

**Seventy three      STOCKPORT – MORE GOOD THINGS.**

Stockport again! Why were Stopfordians “as mad as hatters”? Where can you have afternoon tea in a plush art-deco cafe? What was it like in an air raid during World War Two? How did Stopfordians live in the past? Is there a good pub in the centre for lunchtime? The answers don’t make for a single trip but individually they are well worth doing!

Take the train to Manchester Victoria and from there a tram to Manchester Piccadilly Station. From here there are many trains that stop at Stockport.

*Option: - turn right as you get off the tram and on Fairfield Street use the lift on the left to the link bridge lounge.*

Alight at Stockport station. At the bottom of the platform steps turn right. Go left down the station approach road.

**a)      THE HATWORKS.**

At Wellington Road, go left and walk downhill.

Cross Exchange Street and just past the Garrick Theatre on the left is the entrance to The Hatworks.

*Stockport was once famous for making fashionable felt hats. This excellent little museum shows how it was done; has a collection of the machinery, and a fashion gallery. Admission is free and there is a cafe with views across to the viaduct. The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 – 17.00.*

*A guided tour is available (category one) and this includes machine demonstrations. Larger groups (say 10+) wanting the guided tour are asked to book in advance to avoid clashing with other large groups. Telephone: 0161 355 7770. Website: [www.hatworks.org.uk](http://www.hatworks.org.uk)*

To return to the railway station, retrace your steps and go to the far platforms for trains to Manchester. Otherwise go on to any of the following options.

**b)      THE PLAZA.**

At Wellington Road traffic lights, cross and go a short way left.

Turn right onto St. Petersgate. Go first left and you come to the top of a 1930’s grand stone staircase. *Notice the view of the busy road to Manchester up ahead.*

Descend the staircase and go right. You are immediately in front of the Plaza. *This is a grand building of the cinema age!(1932) It’s worth crossing the road to get a full view of the white faience facade - which looks impressive in the evening with its neon signs lit. The Plaza was recently rescued from decay and had a nine month restoration. In the auditorium there is a Crompton Organ.*

Enter the Plaza and climb to the first floor. *There is a plush real art deco cafe here. Light refreshments, and complete afternoon teas are served at your table. Open daily from 10.00 – 16.00.*

*The Plaza hosts a full calendar of events in its grand auditorium.*

*Website: [www.stockportplaza.co.uk](http://www.stockportplaza.co.uk)*

*Tel: 0161477 7779*

To return to the railway station turn right outside and go up uphill to St Peter's Square. Turn right to go back to Wellington Road then retrace your steps. Go to the far platforms for trains to Manchester. Otherwise go on to (c).

### **c) THE AIR RAID SHELTERS.**

At Wellington Road traffic lights, cross and go a short way left.

Turn right onto St. Petersgate. Go first left and you come to the top of a 1930's grand stone staircase. *Notice the view of the busy road to Manchester up ahead.*

Descend the staircase and go right past the front of The Plaza.

Cross the road that goes up to St Peter's Square and then go ahead along Chestergate. *There is a 1930's large department store facade on the left.*

Just along on the right is the entrance to the Stockport Air Raid Shelters.

*Admission: Category one (concessions) and you will be taken round by an informative guide. Opened in 1939, a maze of tunnels in the sandstone cliff formed the country's largest purpose built air raid shelter. They were supposed to be a Stockport secret. Open Tuesday to Friday 13.00 – 17.00; Saturday 10.00 – 17.00, and Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. Tel: 0161474 1940. Website:*

*[www.airraidshelters.org.uk](http://www.airraidshelters.org.uk).*

To return to the railway station, turn right outside and go up High Banks to St Petersgate. Turn right to go back to Wellington Road then retrace your steps. Go to the far platforms for trains to Manchester.

### **d) STAIRCASE HOUSE.**

At Wellington Road traffic lights, cross and go a short way left.

Turn right onto St. Petersgate and continue all the way along until you pass the market hall.

Turn immediately right and Staircase House is on the left. *Highly recommended, this beautifully restored old house has visitor friendly displays making it a five star visit!* Admission: category one (concessions). Opening times:

*Tuesday to Friday 13.00 – 17.00; Saturday 10.00 – 17.00; Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. Tel: 0161 480 1460 Website: [www.staircasehouse.org.uk](http://www.staircasehouse.org.uk)*

To return to the railway station, retrace your steps. Go to the far platforms for trains to Manchester. Otherwise go on to (e) or (f).

**e) STOCKPORT STORY**

Just past Staircase House is the Stockport Story. Therefore please follow the same directions.

*This tells the story of Stockport, from prehistoric finds at Mellor, through mediaeval life and the Victorian textile industry to the present day. There is interest for all ages. Admission: free. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 – 17.00; Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. Tel: 0161 480 1460. Website*

[www.stockportstory.org.uk](http://www.stockportstory.org.uk)

To return to the railway station, retrace your steps. Go to the far platforms for trains to Manchester. Otherwise go on to (f).

**f) THE SWAN WITH TWO NECKS**

Follow the directions for Staircase House but keep straight on past the Market Hall on your right. St. Petersgate curves down to the left.

At the bottom go straight ahead along Bridge Street and just before it starts to climb turn left onto Prince's Street. The Swan with Two Necks is on the right. *Dating from 1926 it has a lovely interior. There is a narrow corridor with light oak panelling going up to shoulder height, and three small comfortable rooms. A small bar sells local Robinson's real ales by hand pumps and in good condition. There is a small beer garden at the rear and tables outside at the front. Food is available between 12.00 and 15.00. Sometimes closes mid evening. Tel: 08721 077077 (This pub is listed on the Campaign for Real Ales National Inventory of noted pub interiors.)*

On leaving the pub go right to Mersey Square and across it to the main road. Notice the Plaza to your left. Turn left up the main road over the large bridge. You will come to the traffic lights with Station Road on the right. Go to the far platforms for trains to Manchester.

CLASSIFICATION: EASY, SHORT  
SHOPS, MARKETS, ARCHITECTURE, PUBS,  
MUSEUM, CAFES.  
RAIL FARE – category one

Maps: OS 1:50 000 sheet 109 Manchester A-Z  
Philip's Street Atlas Greater Manchester