

Dane Valley

A route from Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve crossing the River Dane through to Swettenham.

Grade	Moderate
Distance	7km/4.5 miles
Time	2-3 hours
Start	Pay and Display car park at Brereton Heath Nature Reserve: open 8:45am – 5pm winter/8:30pm summer
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Mainly public rights of way (some surfaced sections, some cross-field sections) with some country lanes, fairly level terrain.
Barriers	9 stiles, 6 kissing gates
Toilets	Brereton Heath Country Park (Visitor Centre)
Contact	Brereton Heath Country Park Davenport Lane Davenport Congleton CW12 4SU 01477 534115



Route Details

A route from Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve, crossing the River Dane through to the pretty village of Swettenham.

The Dane Valley is one of the hidden gems of the Congleton area. The River has cut a course through the soft sand and gravels of the Cheshire Plain to create a scenic wooded valley. This is rich dairy country, with prime grazing for the county's famous cattle.

Tucked away in the valley is Swettenham, a village which has changed little over the years. St Peter's Church was built in the 13th century, possibly on the site of a much older building. Some of the original half-timbered structure can be seen in the north wall, although the rest of the church was encased in brick in 1720.

The pub opposite was once a nunnery and is said to be linked to St. Peter's by an underground passage. Next to the pub is 'The Quinta' Arboretum, managed by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, with good views along the River Dane. The site can be accessed from the pub car park.

Swettenham Mill on Midge Brook was built as a corn mill, but more recently was used to power heavy timber cutting machinery. It is now a private residence. The woods behind are known as Daffodil Dell and used to be a favourite outing in the spring for local people.

Swettenham Meadows above the brook are full of wildflowers all summer long, and today are managed as a nature reserve by Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Directions

Start in the car park at Brereton Heath (pay & display).

1. Turn right out of the car park along Davenport Lane and cross the A54. Follow the bridleway beside Davenport Farm down into the Dane Valley.
2. Cross the river and follow the track up the hill into Swettenham village.
3. Turn right opposite the churchyard, over a stile next to a bungalow. Carry on for another 50m and cross another stile. Proceed straight ahead across the field following the yellow waymarks.
4. Turn left at the T junction along Congleton Road and drop down the hill to Swettenham Mill. Carry on up the hill and take the first lane on the left.
5. Drop down and cross Midge Brook. Climb up the hill to the T junction and turn right. Turn right again onto the footpath which will take you down to the brook and back up across Swettenham Meadows.
6. Turn left onto the track and left again opposite Ash Tree Farm.
7. Turn left again at the T junction back into the village and turn right by the telephone. Retrace your steps from the church back through the Dane Valley to Brereton Heath.