

WALK 1

A Bollington Walk: Ingersley Vale, Kerridge and Swanscoe

Walk author: Graham Beech

My wife and I love this walk - especially the short version that's perfect for a summer evening. Way back in the 1980s, I wrote it up for my book, "East Cheshire Walks", from which this version has been adapted.

Not so long ago, Bollington was a hive of industry with quarrying, mining, and up to 20 mills connected with the cotton, flour and paper industries – and about the same number of pubs where the workers could slake their thirsts. There's still the canal, but the railway closed in 1971 – imagine how popular it would be now! The village has a very active social life – see www.happy-valley.org.uk for an overview of what's happening and tune in to the local Canalside Community radio station (on 102.8MHz or at www.ccr-fm.co.uk).

Starting Point: near the Cotton Tree pub, Ingersley Road, Bollington SJ940779. Park considerately.

How to get there: From the Prestbury direction, drive through Bollington and pass under the viaduct and aqueduct. Turn into Ingersley Road between the New Con club and bus turning area.

Map: OS Explorer 268 – Wilmslow, Macclesfield & Congleton

Length: 6 miles (short option: 3 miles)

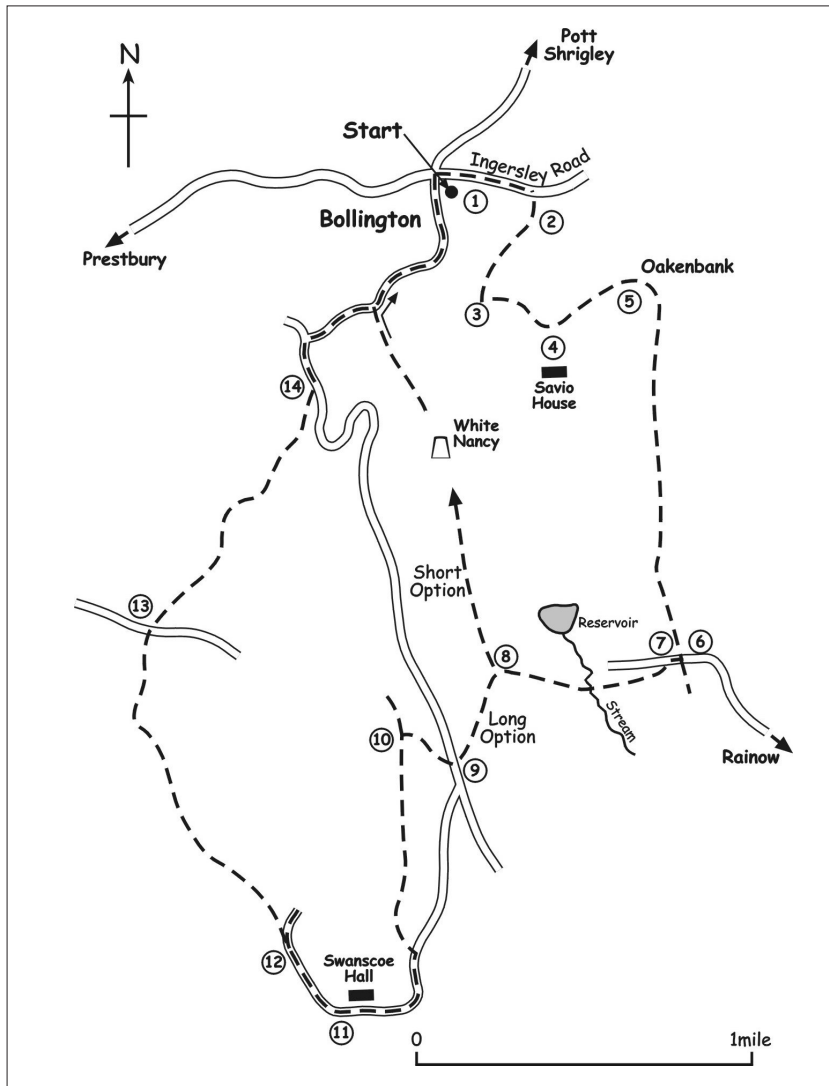
Grade: Moderate, with one steep climb

Duration: Three hours

From your starting point, walk up Ingersley Road and, at the Poachers Inn, turn right down Mill Lane (2). The lane eventually narrows to a stony track and you soon turn left to pass a small row of cottages. Just at the back of the last cottage, and before a factory, turn left to climb stone steps, and go into a field (4). The path goes uphill and bears right, taking you past a wooden fence towards a wall on your left.

Look out for a combination of steps and a stile in the wall. Cross the stile (4), turn right and, after about 30m, turn left onto a wide grassy track leading away from the factory in the valley and uphill towards a set of gates.

Cross over the main drive of Savio House. Until the 1970s, this was Ingersley Hall Farm, but is now a retreat and conference centre run by the Salesian religious order. Continue along a wide, raised track towards a small wood (keep it on your left) then go through a kissing gate to a stony track (5). Turn immediately right after a step stile and right again to cross a stile with a Gritstone Trail marker and walk downhill, with a wall on your right. Long ago, this path was used by the men and women who walked



to Bollington every day to work in the mills. It still has some of the original stone steps and paving.

Climb uphill to pass a white-painted house. After two stiles, you will find a third stile almost immediately on your right. Cross this but then turn left and continue on the right of the wall in roughly the same direction as before – i.e. not downhill. On your right, as you pass through this field, you will see the White Nancy monument at one end of Kerridge Hill.

Continue to the end of the field. Go over the stile that's facing you and walk straight ahead to cross a stile in the far-left corner. After entering this next field,

cross a stile half-way along the opposite wall. The next stile is in the far-right-hand corner – squeeze through this and turn left towards Rainow, passing through two more stiles and down a stone-slabbed slope. Here, on your right, you will see the lake and gardens of Hough Hole House, complete with its Victorian Allegorical Garden and stone plaques along a path representing the story of 'A Pilgrim's Progress'. The gardens are currently open on the late May Bank Holiday and August Bank Holiday Mondays and to groups by prior arrangement at other times – phone 01625 573251 for details.

You soon reach a minor road. Turn right here (6). After 100m, turn left up some steps (7) into a field. Keep to the right and head downhill, then cross a stile and two footbridges over streams. From here, head steeply uphill, roughly parallel to power cables on your right, heading for a gap in the trees at the top of the hill (8).

From the top of the hill, you have a choice:

For a short walk: turn right and walk along the ridge to the White Nancy monument, commemorating the Battle of Waterloo. On your way, you will have a particularly impressive view of your outward route. From White Nancy, continue straight ahead



Looking back towards Hough Hole House

to drop straight down to Chancery Lane and join the long walkers near the end of this description where it says “**Long and short walks join here:**”.

For the complete route: carry on over the hill, then turn left alongside a wall and head steeply downhill to a road. Cross the road and turn right (9) along the wide track to Endon House. After 200m, and before any of the buildings, take a sharp left hairpin alongside a wide steel gate (10). After a few minutes, cross a stile beside a wide wooden gate. From here, you must ignore your Ordnance Survey map as there have been major (legal) diversions of the rights of way and a permissive path has been provided. This is the current best route: after crossing the stile by the wooden gate, turn left through a gate waymarked as “Permissive Path”. Follow this across a field and cross the drive for Swanscoe Farm. The diversion continues, taking you through a gate and back onto the drive and then, after just a few metres, turns right through another gate to a flight of steps. At the bottom of the steps, the diversion turns left alongside a wall and above a large ornamental pond.

The diverted right-of-way emerges onto the drive to Lower Swanscoe Farm, from where you continue for half a mile to a road. Turn right here and pass the entrance to Swanscoe Hall (11), keeping to the right along Swanscoe Lane. After 200m, bear right down a road signed as a ‘dead end’ and, after about 100m, enter the private drive (12) signed to ‘Woodlands, Woodend and Shrigley Fold’. After the second property, fork right on a signed footpath. Pass buildings on your left and follow the waymarks gently downhill. Continue towards a ruined barn, before which you turn left, then pass to the right of an old mine shaft, now filled in. Go straight ahead from



Hollin Hall Hotel

here on an obvious track to a small pool by a gate. Continue to the right of the hedge, and follow the waymarks to walk between two pools to the opposite stile.

Along the way, you may notice numbered plaques nailed to stiles and other locations. These relate to 'Nostalgia Trails' developed by the Bridgend Centre, a community cooperative based in Bollington. For more information on the centre and the trails, visit <http://tinyurl.com/cpt8kv>.

Cross a track, another stile, and bear right to follow the path to the left of yet another pool – they like pools around here – and continue to the road (13). Cross the road and walk to a small bridge across a stream – a good place to wash your boots. On your far left is the canal and ahead is the old Adelphi cotton mill, now converted for office and light commercial purposes. Bear slightly right from the bridge and keep the stream on your right as you pass through a succession of gates. Keep following the waymarks as you continue ahead until you reach a bridge over a stream. Bear right after this and pass through two kissing gates to cross a wide track; as you cross the final field, you can see the Hollin Hall Hotel to your left. The waymarked path finally joins a road (14) in Kerridge, opposite the previous site of Holy Trinity Church. Go left, walk along the road and turn right into Chancery Lane.

Long and short walks join here: continue along Chancery Lane, down Lord Street, along Church Street, and back to the starting point. A few years ago, you would have passed the premises of Shrigley Dyers (slogan: “We Live to Dye”) – but the company closed and the land was used for housing development.