

TOP RMHT Stage 01: Macclesfield to Wilmslow

↔ 10 mi

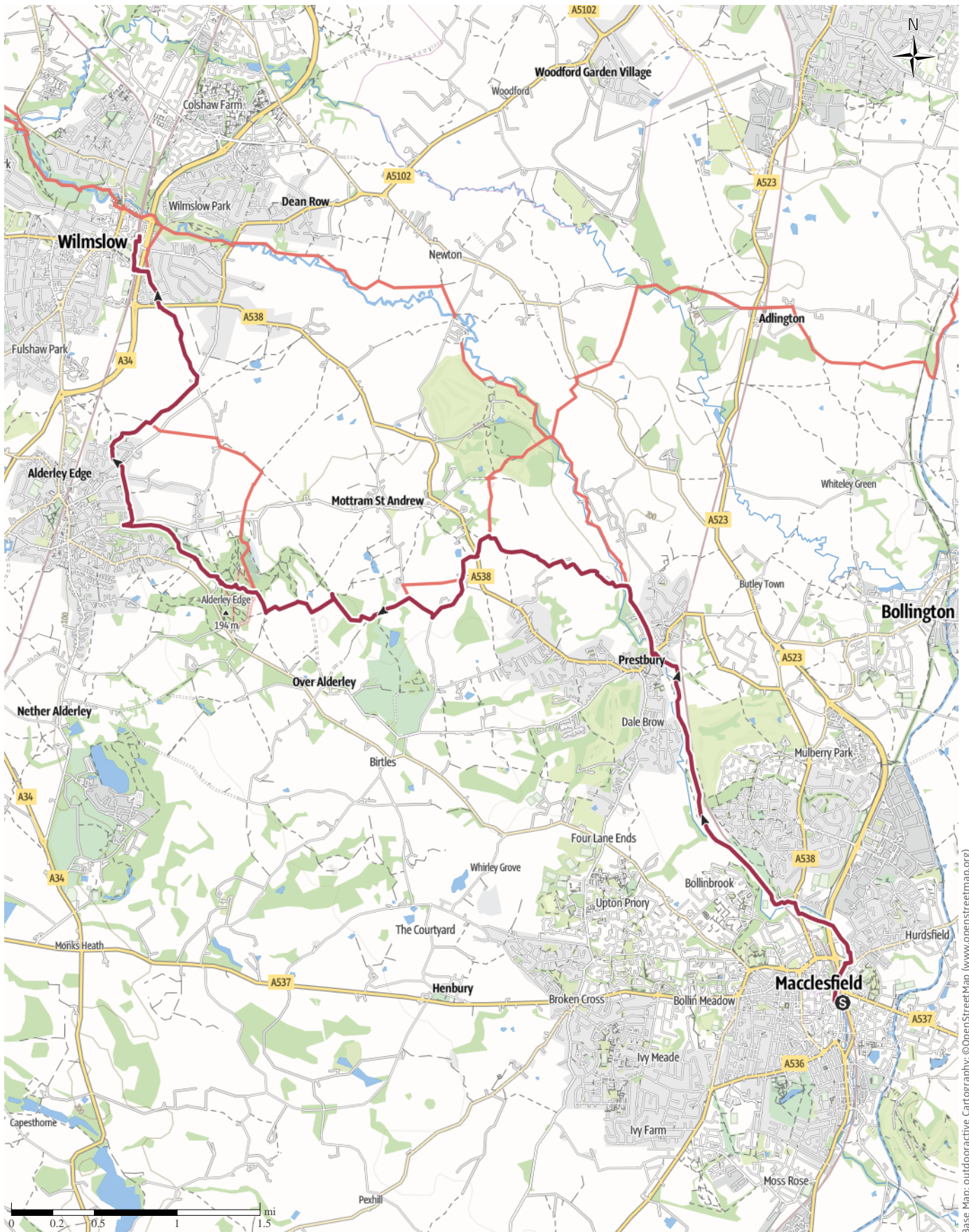
⌚ 4:10 h

▲ 351ft

▼ 561ft

Difficulty

moderate



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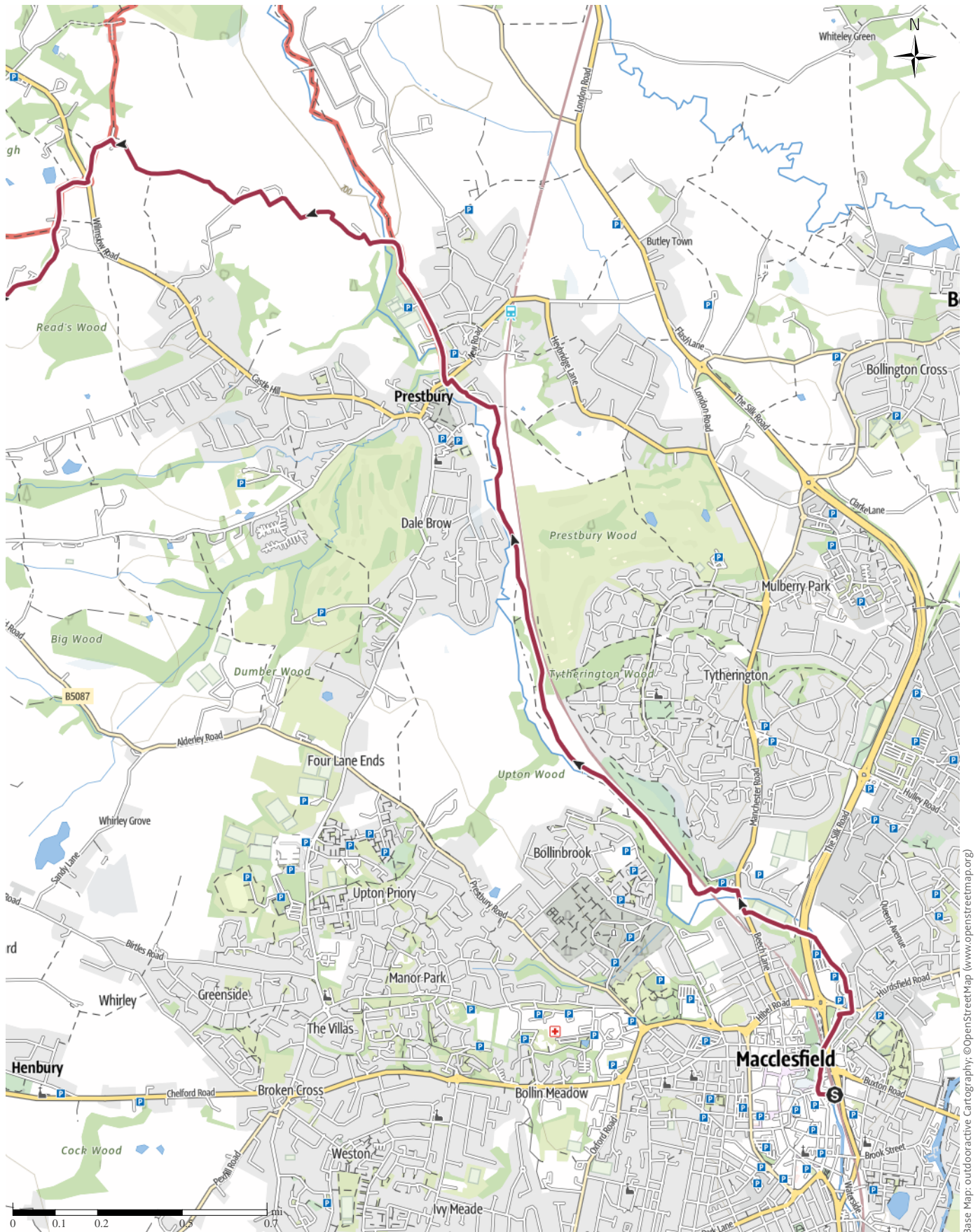
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Base Map: outdooractive Cartography; ©OpenStreetMap (www.openstreetmap.org)

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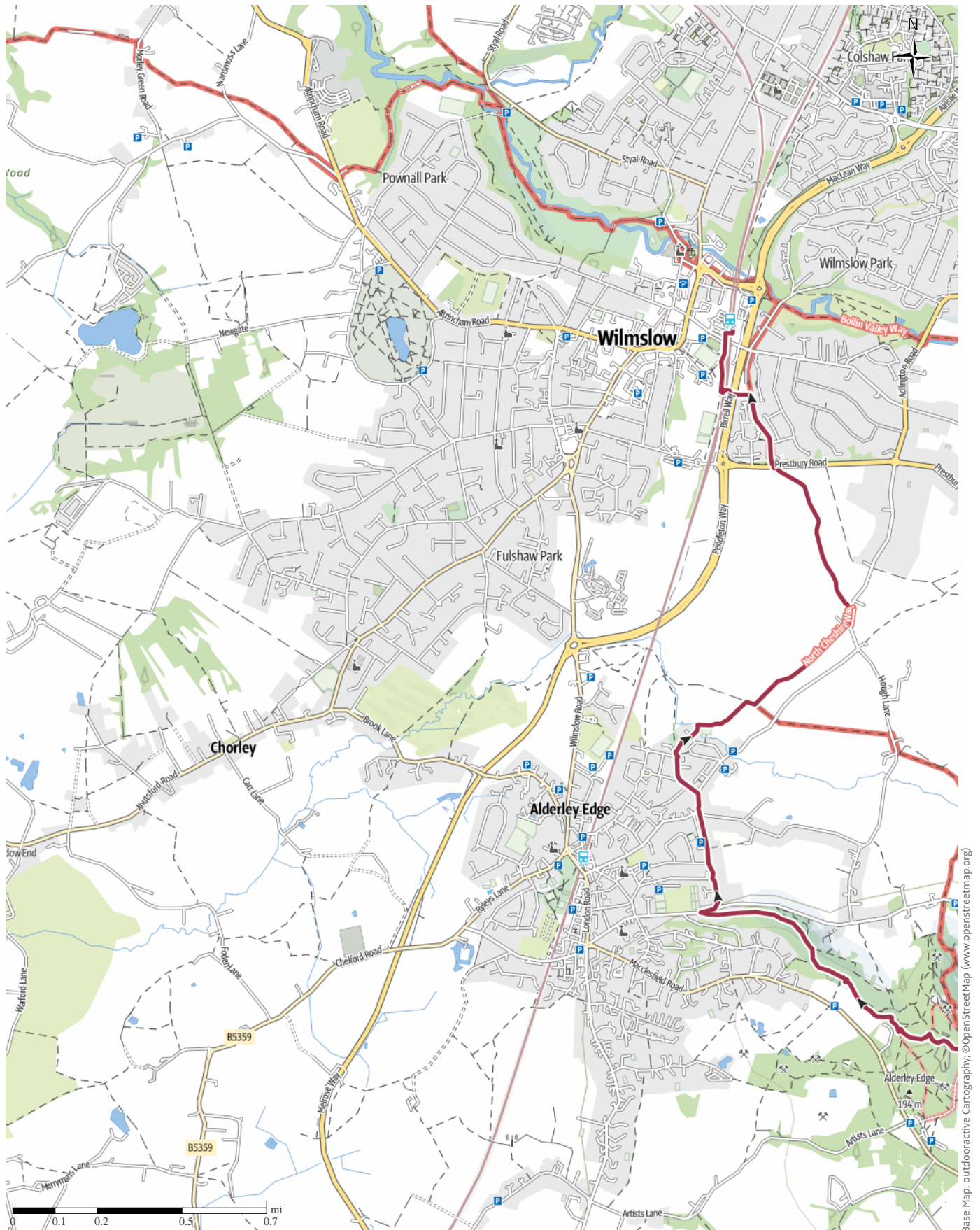
4:10 h

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Road surface

Asphalt	0.8 mi
Dirt road	0.1 mi
Way	2.6 mi
Path	6.3 mi
Street	0.2 mi
Unknown	0 mi

Elevation profile



route data

Hiking route

Distance	↔	10 mi
Duration	🕒	4:10 h
Ascent	⬆	351 ft
Descent	⬇	561 ft

Difficulty	moderate
Stamina	●●●●●
Technique	●●●●●
Altitude	<div> <div></div> <div>659 ft</div> </div> <div> <div></div> <div>253 ft</div> </div>

Best time of year

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

Ratings

Authors

Experience ●●●●●

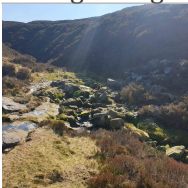
Landscape ●●●●●

Community

More route data

Properties

Public-transport-friendly	Linear route
Geological highlights	Summit route



Matthew Ball

Update: September 16, 2021

Stage 1 of the Round Manchester Hiking Trail:

Macclesfield to Wilmslow via the Armada Beacon

Starting from Macclesfield Railway Station, we head through an urban landscape for the first few minutes, before entering the River Bollin Country Park and following the river for approximately an hour along a path popular with families and dog walkers, before reaching the picturesque village of Prestbury. After this we cross the Bollin and follow some good paths through rolling Cheshire farmland before joining the

North Cheshire Way at Legh Hall. After crossing the A538, this takes us towards higher, wooded, ground before we leave the NCW temporarily to take in the highlights of the Alderley Edge escarpment – the Armada Beacon, Castle Rock and Squirrel's Jump. We then cut through Alderley Edge town on back lanes and paths to re-join the NCW, which then takes us through more farmland all the way to Wilmslow. All in all this is a fairly flat route with the exception of one steep descent between Castle Rock and Squirrel's Jump. It can also get quite muddy in winter, and is also notable for having a lot of stiles.

Author's recommendation

This route was walked by Manchester Weekend Walkers (a branch of the Ramblers) on Saturday 16th November 2019.

As well as being a walking route in its own right, it is also Stage 1 of the Round Manchester Hiking Trail, a 13-stage long

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distance walk that completely encircles the city of Manchester. The Trail is designed to be accessible by public transport, and to take in a varied selection of the best scenery in the Manchester area. It is 157 miles long in total and has about 6,000m of ascent.

The Trail starts in Macclesfield, and then proceeds in a clockwise direction via the other twelve staging points (Wilmslow, Knutsford, Lymm, Leigh, Blackrod, Entwistle, Rawtenstall, Todmorden, Marsden, Hadfield, Edale, and Buxton) before the last stage takes it back to Macclesfield again to complete the loop.

Since 2019, Manchester Weekend Walkers (a branch of the Ramblers) have been walking each of the stages in order roughly once every four weeks (pandemic permitting), which results in the full loop being completed once every year. The first five stages cover mostly lowland territory, and so are walked in the winter months, leaving the sunnier parts of the year in which to tackle the hills that otherwise nearly surround Manchester on three sides.

As of the summer of 2021, it is intended that the Trail will at some point be registered with the Long Distance Walkers Association as an "official" long distance path, although this hasn't yet happened at the time of writing. However, all 13 stages are available on the Outdoor Active website and can be downloaded as GPX files.

Safety information

The crossing at the A538 just after Legh Hall is potentially dangerous and needs care. The road has a 50mph speed limit, and is not somewhere where motorists will expect walkers to be, and also has blind bends. In a large group, the walk leader should ensure that people concentrate on the road crossing rather than on social interaction until the group is safely across.

Equipment

Decent walking boots and other sensible hiking gear.

Additional information

Tips and hints

Assembly Point:

The car park immediately out from the front of the Station, or at the bike sheds by the station.

Stiles:

10 on the route, with a couple in ropey condition, and most of the rest quite challenging.

Toilets:

The facilities at Macclesfield Station are quite small and cramped so it would probably be best to encourage people to go on the train and then again at the entrance to the Riverside Park. After then Danielhill Wood offers cover, but after that there is not much till the end at Wilmslow, where the station also has toilets.

Obstructions:

None known as of Jan 2021.

Timings:

1:20 - A538 crossing at Prestbury

2:20 - Legh Hall

3:00 - Danielhill Wood (suggested lunch stop)

4:15 - Squirrels Jump

5:30 - Wilmslow

Bail-Out Points:

At Prestbury there is a railway station about 1/3 of a mile to the right of the route up the main road. In the middle of the route, we are on roads between Legh Hall and Turner House Farm. Then, we are near the B5087 at Wizard's Well, which leads straight back to Alderley Edge. But the most obvious point to bail at is the junction of Squirrels Jump and Mottram Road, which is just 10 minutes walk from Alderley Edge train station, which has most of the same services as Wilmslow.

Lunch Stop:

The bear pit just to the right of the path in Danielhill Wood is good for a group. It is quite late in the walk so you might want to take a snack break some time between Prestbury and Legh Hall.

TOP RMHT Stage 01: Macclesfield to Wilmslow**Pub Stops En-Route:**

There are no obvious pub stops on this walk. The Admiral Rodney in Prestbury is reached too early in the walk to be open, and the Bulls Head near Mottram is a full-on gastro-pub with no beer garden for walkers.

Post-Walk Refreshments:

Most obvious place to congregate in Wilmslow is the Brew House & Kitchen, just two minutes from the station, which has wooden floors, excellent beer and also does excellent pizza. I haven't really explored Wilmslow beyond the Brew House, as that has always been adequate for my Group's needs.

Turn-by-turn directions**Starting point / trailhead**

Macclesfield Railway Station

Coordinates:

DD: 53.259347, -2.121938

DMS: 53°15'33.6"N 2°07'19.0"W

UTM: 30U 558572 5901481

w3w: ///solid.cloak.taped

Point of arrival

Wilmslow Railway Station

Turn-by-turn directions

On exiting the Railway Station, turn right onto Waters Green, crossing the road at the zebra crossing. Then immediately bear slightly left on to Gas Road, passing the Travelodge - this is actually the start of the Middlewood Way, which we now briefly follow (the occasional blue traffic signs indicating it can help with this). Next, bear right to head under the railway line, and then bear right again to go through another underpass to meet the River Bollin.

Follow the river for about 100 yards before turning right to cross it by bridge. This leads to a pelican crossing over Hurdsfield Road. Cross over and then continue northwards along Black Lane towards the big Tesco store. The car park entrance takes you back across the Bollin again, and at this point cross the entrance to follow the river again, following the sign for the Middlewood Way.

After following the River for another couple of hundred yards, the Way passes through a large concrete underpass. Immediately after this is a 4-way crossroads, at which the Middlewood Way turns right. We, however, are heading straight on at this point, to follow the Bollin Valley Way instead. (The Middlewood

Way does continue for another 11 miles on to Marple along the line of an old railway, but as it doesn't head the right way for us, so we leave it almost straight after its start point).

Having headed straight on from the cross-roads, we now follow Summerlea Close, and after seeing playing fields on the right we come to a main road, the A538. At this road we turn right, cross over, cross the River Bollin again and then take the next turn on the left, Beechwood Mews.

This leads immediately to a toilet block at the entrance to Macclesfield Riverside Park. This is a good place to pause, 1 mile into the route, after some tricky navigation to get to this point - and also the last public convenience facilities before the walk finish.

The walk leader may also be relieved to hear that the navigation become much simpler after this point!

Just off to the left, there is also a small garden here with some benches where you can sit down if you are having a stop here whilst people go to the toilet.

We now enter the Riverside Park and follow a narrow corridor of green space between the Bollin and the main railway line to Manchester for another 1.75 miles. The terrain is flat and can get muddy after wet weather but that path is very simple to follow - just keep the river on your left and the railway line on your right until we reach the outskirts of the village of Prestbury.

At the crossroads immediately before the first houses this side of the river, turn left to stay on the Bollin Valley Way, and follow the path until it rejoins residential road Bridge Green. Carry on for 50 yards until meeting Prestbury's main road, the A538. We now need to cross this road without the assistance of a pedestrian crossing, but this is helped by the speed limit being just 30mph and this being a residential area. After crossing, head straight over onto Bollin Grove next to the bridge over the river. We now take this road northward past the Village Club and a primary school before returning to the open countryside and reaching a junction in the path about 500 yards on from the school.

This is the point, 3.4 miles in to the walk (about one third of the total distance) at which we turn left to cross the Bollin, waving it goodbye to head towards the North Cheshire Way.

After leaving the Bollin we follow a mostly good quality footpath on a somewhat meandering route through various farms, heading for Legh Hall. First we pass

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Spittle House, at which it is important to remember not to turn right through the gate after passing the farm building, but instead to carry straight on, keeping the line of trees that marks the field boundary to your right. Carry on till the end of the field and then you will be able to pick up the signage again and cross a stream. We now follow a zig-zag path to the next landmark, Woodend Farm. As the path is well signed and there are no alternative paths to confuse, this is quite straightforward. After Woodend, cross the minor road and turn right to follow the path across open fields (it can be quite muddy here) and head toward Legh Hall.

On approaching the Hall, bear right just a little through the field to find the footpath gap in the line of buildings and hedges that you can see on top of the ridge. Then turn left to join the North Cheshire Way and arrive at a circular courtyard in front of the Hall. I find this courtyard a useful place to gather people and alert them to the tricky road crossing in the next section.

From the courtyard at Legh Hall, head South towards the A538. After the tricky road crossing, we continue to follow the North Cheshire Way (NCW) - although I tend to favour a detour to get to Turner's House Farm - past Hunter's Pool Farm via Shaw's Lane, turning right onto Oak Road, as an easier alternative to crossing the fields on the route of the NCW, as this affords some great views of the really nice farm houses along those two roads.

From Turner's we strike out west-south-west from the road to head towards hilly, wooded country. After passing through this wood the NCW takes a right turn towards a larger wooded area - Daniel Hill. Follow the path left and then right to enter the woodland and then follow it uphill. After a while you come to a depression on the ground to the right of the path which I think is a good place to sit down and have lunch.

After passing the summit of Daniel Hill we come to an interchange of pathways at which we cross the stile and then take the extreme left option. This then bends rightward and heads steadily downhill for about 300 yards before reaching a T-junction, at which we turn right.

After another 50 yards we take the left fork out the two available. And, 50 yards after that, stay left rather than heading into Waterfall Wood. The NCW then takes you on an uphill stretch to reach another pathway interchange just outside Edge House Farm, at which we turn 90 degrees to the right.

We now head to the National Trust's Alderley Edge estate, which we enter after about 100 yards through a big main gate. After this we immediately head about 60

degrees left to follow a slightly winding path for another 100 yards before turning right and then immediately left again to bend round rightwards towards the Armada Beacon, which is on top of a mound to the left of the path.

The Beacon is the highest point of this walk, at 200m (or 656 ft) above seal level - and a handy place for a group photograph. Hilltop beacon's were used during the medieval and Tudor periods to signal danger, especially of foreign invasion.

From the Beacon, continue west to follow a path that stays left of the tree-line for a while before leading us to Castle Rock - a rocky outcrop in the Alderley Edge escarpment with spectacular views northward towards Manchester. After leaving the Rock, continue heading west into the woods, keeping a ridge above you to your left and a steep drop down a wooded slope to your right.

(There are two alternative paths to find this westward route from the Rock - one goes just to the right of a fence and then steeply downhill through a rocky outcrop and then stright on - the other heads to the left of this fence and heads towards a main road, before doubling back North, and heading down a flight of six steps after which you immediately turn left. The first option is more direct, but the second is the easiest.)

After about 150 yards this path starts bending to the right and heading downhill, before it then turns in to a long and quite steep downward staircase. On reaching the bottom of the staircase look around and notice a path branching off slightly to the left that heads slightly up, rather than continuing down. This is the path we now follow to get us to the upmarket residential road Squirrel's Jump.

Once Squirrel's Jump joins Mottram Road we take a sharp right and then turn immediately left, to head northward along Moss Lane. From this point the rule through the next three junctions is to keep heading northwards. This takes us to Duke Street, a cobbled residential stree that leads us on to Heyes Lane, a more major road, which we follow northwards for 50 yards before crossing to head left onto the smaller residential Oakfield Road, following the sign that says "Local Shops". Follow Oakfield round to the right to reach Beech Road Park, which we enter and then keep to the rightward edge of to follow an indistinct footpath that exits the park after a short distance to enter a narrow walled corridor between back gardens. We follow this across another side street, Fairbourne Avenue, before the path leads us across Whitehall Brook and then turns right to go past a tennis club. The

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path then crosses fields again, keeping a hedge to the left and going through a boggy patch, before re-joining the North Cheshire Way near Heyes Lane.

We now follow the North Cheshire Way parallel to Heyes Lane for about 500 yards to Big Brick Hill Farm, before crossing the main road and then following it northward for about 50 yards on the right hand side until a patch of bright green grass appears to serve as a pavement. At this point we re-cross the road to continue following the NCW through a wooded patch before it crosses more fields again - you may need to look carefully from the other side of the road to see the entrance to the path, as it is not obvious - but it is marked by a wooden post with the yellow "NCW" sign. Whilst the Ordnance Survey map shows the NCW following a fairly straight line across these fields the actual physical path skirts them to the left and so ends up following a slightly different path. It is easier to stick with the physical path, which finally heads left through another wooded path to meet the A538 at the edge of the Wilmslow built-up area.

The last major road crossing, of the dual carriageway just before Wilmslow's built-up area begins, is not too difficult as there is a wide central reservation that you can stop in. However, just be on guard for the speed of the traffic, any fatigue affecting concentration, and any distraction owing to group interaction, that might have set in by this point.

After crossing the A538 continue straight on on the North Cheshire Way for about 500 yards through the housing estate, until a footpath turning appears on the left. Follow this path over the footbridge that takes us over the A34 and then the railway line. Then turn right and head towards the playing field and then turn right to pass the Sports/Leisure Centre (keeping it on your left) to reach Wilmslow Railway Station.

Wilmslow Railway Station has toilets open to anyone using the train to get back, accessible from platforms 2 and 3.

Getting There



This route is conveniently accessible by public transport.

Public transport

Trains from Manchester Piccadilly to Macclesfield are frequent on Saturday mornings, 4 or 5 times per hour. The Inter-City and Cross Country services take about 25 minutes to get there, and the stopping trains about 45 minutes.

Getting there

Return services from Wilmslow to Manchester run about 3-4 times an hour on a Saturday evening, again with a mixture of local/stopping services (taking about 50 minutes) and express/InterCity services (taking about 25 minutes).

Parking

If you are going to drive part of the way for this linear walk then the most logical place to park is Stockport, from which trains will run to Macclesfield and to which they will return from Wilmslow. You can park in the NCP near the station if you have deep pockets, or else just park on street for free in many places near the railway station.

Takeaway route for iPhone and Android



Scan QR code, save this route offline, share with friends and more...

Website

<https://out.ac/IliKOa>

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View Southward from Danielhill Wood

Photo: Matthew Ball, Community

Legend

Topography

	Wood, forest
	Moor, swamp, marsh
	Moorland
	Residential building area with single building
	Industrial real estate with single building
	Cemetery
	Golf course
	Sportsfield, stadium
	Stadium
	Open-air pool
	Vineyard
	Petrograph
	Country border
	State border
	District border
	Contour line
	Special use area
	Nature reserve

Topographic single signs

	Summit cross
	Elevation point
	Rock
	Cave
	Church
	Chapel
	Cemetery
	Palace/Castle
	Abbey
	Monument
	Ruin
	Mine
	Cairn
	Broadcasting tower
	Windwheel
	Water-/windmill
	Viewpoint

Streets and ways

	Freeway with number
	Highway with number
	State, country, district street
	Village road
	Main agricultural road
	Agricultural road
	Trail
	Via Ferrata

Lifts, Railway

	Ropeway lift
	Gondola lift
	Chairlift
	Ski-, draglift
	Aerial ropeways
	Railway
	Suburban train
	Subway
	Tram
	Railway station