

# WALK 6

## The Cheshire Peaks Challenge Walk

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### The Challenge

I designed this as a sponsored walk to raise money in 1995 for the David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy. Some 14 years later, in 2009, I did the walk again - just for fun this time - with a group of friends (Rosie, Vron, Sue, John, Keith and Dave); we had an excellent day with good company and – thankfully – good weather. The total ascent is just four metres more than the height of Snowdon from sea level, and some of the views are, arguably, just as good. We completed the walk in less than 9 hours – the time it took way back in 1995, which goes to show that regular walks help to keep us fit!

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**Starting point:** Tegg's Nose Car Park (pay & display). SJ948733.

**Length:** 20 miles

**Ascent:** 1089m/3594ft

**Duration:** about 9 hours

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### Notes

Navigation is not difficult, but avoid a late start as this may mean returning in the dark through lonely countryside.

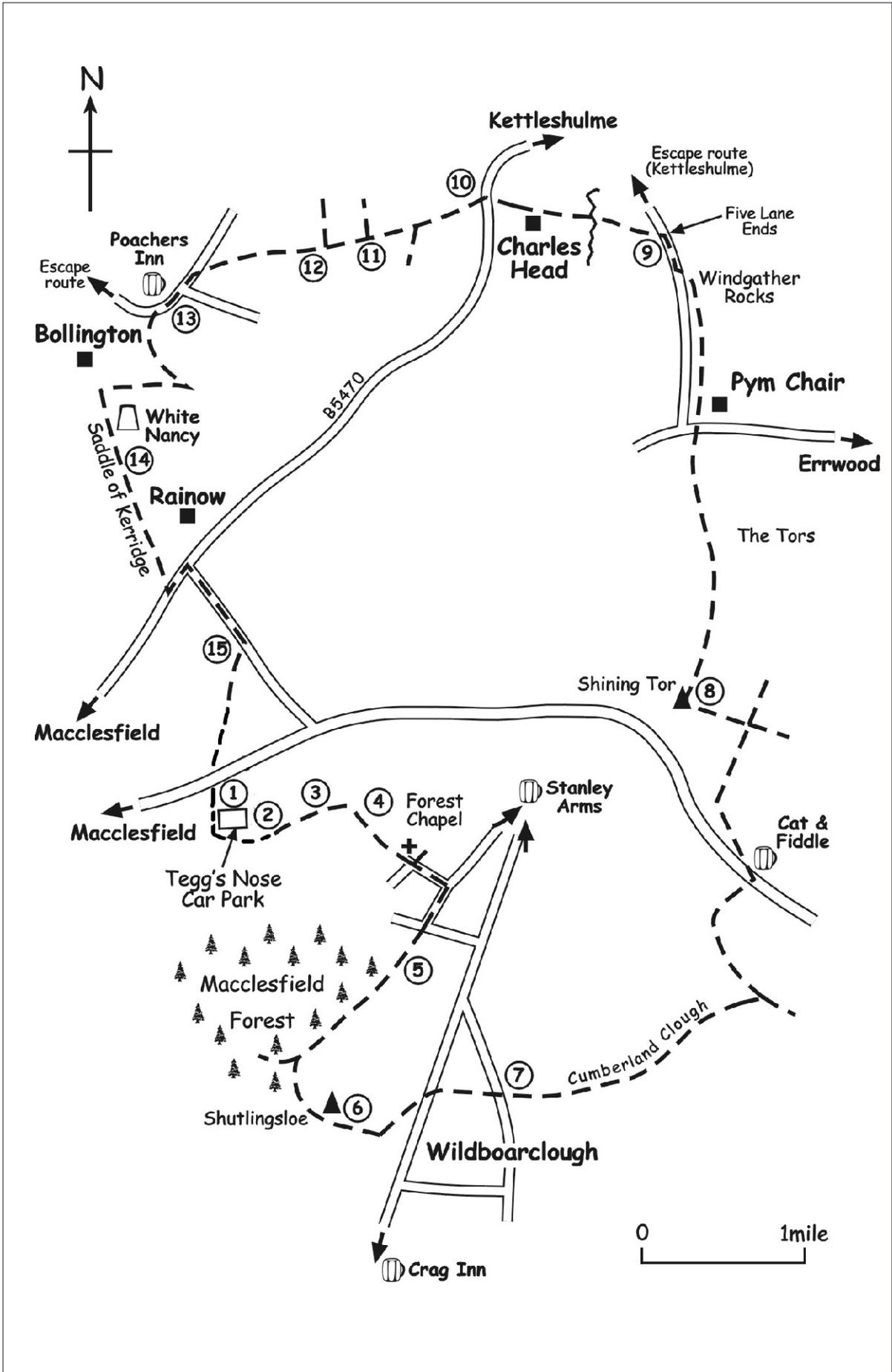
20 miles is not to be underestimated, especially when combined with over 3500ft of climbing. You'll need waterproof clothing, walking boots, supplies of food and at least 2 litres of liquid – more on a hot summer's day. There are no shops for supplies and the only refreshment points on the route are the Cat and Fiddle (late coffee or early lunch) and The Poachers Inn in Bollington (closed 2pm to 5.30pm except on Sunday, when it's open all day).

Timings refer to a 9.00am start, finishing by about 6.00pm if you walk briskly.

Numbers in the description refer to the points on the sketch map.

### The Route

1. **9.00am.** Walk south-east from the car park (away from the road and the car park entrance) and down the steep "Saddler's Way" track, also marked by a stone sign for 'Langley and Forest Chapel'. Continue ahead along the tarmac lane at the bottom of the hill.
2. At Clough House Farm, keep left and follow the signs for Forest Chapel. Continue uphill, past a group of buildings (Lower Crooked Yard Farm).
3. Continue along the track for a few hundred metres and, 20m after a signpost on your right, turn left through a stile to follow a footpath passing diagonally across a field towards Hardingland Farm. Pass the farm on your left and follow the tarmac road uphill. In 50m or so, just as the road bears left, take a footpath to the right and enter the forest. Proceed to a junction of paths where you bear right and continue on the main track, signposted to Forest Chapel.



4. Pass a stone barn (**9.30am**). Bear slightly left and go straight ahead through a stile (signposted Forest Chapel); the track goes steeply uphill through the forest and then down to Forest Chapel. On reaching the tarmac road at Forest Chapel, continue straight ahead on the tarmac road for a quarter of a mile to a T-junction and turn right. After another quarter of a mile, go over a crossroads and along a path signed to Shutlingsloe.
5. After a few minutes, fork left up some steps and follow the signed concessionary path, initially with forest on your right, to the top of Shutlingsloe. At 506m (1670ft) this is our first major peak (**10.35am – 10-minute coffee break**).
6. Continue over the top in roughly the same direction (east, follow arrow). Head downhill and turn right at a tarmac track. After a hundred metres or so, a sharp hairpin left takes you onto a rough track alongside woods on your right. Two gates and a stile lead to the road through Wildboardclough. Cross the bridge almost opposite, head towards a large farm (main building on left) and walk through the farmyard. Leave the farm by turning right on a tarmac lane, then cross the road to a gated track leading to Cumberland Clough.
7. Once in the clough, cross the footbridge and walk uphill with the stream on your right. Keep to the path nearest to the stream – do not take any side-turnings. At the waterfall at the top of the clough, turn left ('Cat & Fiddle' sign). Climb steeply uphill to a Public Footpath sign at a T-junction where you turn left again and walk across open moorland, towards the Cat & Fiddle (**12.00 noon – 515m, 1690 feet**).

Cross the busy road and turn left yet again. Go downhill and turn right at a Public Footpath sign. Continue on a track, ignoring the left fork to the Peak View café. Pass an 'Errwood' footpath sign and then, after a further 200m, turn left at the sign to Shining Tor.

8. Climb to Shining Tor (**12.30pm**), the highest point in Cheshire – 559m, 1845ft; you can visit the trig point by way of a concessionary stile. Continue northwards along the entire ridge-plateau of the Tors until you reach a 'Windgather' signpost. Fork right here and follow the signed concessionary path.



*Our group at Shining Tor*

Just before the huge gritstone crags of Windgather Rocks, pause for a 20-minute lunch break (**1.30pm**). Suitably refreshed, walk for a short distance and fork left to join the road by way of the climbers' access path below the rocks. Turn right at the road and walk downhill to a crossroads ('Fivelane Ends' on the OS map). Turn left here then, very soon, go right at a gateway with a footpath sign to Charles Head.

9. Walk downhill, with a wall on your right for company. The path soon begins to climb, passing through two wide wall gaps, then heads downhill and over a stile towards a house and outbuilding. At the bottom of the hill, turn left along a track and – just past the house on the right – go through a gate and turn immediately right. Continue downhill to the right of an overgrown hedge and cross a footbridge.

Climb the facing steep hill towards Charles Head – the path heads left to a barn then further uphill and along an old track sloping up to the right. Walk along a short length of cobbles

towards the buildings of Charles Head and uphill to the highest point, overlooking Kettleshulme **(2.15pm – about 350m, 1155ft)**. Follow the main track to the road.

10. Cross the busy road to a wide farm track. After a short distance, cross a stile on the left and alongside a cattle grid. The path enters a small plantation of trees but soon becomes sunken and overgrown so, where necessary, keep to the higher ground to the right. After half a mile, marked by a fence ahead, cross the stream and go over a stile. After about 200m, reach an intersection of three paths where, in June 2009, waymarks had been removed. Turn right, downhill, along a sunken track with a wall on your right.
11. Cross a stile just before Further Harrop farm, and walk past the farm. Continue straight ahead and down another sunken track to a T-junction marked with a group of trees. Turn left along the tree-lined track. Head left, go through a gateway, then bear right across a footbridge.
12. Where the track meets Harrop Brook, turn left (do not cross the bridge) and pass a house, staying on a tarmac track. This leads past various other houses, but keep your eyes peeled so that you turn left at Cheshire Hunt Cottages – on the site of the eponymous and sadly-missed pub. Cross a field and bear right to a stile leading to a road **(3.30pm)** where you turn left towards Bollington.
13. Immediately before The Poachers Inn, turn left along a track. At the end of the track, turn left along a road and walk past the industrial buildings. Ignore the first signpost on the right and then, after a couple of hundred metres, turn right (Gritstone Trail sign) uphill. At the top of the hill, turn left and go up the stepped track to White Nancy **(4.15pm)** – 310m, 1023ft.
14. From the White Nancy monument, follow the path along the entire length of the ridge (almost due south) – do not take any side-paths leading off the ridge. Towards the very end of the ridge, after a trig point, bear left to the main road. Turn left here and then take the first turn on your right.

Walk up here for just a short distance and turn left through a gate alongside the 'Road Narrows' and 'Penny Lane' signs. Walk up the grassy slope and, at the top, turn right through the gate (if open) or over the ladder stile about 50yds to the right. Follow the wall on your right and cross a stile alongside a clump of trees; turn right and almost immediately cross another stile to follow the Gritstone Trail marker and walk alongside a wall (not the track bearing to the left). Walk across the middle of the next field and pass through a kissing gate. Go downhill to a bridge and turn left (uphill); cross a stile and head for yet another stile leading to the busy main road. Cross this (with care), turn left uphill and, very soon, go through the gate on your right.



*At White Nancy*

15. Continue through the field along a well-used and waymarked path (with stiles), almost in a straight line to the road. Turn right at the road and then left into the car park at Tegg's Nose **(5.45pm)** – 350m, 1155ft.

**Congratulations – you've made it!**