

## Walk No. 5 Blue Cap Walk

A Circular Walk on the Whitegate Way to Ravensclough

A wooded walk past the kennels of the Cheshire Hunt, then along the leafy Whitegate Way and back through Kennel Wood.

**3¼ miles, say 1½ to 2 hours.**

Start at Kennel Lane, grid ref. SJ 601701. Parking is possible along Kennel Lane.

**Having gone down Kennel Lane away from the A556 and parked, continue down the lane and pass the Cheshire Hunt Kennels on the right hand side. (You can just, only just, see the monument to the famous dog “Blue Cap”).**

At Cheshire Kennels packs of hunting hounds have been kept at Sandiway for centuries. The Cheshire Forest Kennels were erected in 1834. A monument to the famous hound, Blue Caps, now stands to the rear of the kennels. The Blue Cap Hotel was named after this famous hound.

**Continue along an unsurfaced track to a track crossing and keep ahead past a barrier up a sandy track with the scout camp on the left. Cross Kennel Bridge and immediately turn left down the slope and then sharp left onto the Whitegate Way.**

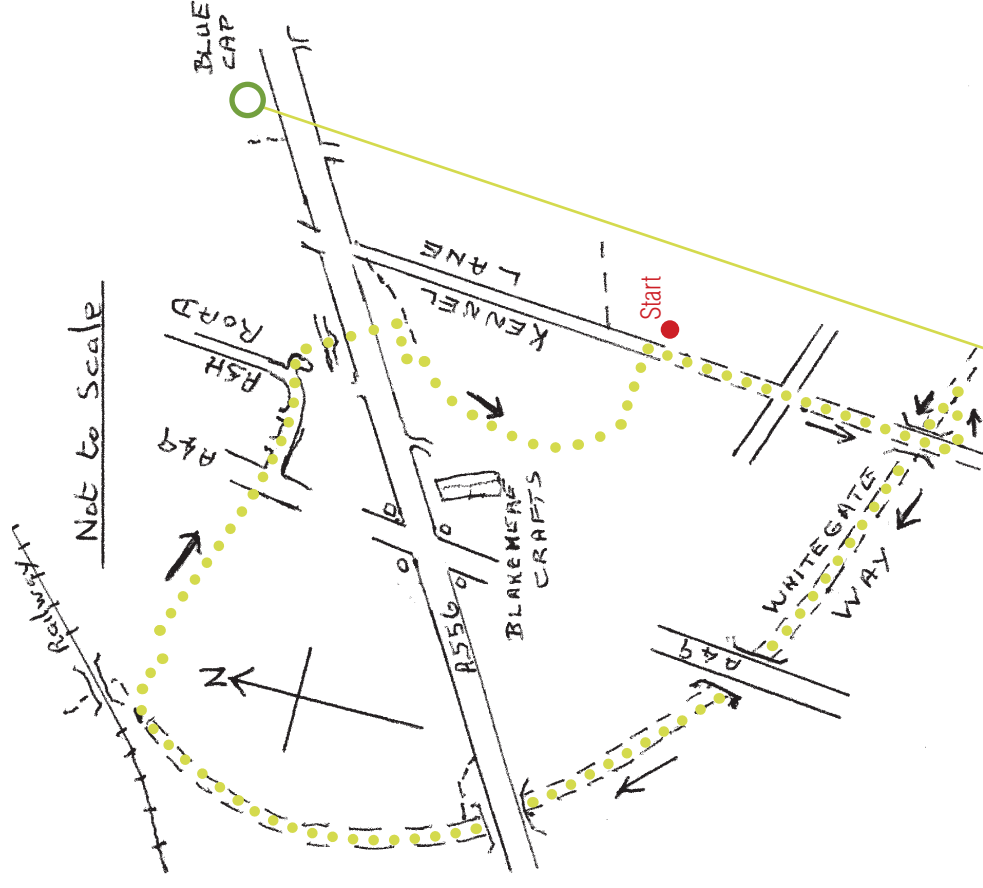
The Whitegate Way is the track bed of the former Winsford & Over branch railway. The junction off the main Chester-Manchester line was controlled by a signal box at Ravensclough Waste.

**Wherever possible use the pleasant footpaths on the embankments to either side of the main track of the old railway, which is better left to horses and bikes! Go under the two bridges for the A49 and A556, and so to Ravensclough where the path narrows and the Delamere Loop equestrian route continues ahead. Here there is a locked gate, marked private, with a footpath finger post beside it.**

Ravensclough Waste/Waste Lane: This is the major area of waste land allotted to the control of the Lord of the Manor under the Cuddington Enclosure Act of 1769.

**Turn right at the finger post, follow a narrow path round the garden of Ravensclough Manor and then climb the hill between gorse bushes and up the steps of “Granny’s Hump”. As you near the top of the hill turn round to admire the view behind you. Continue to Forest Road, the main A49.**

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## Blue Cap Inn

Restaurant quality meals, cooked to order.

Tel: 01606 882860

Granny's Hump: The old name was "Brunt Brows" but it became "Granny's Hump" after old Granny Birtwistle who lived in the Waste Cottage, now replaced by Ravensclough Manor.

**Cross carefully over the busy A49 to enter Ash Road opposite and continue straight ahead past Cuddington Primary School, where the road turns left. Immediately after the bend, take a footpath on the right, which leads through a green area to more housing. Cross a Sandington Drive into Wharburton Close and along a short footpath onto the busy Chester Road (A556). Cross carefully to enter Kennel Woods by a path alongside the end house.**



**A right turn takes you to a kissing gate where you turn left into the wood. After a few yards, turn right at a finger post and enjoy a woodland walk which should keep the margin of the wood visible on the right hand side. Blakemere Craft Centre can soon be seen through the trees on the right. Keep on the main path and eventually turn left just before a deep ditch. Keeping the ditch on your right, follow the path back to Kennel Lane. Turn left into the lane and return to your starting point.**

The Blue Cap Hotel is just 1/3 mile from the end of Kennel Lane; turn right along the A556.

Just beyond the Blue Cap Hotel in the centre of the dual carriageway is another Sandiway landmark, the Round Tower (or Round Lodge). This was formerly a gate lodge to Vale Royal and was built by Lord Delamere about 1816. A carriage drive ran across what is now Sandiway golf course; at the Whitegate end was Monkey Lodge, a name deriving from the plaster bas-relief of a monkey amongst its many ornate panels.

