

Southern Woods Walk

Distance: 2.5 km

Duration: About 50 minutes

Terrain: Partially accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs if done in reverse up to point 9.

Starting at Visitor Reception ① walk along the edge of the car park, past a small reservoir pond, and through a gate into the field beyond.

In the event of a fire, water would be pumped from the reservoir to the mill. Fire was a constant threat in the hot and dusty mills. Fortunately fires at Quarry Bank seem to have been rare and small.

Once you have passed through the gates, go across the field and pass through another gate ②, then continue down the path.

Looking across the field on your left you will see a large house. ③ This was once used as the transmitter and control station for Manchester Airport during the Second World War. Across the fields to the right is a stone obelisk which is due south from an observatory that once stood in Quarry Bank Garden. It allowed the mill owner to use the sun to set his clocks. ④

As you continue on you will come to an iron gate ⑤. Pass through this and drop down the hill and into the meadow. Continue straight down to a gate at the bottom. Evening walks may allow you to see bats crossing the meadow.

This route was used by mill apprentices, to walk from the Apprentice House to the parish church in Wilmslow every Sunday.

At the gate ⑥ turn right along the concrete cycle track. Walk for approximately 40 metres, you will then see another gate on your right ⑦. Pass through the kissing gate so that the river Bollin will be on your left. This area is called a Willow Carr, it is an area of wet woodland which is unique habitat feature of the estate.

To the right of the bridge, the rivers Dean and Bollin combine.

As you walk along the low laying path you will reach a large granite boulder. This is called an 'erratic' stone and was deposited here from the Lake District during the last ice age. ⑧ To your right there is a steep woodland bank and during late April and throughout May this banking is a carpet of bluebells. Keep following the path straight ahead.

As you follow the path it will rise up steeply and you will pass over Heron's Pool Bridge.

⑨ This is a great place to see herons feeding and also bats later in the evening.

Soon you will reach the mill pond on your left which is a great place for pond dipping ⑩. Carry straight on, passing the playground on your left until you reach the mill ⑪.

Once at the mill it is a perfect place to stop off, grab a bite to eat, have a cup of tea and rest your feet! Once you are fully rested head up the mill drive and back to the Visitor Reception to complete your walk.



Welcome to Quarry Bank

Before the mill was built, Styal village was a small collection of barns and cottages whose inhabitants worked on the surrounding land. In 1784, the valley of the river Bollin was chosen by Samuel Greg as the site for Quarry Bank mill.

As the mill expanded, many of the original farm buildings in Styal were converted into houses, with the purpose-built Oak Cottages added in the 1820s. This early industrial community included a school, shop, bakery, two churches and many of the villagers even had their own allotments. In 1939, Alexander Greg gave the estate to the National Trust to be cared for and for future generations to enjoy.

Today a team of rangers and volunteers work on the estate to protect, restore and maintain the historic grounds.

Access

The most accessible walk is the Riverside Walk which has fully accessible paths. The Southern Woods Walk is partially accessible, if done in reverse up to point ⑨.

The Giant's Castle Walk and Kingfisher Walk contain many steps and steep sloping paths. Paths can be muddy, so we advise stout footwear. A small part of the Giant's Castle Walk is by the side of a road.

Gates will be locked at the time specified at the entrance.

Countryside Care

Please stay on the paths to reduce erosion of banks and damage to plants.

We welcome responsible dog owners. Please keep your dog on a lead in the village and around livestock and wildlife.

The river can be deep and fast flowing. For their safety, children should be supervised at all times.

Please help us to care for the countryside by taking your litter home.



Explore Quarry Bank



National Trust

Enjoy one of our wonderful walks around the Quarry Bank estate

Kingfisher Walk

Distance: 2 km

Duration: 50 minutes

Terrain: Some steep inclines and steps.
Unsuitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

From Visitor Reception ① walk follow the path that runs alongside the Apprentice House and across the field. When you reach a gate with a track in front of it, pass through the gate and cross the track. Go through another gate and head towards Styal Cross. ②

Once at Styal Cross turn left towards Norcliffe Chapel. If you wish to visit the chapel, pass through the gate on the right. To access the woods, take the path on the left nearest the field and continue with the chapel to your right.

The Greg family worshipped at the Unitarian Norcliffe Chapel.

As you enter Chapel Woods the path splits into two; take the right hand path. ③

The Greg family planted a number of exotic tree species, and we have been working to restore the landscape that they would have enjoyed. As you walk along see how many tree species you can spot.

Continue to walk straight ahead for approximately 200m.

You will reach a set of stone steps taking you down to Chapel Bridge. ④ Once you have reached the bottom cross Chapel Bridge and take the path that leads to the right and up the hill.

Chapel Bridge was built to provide easy access to the mill for Robert Hyde Greg from Norcliffe Hall, his home.

Once at the top of the hill follow the path along the top of the valley. ⑤ If you look down to your left you can see Folly Bridge.

Folly Bridge features in paintings by Caroline, Robert Greg's daughter. The huge redwood conifer, with its characteristic reddish bark, is just one of the exotic specimens that were planted by the Gregs at Styal.

Continue on and follow the footpath down the hill. ⑥

As you enter the Oxbow, ignore the path on the left and continue straight ahead with the river on your right, but rather than crossing it instead follow the path around the Oxbow and in around 300m you will re-enter the woodland.

Continue walking until you reach Kingfisher Bridge.

Keep an eye out on the river and if you are lucky you will see a kingfisher pass by. ⑦ Head over the bridge and turn left following the path up the steep hill.

Once you reach the top of the hill you will see Centenary Bridge ⑧ on your left and a path on your right. Take the path to the right; you will soon notice Quarry Bank's gardens on your right hand side.

As you pass the gardens it's a perfect place to pop in to the garden café to rest your feet and have a bite to eat ⑨. Alternately you can carry on straight ahead to Visitor Reception to finish your walk.

Giant's Castle Walk

Distance: 6.2 km

Duration: About 2.5 hours

Terrain: Muddy paths, uneven terrain and steep steps.
Unsuitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

Upon entering the Oxbow, ignore the path on your left and continue straight ahead with the river on your right. As you reach the Oxbow Bridge, cross over and turn left. ⑩

The Oxbow Bridge was brought to this isolated location in the 1970s, by helicopter!

Follow the path up and then down the steep flights of steps known as Acorn Steps. ⑪

The dense canopy of the beech wood in summer allows little light to penetrate to encourage growth on the woodland floor.

Cross Giant's Castle Bridge ⑫ and climb the steep steps. ⑬ Walk along the cliff edge, with views back down to the river Bollin. Once across the cliff edge you will descend back down in to Giant's Castle Wood.

You are now passing through a piece of ancient semi-natural woodland. ⑭

Ancient semi-natural woodland is a habitat for many native species. The dead wood is important for 700 varieties of fungi recorded throughout the estate.

As you walk along the path with the river to your left and fields to the right, you will come to a bridge crossing the river. This bridge is known locally as 'the bridge to nowhere'; why do think that it's here?

Continue through the woodland area and follow the steep and sometimes stepped path as it climbs away from the river. You will eventually reach a kissing gate, leave the woodland path and

turn right, following the steep bridleway path up to Manchester Airport perimeter track. ⑮

Turn right at the track. On your left is the Manchester Airport's busy Runway 2. Follow the stony track for 600m until you reach an old tarmac road. This is the "Old" Altrincham Road and was a main road before Runway 2 was built; the road is no longer a highway and is only used by local residents. Follow this old road for 800m until you reach a vehicle gate. ⑯

Once at the vehicle gate turn right onto Altrincham Road, taking care of the traffic as you walk. Turn right and head back up the road. ⑰

You pass the magnificent half-timbered Oak Farm, then Tudor Cottage which are some of the original medieval buildings of Styal.

Turn right at Styal village car park ⑱. Walk to the far end of the car park, turn left and then right along a cobbled track to Styal Cross. Turn left at the cross and head across the fields towards Visitor Reception. ①

Riverside Walk

Distance: 0.8 km

Duration: About 20 minutes

Terrain: Flat path, suitable for wheelchairs and buggies.

Funded with support from



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Starting point

Take a walk out into the Chapel Woods from Ferney Brow to see where the Greg children used to play. Follow the path around the river heading back to the gardens to continue your journey.

