



Race publicity officer Carl Hanaghan guides you on this looped course along the country lanes that surround this Cheshire market town

START Runners gather at Macclesfield Harriers and Athletic Club's home track. After completing two laps, the route heads into the town.

MILE 2 You pass the Victorian-era West Park, clock tower and the local cemetery. It's a place of pilgrimage for Joy Division fans, thanks to its memorial to singer Ian Curtis, who died in 1980.

MILE 4 An easy downhill stretch takes you into Prestbury (A), which once housed weavers for the local silk industry. Today, it's been called 'Britain's poshest village', thanks to the celebs who live there, including the England captain, Wayne Rooney.

MILE 5 After leaving Prestbury, you tackle the first of the course's two long, steep climbs.

MILE 6 You are now surrounded by rolling farmland as you trot along quiet country roads. But you'll spot the National Trust-owned Hare Hill - its garden is renowned for its rhododendrons.

MILE 7 On a clear day, you can see Jodrell Bank (B), which has been at the forefront of space research for more than 60 years. It also has a discovery centre to visit post-race.

MILE 9 On a gentle descent, runners skirt Henbury village, another extremely desirable location in Cheshire's affluent 'golden triangle'. Look out, too, for St Catherine's church, with its unusual octagonal tower.

MILE 10 Ready yourself for the toughest part of the route as you climb 80m across two miles of hill. At its crest is the very visible water tower landmark.

MILE 12 Once back into Macclesfield, enjoy a slow downhill final mile back. You pass close to Henbury Park, where in 1876 it's said the first American grey squirrel was introduced to our shores.

FINISH In front of the grassy banks of spectators, you finish on the 100m straight, before heading over to that thing beloved of runners the country over: the cake stall.

INSIDE STORY Carl Hanaghan says: 'We're now in year 15, but we made some changes this year after listening to runners' feedback. Finishers now get a medal, rather than a T-shirt, with their goodie bag. We're also getting businesses, school staff and the community generally to set up teams and make running the half or the accompanying 5K a 'challenge' to complete.

My main worry before race day is hoping we get the numbers out on time and that our pacers don't get injured. There are two big hills to tackle, but the course isn't stupidly hard and most of it is on quiet roads. It's worth looking out for some celebs, as we pass many of their houses in the villages the race goes through. There's always a brilliant atmosphere at the start and finish at the running track, with its banks packed with spectators - it provides a great setting.'

● **Run it** The 2016 race is on September 25. For more details, visit macc-half.co.uk

THE RUNDOWN

Macclesfield Half Marathon
Cheshire (2015 stats)

First man James Scott-Bucclough 1:14:32

First woman Victoria Perry 1:31:49

No. of starters/finishers 657/655 (99%)



Finishing stats

- 1:00-1:30: 5%
- 1:30-1:45: 22%
- 1:45-2:00: 33%
- 2:00-2:30: 35%
- 2:30-3:00: 5%

