



The **Sandbach Crosses** are two richly carved sandstone crosses dating from the early 9th century. They have stood in Sandbach market square since at least 1585 and have been described as "among the finest surviving examples of Anglo-Saxon sculpture". The carvings depict human figures, animals and religious scenes.



The **River Wheelock** near the M6 motorway.



Fields Farm Flash is one of the smaller of the Sandbach Flashes, created by subsidence due to the collapse or dissolution of underground salt deposits. It lies next to the West Coast Mainline.



Many of the **Trent & Mersey Canal** locks are doubled; the long flight east of Wheelock is nicknamed "Heartbreak Hill". The canal runs from the Trent in Derbyshire to the Bridge-water Canal near Runcorn, and thence to the Mersey.



Grey Herons are among the **birdlife** you may encounter along the Wheelock. Buzzards are common, and water-fowl may be present on Fields Farm Flash. Elton Flashes (on the other side of the railway) are a birding hotspot.

Wheelock Rail Trail and the Trent & Mersey Canal (1¼ miles)

An easy stroll that packs a lot into its short distance.

River Wheelock and the Trent & Mersey (3¾ miles)

Two contrasting waterways lead you through pleasant Cheshire countryside.

Sandbach Crosses, River Wheelock and the Trent & Mersey (5¼ miles)

A historic town centre, pretty stream valleys and an easy canalside return.

THE CHESHIRE CHEESE
466-468 Crewe Rd, Wheelock, Cheshire CW11 3RL
tel 01270 346600

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three walks from the CHESHIRE CHEESE

Wheelock nr Sandbach



Wheelock Rail Trail and the Trent & Mersey Canal (1¼ miles: Easy)

Allow 1 hour. Possibly a few muddy spots, but mostly level and well surfaced. One flight of steps and a fast road crossing.

1 From the front door of the Cheshire Cheese, turn right over the canal bridge. **2** Immediately over the bridge, go down steps on your right to a narrow canalside path (on the opposite side to the main towpath). **3** Walk along the canal for a short distance then, beyond a car park at the back of the Zan industrial estate, turn left. **4** Walk down and cross a stream and follow the path upstream beyond the footbridge. **5** Just before a railway arch, take the steps on the right up to the disused railway. **6** Turn right and follow the Rail Trail to the A534 Wheelock Bypass. **7** Cross quickly but carefully, and continue along the trail beyond. **8** Cross the old railway bridge over the canal, then turn immediately left onto the towpath. **9** Turn left again, under the bridge you've just crossed, and follow the canal past locks 65 and 66. **10** Pass under the bridge beyond the second lock, and then the much larger bypass bridge. **11** Cross the River Wheelock and continue to Wheelock Wharf. **12** Leave the canal here, and walk out through the Crewe Road Car Park back to the Cheshire Cheese.

River Wheelock and the Trent & Mersey Canal

3¾ miles: Fairly easy

Allow 2–2½ hours. Generally level; some field paths may be muddy after rain.

1 From the front door of the Cheshire Cheese, cross the road and turn left along the main village street. **2** Cross the River Wheelock and then keep right at the telephone box. **3** Beyond Brook Farm, continue to the first terrace of houses on the right and take the driveway on your right beside them. **4** Go through the gate ahead of you and cross the field to a gate into the farmyard. **5** Turn left and follow the track through three gateways. **6** After the third gate, turn half-right (indicated by a waymark) and walk down towards the river. **7** Follow the hedge round to the left (with the river on your right) then bear right along a fence to a kissing gate. **8** Continue with the hedge on your left and the river on your right until the hedge terminates at the end of a rough track on the left; cross to a footbridge over a side-stream ahead. **9** Bear right to a second footbridge and then follow the bottom of the next field, close to the river. **10** After a stile and further footbridge, leave the river and head diagonally uphill, towards Fields Farm and to a stile in the far corner of the field. **11** Follow the farm track between weighbridge and barn and keep left of the farmhouse entrance to meet a lane. **12** Turn right to a gate by the railway line. **13** Follow the path between the Flash (right) and railway line (left), crossing the River Wheelock partway along, until you climb to meet

the canal by the railway bridge. **14** Turn right (away from the bridge), along the towpath. **15** After three-quarters of a mile, pass a canal milepost and under bridge 157. **16** After a further quarter-mile pass under bridge 156, which carries the access road for the water treatment works on your right. **17** After bridge 155 you approach Wheelock Wharf again, with houses on the opposite bank. **18** Go under the road bridge then, beyond the old wharf buildings on your right, double-back right through the Crewe Road Car Park to return to the Cheshire Cheese.

Sandbach Crosses, River Wheelock and the Trent & Mersey

5¼ miles: Moderate

Allow 3–4 hours. Some paths may be muddy after rain, or slightly overgrown. One urban interlude with some road walking. Deep water alongside canal.

1 From the front door of the Cheshire Cheese, turn right over the canal. **2** Immediately over the bridge, go down steps on your right to a narrow canalside path (on the opposite side to the main towpath). **3** Walk along the canal for a short distance then, beyond a car park at the back of the Zan industrial estate, turn left. **4** Walk down and cross a stream. **5** Follow the path upstream beyond the footbridge. **6** Pass under a railway bridge and cross a footbridge over a boggy patch. **7** Continue through trees to another footbridge into a field. **8** Turn left and walk along the bottom of the sloping field. **9** Follow the path over a footbridge on your left and bear right between gardens to emerge opposite Sandbach Mill. **10** Turn left, over the millstream and up the road. **11** Cross the end of Mill Hill Drive, then turn right into an alleyway by a substation. **12** After a right-hand bend, emerge on Coronation Crescent, where you turn left. **13** Turn left at a T-junction (Town Fields) then right at the next (Hungerford Place). **14** On reaching Third Avenue, turn right. **15** Turn left into Price Avenue, then immediately right into the unsurfaced Price Drive. **16** Cross Fairfield Avenue onto a continuation of the path and pass a children's play area to emerge at the end of Newell Avenue. **17** Follow Flat Lane (ahead) with new housing on your right. **18** Cross Union Street and continue along Flat Lane. **19** Cross the A533 at the crossing and continue along an alleyway. **20** On emerging in the town centre, cross the road into the square, and walk to the right of the Sandbach Crosses. **21** Bear right past the Lower Chequer and right again behind the church (Crown Bank/Church Street). **22** Keep straight on at the junction with Well Bank and then at the end of Bath Street turn right, out to the main road. **23** Cross over and turn left across the stream. **24** Cross Old Mill Road at the pedestrian crossing and turn right. **25** Pass the entrance to Birch Gardens then, after the sign but before the roundabout itself, take a footpath off to the left. **26** Go through a kissing gate and turn left, uphill along the edge of the field with houses on your left and a farm away to your right. **27** At the top of the

field, head out into the farm drive and follow it out to a road. **28** Turn left along the road (ignore the footpath on your left), passing through bungalows to a T-junction. **29** Turn right past the end of Coldmoss Drive, then turn left into a driveway with a footpath sign. **30** When the drive bends right towards the house, turn left along the hedge at the bottom of the gardens on your left. **31** Shortly, bear right, downhill to some steps and a footbridge. **32** Follow the hedge opposite to the top of the field, then cross another narrow field to reach a metalled farm drive. **33** Go straight across through a metalled kissing gate and bear right, passing right of an old oak and then through a kissing gate and to the left of the large house aptly named Tall Chimneys. **34** The path leads pleasantly through trees down to a track over a bridge across the River Wheelock. **35** Cross the track and take the path opposite through the kissing gate, with the river on your right (diverting into the woods if necessary at a muddy spot). **36** As you near the motorway, cross a footbridge over the river on your right and bear left up the bank. **37** Keep left along the top of the wooded valley then, 100 yards or so short of the motorway, bear right across the field to a stile. **38** Cross a second field to a double stile into a lane. **39** Turn right (away from the motorway) along the lane for 400 yards then, at a right-hand bend, take a footpath on the left. **40** Walk down to the canal then turn left for a short distance to lock 59. **41** Squeeze carefully past the end of the fence onto the lock surround, walk past both sets of lock gates and cross the canal via the footbridges beyond the second pairs of gates. **42** Turn right along the towpath. **43** Pass lock 60 and go under its adjacent bridge (149) and similarly for lock 61 and bridge 150. **44** Beyond lock 62 (with the houses of Malkin's Bank on the opposite side) you cross a short canal arm then pass lock 63 and bridge 151. **45** After lock 64 you pass under the disused railway bridge (now carrying the Wheelock Rail Trail) and continue along the towpath to adjacent locks 65 and 66. **46** Pass under bridge 152 and the larger bypass bridge. **47** Continue along the towpath to Wheelock Wharf, where you leave the canal to pass through the Crewe Road Car Park back to the Cheshire Cheese.

THE CHESHIRE CHEESE CANALSIDE PUB & DINING

The Cheshire Cheese is a characteristic and charming local inn, situated in the traditional village of Wheelock, adjacent to the picturesque Trent and Mersey Canal. Serving great customer service, a warm welcome and quality food alongside an extensive portfolio of drinks and fine ales.



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