

## Cheshire Ring Canoe Race Guidance Notes

- This document must be read in conjunction with the Cheshire Ring Race Rules.
- The event began in 1977 when two relay teams from Poynton Canoe Club (now Macclesfield and District Canoe Club), using Ardeche double tourers, took up the challenge to paddle the newly re-opened Cheshire canal ring. The winning boat finished in 20 hours and 20 minutes. The race has since been held every year (with one interruption due to foot and mouth disease).
- The race is good for clubs and youth groups as relay team entries are encouraged. Almost any combination of boats and paddlers can be entered in a relay, but unique combinations may not be eligible for a record or trophy.
- The Cheshire Ring is a challenge and preparation is essential, both for the paddlers and the support team. Study these notes and make sure you know the routes on the water and on the land. Ordnance survey Landranger 1:50000 series maps 108, 109, 117 and 118 cover the route. A canal guide to the Cheshire ring can be helpful (e.g. Pearson or Nicholson).
- The Ring is part of a canal network and the race follows an anti-clockwise route. There are some blind branches off the ring, as well as junctions to other canals leading to e.g. Rochdale and Llangollen, so read the instructions for each section carefully.
- **The most important navigation point to remember is to turn left at major junctions and ignore tempting-looking opportunities to turn right.**
- Some relay change points are in built-up areas and parking is often restricted. Please minimise the number of vehicles taken to each point, park considerately, only use pub car parks if you are a customer, and please be quiet at night.
- We rely on the goodwill of pub owners at change over points. Please make occasional purchases of drinks, snacks etc. This enables pubs to benefit from our event and be welcoming in the future. Pubs to support are: Old Broken Cross, Middlewich Big Lock, and Broughton Arms.
- Paddle on the right when passing oncoming boats, and give way to barges at narrow bridges.
- Remember to be properly prepared; you will be alone out in the country and in the dark at times.
- The relay sections listed below are all different lengths but in a five-pair relay team, the total distances paddled by each pair are similar. For a two-crew relay, the second crew can combine sections 2 and 3 to give a reasonable share.
- The table below gives approximate times for each section for completing the Ring Race in approximately 20 hours.

Section number	Name of start point	Section length (miles)	Section locks/ tunnels	Guide time (mins) for approx. 20 h completion
1	Bridge 18 (Miners Arms)	5		57
2	Marple top lock	5	16L 2T	65
3	Apethorn Lane, Hyde	3.25		37
4	Dukinfield Junction, Ashton	6.25	18L	91
5	Ducie Street, Manchester	8	9L	95
6	Marsland Road, Sale	6.75		71
7	Burford Lane underbridge, Lymm	6		70

8	London Road bridge, Stockton Heath	6	Half T	75
9	Preston Brook Tunnel Top	3.5	Half T, 1 L	39
10	Valley Farm, Little Leigh	7.25	2T	86
11	Old Broken Cross, Rudheath, Northwich	5.5		64
12	Middlewich Big Lock	6.75	9L	87
13	Wheelock	4	14L	59
14	Rode Heath	2.25	10L	35
15	Red Bull, Hardings Wood	4.0	3L	65
16	Bridge 80, Dodds Lane, Astbury	6.87	12L	90
17	Bosley Top Lock (#1)	4		40
18	Bridge 44, Bullocks Lane	3.25		35
19	Bridge 29, Clarke Lane back to bridge 18	3.75		40

NB distances are approximate.

## Guidance Notes: Ring Race Relay Sections

Canal and Rivers Trust canal side toilet blocks (keys on sale at C&RT website) can be found at intervals around the race route. There are also other toilets that support crews can access. It is of course, always polite to either ask or make a small purchase at pubs if using their facilities. **CRT** = Canal side toilets; mainly relevant to paddlers. **ST** = Other toilets on route mainly relevant to Support crews.

### **START Stage 1 Bridge 18 (pin symbol = parking; red circle = changeover point)**

Lat/Long: 53.332898, -2.095653 (Approximate postcode SK10 4PF, grid reference SJ9372781781)

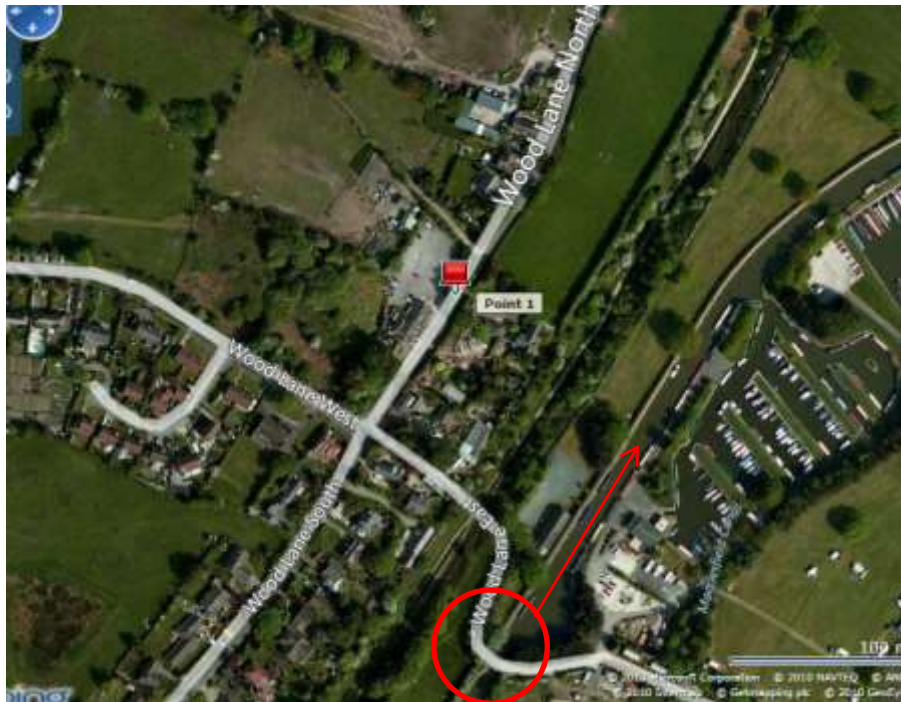
Stage Distance: 5 miles

Portages: 0

Paddling notes: n/a

Toilets: **CRT/ST** at Miners Arms from 08.00

Parking notes: Miners Arms pub car park, Wood Lane North, Adlington, SK10 4PF Macclesfield.



## Stage 2 Marple – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.392789, -2.059636 (Approximate postcode SK6 6BN, grid reference SJ9613288441)

Stage Distance: 5 miles

Portages: 16 Locks 2 Tunnels

Paddling notes: This is at a T junction of two canals, **TURN LEFT** and portage down the locks.

Hyde Bank Tunnel (308yds): Get out left, compulsory portage, use towpath over tunnel, follow path upwards turn left at a T junction, and fork left at a Y back down to the canal.

Woodley Tunnel (176yds): Get out left, compulsory portage of tunnel, use tow path through tunnel - take care as this can be slippery.

Parking notes: Limited parking on Lockside/Suttons Lane





### Stage 3 Apethorn Lane, Hyde – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.439976, -2.088518 (Approximate postcode SK14 5DL, grid reference SJ9421793693)

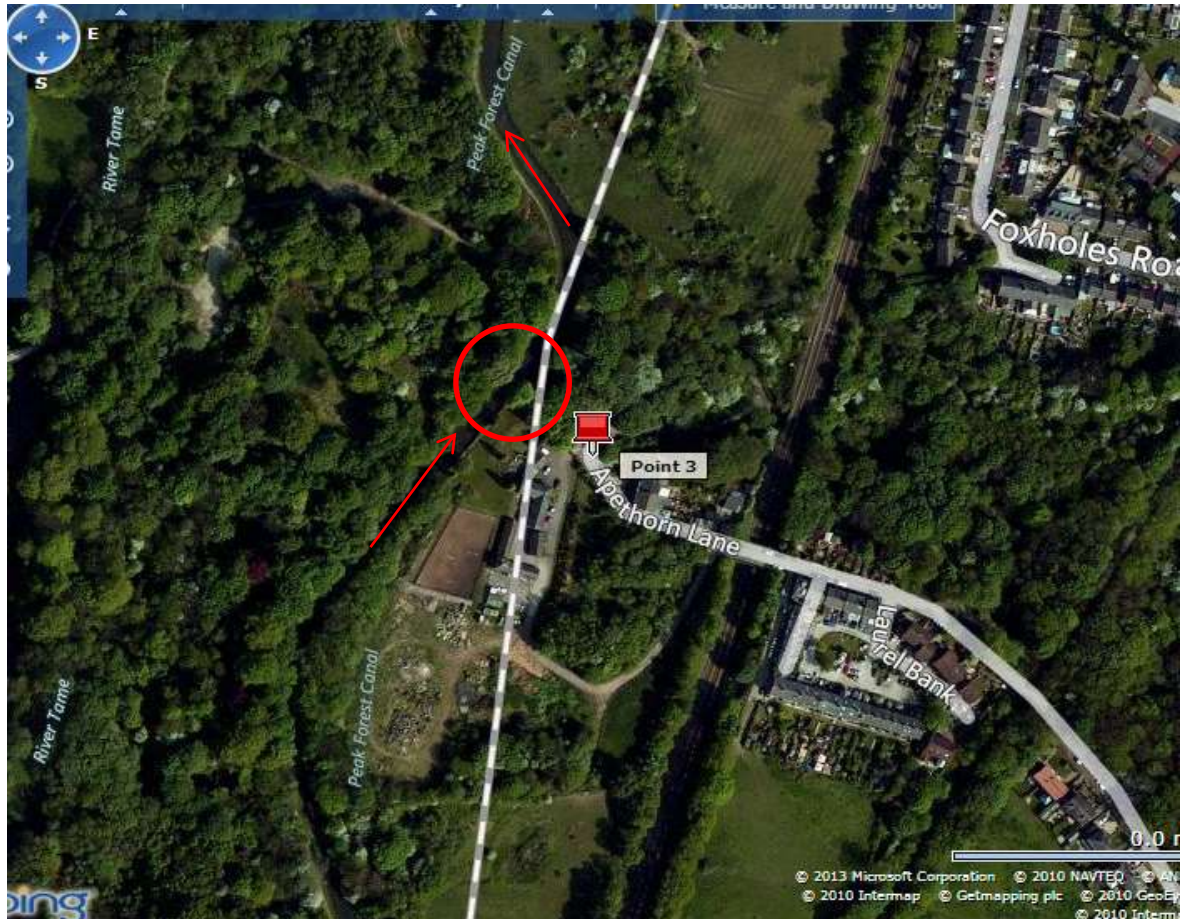
Stage Distance: 3.25 miles

Portages: 0

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Limited parking the bottom of the lane.

NB. For relay teams, the paddling time to the next changeover is short and the roads could be congested so consider sending a support car ahead to Dukinfield.



## Stage 4 Dukinfield Junction, Ashton-Under-Lyne –Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.483328, -2.099934 (Approximate postcode OL7 0QJ, grid reference SJ9346698517)

Stage Distance: 6.25 miles

Portages: 18 Locks

Paddling notes: The changeover is at the junction with the Ashton Canal – **turn left**.

Lock 7 has an awkward spiral ramp – the support crew can assist here. See below.

Parking notes: Follow brown signs to Portland Basin. Park behind the museum.

Toilets: **CRT** at Droylesden Marina before first lock. **ST** in waterway museum.



### Spiral ramp assistance on stage 4 at lock 7 of the Ashton Canal

Lat/Long: 53.486162, -2.197735 (Grid reference SJ8697798846)

Notes: Alternatives are to cross the busy road and take path on right to the canal, or portage very cautiously along the right hand side of the lock.





## Stage 5 Ducie Street, Manchester – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.480001, -2.229742 (Approximate postcode M1 2DF, grid reference SJ8485098167)

Stage Distance: 8 miles

Portages: 9L

Paddling notes: Crew taking over, pass under the bridge straight ahead, turn sharp right under another bridge and then sharp left; get out on the left hand side of the lock.

Portage options: Follow the towpath as the canal passes under some buildings (not easy for large, heavy boats).

***Crews need to be aware that the initial underground towpath section is gloomy and enclosed and not very salubrious, although unlawful activities are unlikely during daylight hours when the race passes this section.***

The alternative is to follow the road route to avoid the underground section (see second map below); these are busy streets in a city centre.

Toilets: **ST** at Piccadilly railway station (30p).

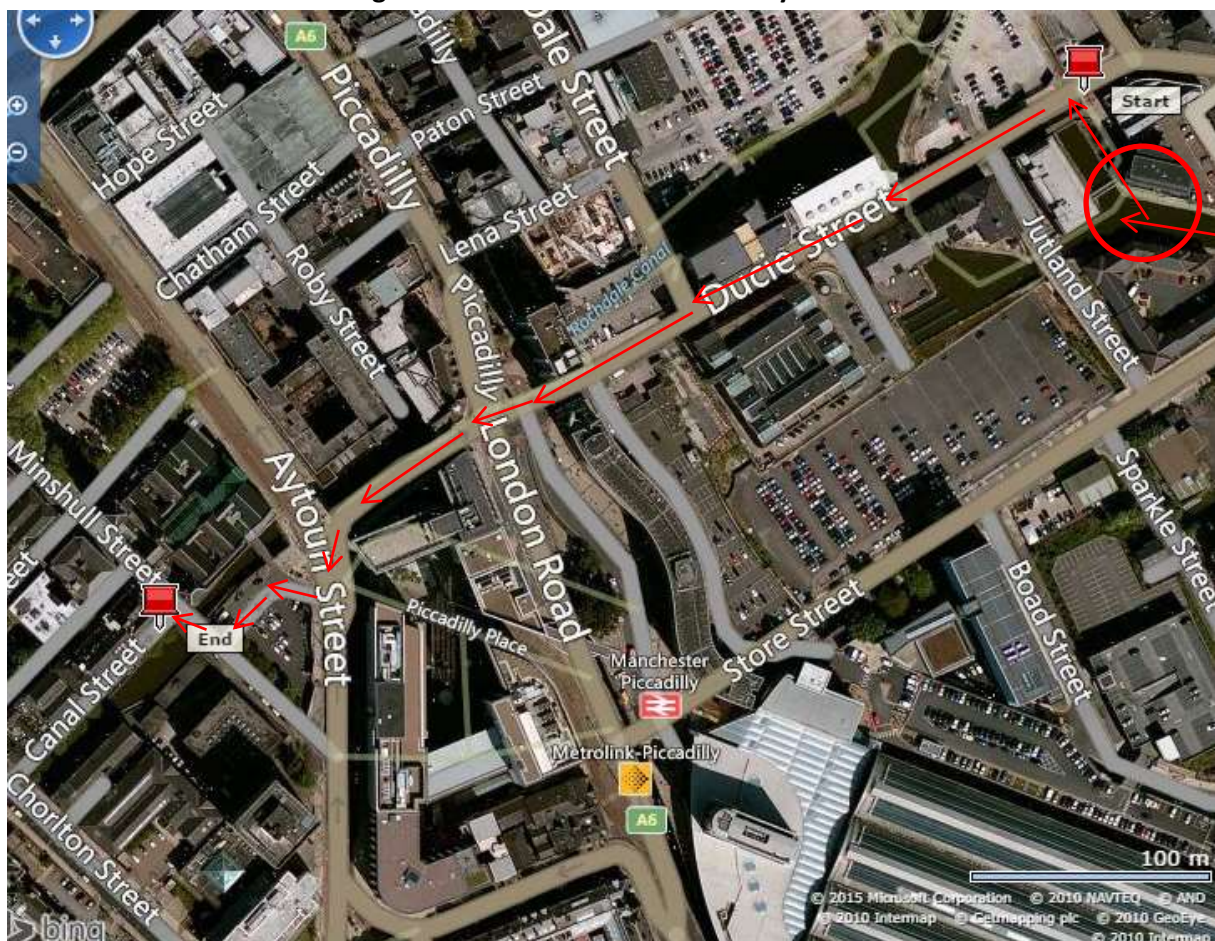
**Castlefield Junction:** After the 9 locks of the Rochdale Canal the Ring joins the Bridgewater Canal. At the bottom lock the route is straight on, keeping the railway line to your right. Avoid the short branches to left and right.

Follow the main canal out of Manchester. Soon after passing Man United's Old Trafford ground, just after a rail bridge crosses the canal there is a major junction at which **you turn left under a pedestrian bridge** and head towards Altrincham.

Parking notes: Limited metered parking on roadside.

Toilets: **ST** at Dukes 92 pub. **ST** at Tesco Extra, Chester Road, Stretford.

### Alternative road route to avoid underground section – be aware of busy roads





## Stage 6 Marsland Road, Sale –Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.417091, -2.325550 (Approximate postcode M33 3SQ, grid reference SJ7846091192)

Stage Distance: 6.75 miles

Portages: 0

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Metro station car park – Metrolink Brooklands. Walk up to the main road and cross the bridge over the canal to follow path on the right down to the canal. Alternatively park on nearby side roads.

Toilets: **CRT/ST** – toilets at pub by Metro station if you buy something.





## Stage 7 Burford Lane Underbridge, Lymm – Relay change point

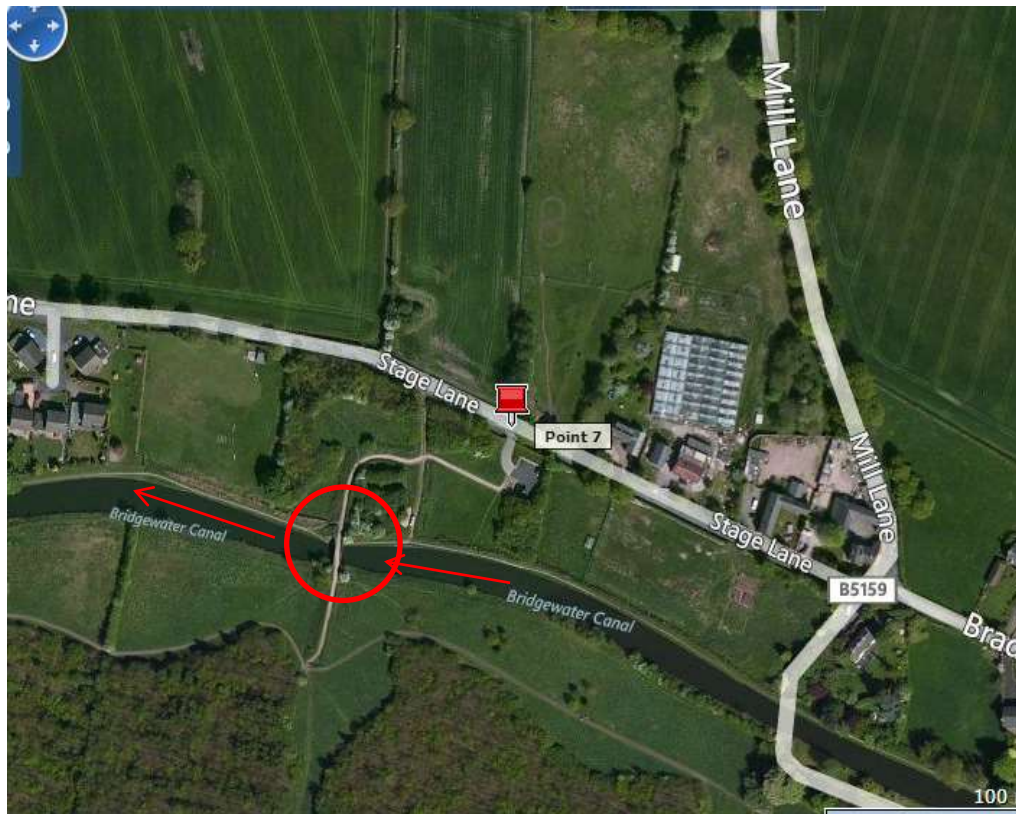
Lat/Long: 53.383316, -2.448621 (Approximate postcode WA13 9JB, grid reference SJ7025787479)

Stage Distance: 6 miles

Portages: 0

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Park in the small car park (height restricted, careful with V-bars) or on road and walk to the bridge to changeover.



## Stage 8 London Road bridge, Stockton Heath – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.367577, -2.579910 (Approximate postcode WA4 6HN, grid reference SJ6151085791)

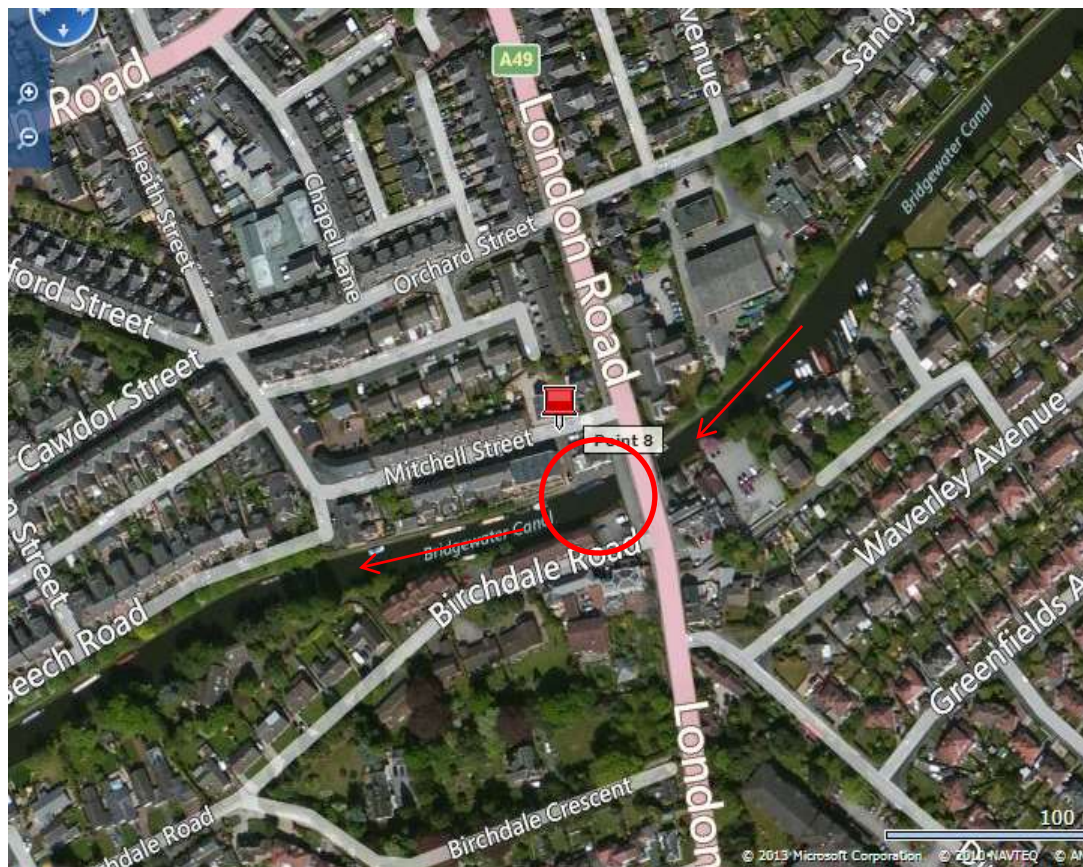
Stage Distance: 6 miles

Portages: half T at the end of the stage up to the Tunnel Top relay change point

Paddling notes: Toward the end of this section, just before passing under the motorway bridge, there is a major branch off to Runcorn - **keep left** at the junction.

Parking notes: Access to the canal is from Mitchell Street where there is limited parking.

Toilets: **CRT/ST** Canalside Tearoom or London Road Inn.





## Stage 9 Preston Brook Tunnel Top – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.310000, -2.643510 (Approximate postcode WA4 4JK, grid reference SJ5722079422)

Stage Distance: 3.5 miles

Portages: half T downhill

Paddling notes: The relay change over point is at the end of the ascending horse path. Take extreme care crossing the road. Descend the tarmac track to the canal. On reaching the canal again there is a small stop lock shortly after the tunnel; continue portaging to pass this lock.

Parking notes: Very limited at beginning of horse paths on either side of main road -do not block resident's access. Or park with care on side of A533.

Toilets: **CRT** At Cotton's Bridge, WA4 4BA, moorings just after going under motorway.



## Stage 10 Valley Farm, Little Leigh – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.279030, -2.590869 (Approximate postcode CW8 4RE, grid reference SJ6069975946)

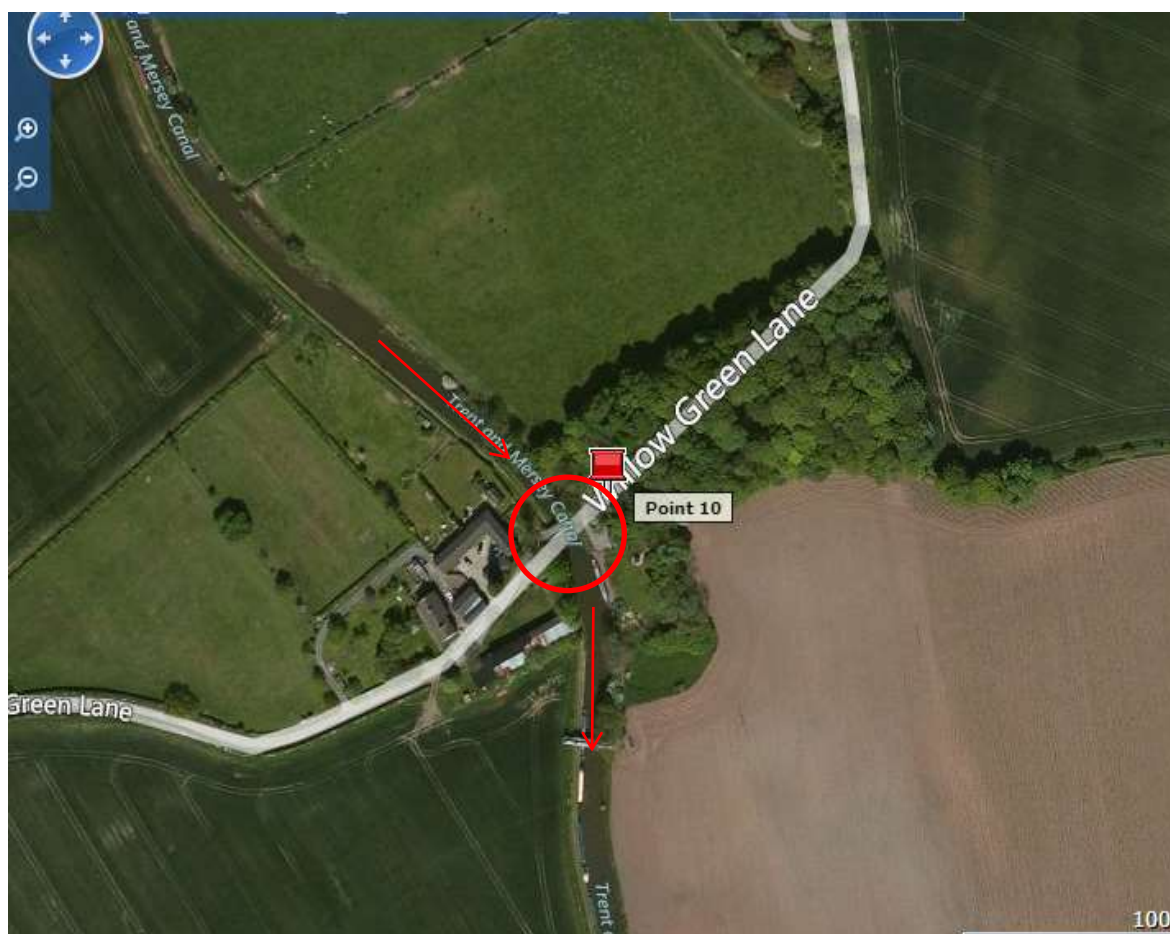
Stage Distance: 7.25 miles

Portages: 2T

Paddling notes: Saltersford Tunnel (424 yards) Compulsory portage, Get out on the right and follow the path over the tunnel. Barnton Tunnel (572 yards) Compulsory portage, Get out on the right and follow the path over the tunnel, crossing straight over single track road at the top.

Parking notes: Limited parking up the hill beyond canal on Willow Green Lane. 'All the way' support crews avoid if possible. End of Barnton tunnel roadside parking on left – good for supporting all the way crews.

Toilets: **ST** Tesco 24 hrs, Manchester Road, Northwich, CW9 5LY. **CRT** Anderton, Uplands Road, Marina, on right hand side after Anderton Lift.





## Stage 11 Broken Cross – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.254270, -2.476280 (Approximate postcode CW9 7EB, grid reference SJ6832173135)

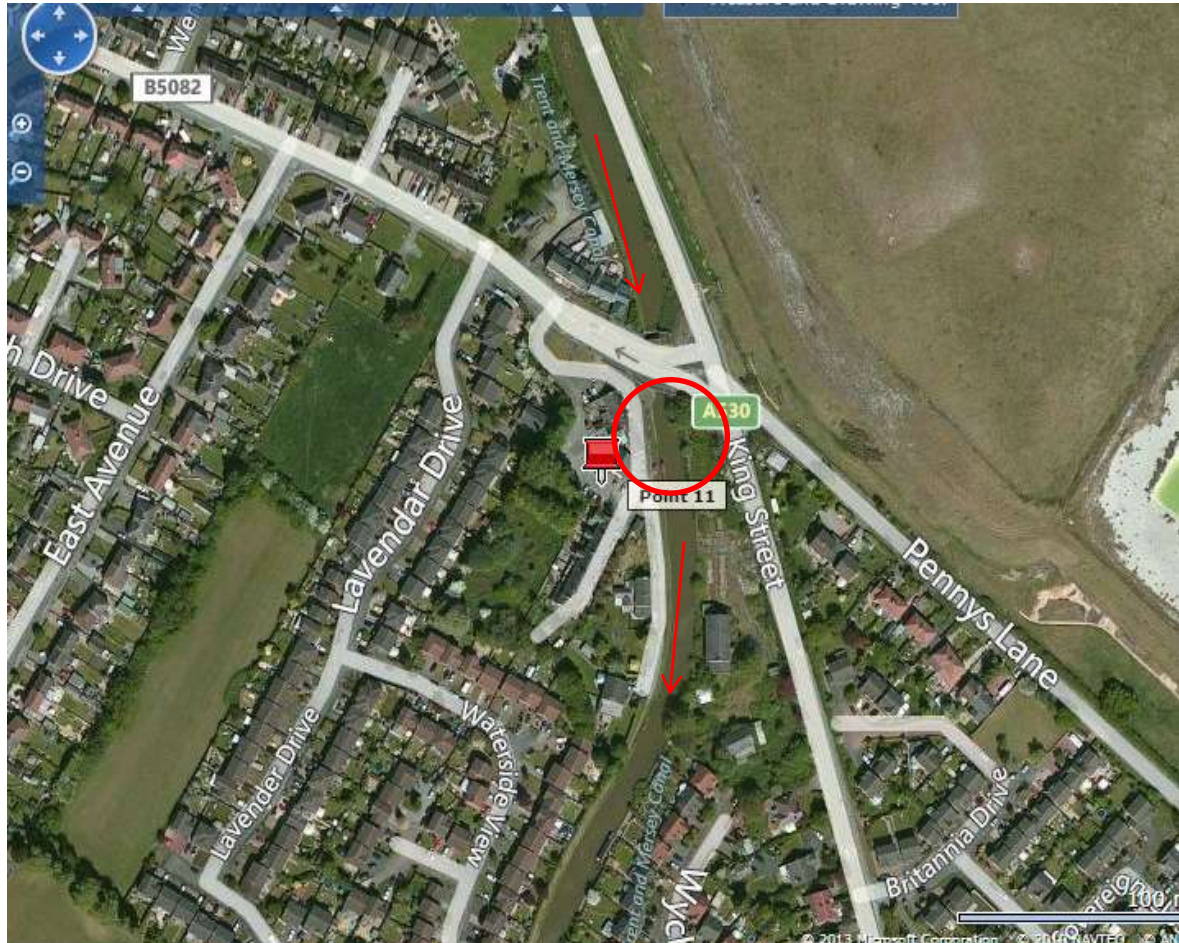
Stage Distance: 5 miles

Portages: 0

Paddling notes: There are lagoons off to the left on this stage. Follow the right hand bank to take the shortest route

Parking notes: Park in The Old Broken Cross car park – buy a drink or food in the pub.

Toilets: **CRT/ST** at the pub for customers.



## Stage 12 Middlewich Big Lock – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.197112, -2.448396 (Approximate postcode CW10 9DN, grid reference SJ7014266764).

Stage Distance: 6.75 miles

Portages: 9L

Paddling notes: In Middlewich, there is a branch to the right under a white arch bridge to the Shropshire Union Canal just before Kings Lock. If you are on the water do NOT turn right under the bridge into the branch, if you are on the tow path follow it straight on, do NOT turn to follow the path under the bridge. Continue straight forward over a lock passing the Kings Lock pub to your left. The canal stays parallel to and close to the main road.

Parking notes: Park at the Big Lock pub or on the roadside.

Toilets: CRT/ST at the Big Lock pub for customers during opening hours.



Where it's easy to get lost:



## Stage 13 Wheelock Wharf – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.129473, -2.373945 (Approximate postcode CW11 3RL, grid reference SJ7507659211)

Stage Distance: 4 miles

Portages: 14L

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Park off Crewe Road in the car park by the pet food shop. **Parking at the wharf by Barchetta restaurant is monitored by Parking Eye and penalties are imposed.**

Toilets: **CRT** on the wharf.



## Stage 14 Bridge 139, Rode Heath – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.111136, -2.291285 (Approximate postcode ST7 3RU, grid reference SJ8059957145)

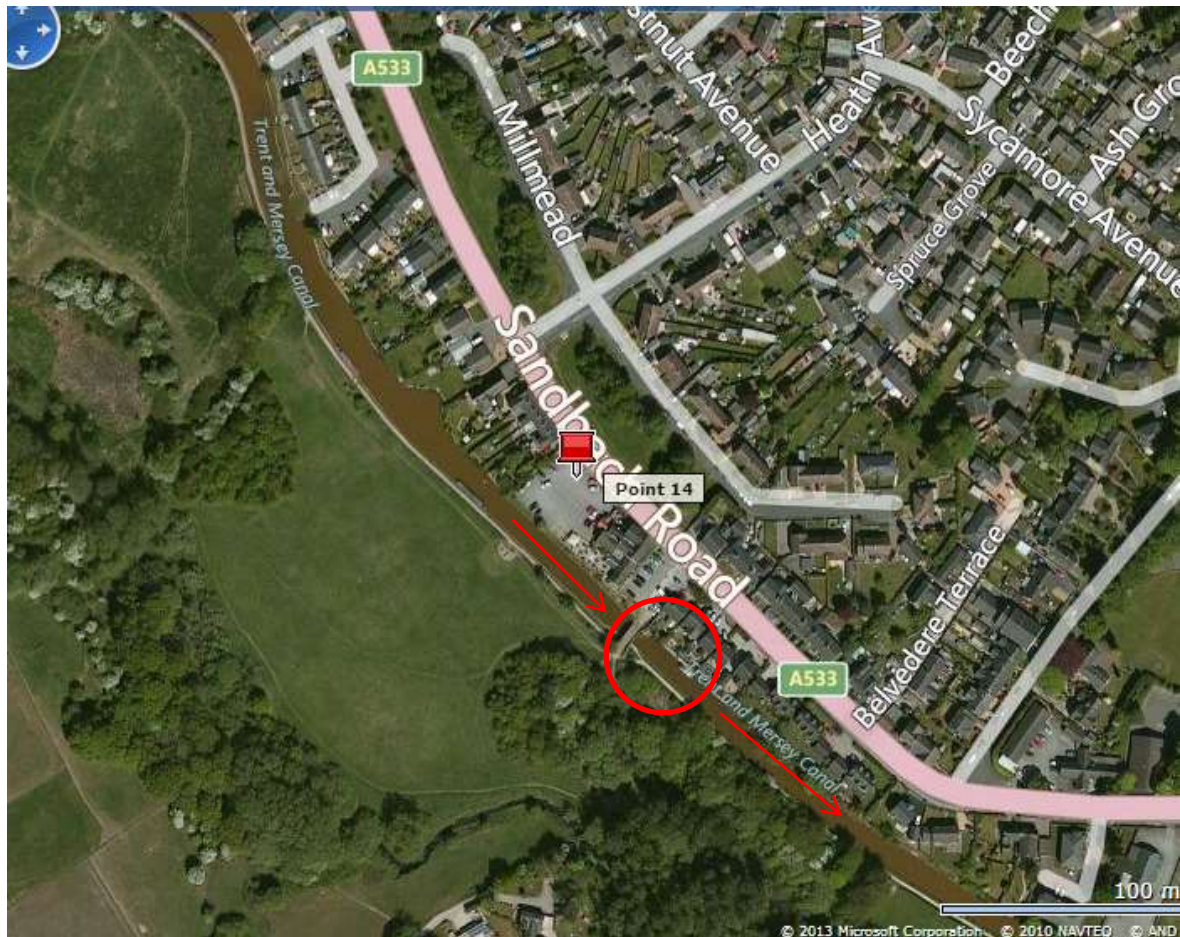
Distance: 2.25 miles

Portages: 10L

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Park in Broughton Arms car park - if you are a customer – or on roadside.

Toilets: **CRT/ST** in the Broughton Arms for customers during opening hours.





## Stage 15 Red Bull, Hardings Wood, Church Lawton – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.092565, -2.258160 (Approximate postcode ST7 3AJ, grid reference SJ8280955071)

Stage Distance: 4 miles

Portages: 3L

Paddling notes: The changeover is under the A34 road bridge/by the lock gate. The transfer from the Trent and Mersey Canal to the Macclesfield Canal is up steep steps (this bypasses two locks). The incoming and outgoing crews can assist each other. All the way crews can be assisted by their support crew.

Parking notes: Roadside parking on the A34 close to bridge over the canal.



## Stage 16 Dodds Lane, Astbury, Congleton – Relay change point

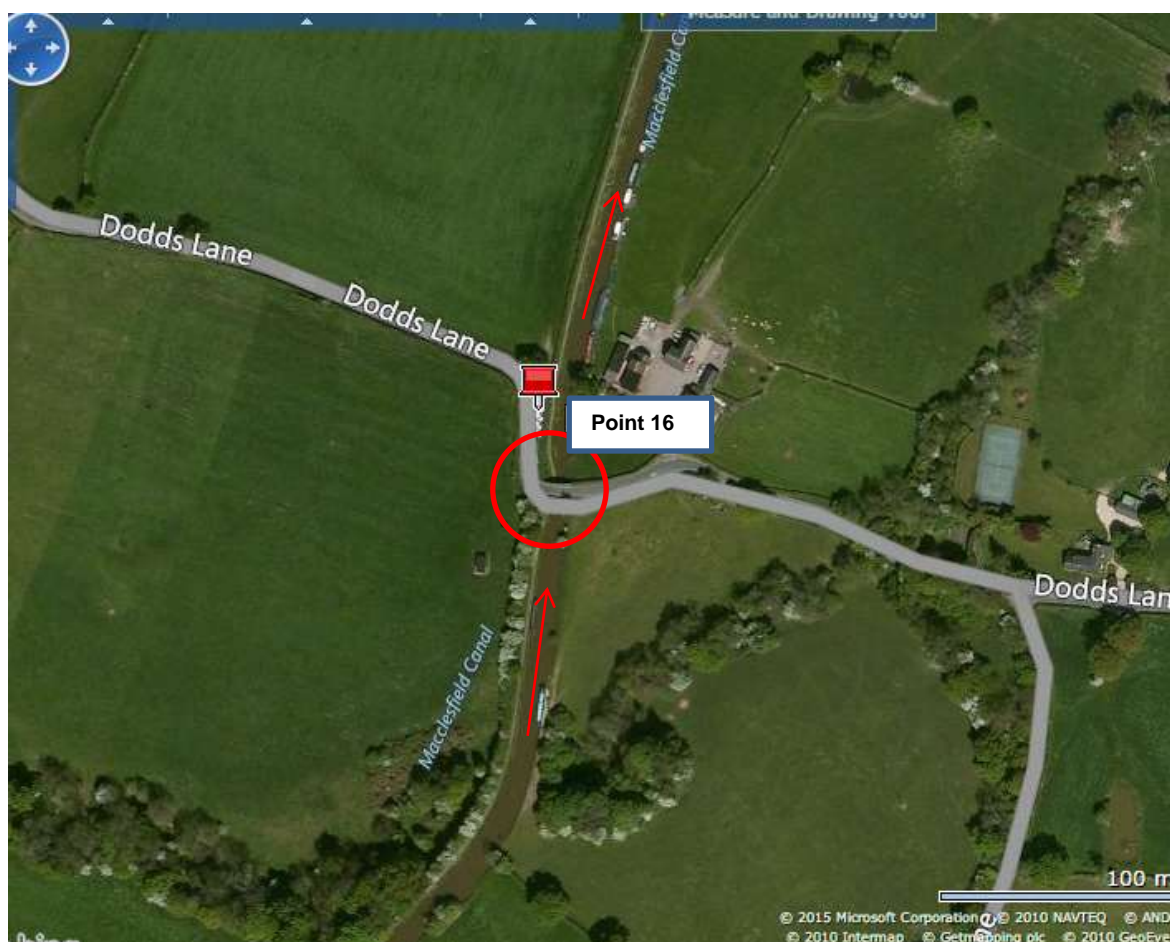
Lat/Long: 53.144328, -2.215949 (Approximate postcode CW12 3NS, grid reference SJ8565360820)

Stage Distance: 6.87 miles

Portages: 12L at Bosley flight, relay handover at end of section is at Bosley Top Lock (#1)

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Limited parking in the layby near the sharp bend in the lane before the canal bridge.





## Stage 17 Bosley Top Lock – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.199677, -2.143573 (Approximate postcode CW12 2PH, grid reference SJ9050666965)

Stage Distance: 4 miles from Bosley Top Lock

Portages: 0 (there are 2 low bridges on this section which can be glided under in a kayak – otherwise portage, taking care when crossing the minor road at the first swing bridge).

Paddling notes: The incoming relay crew must portage all 12 of the locks at Bosley and hand over to the outgoing relay crew at Bosley Top Lock (#1).

All the way crews must receive support at Bosley Top Lock (#1).

Parking notes: There is good roadside parking on Bullgate Lane at Bosley Top Lock.

**Note: no parking on the A54 or adjacent lanes before 08.30.** This is a noise sensitive residential area.

Toilets: CRT at Bosley Top Lock.



## Stage 18 Bridge 44, Bullocks Lane – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.240834, -2.115968 (Approximate postcode SK11 0HE, grid reference SJ9235871541)

Stage Distance: 3.25 miles

Portages: 0

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Park on Bullocks Lane, on the left hand side, just before the bridge.





## Stage 19 Bridge 29, Clarke Lane – Relay change point

Lat/Long: 53.284954, -2.108704 (Approximate postcode SK10 5AH, grid reference SJ9285076448)

Distance: 3.75 miles

Paddling notes: n/a

Parking notes: Park on Clarke Lane, on the left hand side, just before the bridge



## FINISH (same as the START) Bridge 18 Macclesfield canal

Lat/Long: 53.332898, -2.095653 (Approximate postcode SK10 4PF, grid reference SJ9372781781)

Parking notes: Park in the pub car park – Miners Arms, Wood Lane North, Adlington Macclesfield. SK10 4PF.