

HELSEBY QUARRY AND THE HILL

- Distance:** 5kms/3 miles (allow about 1hr 30 mins)
- Start:** Helsby Railway Station (hourly train service from Chester and Warrington, car parking available here and elsewhere in the village).
- Summary:** A walk which, winding around the hill, reveals how the local sandstone has shaped Helsby.

Walk up Station Avenue and turn right into the main Chester Road. Walk along Chester Road to the shops and cross at the post office. Continue along until you are opposite the Robin Hood pub and then turn left up Robin Hood Lane. At the top, turn right continuing down Robin Hood Lane for 100m.

There is evidence here of the quarry shortly to be visited. The tall houses on the right are narrow because originally a tramway ran down behind them taking stone from the quarry to Ince Pier. The old cottage on the left, set back from the road was the original Robin Hood pub used by the quarrymen at lunchtime.

Take the track on the left (He21). The tramway ran alongside this track and on the right half way up you can see a portion of rail. At the top of this track there is a gate and you enter Helsby Quarry. Bear left through the tunnel. (The tunnel can be avoided by continuing to a flight of steps on the left, from the top of which a descent can be made to the far side of it).

The quarry was in use from the 1830's to about 1920 and much of Liverpool's docks was built with the stone from here. The quarry has now been largely filled in so it is difficult to appreciate what it was originally like. It has in recent years been developed by Vale Royal Borough Council and the Friends of Helsby Quarry as a woodland park.

After leaving the tunnel and walking for a few metres through the deep cutting, proceed up the steps on the right and then turn right again and follow the perimeter of the quarry past the caves and continue up to the car park on Alvanley Road. Turn left along the road and after a short distance turn right up Hill Road South. At the top pass over the stile and continue along He25. Where the path divides bear left on to He24 and climb up to the top of Helsby Hill.

From the white painted triangulation point on the summit, you can look across to Liverpool with its Anglican and Roman Catholic cathedrals, the Cammel Laird shipyard at Birkenhead, Moel Famau – the highest point of the Clwydian Hills and to the south Pecforton and Beeston Castles. Long Mynd in Shropshire is visible on a clear day. Looking over towards Frodsham you can see the Foxhill Arboretum with its folly hidden in the trees.

From the 'trig point' walk directly away from the edge to emerge by way of a narrow sandy track onto a wider track (He25). Turn left along the track past the secluded Harmers Lake to join Hill Road North. The road winds round to the left and down the hill. Once the road starts to bend to the right again take the metalled track (He16) on your left. Note the small caves on your right.

The track continues towards woodland. Cross a stile and, after 60 metres, fork left over a second stile. Fork left again after 20 metres to carry on along the track of He18 which levels out to skirt the hill at mid height, a pleasant woodland walk which brings you to Alvanley Road. Turn left here and where the road bends sharp left, turn right down a shaded path (He19) taking care as it descends steeply. Where the path splits by a wall, take the right fork. This path leads down to the main road, crossing Old Chester Road by a bridge. In Chester Road turn right and head back to the station.