

Sandbach Footpath Group

SANDBACH HEATH and ARCILD AIRFIELD

About 4.2 miles, 6.7 km

Allow 2 to 3 hours

Option A extension adds about 0.5 mile, 0.8 km.

As with all country walks, some paths are wet, muddy and uneven, so wear strong footwear and have clothing to suit the weather.

On narrow country lanes, take care to watch for traffic as you climb down the stile to the road, and when walking on the road make sure you can see oncoming traffic.

Stiles. There are no stiles on this walk, if you use the gates (option A does have stiles).

To find the starting point in Hawthorne Drive leave Sandbach Town Centre, via the High Street, straight across the traffic lights, over the A534 and into the road called "The Hill", then after about ½km turn into Heath Road and after about 200m turn left into Hawthorne Drive. Ignore the opening with a notice barring entry and further along Hawthorne Drive, on the right, is the footpath [Sandbach FP 14].

There is a planned housing development here, so at some stage FP 14 may be temporarily closed or too muddy to walk. If so, go back to Heath Road, turn left going past the Methodist Chapel, then left into Church Lane and just before some buildings as you approach the motorway the FP 14 joins from your left. This is shown with red dotted arrows on the map.

If you can enter FP 14, follow the ginnel between the houses and out into the field. Go over a stile and then another path leads in from the right, at an angle, from Heath Road, but we ignore this and continue forward with a hedge on the right and then at a triangle of paths to the right we again ignore these and keep forward, in the same direction, heading for some farm buildings in the distance. Before reaching the farm buildings, follow the fence round to the right and continue along a track and at the end of the track go through a kissing gate, soon reaching the road where you turn left, to join the alternative path, in italics, above.

Go over the motorway, then right into Reynolds Lane, passing Reynolds Lane Farm on the left, then, just before a house and barns on the right, turn left to go down the byway. Ignore a crossing path, with a stile to the right, then a stile to the left, and continue straight, past Arclid Cottage Farm, then over a stile or through a gate, and continue straight in the same direction. Follow a few bends in the path, through a farm gate, following the blue arrows and you should see a notice on the right saying "Beware Low Flying Aircraft". These are the light aircraft and microlights at Arclid Airport nearby. Then after another 200m, turn right and follow a blue arrow sign to the right.

The hanger for Arclid Airfield should now come into view, and with any luck you may see a take-off or landing. Pass the hanger on your left, through a gate and carry on in the same line as before, with a hedge on your right and a line of good sized oak trees on your left. Go over another stile, or open the gate and continue in the same line.

Just next to the stile are some car tyres for a horse jump, but if you fancy a rest, sit on them awhile and watch to see any aircraft activities.

Follow the straight grassy track which eventually becomes a metalled track, ending at the A533 road, which goes from Sandbach to Rode Heath. Here we turn right, first

crossing to the other side for safety from the fast moving traffic, to walk off the road on a reasonable verge.

Go past Randle Rose Farm on the left.

Immediately on the left, look at the stone wall and see how many carved faces you can find set into the wall. We think about 10, but there could be more.

Ignore the footpath off to the left, after the farm, but when convenient and safe and you can see a reasonable verge on the other side, cross over and continue on the right hand side of the road.

*See **option A** below for an extended walk, shown on the map with blue arrows.*

Pass Manor House Farm on the right and just before the motorway, turn right onto the Service Road and into the Sandbach Services site, Southbound. Before you reach the filling station, keep in the same line straight on. Follow a dirt track, still with the filling station on your left and, at a farm gate and stile, turn left along a track, soon bending round to the right and you should approach some farm buildings.

At Reynolds Lane turn left, go up and over the motorway and down the other side. At the end turn right and continue to bear right into School Lane and just after the 20mph sign on the right hand side, turn sharp left down a ginnel between houses.

The ginnel comes to a tee and we go to the right and you should soon emerge into Heath Road near the Methodist Chapel, from where you can retrace your steps.

An alternative to the ginnel is to continue straight at the 20mph sign, then left on Heath Road to return, as shown with black arrows on the map.

Option A extended walk, via Stannerhouse Lane and Tall Chimneys

As shown on the map with blue arrows.

Continue over the motorway on the A533, choosing a side with a reasonable verge for safety, bearing in mind we will be turning left soon.

Soon after leaving the motorway behind, turn left down Stannerhouse Lane.

The lane is initially a metalled track, but becomes steadily more muddy, if it has rained recently. Keep on the track and follow it down into the valley, eventually at the bottom you should see two kissing gates to the left and right. We take the gate to the right and go uphill through a nice grove of mixed oak, beech, horse chestnut and in the spring a bank of daffodils on the right.

*If the track becomes too muddy to walk, look for a path to the right, going uphill with some steps and emerging via a kissing gate into a field. Follow the field boundary round to the right and after about 300m from the kissing gate you should see the **oak tree leaning over at an angle** to re-join option A.*

At the top of the incline, go through another kissing gate, and pass Tall Chimneys house on your left. Keep straight on to head for a magnificent **oak tree leaning over at an angle**, shortly after going through another kissing gate. At the metalled track turn right to pass through the brick gate pillars, then turn left down a minor road called Colley Lane.

At a fork in the road turn right, then at the end of Colley Lane turn right and then you reach the main road [A533] opposite the "Top of the Hill Chip Shop". Go straight over into Heath Road and on to Hawthorn Drive on the left.

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6.7km or 4.2miles, allow 2 to 3 hours**

