



# Royal approval

Jody Vaughan takes you on a pleasant Cheshire stroll from the Club's Royal Vale Caravan Park AS



Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 118

**T**his wonderful walk is based around one of the Club's Affiliated Sites – Royal Vale Caravan Park in Knutsford, Cheshire – which has a five-star rating and is open all year round. Our route begins in the centre of Over Peover – a small village nearby with a pub, school and cricket club. From here, you stroll to Peover Hall, a Grade 2-listed Elizabethan family house with some 500 acres of landscaped parkland and formal gardens. While the gardens aren't open during winter, you can still walk through some of the parkland and stop and explore the Hall if that is open.

Most of the pathways and quiet lanes are perfect for winter or spring walking but, after a long period of heavy rain last autumn, the woodland section was very muddy. It was passable but I wished I'd taken a walking pole for balance over the wettest sections – especially for the steep climb up out of the woods which was very slippery.

When parking, if there is no room in the lay-by beside the cricket club and remembrance cross then you should be able to find a space anywhere along that road towards the pub.

## DIRECTIONS

**1** From the cricket club lay-by, walk to the crossroads and continue straight ahead along the pavement following the 'Toft, 2.5, Knutsford 4' signpost – down Stocks Lane. Continue past the Park Gate Inn and then the entrance to Colshaw Hall. When you reach the road junction with Grotto Lane, continue straight ahead leaving the main road behind you – not up Grotto Lane but instead up the gated road marked 'Private Road – No Parking – Access Only' (also following a yellow arrow and a public footpath sign).

**2** Go through the wooden gates and keep ahead, past the cottage, and along the lane. Pass the wonderful sculpture of the owl and head through the gates (or over the

stile) before continuing along the now grassy path. Go over a stile and a wooden bridge before passing through another gate, continuing towards the building ahead (again following a yellow arrow).

**3** Having crossed the stile at Peover Hall you'll see a footpath sign in front of you – turn left here along the tarmac drive. At the end of the road, having passed through a white gate, there's a staggered crossroads. Effectively continue straight ahead (by shimmying left and then immediately right) following a green arrow with a horse upon it – down the tarmac lane with speed-bumps.

**4** Go past the house towards a wooden gate, and then walk past that gate to continue along a smaller grassy path. When you eventually get to a house (which is a nursery – there are rows of glasshouses in its back garden), the road branches to the left. Take this branch (marked by a public footpath sign) and pass to the right of all the glasshouses.

## INFORMATION

**Club site:** Royal Vale Caravan Park (Affiliated Site), London Road, Allostock, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9JD. See p168 of the *Sites Directory & Handbook 2013/14* for full details. To book, call the site direct on 01565 722355. Open: all year.

**Distance:** 3 miles

**Terrain:** mostly good paths with one muddy section through woodland

**Number of stiles:** 2

**Essential equipment:** walking pole, Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 268 – Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton

**Level of difficulty:** easy, but partially muddy after wet weather

**Refreshments:** in Over Peover

**Toilets:** none

**Parking:** park in the lay-by next to Over Peover Cricket Club



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**5** At the end of the lane, on approaching a house, look for a public footpath post on the right (beside a fir tree). Follow this arrow to continue ahead along the left side of the next field (walking alongside a fence that flanks more greenhouses on the left).

**6** Having passed the greenhouses turn left to walk around their rear ends, but as you veer left again and begin to walk along their far side you'll see a yellow arrow pointing down some steps, heading into the woodland. Walk down these steps, over a wooden bridge, and go up three more steps to following the woodland path (with accompanying yellow arrows).

**7** Keep following these arrows along the sometimes muddy path (you may need a pole to balance you through the worst sections), but where the path forks, by a lone silver birch, keep left to head downhill (this is an unmarked junction). Walk over some very small bridges, but eventually,

where there's a much larger bridge spanning the main river on your right, keep straight on (without crossing this bridge) before almost immediately veering left up a steep hill.

**8** At the top, pass through a wooden gate and immediately turn right, following the right side of a field. Veer left at the field's corner (still following its perimeter). At a T-junction with a lane turn right along this and at the next T-junction keep right to continue walking away from the Hall. Go through the white gates and continue ahead. After another set of white gates, at the T-junction, turn left (being careful as there's no pavement).

**9** At the more major T-junction continue straight ahead up Clay Lane (signposted 'Peover Heath'). Eventually you come to the junction beside the primary school and the remembrance cross – return to your vehicle.

