

# THE BONGS

2.5 km (1½ miles)

## WALK 1

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Start at **Goostrey Church**.

Goostrey Church was founded in 1244. In 1617 it was built of wood in the Cheshire black and white style. It was pulled down in 1792 and rebuilt in 1796 by the local brick setter at a cost of £1700. The font is 15th century and the yew tree in the churchyard by the South door has recently been assessed as 1200 years old.

The War Memorial was erected in 1921 to a design chosen in 1919 which required approval by the Royal Academy. The sculptors, Carp Hobbs & Millar, had difficulty obtaining the Darley Dale stone originally chosen, so Hollington sandstone was used instead.

Go down Church Bank and over the bridge to spot a footpath sign on your left immediately before the de-restriction sign, at the entrance to "The Cottage". Turn along this drive, go through a gate and keep to the right through the garden. Go through another gate and keep straight ahead through a small paddock. Enter the Bongs (the woodland) by a third gate.

The trees are mainly oak and beech with alder and willow in the damper parts.

In April look out for drifts of the white flowers of wood anemones and, in the wettest parts, the yellow of marsh marigolds - which are poisonous.

These are followed by bluebells and, in the summer, red campion amongst others. All three British woodpeckers have been seen in the Bongs, with the Greater Spotted easier to see than the Lesser Spotted. Listen for the "laughing" call of the Green Woodpecker. Treecreepers and Nuthatches can also be found.

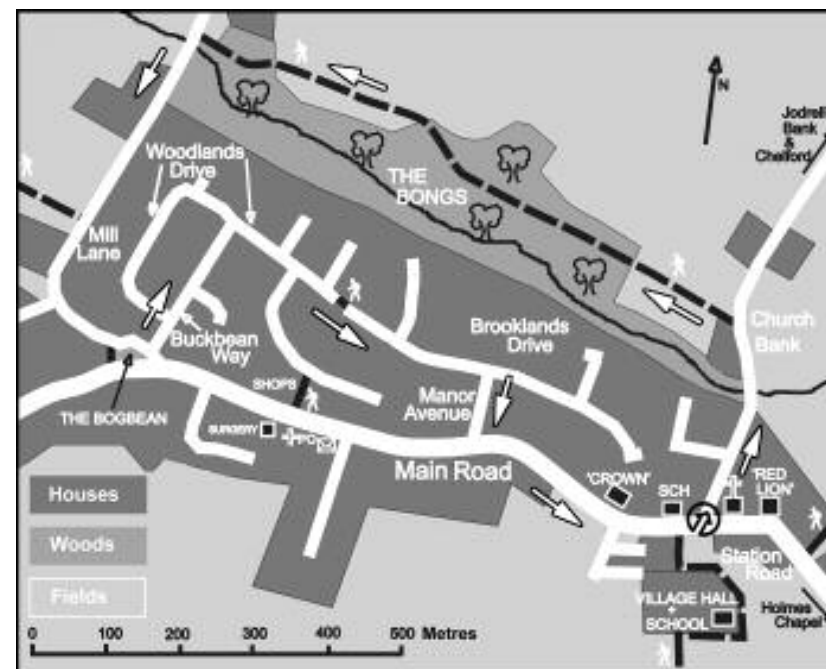
If you hear a **cuckoo** in this area, it is likely that it will lay its egg in the nest of a Dunnock.



# THE BONGS

"Bongs" is a local dialect alternative for the "banks" or valley side of a river (the "g" and "k" sounds being interchangeable).

The river in question here is Red Lion Brook. The Bongs were made famous by Alan Garner's nativity play "Holly from the Bongs".



Follow the clear path through the Bongs. You will pass a commemorative seat on your right.

*Why not take a break here "so you may sit and stare", as inscribed on the seat?*

The path continues until it leads up and out, via a kissing gate, into a field.

Walk ahead along the top of the slope until a corner is reached, with a kissing gate back into woods. Enter the woods here, go down the steps and across a small bridge to continue on the path until you reach Mill Lane - one of Cheshire's 51 Mill Lanes.



## THE BONGS

Turn left along Mill Lane, passing **Goostrey Mill** on your right.

Goostrey Mill was originally a corn water mill. It became a cheese store and is now a house, but remains of the sluice machinery and the wheel are still visible from the road.



At the **Village Green**, turn left into Buckbean Way.

The Village Green is called locally "The Bogbean" from "Buck Bean Pit", a pond in which the bog-bean, "*Menyanthes trifoliata*", grew.

At the end of Buckbean Way, swing right into Woodlands Drive and go straight on through the gap in the hedge 150 metres ahead into Brooklands Drive.

After 100 metres turn right into Manor Avenue, then left at the T-junction with Main Road to pass **The Crown Inn** and return to the Church.



The Crown Inn was occupied in 1578 and called the "Crown Farm" in 1781 with a likely dual role as farm and public house. Initially named the "Mainwaring Arms" after the Peover family who owned most of the surrounding area, it became "The Crown" in 1873.

