

# Timbersbrook to Rushton Spencer Circular Walk

*From Timbersbrook this scenic walk follows the Staffordshire Way up and over The Cloud, where there are impressive views of Cheshire and the Staffordshire Moorlands. It then continues through a wooded valley, past the river Dane and along the course of the old North Rode to Leek railway line to reach Rushton Spencer. The return journey passes a Neolithic chambered long barrow known as the Bridestones. A short walk route is also available.*

**Distance:**

Long walk approx. 11.2km (7 miles) / short walk approx. 5.6km (3½ miles)

**Duration:**

Long walk approx. 3 hours / short walk approx. 2 hours

**Terrain:**

Several steep sections make this an energetic walk, however impressive views more than compensate

**Parking:**

Timbersbrook village car park OS895627

**Refreshments/ facilities:**

There are toilets at Timbersbrook car park, and food and drink is served at the Knot Inn at Rushton Spencer

**Maps:**

Ordnance Survey Explorer 268 "Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton"

**Bus routes:**

Trent service 107 (Derby Manchester). If arriving by bus start the walk at Rushton Spencer section 8



The Cloud

- 1** Leave Timbersbrook car park and walk straight across the picnic area to some steps up through the trees to a road. Turn left and walk 250 metres up the road to a footpath on the right signposted Gritstone Trail.
- 2** Follow the path up steps through the woodland to a track, at which point despite being in Cheshire - we join the route of the Staffordshire Way. Turn right and climb the track, which swings to the left and passes a house on the right, for 300 metres. Branch onto a footpath on the left next to a National Trust Sign (the Cloud has been owned by the National Trust since 1962).
- 3** Follow the footpath steeply uphill for 200 metres until it passes through a fence and enters an area of woodland. The footpath immediately divides into several routes. Follow the left-hand path and gradually rise up to the Trig Point at the Cloud's summit (343 metres). From the summit it is possible to see Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope and the Dane Viaduct (1849) on the Stoke to Manchester railway, both lying on the flat ground to the north-west. To the north-east, the western hills of the Peak District lead back from Macclesfield to the Roaches, north of Leek.
- 4** Crossing the county boundary into Staffordshire, we now follow a path heading south-east along the edge of the hill and then down a number of steps to a track. Turn left and follow the track down the hill to a lane. Jump to section 18 to follow the short walk. Turn left down the lane for 200 metres to cross a stile on the right.
- 5** Keeping the field boundary on your right walk down the hill through two fields. At this point the footpath, still descending, bears left through trees and eventually meets a small lane. Turn right and follow the lane round some corners and down the hill to Ravensclough Farm. Just before reaching the farm cross a stile on the right.
- 6** Follow the footpath across a small meadow, then down through woodland to a footbridge over the Ravensclough Brook. Cross the bridge and walk straight through a large field for about 500 metres, at first with the River Dane on your left, until you reach a stile in the far left corner next to another small brook.



View from The Cloud

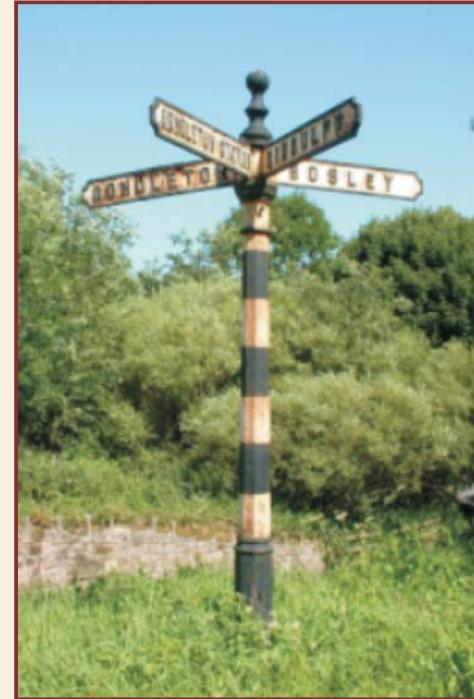


Knot Inn

- 7** Cross over the brook and a short walk across the next field leads to a stile and steps up onto the course of the old North Rode to Leek railway line, which was built by the North Staffordshire Railway in 1849 and closed down in 1964.
- 8** Turn right and follow the railway course for a kilometre until you arrive at Rushton Spencer, next to the old station building and the Knot Inn (so named because the North Staffordshire Railway Company's emblem was the Staffordshire Knot). Here, the Staffordshire Way continues straight ahead along the old railway to Rudyard Lake, but we turn right and follow a road for 20 metres before turning left onto a lane sign-posted to Rushton Hall.
- 9** Follow the lane steeply uphill, round two sharp bends and past a group of houses on the right. After the final house, Rushton Bank, the lane turns sharply to the left. Climb up the bank straight in front to a stile next to a large sycamore tree.
- 10** Follow the field boundary on the right past some cattle sheds and then gently downhill to a stile. Bear slightly left here across the next field passing to the right of a telegraph pole to arrive at a stile in the hedge opposite.
- 11** Cross over the stile and turn right, crossing two more stiles in the field corner. Turn left and with a hedgerow now on your left rise gently uphill through three fields to emerge onto a lane.
- 12** Follow the lane for 400 metres, passing beneath power lines, and reach a T-junction in front of a farm. Turn left for half a mile and rise steeply up to second T-junction.
- 13** Turn left again, signposted to Biddulph and Congleton. Pass Willowshaw Farm on the left then turn right 50 metres later onto a narrow lane running through the woodland, which cuts the corner onto the Congleton road.
- 14** Turn right and walk down the road towards Congleton, facing the traffic. After passing the entrance to a large house on the right, turn right down a driveway to reach a Neolithic chambered long barrow known as the Bridestones. The mound of earth which originally covered the tomb is reputed to have been more than 90 metres long and 12 metres wide, and there were originally two further side chambers.



- 15** After visiting the burial chamber, return to the Congleton road and continue down the hill for 300 metres to a lane on the right. Follow the lane for a short distance then join a footpath on the left.
- 16** Walk down the hill through two fields following the edge of a small wooded valley on the right until you reach a footbridge at the bottom of the hill. The Staffordshire-Cheshire county boundary follows the brook.
- 17** Cross the footbridge and follow the path straight ahead to emerge onto a road opposite a house. Turn right and walk down the road then fork left past the telephone box and across a road to Weathercock Lane. Follow the lane gently downhill past a bus shelter on the left and some houses on the right to return to the Timbersbrook car park.
- 18** Short walk continued... Turn right and follow the lane for three-quarters of a mile, passing The Cloud Methodist Church on the right, then a turn-off to Woodhouse Green and shortly afterwards Willowshaw Farm on the left. Continue for another 50 metres and follow a lane on the right through woodland to the Congleton Road. Now go to section 14.



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