



Ronnie Ratkins' Nantwich Walk

We have been learning all about health and diseases at the Nantwich Museum exhibition.

One way to stay healthy is to go outside and get some exercise and fresh air.

Would you like to come for a healthy walk round Nantwich with me?

RONNIE RATKINS' MAP



Stand with your back to the museum and look across the road

What can you see that helps to keep us safe?

I am so small; you might be able to spot things I can't see.



Have you spotted a few things?

There are lots of bins. You put your rubbish in there.

It used to be easier for us rats to get hold of your waste food in the old days, as people just threw things down anywhere because there weren't any bins.

You wouldn't throw rubbish on the floor now, would you?

But that's not the worst of it!

Humans didn't have bathrooms and toilets in their houses like we do now. They used to use a big potty and empty it into the River or, even worse, empty it out of the window on to the street, so you would have to look out!

Yuk!!

Are there any street lights?

How do they keep us safe?

There's also a pavement. Why do we have a pavement?

Can you imagine what it would be like if the road and pavement was just soil and bits of wood and rubbish?

Before we had motor cars, how did the wheels on the horse-drawn carts get through the streets when it was very muddy?



Now turn right, next to the Museum, into...

The Cocoa Yard



Walk (carefully!) on the cobble stones in the Cocoa Yard

Can you see something made of glass?

What do you think it is?

That's right, it's a clock!



This clock was made in the year 2000, so we call it the Millennium Clock.



What is the time?

Is it working?



Now you've had a good look at the clock, what is behind it?

And what was it part of?



Have a good look around you...

Are there any pictures of me?

Try looking in the shop windows.

Here's a selfie, just in case you'd forgotten how handsome I am ...



Now let's walk towards the church ...

Walk up to the end of the Cocoa Yard. Turn left along Hospital Street for a short distance, cross carefully, and take the next right turn, up a narrow cobbled street, Church Lane. Walk up to the top of the lane and stop outside St Mary's Church.

This is St Marys

Have a look up at the side of the church by the side entrance called the south porch.

Are there some strange faces looking down at you?



What do you think they are?



Walk all around the church and have a look at all the different carvings of faces.

Some of the faces are called gargoyles.

See if you can say the word 'gargoyle'.



Gargoyles are actually part of the drain pipes on the church! They are a type of spout designed to carry water away from the roof or side of the building, to stop it getting damaged. They were designed to look like creatures, and water often came out of their mouths. The grey coloured drainpipe on the left has replaced the gargoyle as a water channel.



The faces that do not carry water off the roof are called grotesques. They are just there to look scary! They were supposed to scare evil spirits away from the church.

Did any of the faces you saw on the church look like me?



No? Well, I'm not sure I'd like to be a gargoyle or a grotesque; I think I'd get cold up there!



See if you can go into the church. Stop in the porch at the side.



Can you see any pictures of my ancestor Ranulphe in a blue tunic with a ruff collar?



Have a walk around inside the church if you wish and find St Nicholas's chapel down on the right towards the front (ask a steward if you are not sure).

There you will see some big tombs and some lovely wooden chairs.

Look for the mice carved into the chair legs.

They aren't as handsome as me, are they?



Walk around to the front of the church.

There is a lovely big grassy area with trees.

This used to be the town's graveyard.



Can you see any gravestones?



The Crown Hotel



Walk across the Square and turn right up the High Street. Soon you will come to a lovely black and white building called the Crown Hotel.



Can you find a picture of my relative Rowena in a yellow dress, looking out of the window?



Once you've finished admiring her, have a good look at the black and white walls of the building.



What do you think the black bits are made of?

It's actually wood painted black.

What about the white areas which are made of wattle and daub...



Do you want to see what wattle and daub looks like?

If you are with an adult, you can look at some of this in the entrance of the Crown Hotel. You can see it from the doorway. There is a frame around a section of the wall showing the wattle and daub.

What do you think the wattle and daub is made from?

If you can't go inside and you cannot see it, don't worry – here's a picture:



Wattle is a mesh of sticks and twigs

Daub is made from clay, soil, sand, straw and even animal dung (poo!)



Come out of the entrance of the Crown Hotel and walk a little way along the Crown Passage. Look up on the right.



Can you see a carriage?

What would have pulled it and who might have sat in it?



Now take a walk down towards the Brine Baths

Go back past the Crown, turning left on High Street. At the end, turn right and walk towards Barnardo's. Cross the road at the crossing. Go down Wall Lane, to the left of Home Bargains.



Why do you think it was called Wall Lane?



A 'waller' was an old name for a person who was involved in producing salt. They boiled up salty water until all the water had gone and the salt remained.

Have a look at the area you are in now. It's called Snow Hill.



Why do you think it's called that? Can you see any snow?

I'll give you a clue ...

Humans used to use something which looked like snow.

Have you guessed yet?

Yes, it was salt!

Salty water was taken from the ground and boiled in big pans until the water was boiled away and the salt was left.

Rats know salt is bad for your health; we don't like it.

Humans sometimes use it for cooking, to add flavour on food, and to keep foods fresh for a long time.



Across the car park you may see a big building, what is it?

Yes, it's a swimming pool and it is being made into a leisure centre.
The swimming pools are still open and are great fun!



They also help to keep us safe.
How do swimming pools help us to stay safe?



Back in the time of my ancestor Ranolphe Ratkins, humans didn't learn how to swim and lots of them fell into the river and drowned. My family were very scared of the water, and even today my Mum tells me not to go too near to the river's edge.

Having a swimming pool means you can learn how to swim and stay safe by the water.



Go back down Wall Lane and cross back over the road on the crossing, retrace your steps towards the Crown, but this time, follow the bend in the road to the right and go down to the traffic lights, towards the River Weaver.

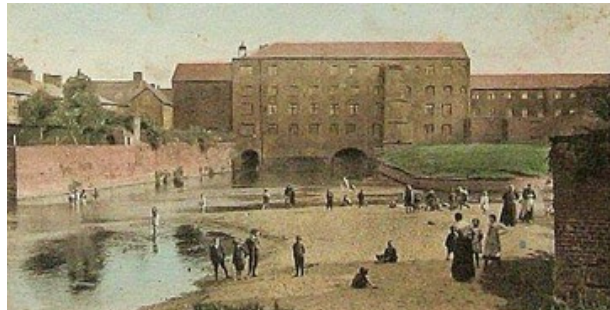
Turn left at the traffic lights onto Water Lode and walk a short distance to the pelican crossing. Cross over the road here, when it is safe.

Alongside the river is Mill Island.



What used to be here?

Yes, a big mill.



Can you see some seats by the river and a plaque mounted on bricks in the corner?



What does it say? ...



**Cross the bridge and you are now on Mill Island!
Turn left and walk along the path.**

If you want a nice long, healthy walk, you can walk all the way to Nantwich Lake. (If you want a short walk, just wander round Mill Island then cross back on the pelican crossing to return to the town centre up Mill Street.)

While you are walking near the River, remember my home is near here.



You might not see me because I'm very shy of humans and I stay inside during the day. I sometimes help my Mum to look after my little brothers and sisters and the baby rats.



You might see lots of other creatures, though. See if you can see any:



- Ducks
 - Bees
 - Butterflies
 - Ants
 - Flies
 - Blackbirds
 - Fish
 - Swans
 - Crocodiles (just testing)!
- What else did you see?



Nantwich Lake

Once you get to Nantwich Lake there is a path all the way round, if you are feeling really energetic!



Did you know that the water in the lake is salt water, like sea water?
The lake was made about 50 years ago to stop the town flooding.

The river came right up to our house door last year, and we had to hold the baby rats up in the air to stop them getting wet, so maybe it's time you humans built another lake!



To get back into town, turn left out of the lake-side car park and walk along Shrewbridge Road.

A little way along you will come to a park on the right, called Brookfield Park. Can you see a play area?



Keep going along Shrewbridge Road and you will come back to Water Lode. Cross at the pedestrian crossing and walk back into town.

Well done!

Maybe you could have a well-earned rest on a bench in the Square!

