

WALK 7

Wilmslow to Mottram Bridge

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This walk explores the upstream section of the Bollin in the direction of Prestbury. Starting from the car park by Wilmslow's parish church, almost alongside the river, you're soon away from the busy roads and into open countryside. That's one of Wilmslow's great advantages – you're never far away from a good walk!

The route really is an easy-going one with no real hills to climb. Note that there are no handy cafés or pubs, so you'll need to be self-sufficient. For entertainment, leave the iPod at home and take a camera and a bird-spotting book instead. You'll see and hear plenty of birdlife, with a high probability of at least one heron, lazily flapping its way above the Bollin.

Starting Point: Car Park, Wilmslow Parish Hall/Carrs Recreation area, SJ848815. (Maximum stay, 3 hours). **Alternative starting point:** Twinnies car park at the other end of The Carrs, just under a mile away: no time limit on parking.

How to get there: Find St Barthomew's church, and you've found the car park.

Map: OS Explorer 268 – Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton

Length: 5½ miles (or almost 7½ miles if parked at Twinnies car park)

Grade: Easy

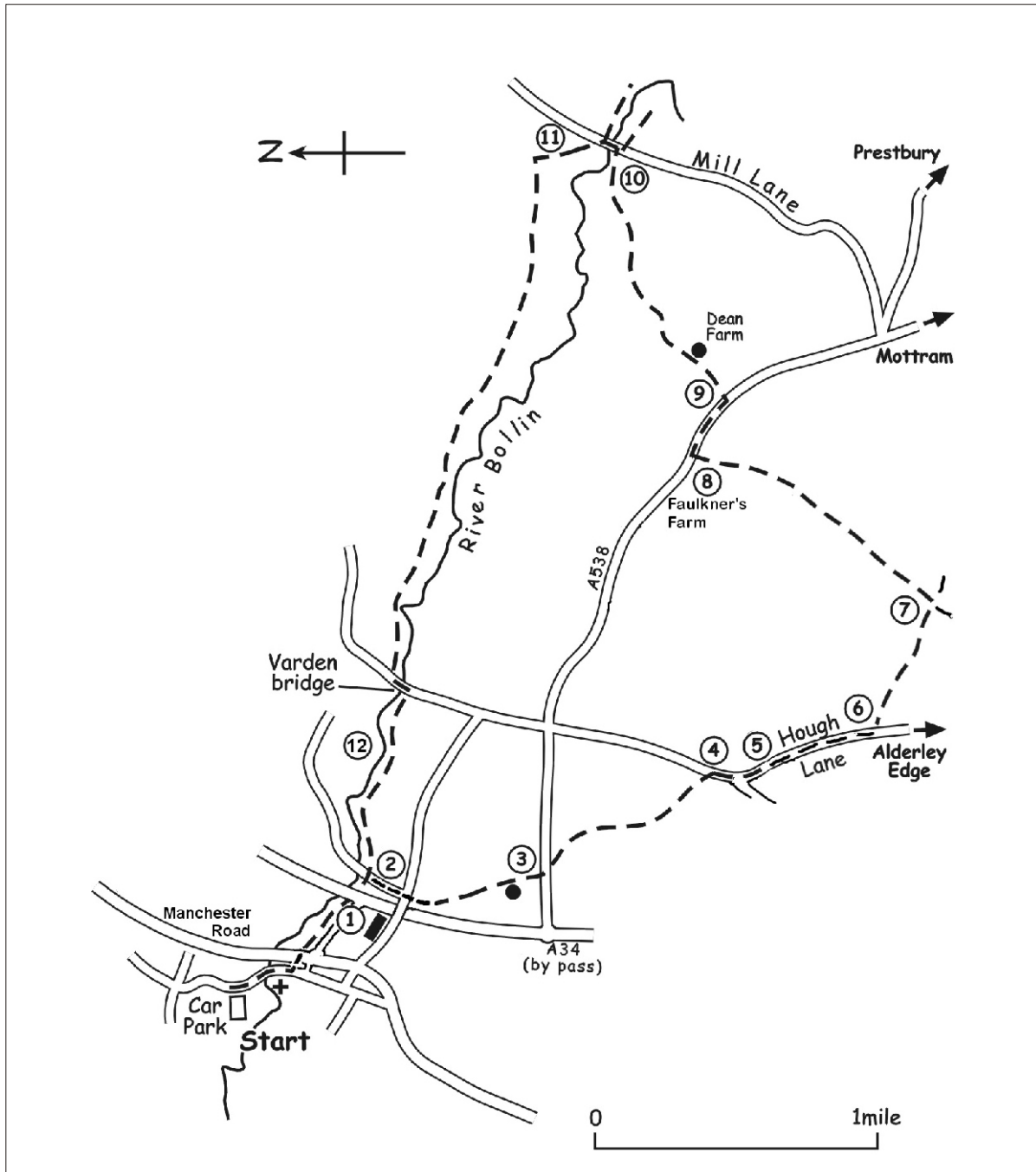
Duration: Two and a half hours

Leave the Parish Hall car park and turn right along Chancel Lane, passing the Parish Church and then the Garden of Remembrance. Turn left (Bollin Valley sign) and walk along Mill Street. Cross Manchester Road to the left of the roundabout and continue along the A538 by-pass feeder. Before the next roundabout (1), bear left and then head right, through the underpass. Follow the River Bollin upstream to Bollin Bridge (2) where you turn right and walk through part of the Wilmslow Park development towards Macclesfield Road. Cross the road, and join a tarmac road (almost opposite) leading to Queen Anne Court. After 50m, keep left along a tarmac path to the left of wooden fencing. Continue to Land Lane and walk through a housing estate built on the grounds of the former Thorngrove site of Wilmslow High School (3).

Walk along Land Lane and go over an embankment, by way of a double flight of steps, to the Prestbury link road. Cross this busy road, turn left and walk a few metres to a footpath sign and the remains of a kissing gate.

This is where the 'real' walk begins. Continue along a well-trodden footpath for almost 150m, passing allotments on the right. You come to the corner of a large uncultivated field – actually several fields ploughed into one, so the old field boundaries are obliterated. The right of way crosses the field, as waymarked, almost diagonally – not around the edge! Walk due south, heading for a wooded dip.

When you get to the dip, walk across as waymarked then bear right to a hedge corner. Follow the next waymark and a white house comes into view in the distance. Head towards this and find a stile in the far corner of the field. Cross the stile and go through a wood, following the waymarks. The footpath emerges at Hough Lane (4), where you turn right and



then bear left at the fork, soon passing Chonar Farmhouse (5) and Hough Green Farm, now developed as a very des res!

Continue along Hough Lane for another 50m and turn left at a stile alongside a gate (6). Follow the hedge on your left and, after passing some mature trees, cross a stile (7) in the hedge (NCW sign) then turn right and continue, with the hedge on your right, in the same direction to a footpath sign. Turn left here (do not cross the stile) and follow the hedge on your right along the entire length of this big field. At the far right corner, cross a stile and continue with the hedge now on your left. Cross another stile and then, after 50m or so, turn left across a footbridge and follow the waymark.

Pass under power lines and go over a stile in the corner of a field. Follow the waymarks from here, heading just to the right of the Faulkner's Farm development (8). Two waymarked kissing gates lead you to the A538 (Prestbury Road) (8). Turn right and walk for 200m along

this busy main road; **take care: walk on the verge and face oncoming traffic; cross to the left-hand side for the final 100m.**

Turn left at the impressive poplar-lined drive (9) to Dean Farm. Go past the buildings, then through a gateway and follow the waymark signs downhill with a large fence on the right. At the next gate, continue alongside the fence and cross a ladder stile into a small wood. Go over a footbridge and turn right towards a stile. Cross this and turn left, with the hedge on your left. Continue for 100m to a break in the hedge and bear right as waymarked. Pass or cross a stile in a wire fence, and you reach Mill Lane by way of a stile about 10 metres left of a gate. Here, turn left, cross Mottram Bridge (10) and turn left (11) to head back to Wilmslow along the well-maintained and waymarked Bollin Valley Way, with the River Bollin away to your left.

Very soon, the path climbs a grassy bank to the right, heading towards houses. From here, look back to the meandering Bollin and its wide flood plain. Winter floods cause rapid erosion of the sandy banks; the landscape responds more rapidly to dramatic events than to gentle persuasion.

Just before the houses, go through a kissing gate and turn left – spot the weather vane on the garage in the shape of a racing car! Follow the waymarks until you reach a three-armed signpost. Turn left here (tempting as it is, do **not** cross the stile) then right at the next stile to follow the Bollin. Cross Varden Bridge at the main road and soon you will hear – and then see – the impressive weir (12) in the Bollin.



The weir in the River Bollin

This was used to control the water level to a silk mill, which closed in 1923. Look carefully on your left and you'll find the remains of the mill race below the houses in Macclesfield Road. In 2004, the weir was repaired and it was intended to have had a salmon ladder in anticipation of further improvements downstream. That's been delayed, but fishing in the cleaned-up River Bollin is already a popular – though not strictly legal – pastime.

Cross the next road and retrace your steps to the start of the walk.