The line carried cotton, silk, coal and passengers, but always struggled to make a profit. It was closed and redeveloped for recreation at the Middleway Way in 1865. The Middleway Canal was completed in 1833, very late for a canal — so late that it was already a railway. Coal from Poynton, stone from Knutsford and sand from Wilmslow were some of the cargoes carried. The canal was threatened with closure in the 1950s. A campaign by pleasure boats saved it and today the canal is a popular leisure destination.

Who’s who?
The Middleway Way runs between the boroughs of Macclesfield and Stockport. From Macclesfield to Middlewood Station, the Way is owned and managed by Macclesfield Borough Council, from Middlewood to Marple by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. The Middleway Canal is managed by British Waterways. You can find the appropriate contact details in the Contacts section.

Horse riding
Horse riders can use the Middleway Way from Bollington Vadnals (Arlington Road, all the way to Rose Hill in Marple, 7-mile ride). Recommended horse riding is at Jacksons in Birkirkirk and Rose Hill. Riders can expect to meet pedestrians and cyclists, please do not bring your horse! It is really easy started and do not ride faster than a trot. To find out about stables and riding schools, telephone Tourist Information.

Cycling
The Middleway Way offers easy and iconic cycling and is popular for leisure cycling year-round, especially on Sundays. It forms part of Route 51 of the National Cycle Network. To see more information, visit www.sustrans.org.uk or telephone 01625 4850 for more information.

Horse riders need to respect the rights of others. Be aware that horses may react to other horses. If you race your horse and approach slowly, where the Way is separated into two paths, we recommend using the footpath which is shared with horse riders. Please give way to horses, to avoid startling them. Cycling is not allowed on the canal towpath.

Accessibility
The Middleway Way is mostly level and wheelchair-accessible. To help you plan your visit, we have attempted to show on the map easy access points and areas of the Middleway Way that may be difficult for wheelchair users. If you would like more detailed information, please telephone the Ranger Service. Enquire about the canal entrance, telephone British Waterways.

Middleway Canals
Middleway Canals was not to Macclesfield, but to Stockport. From Macclesfield, the Way is hard-surfaced. North of Bollington, walkers will find firm, compacted surfaces, the accessibility of which can be affected by weather. At road bridges, access is via steps unless otherwise indicated. At car parks and crossings, our standard entrance facilities, paths or other arrangement, designed to admit conventional wheelchairs. If you use a large folding aid, you may wish to telephone for advice.

Things to see and do
Middleway encourages you and your family to enjoy your visit. To see the Canal Visitor Centre, you must get the ferry. You can see the Macclesfield Canal Visitor Centre, Wilmslow, visitors will find displays, activities and information leaflets. Nearby is the Armon Museum, an important collection of steam engines, which holds open days in the summer months. From Rosehill, footpaths lead to Lyne Park and Lyme Hough. Canals enthusiasts might like to see the towpath of Locks at Macclesfield or look for Lineham. If you are in Macclesfield, don’t miss the Armon Museum, there is information about any of these activities on www.macclesfield.gov.uk.