chatsworth Grit and the lower slopes from Roaches Grit. Several geological faults run through the hill.

Shutlingsloe is believed to be a Nunatak, a hill whose peak stood above the surrounding glaciers during the Ice Ages, and therefore did not get eroded by them.

### 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.

### Macclesfield Forest

Macclesfield Forest is the last substantial remnant of the Royal Forest of Macclesfield, a once-extensive ancient hunting reserve on the western edge of the Peak District, although it is nowadays predominantly conifer plantation managed for timber. The hills of Tegg's Nose and Shutlingsloe stand to the north west and south east, respectively; the moorland of High Moor lies to the south and the Goyt Valley lies to the east.

The area ranges in elevation from around 225m to 475m and includes two hills itself: Toot Hill in the east and Nessit Hill in the south. Two reservoirs, fed by the Bollin Brook, supply water to Macclesfield: Ridgegate Reservoir was constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Trentabank Reservoir following in the 1920s. The latter contains a large herony.

## **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 km<sup>2</sup> (550 mi<sup>2</sup>) 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 copse 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 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.

## **Lud's Church**

Lud's Church is a deep chasm penetrating the Roaches Millstone Grit bedrock on the wooded hillside of the Back Forest above Gradbach, in Staffordshire, in the Dark Peak. Over 100m long and 18m deep, it was created by a massive landslip when all but the upper third of the slope has slipped forward towards the River Dane.

The thick bed of coarse Carboniferous sandstone here dips northeastwards and the rocks of this area are traversed by numerous roughly northwest-to-southeast-oriented faults and fracture planes. In addition, weak layers of mudstone exist within the sequence. It is along such lines of weakness that a large mass of the Roaches Grit has slipped slightly downhill into the Dane Valley resulting in the open rift. The age of the movement is unknown but is likely to be post-glacial.

The chasm is mossy and overgrown from top to bottom, and wet and cool even on the hottest of days.

The Lollards (followers of John Wycliffe, an early church reformer), are supposed to have used this as a secret place of worship during the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, when they were being persecuted for their religious beliefs. Lud's Church may have been named after Walter de Lud-Auk who was captured here at one of their meetings.

It is also believed by some to be the "Greene Chapel" of the medieval poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

## **The Roaches**

The Roaches (from the French *les roches* - the rocks) are the central part of a prominent curving rocky ridge above Leek and Tittesworth Reservoir, which extends for 6 kilometres from Hen Cloud in the south to Back Forest and Hanging Stone in the northwest. The rock formations of the Roaches rise steeply to 505m, and along with the adjacent Ramshaw Rocks and Hen Cloud they form a gritstone escarpment popular with walkers, rock climbers and fell runners. They are formed from a thick bed of coarse sandstone ('gritstone'), which occurs widely across the Peak District and takes its name, the Roaches Grit, from this location.

In clear conditions, views stretch out over much of Cheshire to as far away as Snowdon and Winter Hill/Lancs.

## 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**, to the left of the green with its war memorial. In 80m continue through bollards and cross the **River Bollin** on a bridge. On the far side, by 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. Cross the road and in 50m enter **Windmill Street Park with the King George Playing Field** and cross it towards a set of steps visible near the middle of the top of the field, to the right of a children's playground (140°). Go up the steps and cross **Black Road** to *turn right* along it for 20m and *turn left* uphill along the cobbled **Richmond Hill**. In 50m you cross the **Macclesfield Canal** on the lane and on the other side ignore a signposted right turning public footpath and *bear right* uphill (200°) along a car wide gravel drive (a signed 'Public Path'). In 100m, at a T-junction with a public footpath, *turn left* uphill and in 15m continue between walls. In 100m you go up some steps onto a track and continue in the same direction a little to the left up some more steps through a wall gap.

You *turn right* with a signpost and in 20m the path levels out by a large transformer mast on the left. You are on **The Hollins**, the hill **overlooking Macclesfield**, and have the southerly parts of town on the right below, as well as several of the holes of **Macclesfield Golf Club**. You cross a gravel track leading to the 18<sup>th</sup> Tee and continue along a narrow earthen path, with the **Sutton Common BT Tower** on **Croker Hill** visible ahead (conceived in the 1950s as part of the 'Backbone' communication chain in case of Nuclear War), and **Manchester** and **Winter Hill** beyond it visible behind on the right. You pass a farm and in another 140m enter some trees, with the golf course on the left now. In 100m *veer left* with the path and in 40m pass a footpath marker post with a bin attached to it! The path starts to gently ascend and in 20m crosses a service track and in 140m you continue a little to the left of the fenced **Hollins Service Reservoir** along a grassy path (to the left of a gravel track). In 90m at a four-way junction, cross a track which leads on the left to a golf course green, to continue into trees.

In 100m you go through a metal kissing gate with a footpath marker and follow a clear grassy path gently uphill through an open area, now with views on the right across the valley of the **Bollin** to Croker Hill and the **Bosley Cloud** and the **Gun** (hills) beyond it to the right (SWC Walk Macclesfield Circular via the Dane Valley). In 100m, at the brow of this rise, ahead you can see (in all but the worst weathers) the top of the 'Cheshire Matterhorn', **Shutlingsloe** (on 115°), although from this side the top itself just looks like a minor pike on a broad ridge (you will appreciate its 'Matterhorn' moniker once you have gone over its top and seen the descent on the other side). The path descends towards a wooded area and in 170m you continue between trees, interspersed with some bracken and gorse. The path curves to the left in 160m and you get fine views on the half right through a break in the trees down to **Langley** village and of the **Tegg's Nose** ridge. In a pasture by a two-way footpath signpost, *turn right* downhill along a right-hand boundary.

In 125m go through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate and *veer to the left* downhill a large pasture along a clear path, which in 100m bears to the right. In 200m

in the bottom right-hand field corner go over a couple of bridges to cross first a tributary stream and in 10m the River Bollin and *turn left* with the path along a fence on the left, with the imposing **Langley Hall** away on the left in 50m. In 80m you go through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction between a wall and a fence. In 70m go through another metal kissing gate onto a road in **Langley** and *turn left* along its left-hand pavement. In 100m the road crosses another tributary of the Bollin and in another 20m you cross the drive leading to Langley Hall. In 90m by the village hall, ignore the left turning **Coalpit Lane** and in 70m at a three-way road junction, with a church ahead and a bus stop to the right of it, you *turn left* along **Main Road** ( $50^\circ$ , 'Macc. Forest 1  $\frac{1}{4}$ '), ignoring the continuation to the right of the church ('Winkle 4'), called Cock Hall Lane.

\* You walk along a row of cottages and in 100m pass **St. Dunstan's Inn**. In 100m ignore Teggs Nose Mount (residential road) on the right and in 80m Hole House Lane on the left and continue gently uphill along **Clarke Lane** along its left-hand pavement. In 130m you pass **Clarke Lane Farm** on your right and have some pastures on the right. Behind an earth wall on the left is **Bottoms Reservoir**, the first of a string of reservoirs supplying drinking water to Macclesfield as well as water for the Macclesfield Canal. The lane rises to the water level and in 70m you get views of Tegg's Nose on the left. Halfway along the reservoir, the **Gritstone Trail** joins from the left by a signpost, from Tegg's Nose. In another 230m, just beyond the far end of the reservoir, you ignore a right turning car wide tarmac lane to **Green Barn Farm** (the Gritstone Trail turns right along it) and continue steeply uphill along the lane, in 100m passing **High Low Farm**. In 230m, by the **Leather's Smithy** pub on the left and **Ridgegate Reservoir** on the right, you ignore a footpath turning right along the reservoir dam, but *fork right* along a tarmac lane along the left-hand side of the reservoir ('Macc. Forest 1/2, Wildboarclough 4').

In 70m *turn left* through a bike-and-horse squeeze gate to continue along a gravel path parallel to the road, but separated by a low wall ('Footpath Only'), with some fine bluebell displays on the left in season. You pass some maps of the **Macclesfield Forest** at either end of the path and in a good 400m *turn right* back onto the road. Continue along the lane past the top of the reservoir and *turn right* with it. On the left you can see the dam of **Trentabank Reservoir** and start to gently ascend. In 40m *turn right* through another squeeze gate to continue along a gravel path parallel to the lane. In 80m, where the path levels out, you pass the drive to the **Forest Office** on the other side of the lane and in another 70m *turn left* through a squeeze gate to cross a lane joining from the direction of Winkle at a three-way lane junction and go through another squeeze gate to follow the left-hand lane along a parallel gravel path ('Forest Chapel 1  $\frac{3}{4}$ , Wildboarclough 3  $\frac{1}{2}$ '). The path keeps ascending and in 200m you pass the reservoir dam on the left by the car park of the **Trentabank Ranger Centre** on the right (toilet facilities), with **The Forest Snug Food Van** away on the right (weekends and Bank Holidays).

You continue in the same direction between rows of mature trees along an earthen track to the right of the lane, soon passing another large map of the forest and its paths. In 60m go through another squeeze gate and ignore a right turn and in 60m *turn right* ( $150^\circ$ ) with a public footpath (signposted 'Shutlingsloe'). You have now entered the **Peak District National Park** and will stay in it for the majority of the rest of the walk. In 75m continue in the same direction to continue uphill along a drystone wall, ignoring a left forking path. On the initially stepped path you ascend **Nessit Hill** through the wood. At the top of the steep first part of the ascent you cross a track ('Trentabank via Gritstone Trail') and continue in the same direction uphill ('Shutlingsloe'), still on a gravel path along a drystone wall. In 120m the path veers to the left away from the wall and you continue the very pleasant ascent along the flank of the hill, soon with a steep drop on the left.

Eventually, at the top of the treeline, you go through a final squeeze gate and – at the following signposted three-way junction of tracks (a concession bridleway joins from the right) – you *veer left*, signposted ‘Shutlingsloe’ and ‘Standing Stone’ (the name of a car park, w/o any standing stone). You have the **large bowl of the Macclesfield Forest** on the left below, and a wide ridgeline ahead, rising on the on the left to **Shining Tor**, Cheshire’s highest top (SWC Walk Macclesfield to Buxton). [The clear-felled area below is being re-planted with broadleaves, replacing conifers.] In about 200m at a signposted three-way junction, you *turn right*, signed for Shutlingsloe, also with a **Peak District Boundary Walk** marker. In 100m *turn right* with the path and go through a wooden kissing gate with a Peak & Northern Footpath Society signpost for the public footpath to **Wildboarclough via Shutlingsloe**, into the open upland moor (Access Land), with a marker reminding dog owners **to keep dogs on a short lead** during bird nesting season (01 March – 31 July). Follow a paved path (120°) gently uphill across **High Moor** and in 330m the terrain levels out and you have the top of Shutlingsloe in the half distance ahead. In 200m you pass a sign just off path for the Piggford Moor Nature Reserve **moorland restoration project** and in 20m you go through a metal kissing gate in a drystone wall and come to a fork in the path. Both onward paths are public footpaths.

### **Here you have a choice:**

**For an easier route**, avoiding the ascent to the exposed mountain top and the steep descent from it, continue in the same direction through the moorland, initially along a paved path, and in 60m turn left over a plank bridge across a stream and turn right along a clear and mostly firm path through the open upland moor, with Shutlingsloe’s top away on the right. In 170m continue down an eerie boggy clough (there are several paths, all good) and at the bottom of the clough *veer right* with the path, gently downhill. In 90m go through a metal kissing gate and *bear right* with a marker post along a wall on the left. In 300m, at a path junction, *turn left* downhill to a metal kissing gate 50m away. Continue below at the double asterisk \*\*).

**For the route up to and over the top of Shutlingsloe**, *turn right* along a paved path along the wall and in 300m go over a stone slab stile with a wooden gate on top and continue in the same direction more steeply uphill. Just before the summit, *fork right* for an easier gradient to the very top with its trig point at **506m above sea level** and a toposcope 10m to the left of it. The top provides for stunning views of the surrounding tops as far as **Kinder Scout**, as well as down into the **Clough Brook valley**, towards the **Roaches** and the **Tittesworth Reservoir** beyond them, with **Leek** just beyond that. Also on view are **Manchester**, the World Heritage Site telescope at **Jodrell Bank** (on 280°) and the **Morridge**, the boundary to the White Peak area of the Peak District.

There is now a choice of **two descent routes**:

- The marked public footpath route is **steeper and along a rougher path** and forks off from the top very close to the trig point;
- **The gentler route** (the steep part of this route is shorter and mostly down a grassy slope rather than a rough path) continues along the grassy top plateau for 100m before continuing steeply either side of a rock outcrop to then *turn left* downhill.

The two routes re-unite by a metal kissing gate where the easier route joins from the left.

\*\*) Go through the gate out of the **Access Land** and descend further along a clear path. **Shutlingsloe Farm** is away to the left and several footpath marker posts guide you downhill, through another metal kissing gate and across a boardwalk past a spring (on the OS map) and then through a wall gap and to the farm drive, where you *turn right* with the **Boundary Walk**. In 220m you cross a cattle grid or a stile to the right where another track and a public footpath join from the left and continue in the same direction along the drive

with a wooded slope on the left (bluebells in season). In 450m you reach the road through the **Wildboarclough** (according to legend the place where the last wild boar in England was killed) and *turn right* along it, with the **Clough Brook** to the left of the road. In 30m a signposted footpath turns left to cross the brook, and the route follows it, but for the early lunch stop, **The Crag Inn**, continue along the road for another 50m. [If you do, try the mineral water bottled from a spring in their grounds: <https://cragspringwater.co.uk/>]

You cross the lively **Clough Brook** by its confluence with a minor stream down the hillside opposite on a two-railed wooden footbridge and – after going either way around a large tree – [!] *veer right* to follow the tributary stream uphill, ignoring any paths to the left along Clough Brook. In 15m cross the stream (this may require a jump) and follow a drystone wall on the right uphill, with the stream now on your left. In 60m go over a stepless stile into a pasture and continue to the left of a wall (and also the stream) towards the top right-hand field corner. **The best route** curves a little to the left to avoid some boggy sections. In 80m in the top corner, a marked public footpath joins from the left from a farm, and you continue in the same direction further uphill between low walls, still along the stream (there are some **fine views back towards Shutlingsloe**). In 70m *turn right* across a two-railed bridge over the stream and continue broadly in the direction the bridge is pointing, over a small rise then up a pasture towards its (out of sight) top-right corner (due S), via a two-railed footbridge that crosses an often-muddy area.

In the top corner by a marker post *turn right* towards a metal field gate 50m away and then up along a car wide track (for the first 30m this stretch can be very muddy as a stream meanders down it, **the driest route** tends to be just to the right of the track). In 150m go over a slab stone stile in a drystone wall with a yellow marker into a pasture and follow its right-hand boundary, soon passing a wood on the right. At the far end of the wood continue in the same direction with a marker on a fence post across a pasture's corner, then through another pasture, to a part-ruined farm building. In the field corner, *turn left* with a yellow marker over a stone slab stile in a wall and walk up to the farm building to *turn right* around it (the route around the far side of the barn is less mud-prone than the one in front of it). Past the barn follow a rough path between crumpled walls and past the ruined farm house on the right amongst trees. You continue through an open field and in 50m ford a stream to ascend along a car wide track towards the audible **A54**.

In 60m, some way before the road, *fork left* towards some steps and over a stile by a footpath signpost onto the road (about 40m to the left of the metal field gate the track was aiming for). Cross the road a little to the right and go over another stile to follow a signposted public footpath uphill and in 40m continue up a car wide tarmac drive joining up from the right, a **Public Road**. The drive climbs the flank of **Tagsclough Hill** and in 75m you *veer left* off the drive with a footpath marker on the right, further uphill along a rough gravel track, also marked as an **Unclassified Road** on the right and as such often used by off-road motorbikes. Behind you can see Shutlingsloe on 340° and Shining Tor on 10°. In 230m the track levels out and you continue along the track with occasional Unclassified Road markers and through several gates, without any tracks or paths off it, until in about 500m you descend with the track into the very scenic **Dane Valley**, with **Gradbach Hill**, the **Roaches** and **Ramshaw Rocks** dominating the view across the valley.

As you approach the road at the bottom of this initial step of the drop down to the valley bottom, ignore a left forking public footpath (grassy between walls) to continue in the same direction through a metal field gate and in another 100m you cross the road and continue in the same direction through a metal field gate with a footpath signpost ('Walkers Only, Thank You') down the drive to **Goosetree Farm**. In 110m, where the drive turns right and splits towards two houses, you continue in the same direction through a wall gap and a wooden gate in a drystone wall and follow a clear path down a steep grassy boulder-filled

hillside, staying to the right-hand boundary as close as possible. In 100m at the bottom-right corner, *turn left* along a wall with a marker post and in 40m *turn right* through a wall gap and continue steeply down to the left along a clear path towards **Gradbach Mill** below. In 180m at the bottom of the drop, *turn right* with a marker post through a metal kissing gate and across the **Dane River** on a two-railed steel bridge **into Staffordshire**.

*Turn right* in front of the former silk spinning mill and youth hostel (now a hotel specialising in conferences and weddings) along a signposted footpath ('Lud's Church, Danebridge, The Roaches') past a picnic area by the grassy riverbank (notice the county boundary marker on the right just beyond the wall). The late lunch stop, **The Riverside Café**, is a further 50m away. *Bear left* up some steps with the path to skirt the café and go through a wooden gate to *turn right* in a pasture. In 90m *turn right* down through a wall gap onto a lower path and *turn left* along it to follow the river. In 250m ignore a left turn uphill on a dog leg, and continue in the same direction through a wall gap, signed 'Danebridge', and *turn right* downhill. In 40m go through a wooden gate and cross the **Black Brook** on a concrete bridge to a signposted four-way footpath junction. Ignore left and right turns to 'Danebridge' and 'Roaches' and continue steeply up into **Forest Wood** (as per the OS map), signed for 'Swythamley' and 'Lud's Church'. In 40m ignore a signposted right turning concession path ('Danebridge') and keep going steeply up. At the top of some steps *turn right* at a T-junction with a public footpath, also a concession bridleway ('Swythamley', 'Lud's Church'). The path gently ascends through the enchanting wood away from the river level and in about 500m by some gritstone outcrops on the right (**Castle Cliff Rocks, a fine viewpoint up the Dane Valley**), you reach a three-way signpost.

#### Here you have a choice:

**For the Hanging Stone route** (add 2.1 km), continue in the same direction along a concession footpath, signed 'Swythamley', and in 100m emerge from the trees to continue uphill with fine views into the Dane Valley to the right. In 700m at a signposted three-way junction, the onwards route will turn left, but first continue in the same direction for 40m and *turn right* over a stone slab stile into a pasture and follow a clear path in a westerly direction to the **Hanging Stone** 380m away (go over a low wall in 200m and in 180m *turn left* to the Stone). Return to the three-way signpost and *turn right* along a permissive footpath along the ridge line, soon with some rock outcrops and a steep drop on the right. In 1.1 km at a signposted four-way junction of permissive footpaths, **the Lud's Church route** joins from the left below. Continue in the same direction ('Roaches') and pick up the directions below at the triple asterisk \*\*\*).

**For the Lud's Church route**, *turn hard left back on yourself* along a public footpath ('Lud's Church'), with the wood rising up on the right. In 200m you *turn right* to one of the entrances to **the chasm known as Lud's Church**. [The chasm is famously rarely touched by sunlight, so will almost always be **wet and slippery**. **An alternative** is to continue along the footpath and in 50m *fork right* and curve to the right up through the wood to emerge at the upper end of the chasm and pick up the route there.] You *turn left* down some steps into the chasm and initially cross a boardwalk section, with a money tree on the ground on the left, then in 80m the chasm forks into two branches, both of which are **well worth exploring** to the end (there is a tight walkable gap linking the two branches).

**The most walkable (and only permitted) exit route** though is off the right-hand branch, up a stepped path about halfway up it. You continue along the top of the chasm to its far end by a wooden fence, there to prevent access to the chasm from there (the alternative route joins from the left). Continue in the same direction along a permissive path through the forest (120°). The path is always clear and often runs over boardwalks and in 220m at a signposted T-junction you *turn right* uphill along a Concession Footpath

('Ridge'), ignoring the left turning public footpath ('Gradbach, Roaches'). You leave the trees behind and keep ascending through the open heathery hillside up to the **Ridge**. At the top of the rise you reach a signposted four-way junction of permissive footpaths. The Hanging Stone route joins from the right. *Turn left*, signed 'Roaches'.

\*\*) In 30m you go up a steep rise and from the top you have grand views on the left across to **Gradbach Hill** with its rock outcrops and beyond it and slightly to the left, the higher upland moors leading to **Shining Tor**. In the back on the left the upper part of the **Dane Valley** beyond Gradbach Mill is visible as is **Shutlingsloe**. In the back on the right, the Ridge curves away to the left to its end by the **Hanging Stone**. In another 100m, on the right, a large green valley stretches towards **Meerbrook**, the **Tittesworth Reservoir** and **Leek** beyond that. In 80m you continue along a public footpath joining from the right along a drystone wall and in 50m go through a dip. Eventually you descend to a road by **Roach End**, this side of **The Roaches**, and go through a wooden gate then a wall gap and cross the road to ascend the 3 km long ridge, signposted '**The Roaches Main Path**'.

The route along the ridge is always clear, but try to **follow the flagged or otherwise engineered paths** where possible to prevent further erosion of this very popular route. You see some large boulders ahead, and in 200m you see the first of many gritstone outcrops 300m ahead. In 350m past the outcrops you pass the **trig point at 505m above sea level** (1m lower than Shutlingsloe) and continue without much loss of height over another 1.1 km to the 15x10m sized **Doxey Pool**. The route continues along a sandy path for a while and starts a gentle descent, now with striking views ahead along the rest of the ridge and the especially striking rock faces of the tilting **Hen Cloud** beyond it, with the also very distinct **Ramshaw Rocks** away to the left. In about 400m a rough stepped path joins from the right below through a cleft in the rocks. [!] *Turn right* downhill along the stepped rough path, descending from the ridge before its far end.

In 70m at the bottom of the steep descent at a three-way path junction, ignore the continuation ahead down through a wood and [!] *turn left* along a level earthen path through the top of the wooded area, with the steep rockface eventually above you on the left, a **rock-climbing and bouldering venue as famous as any other in the UK**. In 150m you have the highest part of the Roaches rockface on the left and follow the path under the overhanging rock face and past several large gritstones to eventually descend from the **Roaches** into a green saddle between it and **Hen Cloud** (en route ignore a right turn steeply down). At the bottom of the drop by a wall at a signposted four-way footpath junction, and with fine views on the left of **Ramshaw Rocks**, continue in the same direction ('To Hen Cloud') through a gate in the wall (**leaving the Access Land**) and cross a narrow pasture towards another gate in a drystone wall opposite.

#### At the gate you have a choice:

**For an out-and-back ascent up Hen Cloud as well as for a finish at the bus stop in Upper Hulme** (1.7 km away, check the time of the last bus), go through the gate and:

- **For the extension up to Hen Cloud** (add 500m each way with 66m ascent) go up the obvious path ahead, then return back to and through the gate and *turn left*.
- **For the finish in Upper Hulme**, *turn left* along the wall and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Alternative Finish in Upper Hulme**.

**For the Main Walk**, *turn right* this side of the wall and follow the wall downhill to the left-bottom field corner, where you go through a wooden gate and down some steps onto a tarmac lane. The **Roaches Tea Rooms and Restaurant** are 650m away to the left along **the lane**, which **is also an alternative way of getting to Upper Hulme's bus stop**. Cross the lane and continue in the same direction through a wall gap by a footpath

signpost into a pasture and follow its right-hand boundary downhill. About 50m before the end of the field, by a lone tree, *veer left* away from the wall and in 50m go down a late-seen set of steep stone steps onto a tarmac drive and *turn right* to **Windygates Farm**.

In 30m go through a metal field gate and in 70m keep to the right of a barn and up some steps and through a wooden gate to pass the barn on its right-hand side, in 15m passing a footpath sign post. At the far end of the barn, *bear left* to cross a concrete track and curve down to the left (245°) through a pasture towards its far bottom-left corner 200m away. There you go through a squeeze gap to the left of a metal field gate and go through a long pasture along its left-hand boundary. In 290m go through a metal field gate and continue in the same direction through the next pasture along its right-hand boundary. In 280m you go through a wall gap and over a stile and emerge at a signposted four-way footpath junction. One of the **Staffordshire Moorlands Walks** (SMW) joins from the left and continues ahead. The hill ahead in the middle distance with the distinct clump of trees almost in its middle (**Hillswood**) lies between here and the end of the walk.

### **Here you have a choice:**

**For a finish at the bus stop in Blackshaw Moor** (2.2 km away, check the time of the last bus), *turn left* with the SMW ('Middle Hulme & Whitty Lane') and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Alternative Finish in Blackshaw Moor**.

**For the Main Walk**, *turn right* along a public footpath ('Frith Bottom & Roach House') and follow a right-hand field boundary. In 175m you go through a wooden gate and cross a stream on a mossy and tilting (and therefore **very slippery**) two-railed footbridge. In the next field, follow the signed concession footpath by turning left along the stream and in 50m in the field corner turning right along the boundary. In the far-left field corner, **ignore** a first left turning public footpath over a stile and in another 5m past a metal field gate on the left, go through a wall squeeze gap and over a stile into another pasture and *turn left* along its left-hand boundary with a signpost towards **Frith Bottom**, the farm buildings visible ahead. In 160m by the farm, go through a metal field gate and *veer to the left* of an open shed and then a small barn to go through another metal field gate into the farmyard and *turn right* through it, with a couple of yellow markers on the barns on the right.

Through the farm, the farm track descends to cross a stream (the SMW has re-joined from the left over a stile) and in 160m you go over a cattle grid and – by a footpath signpost on the right – [!] *turn left* through a metal gate into a pasture. In 50m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and follow a right-hand field boundary. In 75m go through a boundary gap (a missing gate) into the next field and in another 130m *turn right* with a signpost over a stile in a wooden fence and cross a paddock diagonally towards a house. In 50m *turn right* through a wooden field gate and follow a track to the left of the house, in 20m continuing along its tarmac drive. In 90m *turn left* at a T-junction with a road, which in 25m crosses a stream and then continues into **Meerbrook** village. In 150m, at a T-junction by the very early tea stop **The Lazy Trout** pub on the left, you *turn right* along the road ('Rushton 3 ¾, Danebridge 5'), [!] ignoring the left turn to 'Leek'!

In 60m pass an info panel on the left and then *turn left* at a three-way lane junction along a left-hand tarmac pavement, signposted 'Leek 3 ¼'. You have left the **Peak District National Park**. In 770m, by a tarmac drive on the left leading to **Tittesworth Watersports**, the pavement discontinues. In 350m, where the lane turns up to the right, you continue in the same direction across a cattle grid and along a private tarmac drive signed for '**South Hillswood Booth**', with a public footpath signpost in the hedge on the right. In 200m pass **Hillswood End** (farm) and descend with the lane. In 110m you start to re-ascend and in 160m, just before **North Hillswood Farm**, [!] *turn right* along a

gravel track with a footpath signpost a little ahead, ignoring another footpath ahead through the farm (and the SMW with it). In 20m *turn left* uphill with the track, continuing to the right of the farm buildings below, up the hill spotted earlier from below the Roaches.

In 110m go through a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a left-hand drystone wall and past the occasional tree. In 220m the terrain levels out mostly and in 40m you go through a wall gap onto the open hill top and continue in the same direction to in 100m pass the prominent clump of trees seen earlier on its right-hand side. There are very fine views to be had from here behind you, towards Shutlingsloe, the Roaches, Hen Cloud and Ramshaw Rocks, as well as to the high moors separating this area from the **White Peak** part of the Peak District. You continue in the same direction through the gently descending grassy hill, with the houses of **Leek** in the distance, on the other side of the valley ahead. In 160m the descent becomes more pronounced, now along a clear car wide track, and in about 300m you go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate and follow the track through **Abbey Wood** (as per the OS map).

Ignore a metal field gate on the right en route and after 140m leave the wood through an elaborate wooden gate (notice the stencilled dedication to Tony Squires on the reverse) into a large, gently sloping pasture, with the valley of the **Churnet River** directly ahead. You continue along a clear path, in 250m gently downhill, and in 200m leave the field in the bottom-left corner through a metal kissing gate. Stay to the left of a cottage and in 70m you pass the early tea stop, the **Abbey Inn**. You *turn left* along a tarmac path parallel to **Abbey Green Road** and in 50m this continues as a road pavement. In 60m ignore a right turning footpath over a stile into a pasture and in another 60m the pavement switches to the right-hand side. In about 400m you cross the **Churnet River** on the road.

#### **On the other side by a car repair business on the left, you have a choice:**

**For the closest bus stop** (line 109 back to Macclesfield), continue in the same direction along the road and in 280m *turn right* along **Mill Road**, the A523. In 30m you pass **Brindley's Mill** and in 50m on the opposite side, the unmarked **Bridge End, Kiln Lane bus stop** is on your left-hand side, just before the **Dyers Arms**.

**For Leek Town Centre** (still 1.7 km and a couple of middling ascents away), *turn left* with a footpath sign on a lamp post up an initially stepped and railed path and *turn left* with the path to go around the shed and then *turn right* uphill with the path, fenced on the left and with trees on the right. As you rise steeply out of the valley, you get views of **Hen Cloud and Ramshaw Rocks** in the distance and of the lush green valley and a local nature reserve below nearby. Go through a metal gate when the path levels out and in 170m go through a wooden kissing gate into the open. Eventually you can spot part of the **Roaches**. The path continues through a mud-prone stretch and 50m after passing a wooden bench you go through a wooden kissing gate into a wood and in 80m emerge in **Brough Park**, by a map of the **Brough Park Fields Nature Reserve** to your left.

*Turn right* through the open grassy area along the trees on your right and in 120m cross a tarmac drive to gently descend across grass to a tarmac path junction 50m away (the right-hand one of two, i.e.: *not the one* leading to a bandstand). Continue along the tarmac path in the same direction, generally downhill over the next 180m. You follow the path through the bottom of a dry grassy valley, ignoring a right turn into a residential area, and start to re-ascend. In 80m ignore a left fork and continue steeply up the grassy slope towards a church. At the top of the rise *bear right* along **Church Lane** and in 30m *turn left* into the churchyard of **St. Edward the Confessor, Leek** (further ahead along the lane you'll find **The Green Dragon** (Wetherspoon)). Pass the church on either side and leave the churchyard in its far-right corner to continue along the busy **Church Street**.

In 40m (and with **Foxglove Art Centre and Café** and **The White Hart** restaurant ahead) [!] turn right across the road into **the historic Market Square**, with its Butter Market, **pubs, restaurants and a taproom**. At the far end of the square, **Sheep Market** and **Stanley Street** on the right offer **more tea options**, but you [!] turn left along **Stanley Street** (continuing as **Derby Street**), passing some more pubs (**Cock Inn** and **Roebuck Hotel**), cafés and bakeries, as well as **Getliffe's Yard Victorian Arcade** with more cafés on the left. At the far end by a major road junction, with the **Nicholson War Memorial** opposite (at 27m one of the tallest in England), turn right along **Haywood Street**, the A53. Turn left across the road at a set of lights and continue in the same direction. In 50m turn left with a signpost to the bus station 50m away, between rows of shops through a paved pedestrianised area. **All buses** depart on the left-hand side.

**For the route from Hanley Bus Station to Stoke-on-Trent Station**, please see below.

#### **Alternative Finish in Upper Hulme**

(cut 6.9 km/4.3 mi and 125m ascent)

In 100m you pass a footpath marker post and in 60m, in the far end of the walled area, go through a wooden gate out of the **Access Land** into a pasture and skirt **Well Farm**'s buildings around to the right. In 150m, at the far end of the last barn, ignore a stile on the right and turn left to go through a wooden gate by the barn and a signpost ('Concession Footpath to the Roaches' backwards) and turn right along the farm's drive. The grassy **Summerhill** sits on the left, while **Hen Cloud** is rising on the right. Ignore all gates and faint paths off the track (some are public footpaths, others aren't), with a wet area on the right being a tributary of the **River Churnet**, down from Well Farm. The track turns to the right to a house ('Private Road') and you [!] turn left through a wooden gate in a fence. Continue along the fence on the right and in 50m continue in the same direction through a wooden gate with a concession footpath into **Access Land**, ignoring the continuation curving to the left towards a **picturesque half-ruined shed**. You follow a stream on the right and in 50m turn right at a T-junction with a faint grass path (**The Churnet Way**).

You are now following the **Churnet River** down to Upper Hulme. In 70m go through a wooden gate and in 50m through a crumbling drystone wall by a marker post and fork left to keep following the river. You walk for 100m through a mud-prone area, then for a stretch over some boardwalks for 40m. Go through a wooden gate, leaving the **Access Land**, and in 10m turn right with a fence. Ignore a wooden gate on the left and in 50m go over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate with a yellow marker. In 35m, by **Dains Mill**, you turn left with the gravel car wide track to cross the **Churnet River** and bear right with the track. In 40m go through a wooden field gate with a **The Churnet Way** marker post and in 80m pass a disused brick barn and in 60m some farm buildings. Keep descending the drive and in 100m go through a metal field gate and in 40m, at a bend in the road in **Upper Hulme** village, turn left uphill along the road. In 80m at a T-junction with **Old Buxton Road**, turn right downhill (**Ye Olde Rock Inn** is up away on the left) and curve to the left with the road to in 160m reach the **A53**. The unmarked **Upper Hulme, Old Buxton Road** bus stops are on this side towards Buxton and on the opposite side towards Leek and Hanley (for Stoke-on-Trent Station).

[!] At this type of remote – and unmarked – stops, buses often pass through earlier than timetabled and at speed. **Make sure the driver can see you from far away and is in no doubt that you want the bus to stop [!]**

## **Alternative Finish in Blackshaw Moor**

(cut 5.2 km/3.2 mi and 125m ascent)

In 220m in the far field corner you awkwardly overcome a gate and a mini-stile and cross a stream on an earth bridge to *turn right* in a neighbouring pasture and in 60m leave it over a stile and a plank bridge into another pasture, where you *bear right* (due S) with the footpath ('Middle Hulme, Tittesworth'), ignoring a signed concession path 'avoiding farmyard'. In 90m go over a railed wooden footbridge over a ditch into the next field and *turn right* along its right-hand boundary. In 140m, by a lone tree in the field, you *turn left* across the field towards a wooden gate in the opposite boundary and in 75m cross into the next field and *veer right* through it (175°). In 140m you pass a redundant wooden gate by a ditch on the right. Head towards a farm through two more fields, the first one just 40m long and then *bear right* in the second field (215°) to a stile to the right of the farm buildings. In 140m go over a stile onto a tarmac lane and *turn left* along it into **Middle Hulme** village. In 60m ignore the left turning **Whitty Lane** (the **Churnet Way** joins along it) and in 200m you cross the **River Churnet**. In 110m ignore a right turning footpath (both Churnet Way and SMW follow it). In 900m you reach the A53 in **Blackshaw Moor** by the **Three Horseshoes Country Inn & Spa** on the left and **bus stops for services to Leek and Hanley** 50m on the right on the opposite side of the road.

## **Hanley Bus Station to Stoke-on-Trent Train Station**

(2.3 km, mostly through Hanley Park and along residential roads)

The bus from Leek usually arrives at **Stand C** or **Stand G** and you *turn right* through the bus station building. The **bus station summary display** of this **busy interchange** will tell you which of the following departures calls at Stoke-on-Trent Train Station. But if there is no imminent departure and/or if you fancy a short, pleasant walk to the train station:

In the far corner of the building, *turn left* through a doorway and down steps onto a main road and *turn right* along it. In 90m *turn left* at a set of lights to cross the A5008 **Potteries Way** and continue down **Lower Bethesda Street**, signposted 'Uni. Qtr. 1/2, Stoke Station 3/4'. In 110m *turn right* at a T-junction with **Regent Road**. In 200m you pass the **City Central Mosque** and in 75m *turn left* across the road and enter **Hanley Park** through a metal gate to the side of a car gate and follow a wide gravel path. In 30m *fork left* and in another 60m *fork right*, ignoring a narrower tarmac path to the left uphill. In 100m a path joins from the right and you *curve to the left* with the main path and in 150m you walk between the **Main Pavilion** on the left (with its **Pavilion Café**) and a **bandstand** on the right. The path curves to the right and in 150m it crosses the **Caldon Canal**.

There are some fenced sports courts below on the right and the path descends to pass them close to their left-hand fence and then curves to the right around them (ignore a first left turn off the main path to a park exit). In 50m, by some fenced tennis courts on the right though, do *turn left* at a second left turn, towards the **Park Lake**, in 40m passing it on its left. In 75m you leave **Hanley Park** through a pedestrian gate to the side of a car gate, cross **Avenue Road** and continue in the previous direction along **Boughey Road**. Ignore all residential roads off, **passing two stores en route**, and eventually the road merges with the A52 **Leek Road**. In 130m at a five-way major road-junction, and with the **Station Car Park I** on the right, *turn right* along **Station Road**. In 100m you pass **BOD Café**, then the **Gourmet Coffee Bar & Kitchen**, then the **Coffee Room**, and on the opposite side of the road you pass a **Subway** branch and the **North Stafford Hotel**.

**London bound trains** depart from the near platform, **Macclesfield** ones form the far one.