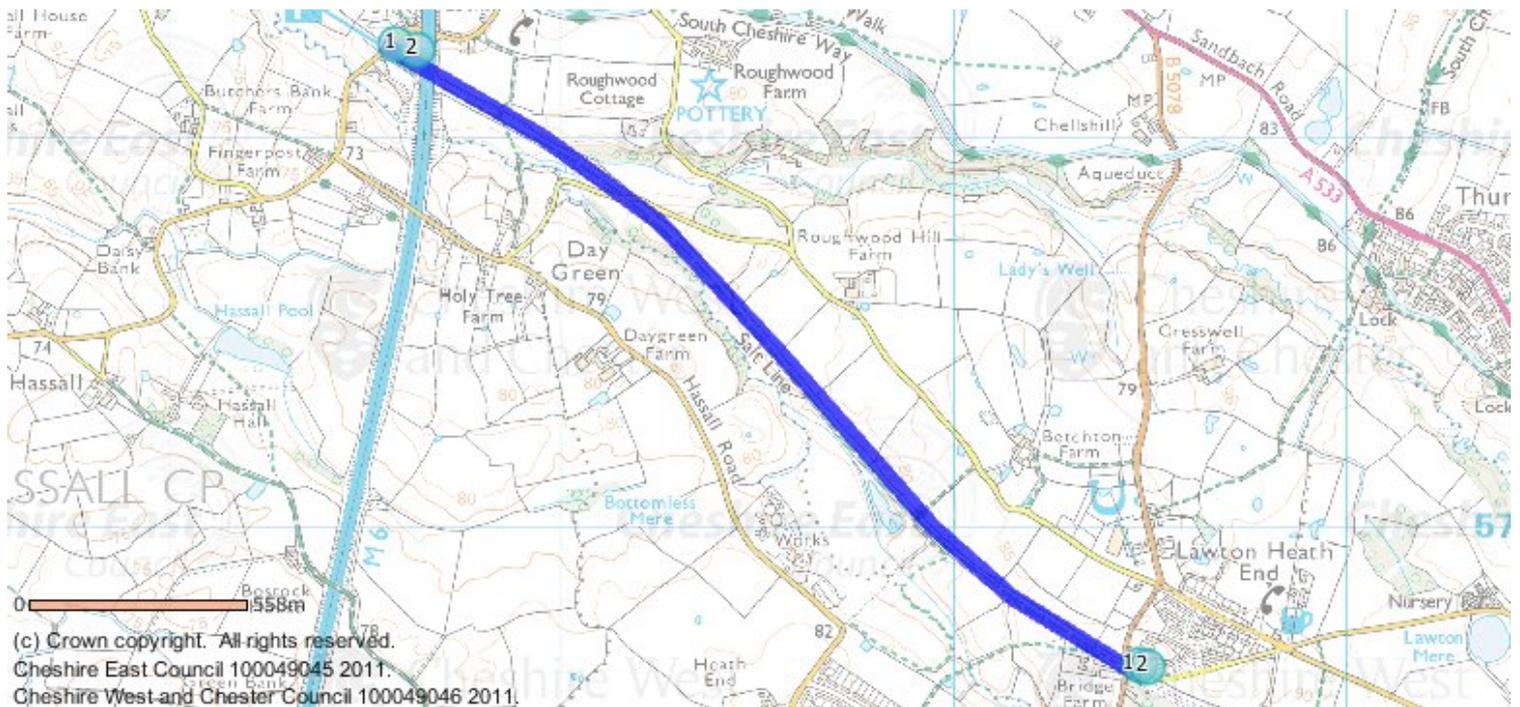


Salt Line

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders can take the traffic free route from Hassall Green to Alsager.

Grade	Easy
Distance	3km/1.8miles end to end
Time	30mins-1 hour
Start	Hassall Green car park
Map	OS Explorer 268
Terrain	Flat and well-surfaced
Barriers	All gates accessible to horse riders.
Toilets	Salt Line Ranger Office, Hassall Green end of route
Contact	Tel: 01477 534115



Route Details

150 years ago this area was a hive of bustling industry, based on salt. There were numerous brine shafts and salt works in the area, the largest salt works was located at Malkins Bank. Brine was heated in large open pans to leave white crystals of salt that were an important raw material in the production of washing soda, glass, soap and detergents.

The Sandbach to Wheelock branch of the North Staffordshire Railway line, now known as the Salt Line, opened in 1852 to carry coal and limestone to the salt works. A passenger service also ran daily with extra trains on Thursdays and Saturdays to take people to the market at Sandbach. In later years weekend excursions to Trentham Gardens near Stoke were popular.

The Trent and Mersey Canal was also a vital transport link, particularly for the salt works at Rode Heath which had their own wharf.

Much of the industry has now gone from the area, but clues to its fascinating industrial past can still be discovered. The Salt Line, the Wheelock Rail Trail and the canal, together with the footpaths, bridleways and quiet country lanes makes this a perfect area to explore whether on foot, bicycle or horse.

The Salt Line runs through farmland and woodlands, with streams, pools and rough grassland. Wild primroses brighten up the steep cutting at Roughwood Hollow while later in the year the delicate flowers of scabious and harebell can be seen on the banks.

Areas of willow and hazel are coppiced regularly. This is an ancient woodland practice in which trees are cut every few years to produce timber that would have been traditionally used for thatching spars, barrel hoops, hurdles and baskets.

Sheltered glades are created where flower and insects thrive, until the trees re-grow and the process begins again. Some areas are managed as wild flower meadows while others are left fairly wild and just cut back enough to keep

the path clear. Look out for Bullfinches and Yellowhammers that feed on buds, berries and seeds along the Salt Line.

Directions

Parking is available at the Salt Line at the Hassall Green end (1). Horse riders are welcome to box out to the Salt Line and it would be helpful if you could ring well in advance as parking space is limited. Riders must also keep to a walk whilst using the Salt Line. Horse riders can also use short stretches of the Wheelock Rail Trail (2) (to the north-west) but are not able to cross the A534 (3).

The surrounding network of country lanes and public bridleways make circular routes possible.