



# Elizabeth Gaskell Bi-Centenary Celebrations



## **Knutsford**

*Discover the Real Cranford  
and Elizabeth Gaskell's  
childhood home*



## **Manchester**

*Visit Plymouth Grove  
where Elizabeth Gaskell  
wrote her famous novels*

[www.elizabethgaskell.co.uk](http://www.elizabethgaskell.co.uk)



# Elizabeth Gaskell (1810~1865)...



an accomplished writer of novels and short stories, she also wrote the remarkable biography of her friend **Charlotte Bronte** and has become familiar to many through BBC adaptations of her works: *Wives and Daughters*, *North and South* and most recently *Cranford*.

2010 marks the bicentenary of her birth and nowhere will this be more celebrated than in the Northwest of England in the Cheshire market town of **Knutsford**, the real **Cranford**; and also **Manchester** where she spent her married life and did most of her writing.

Throughout this important year **Cheshire** and **Manchester** will welcome thousands of Gaskell enthusiasts for a year long programme of exhibitions, events, festivals and performances.



**Knutsford Heritage Centre** will have a Gaskell exhibition and will also organise guided walks for visitors; **Tatton Park** will host a number of events and exhibitions and the

300 year old **Brook Street Chapel**, where **Elizabeth Gaskell**, her ancestors and family rest in the graveyard. There are a number of improvements taking place at the chapel and a lift is being installed in the Victorian Schoolroom to enable easier access to the chapel and grounds.



Restoration of the exterior of **Plymouth Grove**, Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester home, is now being undertaken and the house will soon be ready to welcome visitors again. Previous visitors to the house included Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens and Harriet Beecher Stowe!

There will also be exhibitions at the **Portico Library** and **John Rylands Library** in Manchester.

The year-long programme of events will include a ceremony on 25th September at Westminster Abbey where The Gaskell Society members will dedicate a pane of glass at Poets Corner commemorating **Elizabeth Gaskell's** memory. This is a great accolade as only eight other women have been honoured in this way, including the three Bronte sisters.

The author was born Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson in Chelsea on 29 September, 1810, but **Knutsford** soon became her 'dear, adopted native town', for her mother died when she was a year old and she was brought to **Knutsford** to be cared for by Aunt Hannah Lumb, her mother's sister. She was surrounded by Holland family relations: her uncle, Dr Peter Holland, her aunts and her cousins. *Cranford*, partly

*Cranford has helped to keep her name alive.*



based on her childhood memories of this community, is her much loved humorous, but sympathetic depiction of the social etiquette of the ladies who lived in **Knutsford** in 'elegant economy'.

Her first novel, *Mary Barton*, highlighted the horrors of the industrial system in **Manchester**, where she moved after her marriage; it tells of disease, poverty and even starvation, and of the frustration of working men denied the vote. While this book and *North and South* are valuable as social history, they also express man's common humanity, making them relevant to life today. She was sympathetic to the workers whom she met daily in **Manchester**.



Dickens was enthusiastic about her writing and encouraged her by publishing *Cranford* and later works in instalments in his magazine Household Words.



*Cranford* has helped to keep her name alive. In 1960 there were local celebrations for her 150th birth anniversary and

an edition of her letters was published in 1966, with many books about her subsequently being published.

With many Gaskell enthusiasts around the world, The Gaskell Society with its 600 members links them together with journals, newsletters and a web site.

Gaskell's works are available in many languages, with the most recent being in Japanese.

# ❖ Tatton Park



appears as Cumnor Towers in Cranford, the home of the Cumnor family, where its function as the centre of aristocratic privilege and influence exactly mirrors the relationship between Tatton and Knutsford that Mrs Gaskell had grown up with and observed.

The Mansion Staterooms feature the original furnishings, and also include one of the National Trust's top library collections. The grandeur of the Staterooms contrasts with the servants' area where visitors get a vivid idea of



what life was like for those who worked here, with kitchens. One of Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction, Tatton's 50 acres of Gardens enjoy year-round colour and represent over 250 years of garden design and history. The stylish Japanese Garden is one of the finest in Europe and the Walled Kitchen Garden produces seasonal fruit and vegetables of historic varieties which are sold in the Garden Shop. Organise a group of friends to visit and benefit from reduced rates for a general visit or take a guided tour which offers entertaining insights into the life of the different generations of the families who lived here from the 19th century. To discover more about Tatton Park visit [www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

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## Industrial Powerhouse



Elizabeth Gaskell's writing focussed on the working lives and hardship of people living in the industrial age. The telling of this story continues throughout the Northwest in mills, museums, steam sheds, walking trails and events.

To discover more on the Northwest's rich industrial heritage visit [www.industrialpowerhouse.co.uk](http://www.industrialpowerhouse.co.uk)



# Knutsford ~ The Real Cranford

Elizabeth Gaskell's tales of Cranford were set in her home town of Knutsford in Cheshire, which she renamed Cranford, and told of the lives of a band of women, assuring us that 'the ladies of Cranford are quite sufficient... a man, is so in the way in the house'.

[www.visitknutsford.co.uk](http://www.visitknutsford.co.uk)



## 1 Heathwaite, Gaskell Avenue

The house looks over the Heath, an area of common land which in Gaskell's time was home to a racecourse. This may also have been where Cranford's Miss Betsy Barker's cow fell into the lime pit before being clothed in a flannel waistcoat. Further up the road is the house of another of Knutsford's famous characters, Edward Highwayman Higgins. In Gaskell's time however, this would have been home to the fictional Mrs Jamieson.



## 2 The Former Royal George Hotel, King Street

It was in the assembly rooms of this coaching inn that the Cranford ladies marvelled at Signor Brunoni's magic tricks

and it also appears in Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*. It was here along what was the stable yard of the Royal George where Elizabeth found her inspiration for Miss Matty's Teashop and the gossipy Miss Pole.

## 3 No. 15 King Street

The home of Captain Henry Hill, a half-pay captain who had fought at the battle of Waterloo and the possible inspiration for Cranford's Captain Brown.

## 4 Knutsford Parish Church

This is where Elizabeth was married to William Gaskell in 1832. The wedding itself was a happy affair and Elizabeth wrote that most of the houses 'sanded' for her day, a local custom of writing messages and patterns in coloured sand.

## 5 Brook Street Unitarian Chapel

Elizabeth died, aged 55, and was buried in the grounds of this beautiful chapel along with her husband William and two of their daughters. A description of the building can be found in 'Ruth', another of Gaskell's works. This chapel is where Gaskell worshipped whilst living in Knutsford.

## 6 Gaskell Memorial Tower, King Street

Built in 1907 by Richard Harding Watt, this was originally the Kings Coffee House, although today it is the Belle Epoque restaurant. Watt said at the opening that Gaskell's works had given him real delight and he thought the town should acknowledge its famous daughter. A list of her can be seen on the tower along with a list of her works.

## 7 The Angel Inn, King Street

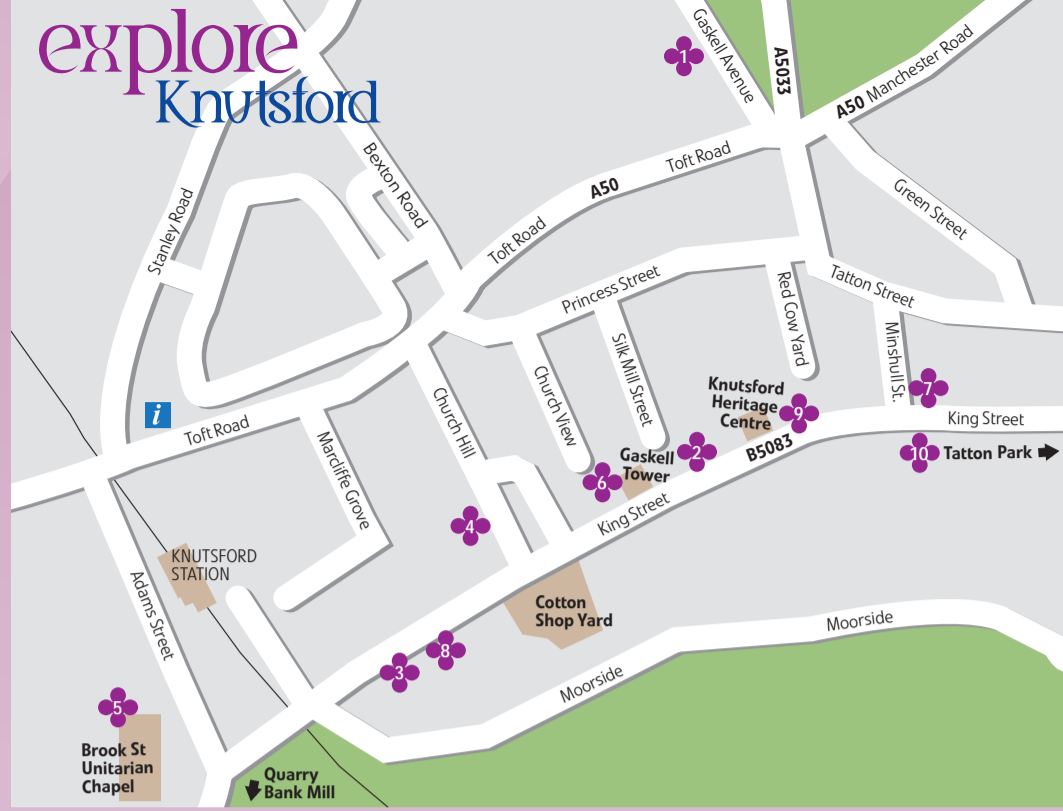
The Angel was a noted posting house and inn in Gaskell's time and in Cranford, Lord Mauleverer stayed here whilst visiting Captain Brown. Minshull Street, next to the Angel was referenced as the Shire Lane in Cranford.

## 8 The Old Vicarage, King Street

It is thought that Elizabeth had this building in mind when telling the story of Peter, the Vicar's son and brother of Miss Matty.

## 9 Knutsford Heritage Centre

Cranford Tours depart from the Heritage Centre, King Street, Knutsford. Tickets are £5 each. For timings and to book in advance call 01565 650506. [www.knutsfordheritage.co.uk](http://www.knutsfordheritage.co.uk)



# Manchester ~ Plymouth Grove

Elizabeth Gaskell lived all her married life in Manchester where you can still see some places associated with her. The novels *Mary Barton* and *North and South* are both set in the city, as well as some short stories.

## 10 The Gaskells' House, 84 Plymouth Grove

Home of Elizabeth Gaskell from 1850 until her death in 1865, and of the family until 1913. At present under restoration, but the ground floor will be open on set days from early June onwards.

## 11 Cross Street Chapel

William Gaskell, Elizabeth's husband, was the Unitarian minister here and you can see the new chapel on the site. There is a memorial plaque to Elizabeth.

## 12 The Portico Library

Copies of Elizabeth Gaskell's books are preserved in the

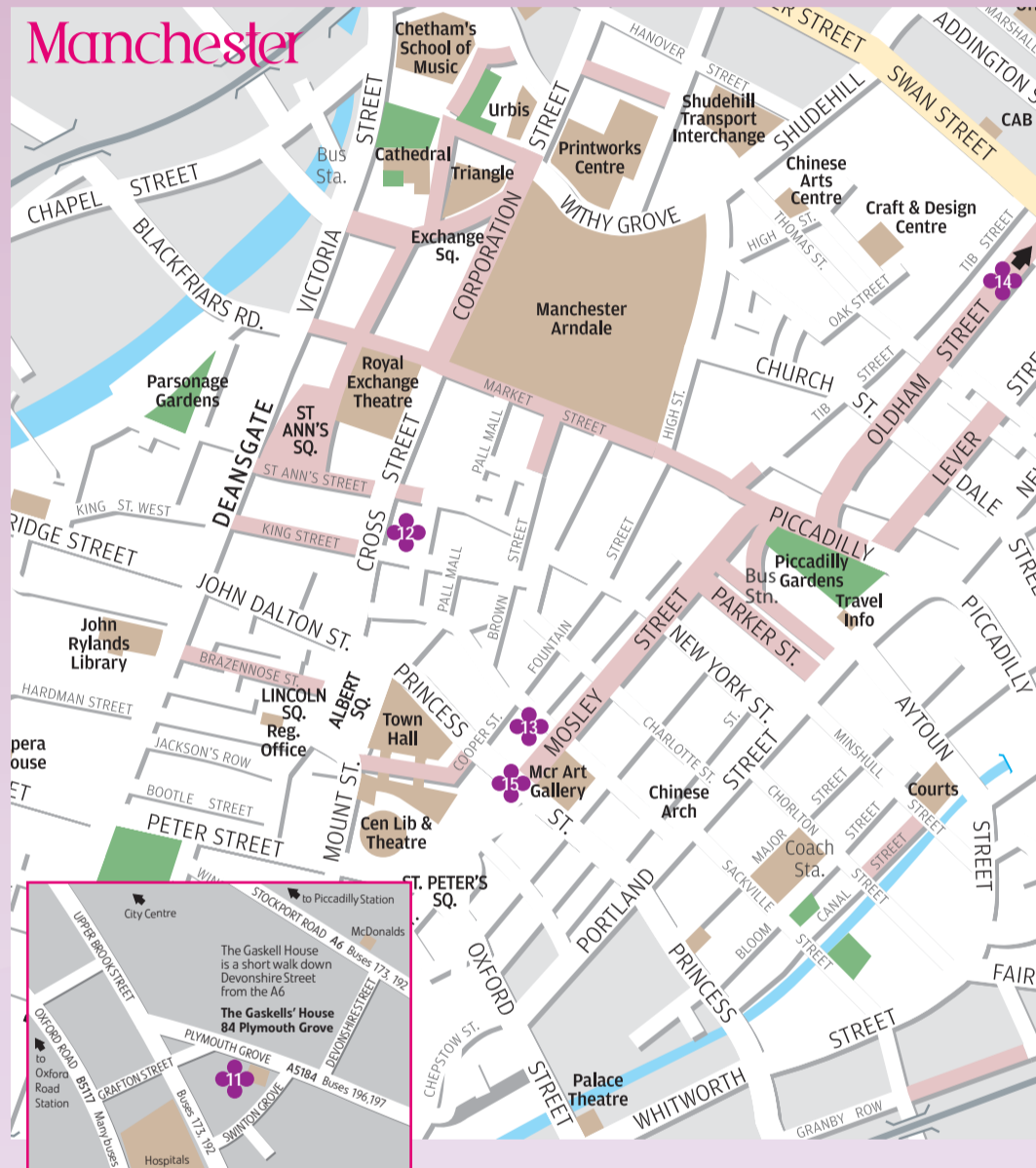
library, where William Gaskell was Chairman. A beautiful building, with a gallery open to the public.

## 13 Murray's Mills, Ancoats

Elizabeth took visitors here to show them the whole process of cotton cloth manufacture. The building has now been repaired for other uses.

## 14 Manchester Art Gallery

Built in 1835, the gallery was known as the Manchester Institution and with the neighbouring Athenaeum hosted many important events. Today it is a thriving gallery with an interesting Manchester display.



# 2010 Highlights

Denotes events in Knutsford Denotes events in Manchester

There are a variety of events to celebrate this anniversary including guided walks, exhibitions and performances, these are some of the highlights.

## 31st March 2010 - 30th April (Excluding 2nd & 5th April)

### Elizabeth Gaskell - A Writer's Life

Portico Library, Manchester  
This exhibition draws together an overview of Mrs Gaskell's life and work with special items from the library's own collection and some rarely-seen treasures. [www.theportico.org.uk](http://www.theportico.org.uk)

## Thursday 8th April

### Alan Shelston talks about his new biography Brief Lives: Elizabeth Gaskell

Portico Library, Manchester  
Commissioned to provide an overview of the life of Manchester's most important writer. [www.theportico.org.uk](http://www.theportico.org.uk)

## Saturday 10th April

### Guided Walk to Tabley Old Hall & Lunch

Tabley House Museum  
Joan Leach MBE will conduct a guided walk to the site of the Old mooted Hall, a picnic spot for the young Elizabeth Gaskell. [www.tableyhouse.co.uk](http://www.tableyhouse.co.uk)

## Tuesday 13th April

### Elizabeth Gaskell & Charlotte Bronte; a costumed reading

Portico Library, Manchester  
This presentation by the InterTheatre performers tells the story of the friendship between two of the nineteenth century's greatest writers in their own words. [www.theportico.org.uk](http://www.theportico.org.uk)

## Thursday 29th April

### Elizabeth Gaskell Walking and Rail Tour

Manchester Visitor Information Centre  
Visit locations connected with Mrs Gaskell and her family, learn about her life and books, taking the train to Knutsford for lunch. [www.toursofmanchester.co.uk](http://www.toursofmanchester.co.uk)

## Saturday 1st May

### Royal May Day

Knutsford Town Centre  
Dating back to 1864, Knutsford's May Day festival is a highlight of the town's calendar.

## 14th - 17th May

### Flower Festival & Victorian Victorials

Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford  
Each arrangement will depict one of Mrs Gaskell's Novels. [www.brookstreetchapel.org](http://www.brookstreetchapel.org)

## Monday 31st May

### Lions Cranford Street Fair

King Street, Knutsford  
A variety of market stalls, entertainment and refreshments for all the family with a Victorian theme. [www.knutsfordlions.org.uk](http://www.knutsfordlions.org.uk)

## 1st June - 31st August

### Elizabeth Gaskell's Life - Trades and Businesses 1810-1865

Knutsford Heritage Centre  
An insight into Knutsford during the Victorian period. Focussing on shops and businesses as it was and how it is today. [www.knutsfordheritage.co.uk](http://www.knutsfordheritage.co.uk)

## Sunday 6th June

### First Open Day at Plymouth Grove

Manchester  
The home of Mrs Gaskell from 1850-1865. Plymouth Grove welcomed many eminent visitors including Charles Dickens and Charlotte Bronte.

## 7th June - 5th September

### Elizabeth Gaskell and the Doctor

Quarry Bank Mill & Styal Estate, Styal  
An exhibition to celebrate the bi-centenary of Mrs Gaskell and her connection with Quarry Bank Mill through her Uncle, Dr Holland. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

## Wednesday 16th June

### Dear Scheherazade by Gabrielle Drake

Capitol Theatre, Manchester  
Gabrielle Drake, star of stage and TV, in her one-woman show, telling the story of Mrs Gaskell's life in the writer's own words. [www.gaskellsociety.co.uk](http://www.gaskellsociety.co.uk)

## Sunday 27th June

### Discover Knutsford's Cranford Days

Assemble in Canute Place, Knutsford  
A trail back through the years with anecdotes of Mrs Gaskell's life and the times of old Knutsford. The walk will end with refreshments at Brook Street Chapel. t: 01565 634668 e: [Joanleach@aol.com](mailto:Joanleach@aol.com)

## 14th July - 28th November

### Elizabeth Gaskell: A Connected Life

John Rylands Library  
This exhibition draws on the Library's world-class Gaskell collections, and looks at how her social networks influenced her fiction and the worlds she depicted in her books. t: 0161 306 0555

## 21st - 25th July

### RHS Show and Floral Walk

Knutsford Town Centre  
This year's Walk will have more stunning displays and a fantastic floral competition. [www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/tattonpark](http://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/tattonpark)

## Thursday 5th August

### Woman of Letters: Gaskell's Autograph Collection & Victorian Celebrity

John Rylands Library  
A lecture by Dr Pamela Corpron Parker of Whitworth University USA. [www.library.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk)

## Saturday 14th August

### Elegant Economy - the clothes of Cranford

John Rylands Library  
While the 1830's clothes are lovely to look at, they also give fascinating clues about how costume reveals character in the novels of Mrs Gaskell. 'Elegant Economy' is a one-hour presentation with two performers. [www.historywardrobe.com](http://www.historywardrobe.com)

## 30th August & 31st October

### Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire Exhibition

Tatton Park, Knutsford  
Knutsford is her inspiration for Cranford but other stories and her letters tell of her links with Tatton and Dunham Halls, Tabley House and Capesborne, and the Cheshire countryside. Learn more in the exhibition in the Mansion at Tatton Park. [www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

## 1st - 30th September

### The Illustrated Gaskell Exhibition

Knutsford Library  
Exhibition on various artists that have been used to illustrate Mrs Gaskell's fiction arranged by Mike Eddison from Cheshire Archives and Local Studies. [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

## Sunday 5th September

### The Knutsford Great Race

Moorside, Knutsford  
The main event is the Penny Farthing Championship - World Series which is an endurance race and starts at 2pm. [www.theknutsfordgreatrace.co.uk](http://www.theknutsfordgreatrace.co.uk)

## Tuesday 14th September

### A Gaskell Celebration

Knutsford Library (Ticketed event)  
Readings from some of Mrs Gaskell's novels with refreshments. t: 01565 632 909

## Thursday 16th September

### "Country and City"

John Rylands Library  
Talk by Jenny Uglow, Gaskell's biographer. [www.library.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk)

## Saturday 18th September

### Fashioning the Past

John Rylands Library  
A fascinating account of how costume historian Gillian Stapleton researches and creates the lovely replica corsets, costumes and bonnets of the History Wardrobe. [www.historywardrobe.com](http://www.historywardrobe.com)

## Tuesday 29th September

### Elizabeth Gaskell's Birthday Celebration

11am A TALK in Brook Street Chapel on Elizabeth Gaskell and her novels. 12:30pm Two course LUNCH at the Belle Epoque (Gaskell Memorial Tower) Book directly 01565 633060 3pm Gaskell guided WALK [www.gaskellsociety.org](http://www.gaskellsociety.org)

## October

### Knutsford Literature Festival

Knutsford  
Staged every October with talks and events held in venues around the town. e: [Knutsfordlitfest@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Knutsfordlitfest@yahoo.co.uk)

## Sunday 3rd October 11am

### Service Commemorating Mrs Gaskell's 200th Birth Anniversary

Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford [www.gaskellsociety.org](http://www.gaskellsociety.org)

## 5th - 9th October

### Old Time Music Hall

Knutsford Amateur Operatic Society  
Musical Highlights, Humour and Hilarity, also featuring the play "Old Poz" performed by Knutsford Little Theatre. [www.knutsfordaos.org](http://www.knutsfordaos.org)

## Wednesday 6th October

### Talk and Tour - Elizabeth Gaskell's Cheshire

Tatton Park, Knutsford  
Joan Leach, MBE gives a talk about how Mrs Gaskell linked to Knutsford and the surrounding area, followed by a tour around the mansion and a visit to the exhibition featuring Mrs Gaskell's Cheshire. [www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

## Friday 8th October

### Elizabeth Gaskell and the 19th Century Novel Lecture

Tatton Park, Knutsford  
Discover the secrets of Mrs Gaskell's world and literary works, and learn about surviving Gaskell archive material from the John Ryland's collection. Special access to the atmospheric Egerton library. [www.tattonpark.org.uk](http://www.tattonpark.org.uk)

## Saturday 4th December

### Two Victorian Christmas Concerts by OPUS 5

Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford  
The varied programme will include Seasonal Songs and music that would have been enjoyed by the Gaskells. [www.gaskellsociety.org](http://www.gaskellsociety.org)

## Knutsford

Knutsford is easy to get to however you choose to travel. Main motorway links to Knutsford and Cheshire are through the M6, M56 and M53.

**By train** Virgin Trains run frequent, direct, high speed services between London Euston and Cheshire in approximately two hours: make for Stockport [www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/stockport](http://www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/stockport) or Chester [www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/chester](http://www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/chester) for onward connections to Knutsford [www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/knutsford](http://www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/knutsford) with Northern Rail [www.northernrail.org](http://www.northernrail.org)

Rail services also run from Manchester International Airport [www.crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk/station/manchester\\_airport](http://www.crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk/station/manchester_airport) via Manchester Piccadilly.

You may also visit Knutsford via Greater Manchester's Metrolink service by changing at the Altrincham Interchange [www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/altrincham](http://www.midcheshirerail.org.uk/station/altrincham)

**By bus** Further information about bus, rail and coach routes/timetables is available from Cheshire Traveline on 0870 608 2 608, open seven days a week from 8am - 8pm.

## Manchester

**By train** Visit National Rail Enquiries to find out ticket and timetable information for trains to and from Manchester. [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**By tram** Manchester's tram system, Metrolink runs through the city centre connecting major railway stations and tourist attractions. [www.metrolink.co.uk](http://www.metrolink.co.uk)

**By bus** GMPTE shows information on bus services in Greater Manchester. [www.gmpte.com](http://www.gmpte.com)

### By Metroshuttle

A free bus service running from 7am-7pm Monday to Saturday and 10am-6pm on Sundays approximately every 10 minutes taking visitors from car parks, stations and tram stops around the city centre's main attractions. [www.gmpte.com](http://www.gmpte.com)

**By taxi** Black cabs operate in the city centre and can be booked by calling Mantax on +44 (0)161 230 3333.

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