

## Keith Carter's walk through the countryside around Peover

The name Peover is pronounced 'Peever' and derives from the Anglo-Saxon 'Peeffer' meaning 'a bright river', referring to the stream known as Peover Eye. The village lies south of Knutsford and west of Macclesfield and is notable for Peover Hall, a fine Elizabethan manor house set in delightful park land.

1. Our walk this month starts at the Park Gate pub on Stocks Lane in the village. It's O.K. to leave the car here but for larger parties you should let the landlord know (call 01625 861455). Turn right out of the pub car park and walk along Stocks Lane as far as the crossroads known as Four Lane Ends. A signpost points to Peover Hall and the Village Hall, the second turning on the left which we take, sticking to the signed footpath and entering the estate by a stout wooden gate.



*Peover Hall*

Just past a tidy stables, a gate takes us forward along an avenue of trees leading to a stile between two ponds. Head across park land to an ornamental gate and turn right but don't go past the front of the hall which is private, opening with restricted hours in the summer. We follow a path past St Lawrence's Church and a sad row of gravestones of much-loved family pets and a sundial which as far as I could tell was a few minutes slow.

We go through a stand of mature trees and at a stile leave the trees and turn left then right over a second stile. Keep along a right hand fence and at a barrier enter a copse for a short distance before exiting by another stile, keeping the same direction ahead. At the next stile, keep left on a well-defined track to an iron estate gate beside a pond.

2. Go through the gate and the track leads dead straight to meet a road at a bend and junction. This is the A50 Holmes Chapel-Knutsford road which we luckily avoid by turning right onto Stocks Lane. The pub on the right is the famous Whipping Stocks, an old coaching inn where at one time as many as a dozen coaches a day would pull up. You can picture the scene by drawing on recent TV adaptations of Dickens, an industry in their own right.

3. Cross over to the pavement opposite and walk along Stocks Lane past the entrance to the Barclays Bank IT Headquarters Radbroke Hall, an impressive complex which is said to have its own gym. You might say that before crunching numbers you have to crunch the weights. Just past the exit look for a footpath sign on the left leading to a rutted track which when I researched this walk was badly churned up by a digger brought in to do some drainage.

4. Go through a metal kissing gate in the left hand hedge on leaving the track and on reaching a footpath sign, take a second kissing gate to change direction by going right. Keep along a field margin, the hedge on our right and on meeting a hedge crossing our path go through a gap in it into the next field. The farmer has left a way across through growing crops, making our way forward clear enough.

We join a bridleway between hedges where I had an encounter: pausing to eat my packed lunch at a stile.

5. The bridleway comes to a lane opposite a nature reserve known as Lower Moss Wood and we turn right heading towards Blease Farm but before reaching it branch off to the left on a tarmac lane. This bends to the right and we leave it at a bench with a signpost beside it, taking a green causeway between two fields to reach a gap in the hedge with a stile that gives access to another bridleway. Turn right here and we are back on Stocks Lane and by turning left are soon back at the Park Gate pub. Go in by all means – they have Samuel Smith's bitter on draught and a roaring fire.

**Area of walk:** Over Peover and Peover Park

**Map:** OS Explorer 268 Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton

**Distance:** 4.3 miles

**Time to allow:** 2 hours

**Refreshments:** Park Gate at Over Peover and Whipping Stocks at Radbroke Crossroads.