

A SEVEN MILE WALK OF SOUTH CHEADLE

The area to the south of Cheadle has been and still is subject to quarrying operations for the extraction of gravel. This limits the scope for longer walks on continuous or connecting footpaths but there are numerous quiet and pleasant country lanes which can be used to extend the range of walks available. The walk described uses several of these lanes and also follows paths through some of the woodland that is another feature of this area. It also includes several points offering views over the town or to the south across rural Staffordshire.

Leave the main car park in the town by the exit near the "bottle bank" and turn left for a few yards. Cross the road and enter the street opposite (Queen Street). Walk straight down this street for about a third of a mile until you reach a track on your right called Moor Lane.

Turn into this track and continue straight ahead along a green lane. Pick your way over the stepping stones across a small wet area. Cross another stile and continue by the hedge until you emerge on to a track where you turn right to reach a road (B5032). Turn left, walk up the road for about 250 yards and at a left hand bend cross into the field by a stile on your right. Cross the field to a stile at the far left hand corner and then follow the short path between the hedge and the stream. Turn right at the road (Moss Lane) and follow it to its junction with another road (Rakeway Road). Turn left, and after about a quarter of a mile, at a point where the road bears left and starts to rise more steeply, follow a path on the right which enters a wooded area.

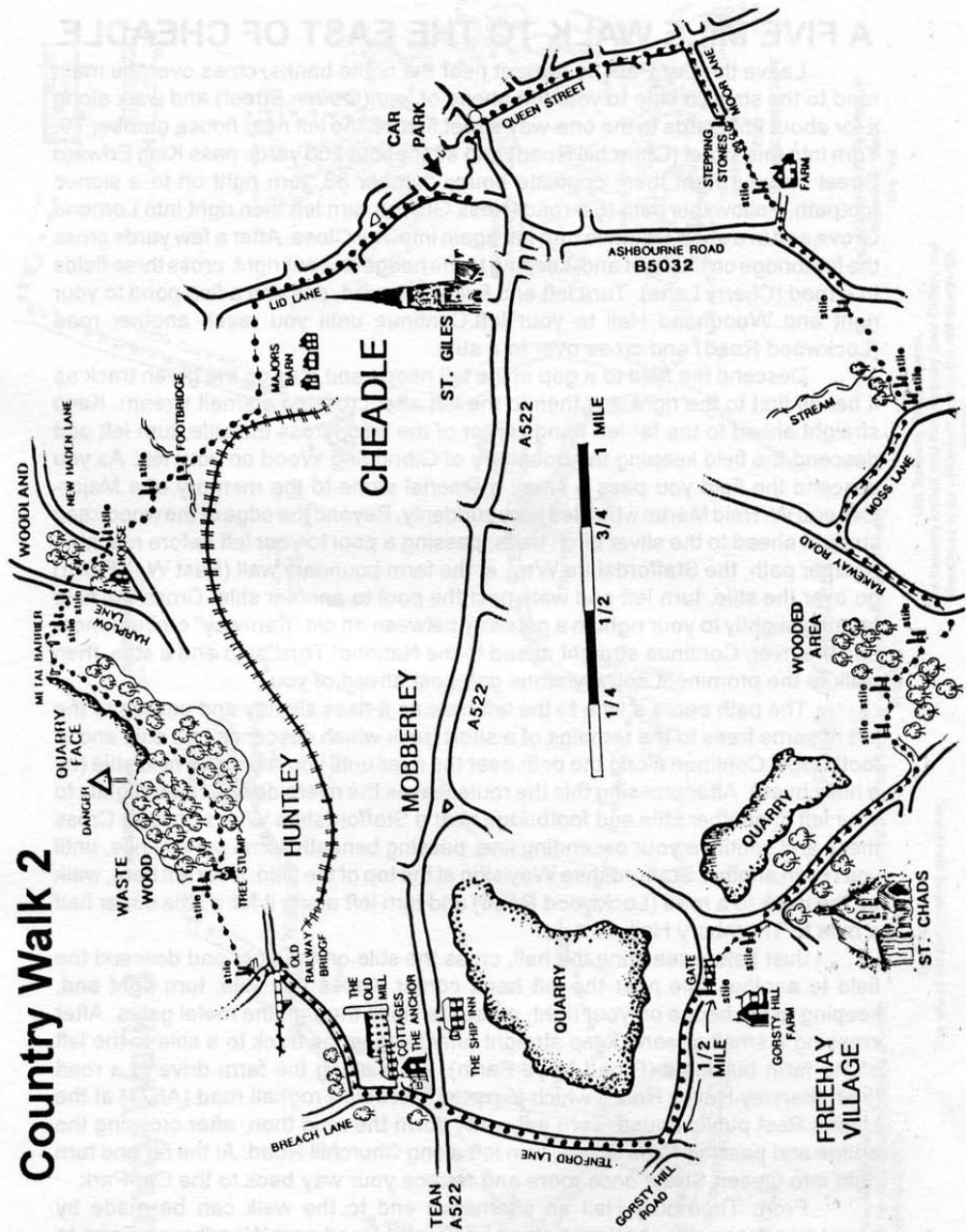
Keep to the edge of the wood for about 50 yards then cross a stile on your right. The path then begins to rise to your left through a pleasant area of birch and oak woodland and reaches a stile into a field. Go across this field to a stile at the far right hand corner then follow the track ahead to the road. At the road turn right and walk straight ahead through Freehay village, passing St. Chad's church on your left.

Just after the road has swung sharply to the right take a rising path to a stile at the top of the bank to your left. Cross the field to the far right hand corner where there is a stile by a gate giving access to the road at Gorsty Hill Farm. Turn left and follow this lane for about half a mile to a crossroads where you turn sharp right. In another half mile this lane brings you to a crossroads with the main road (A522) at Teanford. There is a public house (The Anchor) at this junction and another (The Ship) within sight about 200 yards to the right.

The route crosses the main road and proceeds along the lane ahead (Breach Lane) for about a quarter of a mile. Just beyond a group of cottages near the remains of a disused mill, turn right into another lane and follow it to a junction immediately past an old railway bridge. Bear left here, and after 50 yards climb some steps up the bank to your right to a stile giving access to the hillside. At this point the route becomes a little more strenuous for a mile or so. Proceed steeply up the hillside keeping the fence to your left until you reach a stile by an old tree stump. Cross here and enter a wooded area. The path, which is clear on the ground, gradually leaves the fence and the wood becomes more dense.

Ignore a way marked path leading to your right and continue to follow the path ahead, which is rather overhung with branches in places but always clear on the ground, for about a mile. This path is close to a quarry face and the warning signs must be heeded. As you proceed, the birch and oak woodland is interspersed with dense rhododendron bushes which are a riot of mauve flowers in May and early June. Eventually, at a metal barrier, the path turns to the right and descends through the woods to another stile at a road (Harplow Lane). Go over this road to another path through more woodland and keep straight ahead. There are lots of bluebells here in spring. When you reach the house pass to its right and on reaching the driveway turn left for a few yards to another road (New Haden Lane). Take the stile opposite the end of the drive and continue by the fence on your right to another stile. After crossing this, the fence is to your left. Walk down the field and across the stream by the footbridge. Continue ahead to the embankment of the disused railway line into Cheadle.

The path passes close to the crown of the curve in the embankment and then alongside it to a stile in the corner of a field. Cross this and bear left to a surfaced path which passes through a modern housing development and comes to a road. Turn right along this for about 200 yards. When you reach an older house on your right at a point where an earlier road has been blocked off to traffic by a newer one, turn right. Follow this road (Lid Lane), which curves sharply to the left after a few yards, and continue straight ahead towards the spire of St. Giles R.C., Church which is visible intermittently. Pass immediately to the left of the church and the entrance to the car park will be found about 100 yards away to your left.



Country Walk 2