



A Journey Through Industrial Cheddleton



Trail Summary

Transport



Circular walk along mainly level paths. However this walk is not suitable for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs may find the kissing gates and some terrain tricky in places.

Distance



Allow



There is also a short road section with no path and a busy road to cross.

Difficulty



“Follow the canal to discover how water drove Cheddleton’s industrial revolution.”

Good day explorer and welcome to Cheddleton! On this trail, you will discover how industry has greatly affected Cheddleton’s past, present and future, and hopefully have a lot of fun along the way! The trail takes about 1 ½ to 2 hours to complete and is around a 1½ mile walk, depending on how much time you take to explore the varied and exciting stops! It will bring you right back to the Old School Craft Centre and Tea Rooms, so no need to worry about the car. Toilets and catering are available at the tea rooms, the village’s pubs and at the station, which form part of the trail.

This guide is intended to complement rather than replace appropriate navigational equipment and due care should be taken when undertaking the self guided trails. We recommend you carry and know how to use the correct Ordnance Survey map. Please wear sturdy footwear, take appropriate weather protection, food and drink and please remember to follow the Countryside Code.

Start and finish:

Old School Craft Centre and Tea Rooms. Has parking, toilets and catering facilities. OS White Peak Area, OL24, SJ 967 523.

Access:

If approaching from A520 southbound (Stoke on Trent), cross mini-roundabout after entry into Cheddleton and turn left up Hollow Lane, opposite Red Lion pub. If approaching from A520 northbound, continue through Leek and past St Edwards Hospital. Turn right at Red Lion pub and up Hollow Lane, just after Cheddleton Flint Mill. The Old School Craft Centre and Tea Rooms is at the top of Hollow Lane, on the right.



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Part-funded by the European Union
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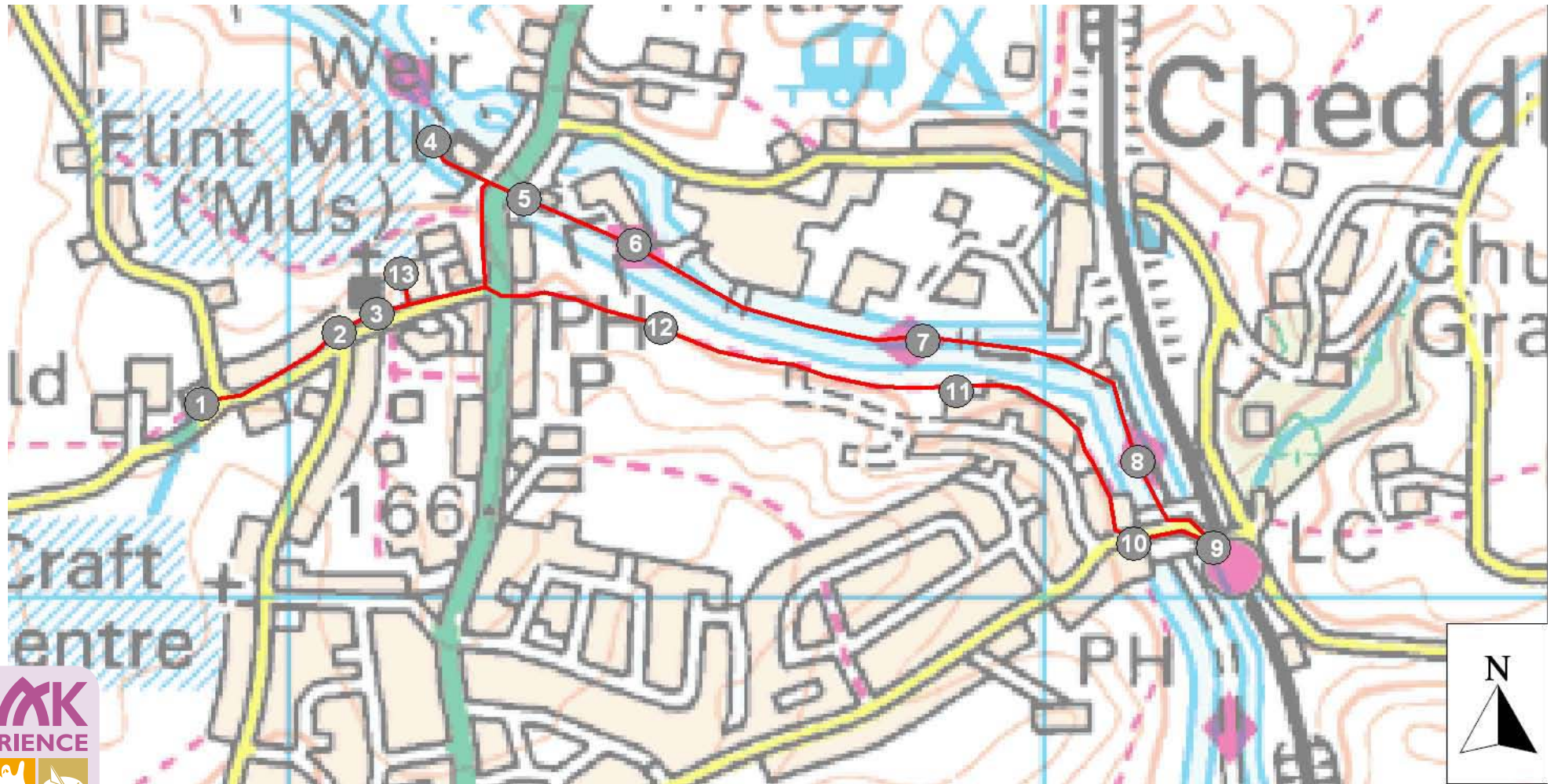
One of a suite of downloadable trails available from www.peak-experience.org.uk



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1. Old School Craft Centre

Can you hear a bell ringing? Well, probably not, but you're right next to Cheddleton Old School (image below). It was built in 1855 and funded by rich local families involved in village industry. It was the only school in the surrounding area and some children would have had to walk miles every day in all sorts of weather to get here.

Stroll down Hollow Lane. Can you see the new school on your right? It's a bit bigger than the old one isn't it? Do you think it has more pupils than the old school did? No peeking at the answers! Keep strolling until you get to a junction...

2. 'A forgotten main street'

These small lanes formed the main road through Cheddleton until 1753 when the big road at the bottom of the hill was built to cope with traffic from the mills. The junction was the centre of village life. Can you imagine it crowded with horses, carts and farmers peddling pigs, sheep and cattle? You can? Now imagine the stench!

Sorry about that. As you try and rid yourself of the smell of animal dung, walk a little further down Hollow Lane until you come to St Edward's Church...



3. 'A church for the rich...'

This is a bit of a fancy church isn't it? Over 150 years ago it was redecorated by the rich folk of Cheddleton who owned the local mills and factories. The poor workers weren't welcome any more so many attended the Methodist 'church' you will discover at stop 5...

Feel free to have a look around... just make sure you've got your posh clothes on and a fancy hat!

Finished? Walk to the bottom of Hollow Lane, past the Black Lion pub, and turn left when you reach the bottom. We're now leaving the Old Village. Hasn't Cheddleton grown. The population doubled between 1801 and 1871. What do you think caused this massive growth? Continue walking until you reach the entrance of the mill on your left and walk down the drive...

4. 'A miller's tale'

Welcome to the famous Cheddleton Flint Mill (image bottom right). Flint, a very dark type of rock, was ground here and sent down the nearby canal to Stoke where it was miraculously turned into all manner of beautifully decorated china plates, vases and cups. Not many people know about little Cheddleton's crucial contribution to this famous industry.

Explore this fascinating place further. If you're lucky enough to be visiting at a weekend, you might get to see inside the mill too. But be careful - a miller called Mr Douglas is said to have fallen into the mill's 'grinding pan' over a hundred years ago and been slowly crushed alive...

After you've had a good nose around the Mill, go back up the drive and walk down the nearby Caudon Canal towpath. Go under the bridge and stop at the other side...



5. 'An old dockhouse for the poor...'

Can you spot the small grey building on the opposite side of the canal, next to the road? It may be partially hidden by foliage (image above). It might be hard to believe but this was once Cheddleton Methodist Church. Many of the village's poor workers came here, feeling unwelcome at the main church we saw at stop 3. It was dangerous though - some churchgoers, piling out after service, used to slip and fall into the canal!

Walk a little further down the canal, past the first lock...



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6. 'Toll please!'

This lock (number 14, image bottom left) played a very important role in Cheddleton, when the canal would have been packed full of boats carrying goods to and from the mills. Locks allow the water level to be raised and lowered, which is very important when the canal bottom is not level! A toll for passing would also have been taken by the local lockkeeper. Do you think he was a popular man?

Carry on your 'trip down the canal'. How about a little competition to make things more interesting? How long do you think the canal is? Here's a clue - less than 25 miles but more than 15! Don't worry, the loser doesn't get thrown in...

7. 'Welcome to the W6!'

Have you seen any boats yet? You would have done if you were walking the canal 200 years ago! The canal was the M6 of its time, crowded with barges transporting goods from the mills to the big towns. Using the canal was much quicker and easier than using horse and carts and was very important to the success of Cheddleton's mills.

Fight your way through the traffic and meander your way down the path until you get near the bridge, keeping your eyes fixed on the opposite bank...



8. 'Total gridlock!'

Look at the barges tied to the opposite bank. If the Cauldon Canal is the 'W6', these are definitely its lorries! Barges such as these filled the canal in Cheddleton 200 years ago. Can you imagine all the queues?

Yet the Cauldon Canal was hardly used after around 1900. Can you guess why? If not, you'll get the answer after the next stop.

At least we can have a nice, quiet walk down the canal without the blaring of barge horns now! Climb the steps next to the bridge and turn left. You can't miss the station, but please take care as there is no path by the road.

9. 'First Class transport links'

Next stop: Cheddleton! This grand old station (image top right) was built over 150 years ago, 40 years before the first motorcar. The arrival of a railway in Cheddleton was very important, as goods could be transported even faster and cheaper than on the canal. Cheddleton's mills got even more successful after its arrival.

Have a good look around the station. There's a shop, tea rooms and picnic tables and if you're here at a weekend, you might be lucky enough to get to go for a little ride.

Hope you had a train-mendous (sorry!) time at the station. Go back the way you came and cross the bridge. Can you spot the 'boat parks' on the canal next to the Boat Inn?



10. 'A nice little earner'

Anyone fancy a drink? Even Elijah Heath, the innkeeper here 150 years ago, wanted a slice of Cheddleton's industrial wealth. He burnt lime for whitewashing buildings in a huge kiln behind the pub. That was until his customers started complaining about the smell!

Right, now let's play 'find the footpath'. Cross the road from the Boat Inn and look for a row of houses. There are a few garages at the end with a path to their left. Follow this, turning right at the fork, and walk on until you reach a memorial bench (image below) in front of an old stone stile...



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11. 'A Brickie's path'

As you continue walking, look at the footpath beneath you. Can you see its reddish colour? This could well be clay. What do you think it may have been used for? (Clue - look at the houses on your left). Bricks! There was once a brickworks in Cheddleton that produced over 120,000 bricks a day.

Continue walking up the path, go through the metal kissing gate and past the hilly green field to your left. As you walk, keep your eye on the field. If you're lucky, you might spot a rabbit. Stop just before the path slopes steeply downwards and look out across the canal and the industrial park beyond it.

12. 'Back to the future'

A thriving paper mill once stood on the opposite bank. It was famous throughout the world. Cheddleton has always relied on its industry to provide jobs and wealth for the village. Look across the canal - Its no different today (image below). Cheddleton still enjoys good transport links, but today companies use the A520 and the M6, not the canal and railway.

Nearly back! Walk down the slope, go through the metal kissing gate and continue up the footpath. Cross the main road to the uphill street opposite. Does this look familiar? It should, we're back on Hollow Lane! Climb the hill and look for the Black Lion Pub on your right.



13. 'One to stimulate thirst, the other to quench it!'

The Black Lion (right) has been popular in the village for centuries and is known round here as the 'Black un'. Cheddleton once had even more pubs - working in the mills or on the railway or canal was thirsty work, as is walking! Reward yourself with a well-earned drink, but remember the words of John Flowers, a poet who visited Cheddleton in 1832:



"A party of labourers drinking to drunkenness, filthy language. These men when sober do not answer civilly a question asked. When in liquor, they jabber not more intelligently than a baboon!"

Continue up Hollow Lane, passing the church, to reach the Old School, and the end of the trail.

Conclusion

Well here we are back at the start. As I'm sure you've realised after experiencing this trail, industry has greatly affected Cheddleton's past, present and future. Yet this industrialisation makes Cheddleton what it is today - a special, unique village that I hope you've enjoyed discovering. For more information on Cheddleton and the fascinating surrounding area, please visit the Peak Experience website. Thanks for visiting today, please return soon, and have a safe journey home.

Directions to A520 - Turn left from Old School Craft Centre and Tea Rooms and drive to the bottom of Hollow Lane. Turning left will bring you onto A520 northbound to Leek, turning right will take you southbound to Stoke on Trent and the M6.

Answers:

- 1) The old school had 165 pupils in the late 1880s and the new one has around 200 today. Yet, look at the size difference between the two. The old school would have had around 80 pupils in a classroom.
- 2) The arrival of industry! Many people came to Cheddleton to find employment and wealth in its mills, quarries, canal and railway.
- 3) 18 miles, or if you're a bunch of good guessers, 17¼! The canal begins in Froghall, Staffordshire and ends in Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent, where it joins the Trent-Mersey canal.

Written and Photos by James Cokeham. Design by Dan Boys

One of a suite of downloadable trails available from www.peak-experience.org.uk

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