

The Churnet Way

The Churnet way is a 30 miles long distance footpath and starts in the Staffordshire Moorlands and finishes near Rocester (joining the River Dove) The walk consists of moorland, canals, disused railway lines ,woods and open countryside. There are plenty of places for refreshments and B&bs along the route, details will be shown later.

1

The first section from the Winking man to Leek is approx 6 miles

The beginning of the walk starts at the Winking Man pub on the busy A53 Buxton to Leek road. Turn left out of the car park following the path on the left for approx 250 metres, cross the road by a building to a gate with a finger post and information board.

2

Great views towards Hen Cloud and the Roaches.

Follow the fence line and wall on your right to a gate and then a path to a way marker and then to a stile. Once over the stile bear left, keeping the wall on your left. Climbing towards two footpath gates one with a finger post, follow the path keeping close to the top of the ridge. Gradually drop down on to a minor road where you turn left and follow it around to your left looking for a stile on your right.

3

Follow a well worn path through moorland to a lane, turn right for 25 mts bearing left to a stile by a cattle grid, following marker post around a farm. After passing the farm go through a gate, keep wall on your left and after approx 80 metres turn sharp left before a building. Go along the track over a brook and stile then approx 100 metres turn left through gate by a tree and follow the wall on the right. Then after 25 metres turn sharp left following a brook on your right and go through the gate and follow a stream on your left.

4

Just a little further along a gorge, it can get very muddy in winter

Keep going on until the path widens and you come to an old water mill on your left. Go through two gates until you reach the ford at Upper Hulme and bear right up the hill approx 200 metres. Then turn left up some steps to a stile keeping the fence on your left. After about 150 metres enter a farm and bear right along the farm track to a cattle grid approx 75 metres, then turn left with a wall on the right.

Follow for approx 100 metres then go over the stile keeping a hedge on your left. After approx 200 metres look for a stile and footbridge on your left. Follow this onto a farm track then through a gate. Follow a faint track across a field to a gate, turn left along Whitty lane for 250 metres.



Ramshaw
Rocks

If you turn right onto the road opposite Middle Hulme Farm you can get to

Tittesworth Reservoir visitors Centre with a cafe and toilets approx 150 metres

Turn left taking care along the road passing a footpath sign on your right and over a bridge.

When you come to a bend on your right look for a stile (slightly hidden) on your right.

5 With a fence on the right follow for 150 metres to a gate, after 50 metres go over a footbridge on

your right. Then bear left into the wood following a track for 200 metres to a stile and turn left into a field.

Follow a fence approx 150 metres and go over a stile on your left then through a gate by a farmhouse.

Go right and over a footbridge and into a field, carry straight on keeping to the left of a telegraph pole

towards a stile in a hedge, then, bear left.

Follow the hedge boundary on your left till you reach a farm gate, then bear left

towards the farm and another gate. Follow the lane to the left of the farm

and over the cattle grid to a stile 150 metres on your right.

Follow the hedge to a stile and walk straight ahead looking for a series of manholes.

These eventually come to a fence on your right by a wood and follow this for a short distance.



6 When you come to steps on your right go down these to a footbridge, then up steps to a stile and turn right. Follow the fence line for about 100 metres to another stile. Head down the centre of the field on a slightly worn path meeting up with a hedge on your left. Keep on left to a kissing gate then bearing left follow the path to the far right corner and over a footbridge. Bear right and follow the fence line to another kissing gate, gradually descending looking out for a footbridge approx 200 metres on your right. Go over the bridge and when you reach a lane, turn left for 100 metres, then turn right and follow till you reach a farm where you go left and follow the lane to the end.

7 You are now on the outskirts of the market town of Leek.

Turn right into Haregate road merging with Ball Haye Green.

Follow the road down to the leisure centre.



Leek has plenty to offer and a good overnight stop with plenty

of pubs and B and Bs

The Cock Inn

The Blue Mugge

The Green Dragon (wetherspoons)

The Red Lion

The Green Man B&B

These are just a few

Leek to Cheddleton

This second section is approx 8 miles with good views towards River Churnet and Ladderidge Park. Starting from Brough Park entrance SJ 98289 56696

- 1 From the gates of Brough Park follow the path past the skateboard park bearing left at the end.
..After a short distance you come to a hedge line on your right, follow this with no obvious path till you reach an information board. Bear left ignoring the path on the right and go through the wood to a gate.
- 2 Once through the gate follow the path with fencing on your left, descending onto a lane, then turn left with the River Churnet on your right. Turn right at the end of the lane onto the busy Leek to Congleton road. After 20 metres you pass the factory of James Brindley, engineer and canal builder.
Keep following the road over a roundabout with Sainsbury's store on the right. When the road bends to your right, then to your left cross over by a finger post.
Be careful when crossing over the road
- 3 The path bears right towards the valley floor and follows close to the river Churnet crossing one stile to an old railway bridge. Go under the bridge via two stiles and head roughly down the middle of the field for 300 metres to another stile. Following a hedge on your left, then a farm track and over the River Churnet. When the track goes sharp right; you turn left over a stile. Go through a wood, you are now sharing the Path with the Staffordshire Way.
You now follow a canal feeder on your right and out of the wood through a field with the river Churnet on your left. After around 800 metres you go through a gate still following the feeder



through Pretty Ladderidge country park. This leads onto the busy A 53 Leek to Stoke Road.

BEWARE Crossing the road (fast traffic)

4 We leave the Staffordshire way for now following a tarmac drive for 80 metres then bearing left by a way marker. Following the River Churnet close to your left go through a gate with the canal feeder reappearing on your right.

5 When a stone bridge comes into view, go over stile onto the peak of the bridge taking a sharp right joining a tow path alongside the canal towards Cheddleton.

6 After about half a mile you reach the Leek Canal Tunnel and you climb above the tunnel and down the other side to rejoin the towpath.

After reaching the bridge number 6, known as horse bridge at Longsdon, you leave the canal and join the road turning right down the road for about 250 metres crossing a railway bridge .

Immediately after the bridge and running parallel is a further canal where you drop down to a towpath and bear left towards Cheddleton also joining the Churnet Way again all the way to Froghall.

Eventually you pass the Flint Mill at Cheddleton which is worth visiting when open.



Cheddleton
Flint Mill



7a From here there is an alternative route if you want a rest from canal walking. Leave the canal and turn right along the A 520 Leek to Stoke road for 300 metres and you come to the Red Lion on your left or you have the Black Lion a short walk uphill opposite the Red Lion. If you don't fancy that, then turn left down the side of the Red lion on a track through a kissing gate, then through some open fields keeping to your left to another gate. Keep following this path with the canal on your left ignoring any paths to the right,.Finally through a wooded area along a winding path to a road by the side of a canal bridge where you can rejoin it or perhaps stop at the Boat pub.

7b If you don't want to go on the alternative route, just follow the canal and you could stop at the Boat Inn pub bridge 44 for a drink or something to eat.

Cheddleton to Oakamoor

This section is approx 8 miles

*Pretty Consall Gorge and
Hawksmoor Nature Reserve*



- 1 Before going any further there is the steam railway centre which is 100 metres from the boat Inn. Commencing along the canal heading for Consall Gorge and Froghall Village with agriculture land both sides of the canal. Reaching bridge 48 the Churnet and the canal converge, this area is known as Oakmeadow Ford Lock.
- 2 When reaching Consall valley the landscape changes to dense woodlands, a haven for wildlife. Just before entering Consall Forge, bridge 49, you will see restored lime kilns on your right. The river Churnet flows beneath bridge 49 to a weir, but the canal bears left and bridge 50 which you cross. You need to cross the Cheddleton to Froghall railway that passes the Black Lion Inn which is in a remote area of the Churnet Valley. Carry on for a short distance along the canal with the Consall station on the other side on your right. The footpath on the right of the canal indicates leaving the Staffordshire Way once more.



3 On reaching bridge 52 you must cross the bridge to the towpath on the other side of the canal.

.Soon you go under bridge 53 which is known as Cherry Eye Bridge,

Cherry eye bridge is named after the miners who used to Rub their eyes causing redness from stained hands.

4 We carry on along the towpath passing where Boltons Copper works was, and eventually we have to leave the path because of the tunnel and onto a lane where you turn right.

However just for a few hundred metres you can cross the road and follow the canal to the other side of the tunnel then Froghall wharf where there is a visitors centre and toilet, not forgetting

Hetties tea shop -cakes sandwiches etc.

If you choose to carry on, then follow the lane and turn right onto the A52 Stoke to Ashbourne road.

Follow this until you reach the Railway public house and cross the road by a finger post down the side of the pub.

Follow this track past some houses to a gate into a field keeping close to the River Churnet till you reach a bridge going over the river on your left.

Cross over the bridge and over a railway line, then turn right and gain height through the trees.

After a short while you go over a stile into open fields bearing right over the railway line(Ross Bridge)

5 *It can get muddy around this area in Winter.*

Steps lead away from the vicinity to a footbridge over the River Churnet and continue straight on to a smaller bridge over a stream. Turn left following a path to a stile where we again rejoin the Staffordshire Way.

Following the River Churnet on your left through woodlands and several fields, you reach East Wall Farm.

Passing a small pond on your right look for a stile in the right hand corner adjacent to an electricity pole and follow around the farm by a well signed path.

When you reach the farms driveway the path begins to climb and you bear right at a junction with fingerposts for Staffordshire Way and Churnet Way.

6 Keep following this path through Hawksmoor Nature reserve winding along a steep section until you reach a picnic area by the side of the Oakamoor to Cheadle road. Bear left for 100 metres and take the path by a bus stop on your right through Suttons and Light Oak Wood. Slowly climbing following the track, ignore a path on your left, then coming to a marker to your left, follow down the hill till you reach a lane where you turn left, leaving the Staffordshire Way behind.

7 Follow the lane passing Red Lane on your right also Churnet River on your right until reaching Oakamoor where there is a car park if you are doing this section

There is a pub close by if you

need refreshments or snacks



Oakamoor to Rocester and the confluence with the River Dove.

This section is approx 8 miles

Disused railway paths and agricultural lands by-pass Alton Towers Theme Park and the prestigious JCB Factory to reach the confluence of the Rivers Churnet and Dove

1. Leave the Oakamoor car park at its rear. Note the distinctive waymark direction sign and pass the toilet block to reach the side of the River Churnet. Walk upstream with the river on your right for about 200 metres before turning right to cross the river over a concrete bridge. Turn immediately right again and now walk downstream along a disused railway track. The river is close to your right.
2. After only a short distance you pass by a large metal gate to join a wide tarmac path leading to a site where once stood the Oakamoor railway station. Continue ahead to that site and note the Staffordshire Moorlands Council Information Board describing previous activities at that location. A waymark sign on that board indicates your path which is now to the left of the wide tarmac path and the station site.
3. You pass a further metal gate where a Staffordshire County Council sign announces that you are now proceeding along the 'Old Churnet Railway Line'. You pass the Oakamoor cricket ground on your right, the far side of which is lined by trees indicating the location of the River Churnet. A canal once followed parallel to the railway line and occasional traces of its prior existence can be seen on your left as you proceed.
4. After walking for about one mile from Oakamoor, you pass beneath a stone road bridge known as Lords Bridge.



If you require refreshments you can leave the track at this point to reach the

Ramblers Retreat Café and Restaurant about 200 metres.

5. However, this walk continues ahead along the track and you reach the disused Alton railway station. Some distinctive buildings still remain in excellent condition and the station platforms are very evident. You have now walked two miles from Oakamoor, you can leave the track at this point to reach *Alton village, its shops, public houses and of course, the Alton Towers Theme Park.*

As you begin the approach to the village of Denstone, the views open out, particularly on your left, revealing lush farmland in the vicinity of the River Churnet.

7. On reaching the next stone road bridge you have reached the outskirts of Denstone village.

When you come to the end of the track there is still evidence of the old Denstone railway station.

Leave through a wooden gate onto College Road, Denstone. If you turn left and first left

you come to *Denstone Hall Farm Shop and Cafe*.

To keep on route, turn right out of the gate to a small roundabout.

If you turn right you come to the Tavern pub on your right.

8. From the roundabout turn left to walk along Oak Road in the direction of Rocester, and after approx 150 metres you come to Oak Farm on your right and directly opposite turn left by a finger post onto a footpath which runs alongside the school playing field. The path is bordered by fences and within 50 metres it enters a further playing field. Here you turn right, following direction arrows which lead to and over two stiles and towards a distinctive stone road bridge which is ahead and within view. This road bridge was once part of the now disused Churnet Valley Railway.

9. Cross the stile by the side of the bridge and ascend steps to the narrow tarmac road. Turn left to pass over the bridge and walk towards the roundabout.

Cross over to a path by a large street lamp. Follow this path which runs parallel to the Denstone to Uttoxeter road.

10. After about 150 metres turn right and follow the path with a car park on your right and follow this along until you join a path that follows a lake clockwise. You are now on a brick paved path and can enjoy a pleasant stroll passing the J.C.B factory in a southerly direction with the lake on your right and the River Churnet close on your left. The views towards the factory are impressive. Note the water fountain in the centre of the lake, the imposing buildings behind and the large ornamental herons poised to fly from the lake waters. Also on your left, there are many seats for resting and note the sculpture of a Fosse (Latin for digger) alongside the lake.

11. The paved path finishes at the end of the first lake where a helicopter landing pad is situated. Take a path on your left at this point to walk through a tunnel which goes under the main Rocester to Uttoxeter road. *From here you have the opportunity to visit the facilities of Rocester village* but to continue this walk you must cross a roundabout on leaving the tunnel to reach another roundabout. **Beware of traffic when crossing the road.** Continue towards Uttoxeter using the wide grass verge around on its left and easterly side. Walking on the verge is comfortable and easy

12. You walk the verge for about 3/4 of a mile when, just after passing an isolated mock-Tudor house on your right, you will see a finger post directional sign indicating your route over fields on your left. Bear slightly right across the field in a southerly direction and head for a large hawthorn and holly hedge through which there is a stile. From there bear slightly left to continue south towards large metal gates which can be seen at the bottom of that field. Pass through those gates and bear right to reach similar gates close to the side of the River Churnet. Here you enter into a large field which may contain crops. The definitive right of way proceeds directly over the field which, depending on the season, can be difficult to cross. Your easy route is to walk by the riverside to reach a stile which is directly ahead.

13 Go over a stile and in the far left hand corner is a tractor bridge, this is as close as you can get where the River Churnet meets the River Dove a short distance away.

14 If you don't want to go to the bridge when you get over the stile, follow a hedge on your right and go through a gate along a track where you come onto a lane.

This is now the end (or beginning) of the walk.

From here there are two alternatives: by turning left along the lane go over the River Dove until you come to the Staffordshire Way marker post.

a/ If you follow the lane straight on bearing left past Eaton Dovedale Farm this will take you to Rocester which is roughly 2.5 miles with limited bus times and amenities.

b/ If you turn right at the Staffordshire Way marker post this will take you to Uttoxeter following the River Dove most of the way.

Approx 4 miles with regular bus and train service.

Plenty of amenities and overnight stops.

This walk is ideal for someone who is starting their first long distance walk with plenty of amenities along the way. This generally is not a hard walk to do, but you still need to use a map or G.P.S for navigation purposes,

Waterproofs

The first part of the walk in the Staffordshire Moorlands can be very bleak and the weather can change very quickly so you need good wet weather gear.

Footwear

You will need boots or strong walking shoes with possible muddy sections along the way.

Places to stop

You can stop at plenty of pubs or cafes along the way and a selection of B&Bs if you decide to do the walk over a couple of days.

Leek is a good place to stock up your supplies.

Uttoxeter

Plenty of transport when you finish the walk.

Whichever way you decide to do it we do hope you enjoy this walk.

Please let us know what you thought of the route and any problems along the way.

<https://www.stokeandnewcastleramblers.org.uk>

Devised by

George Shufflebotham
and Phil Rushton

Old Fosse



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