

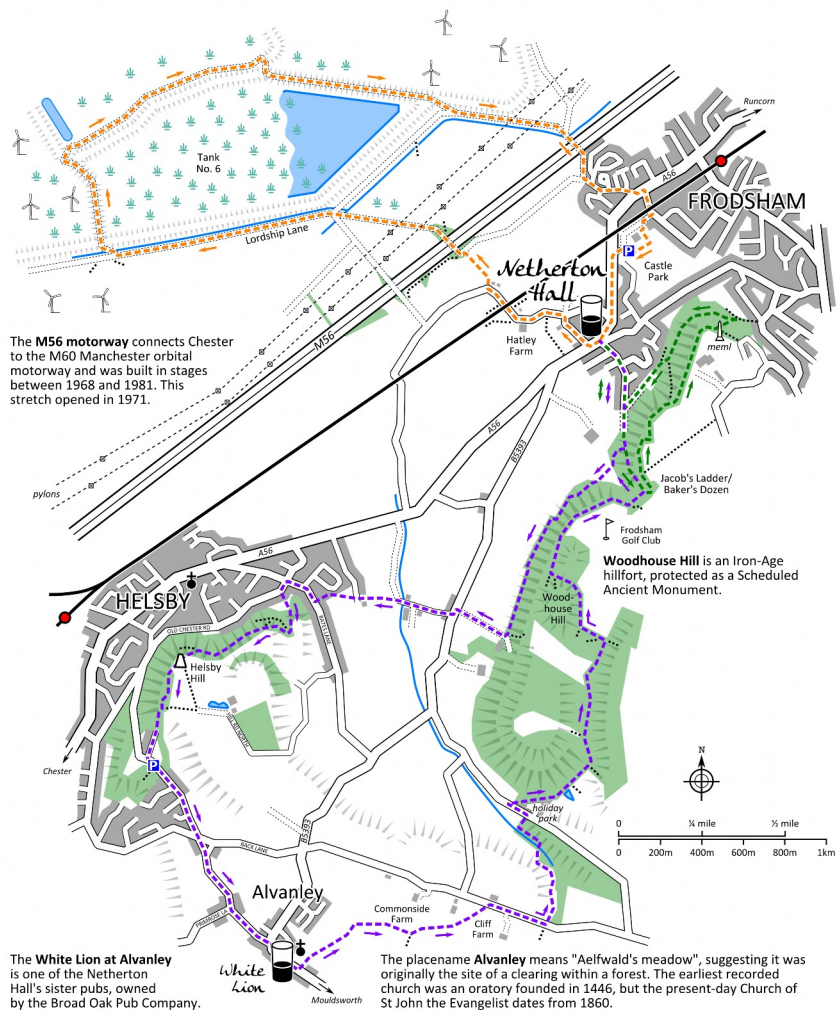


The views from **Helsby Hill** (left) over Frodsham Marsh and the Mersey Estuary are spectacular and extensive, extending to the cathedrals of Liverpool in the north and to the Clwydian mountains (highest point Moel Famau 562m) in the west. A trig point marks the highest point (141m) of the grassy summit within the faint traces of an Iron Age hillfort.

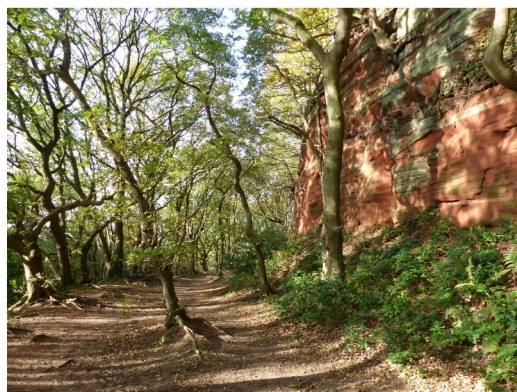
The war memorial on **Overton Hill** (right) offers similar views over the low-lying surrounds of the Manchester Ship Canal and the confluence of the rivers Weaver and Mersey. Recent additions to the many visible landmarks include the turbines of Frodsham Wind Farm and the pylons of the new Mersey Gateway bridge, both opened in 2017.



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Frodsham Marsh is a large area of low-lying marshland and farmland between the M56 motorway and the Mersey Estuary. Much of the land is occupied by large embanked lagoons used to store silt and sludge dredged from the Manchester Ship Canal, and by a wind farm comprising 19 turbines, each 125 metres tall, split into a cluster of 13 to the west and 6 to the east. Despite these industrial intrusions, the Marsh retains an air of isolation and is home to a number of uncommon birds, including Cheshire's only pair of breeding Marsh Harriers. Wintering waterfowl congregate on the flooded lagoons, particularly Tank No. 6, circumnavigated by the orange route described here.



The steep wooded slopes above Helsby and Frodsham represent the northern terminus of the **Mid-Cheshire Ridge**, a range of red Triassic sandstone hills that separate the Weaver and Dee river basins. Many of the most scenic sections of the ridge are visited by the **Sandstone Trail**, which runs for 34 miles from Frodsham to Whitchurch.

Three circular walks from the Netherton Hall

Frodsham, Cheshire



Overton Hill 2 miles: Moderate

A pleasant woodland stroll to a nearby war memorial with fine views over the Mersey Estuary to Liverpool.

Frodsham Marsh 4.6 miles: Fairly easy

An interesting, level walk around the bird-rich lagoons and reed-beds of Frodsham Marsh – take your binoculars!

Helsby Hill and Alvanley 6.6 miles: Moderate

Two hillforts, mixed walking in farmland and woodland, and rocky outcrops with wide views.

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Overton Hill

2 miles: Moderate

Allow 1½ hours. One significant ascent and descent; rocky ground, occasional steps, and short stretches that may be muddy at times.

1 From the front door of the Netherton Hall, cross the A56 and follow Carriage Drive, opposite. **2** Ignore turnings to right and left to reach a gate at the end of the metalled road. **3** Follow the track beyond the gate, which ascends gradually through the trees (ignore a path down stone steps at the end of the wall on your right). **4** Pass below a red sandstone cliff on your left as you approach the Sandstone Trail. **5** On meeting the Trail, bear left. Nimble walkers with a head for heights can climb a rocky scramble over worn sandstone on the left at the end of the cliff (Jacob's Ladder), but for a more straightforward continuation, continue to the foot of a flight of metal steps (Baker's Dozen). **6** At the top of the steps, bear left (past the top of the Jacob's Ladder scramble) and continue along the obvious path, ignoring a path heading out across the golf course on your right. **7** Pass a bench and continue below some low cliffs with names and initials carved into them. **8** Ignore wooden steps above and below the path by a second, wooden, bench, continuing along the contour as before. **9** At a fork with a short Sandstone Trail waymark post, follow the upper (right-hand) path past a taller waymark post to reach the war memorial obelisk. **10** Retrace your steps (keeping right at the taller post) to the junction with the short post, where you double-back right onto the lower path. **11** Follow this path to a fork, turning left as the path descends more steeply, with occasional earth-covered steps. **12** When you eventually reach a wider track within sight of houses, turn left. **13** Follow this obvious path for 500 yards, then bear right at the foot of a flight of wooden steps to meet a track. **14** Turn left and follow the track until it meets the road at Carriage Drive. **15** Turn right and retrace your steps back to Netherton Hall.

Frodsham Marsh

4.6 miles: Fairly easy

Allow 2½ hours. Mostly level on metalled roads and potholed tracks, but with occasional puddles or muddy stretches.

1 From the front door of the Netherton Hall, turn right and right again into Matty's Lane. **2** Follow the road to a junction opposite Fern Meadows and turn left. **3** Pass Hatley Farm, then pass under the railway. **4** Continue along the road to reach two bungalows on the right; beyond the second, take a footpath over a stile by a gate on the right. **5** Follow the path alongside the garden then bear left along an overgrown ditch. **6** Go through a gate at the end of the field and turn left to cross the motorway bridge. **7** Descend from the motorway and follow the straight track ahead of you. **8** At the skewed crossroads below the embankment of No. 6 Tank, take the "second exit", Lordship Lane (slightly left), which runs parallel to the embankment,

separated from it by a broad drainage ditch. **9** After a little over half a mile, turn right over a bridge (with a "Single track road" sign), bear left and climb the embankment. **10** Follow the track to the right at the top, between Tanks No. 6 (right) and 5 (left), the latter housing most of the western cluster of wind turbines. **11** At the end of the two lagoons, bear right down the embankment, passing the end of a narrow flooded pit on your left. **12** Follow the track with the No. 6 embankment now on your right, and wet fields stretching away towards the Ship Canal on your left. **13** After a little over half a mile, follow the track as it climbs the embankment and swings right. **14** Continue your circuit of the reed-filled Tank No. 6 (on your right), with the eastern cluster of turbines away to your left. The eastern end of the lagoon is flooded and worth scanning for waterbirds. **15** Pass close to a turbine then descend to meet another track. **16** Follow it to the left, with a drainage ditch on your right, passing under two sets of power lines. **17** Turn right at the next junction by a mobile mast, heading towards the M56. **18** Once over the motorway bridge, walk past a trailer park on your left and keep straight on at the junction with Maori Drive, following Marsh Lane out to the A56 near the centre of Frodsham. **19** Cross and take a few steps to the left, then turn right into Fountain Lane (signposted "Leisure Centre" and "Castle Park Arts Centre"). **20** Pass under the railway and turn immediately right, into Castle Park. **21** Pass the Arts Centre on your left, then turn left and right, up steps through the wall into the formal garden. **22** Turn left at the fountain and then right to pass in front of Castle Park House and reach the car park. **23** Leave the park here, and turn left along the A56 to return to the Netherton Hall.

Helsby Hill and Alvanley

6.6 miles: Moderate

Allow 3–4 hours. Some moderate ascents and descents with short rocky or uneven sections, and some steep drops. Muddy or overgrown in places in season. Some road walking near Alvanley.

1 From the front door of the Netherton Hall, cross the A56 and follow Carriage Drive, opposite. **2** Ignore turnings to right and left to reach a gate at the end of the metalled road. **3** Follow the track beyond the gate, which ascends gradually. **4** At the end of the wall on your right, turn right down stone steps that descend steeply down the hillside. **5** Bear left within the wood across the bottom of a valley then climb a wooded spur beyond. **6** Follow the path as it twists and turns along the bottom of the wood until you meet a metalled drive. **7** Turn right and follow the drive down to Tarvin Road. **8** Take a few steps to the left then turn right down Chestnut Lane. **9** Beyond the last of the houses, cross a footbridge and go through the gate in front of you. **10** Follow the path ahead along a field edge and then between gardens to a road. **11** Cross and go through a kissing gate opposite, bearing right across the field to enter another narrow path between gardens. **12** When you emerge in Bates Lane, turn right and walk down to the junction with Old Chester Road. **13** Turn left for a short

distance, then turn left up a narrow path (signposted Helsby Hill) before a white-painted cottage. **14** Climb the wooded hill to a path junction, where you turn right over a stile. **15** Take the higher path (signposted to "Hill Top"). **16** Climb up through the trees until you emerge in an open area above the crags of Helsby Hill. **17** Having admired the view, pass the trig point and follow the path above the cliff edge which passes below a field then drops down into the trees and starts to descend. **18** When you reach the top of a road, go through the gate and descend to the road junction. **19** Turn left past the car park for Helsby Quarry and follow the road past Alvanley House. **20** Keep on along past The Paddock, Alvanley Drive and Nemos Close. **21** Keep straight on along Helsby Road at the junction with Back Lane. **22** After a stretch with no footway, pass the end of Primrose Lane as you approach Alvanley. **23** When you meet the B5393, turn right and pass the Primary School to reach the White Lion. **24** Cross the road at the pub and turn right, past the church lych gate. **25** Before the first house on the left, turn left and follow the field edge to a kissing gate on your right. **26** Pass briefly between hedge and fence, then turn right across the field on your right. **27** Go through a gap and follow the right-hand edge of the next field. **28** On reaching a kissing gate (on your right) at a junction of paths, turn half-left and walk diagonally to a stile by a gate. **29** Cross and continue in a similar direction to a kissing gate. **30** Cross a paddock behind the farm to a kissing gate in the far left-hand corner. **31** Follow the right-hand side of the next field to a kissing gate into a lane. **32** Turn right and follow the road for 300 yards, passing a series of entrances. **33** Beyond a layby, cross and turn left at a Sandstone Trail fingerpost signposted to Woodhouse Hill and Frodsham. **34** Walk down the right-hand side of a series of fields until you reach a footbridge into a wood. **35** Swing left past a bench, then turn right up the wooded bank (steps) before dropping to meet the road opposite a holiday park. **36** Turn left for a short distance then leave the road, turning hard right into a track behind the mobile homes (still following the Sandstone Trail). **37** Pass a pond and continue along the Trail as it slowly ascends, ignoring Woodland Trust paths to right and left. **38** After a sunken section with rocky outcrops, you reach a T-junction with a bench at the woodland edge; turn left. **39** Follow the path just inside the wood with open fields to your right, then bear left alongside the mossy remains of a wall as you skirt Woodhouse hillfort on your left. **40** Guided by Sandstone Trail waymarks, descend steps to a contouring path; turn right past a bench and viewpoint. **41** Wind past a golf course on your right and descend a rocky section then bear left over a footbridge below more rocks. **42** At a junction turn left, signposted "Carriage Drive". **43** Descend below a red sandstone cliff and pass the top of the steps you descended on your outward route. **44** Continue straight on to the end of the Carriage Drive, which you follow back to the Netherton Hall.



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