

Reelers Trail



WITTON
WEAVERS
WAY

Walk
No. 2



7.5 miles / 12 km
(easy, with a couple of
short steep ascents)



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The Reelers Trail forms part of the long distance Witton Weavers Way.

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This walk covers a beautiful rural landscape where historical sites of industry, farming and religion combine to produce a fascinating trail.

You are strongly advised to use these walk details in conjunction with OS Explorer map No. 287, West Pennine Moors.

Stout shoes or boots plus waterproofs are recommended.

START: Livesey Library, Cherry Tree Lane, off Preston Old Road (A674) BB2 5NX

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: 1/2 mile from Cherry Tree railway station. A frequent bus service operates along Preston Old Road

PARKING: Cherry Tree Lane

Alternative parking and start point (see OS map for exact location): Abbey Village, A675 Bolton Road PR6 8DP



8-9

From Livesey Library, at Cherry Tree, take the path up to the Leeds and Liverpool canal.



Leeds & Liverpool Canal at Feniscowles

The canal (127 miles) is the longest single canal in Britain and took from 1770 to 1816 to complete. It was originally planned to pass through Whalley, following the Rivers Calder and Ribble. The economic draw however of the rapidly expanding cotton towns of East Lancashire was too great an opportunity for the merchants and builders to miss.

Turn right under the bridge along the towpath for 1 1/2 miles.

Whilst on the towpath you will cross the former Blackburn to Chorley railway line built 1866-9. There was a station at Feniscowles but the line fully closed in 1968.

You will also walk underneath Livesey Branch Road, a short turnpike road opening in 1810, linking Ewood to Feniscowles.

As you approach a mill tower for the Sun Paper Mill on the right go under the steel bridge, up the ramp and over the bridge.

There were two paper mills here; the Sun and the Star built during the 1870's. The Star was the first local firm to have electricity. Both mills turned rags into paper and had tramways to the canal to deliver raw materials.

9-10

Proceed along the track up the field towards Stanworth Farm and the M65. As you approach the motorway, at the top of the field, turn left down the hill to the wood. At the bottom of the field turn right under the motorway and follow the wood boundary through two fields. At the corner of the second field climb the stile into Stanworth Wood. This woodland is part of the largest area of semi-ancient woodland in south Lancashire and is botanically very rich. Drop down into the wood on the path to your left, heading for the wooden handrails which lead down to the river. Cross the river by the wooden footbridge.



Cows

with a couple of short steep ascents)



WITTON WEAVERS WAY

Excellent watering hole The Royal Arms

10-11

A stile can be seen at the top of the hill. Climb the field and go over the stile then cross the bridge, directly ahead, over the disused railway.

Go straight across the field keeping to the left of Bradley Farm, then turn right through a gate into the farmyard. The footpath at this point turns left then right and you walk immediately in front of the farmhouse. Then follow the long track seen ahead. The track goes through three fields. At the end of the third field do not go through the gate to Red Lea Farm, but turn right along the fence.

Climb a stile and then a second stile on your left. Continue alongside the wood on your right. Drop down a grassy track just before the farm. Continue down the steps to cross the River Roddlesworth. Turn right when you reach the road, climbing it as it winds up the hill. Continue along the road to the car park of the Hare and Hounds Public House and turn immediately left along the track by the culvert.

Here you are skirting the southern end of Abbey Village. The name is thought to have arisen from a connection with Whalley Abbey. The village was built at the time of the industrial revolution to serve a large cotton mill.

11-12

The route takes you along Rake Brook Reservoir. As you approach the house go down the steps on the left and cross by footbridge or the ford. Follow the track until you reach Lower Roddlesworth Reservoir. Turn left and cross the embankment. The path swings right and goes up into the wood.

12-13

Follow the track for about 500 yards, climbing gradually. Just before a fork turn left up a path, through a kissing gate and into a field.

Climb the field, heading towards the right hand side of the 17th century Higher Hill Farm, seen ahead. Go through the stone stile, turn left and through another stile into the farm lane. **As you pass the farm, take note of the garderobe on the outside of this grade II listed building. The small room jutting out on the first floor was once the height of fashion in hygienic toilets!** You are now entering the picturesque stone-built village of Tockholes, with several large farmhouses dating from the 17th century. The Manor House, on the site of the now derelict Hollinshead hall is visited on the Tackler's Trail.

Tockholes is a popular starting point for walks - there is Vaughn's Country Cafe (with an information point) next to the Royal Arms, with a public car park. This is a good starting point for walks around Roddlesworth, Tockholes, Darwen Moor and up to Darwen Jubilee Tower.



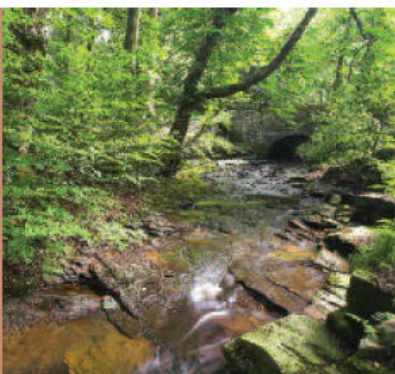
After leaving Higher Hill Farm continue up the lane, passing the old weavers' cottages and turning left at the junction. Take the lower track to the left and then turn left down the narrow bridleway to the left of the row of houses known as Cheetham Buildings. **This bridleway is one of the oldest highways in this district. It is an ancient packhorse road dating back to Saxon times and part of the old roadway from Rossendale to Preston.**

At the crossroads at the bottom of the hill notice on the right hand corner the old parish pound or pinfold, where stray animals were impounded until reclaimed. On the opposite corner is an old graveyard. **In 1803 a breakaway group from the Congregational Chapel built the Bethesda Chapel on this site. In 1899 the stones from the decaying chapel were used to build a new Sunday school, it now serves as the Village Hall. Victoria Terrace, the row of cottages on the opposite right-hand corner (once called Bethesda Row), were handloom weavers' cottages**

Continue ahead down the lane, bearing right and keeping to the made road, following it round past the United Reformed Chapel.

Tockholes was a stronghold of Nonconformity in the time of Charles II and this chapel was known as the Mother of Nonconformity as one of the first established in the area in 1662.

Roddlesworth Wood





Continue along the road past the memorial Lych Gate, erected in 1920 to honour villagers who gave their lives in the First World War. Walk past Lodge Farm (a splendid example of a farmhouse with combined shippon) then onto the renovated Chapels Barn. **Over the wall past the barn can be seen Chapels Farm, another listed 17th century farmhouse.** A few yards further along on the left is the Church of St Stephen, with a Lych Gate erected in honour of a former Mayor of Blackburn. At the bottom of the churchyard notice the old school and the outdoor stone pulpit which dates from 1910.



The Toches Stone 684 ad

On the top of the main path to the church on the left is the Toches Stone, supposedly a remnant of the old Parish Preaching Cross dating from 684, from which the parish takes its name. Behind the church is the spindle-shaped grave of John Osbaldeston, the inventor of the Weft Fork, a device that stopped a loom when the weft snapped.

Continue walking up Chapels Lane and turn left onto the road, which runs along the top side of the church.

13-14

As you approach several new houses, find the path on your right and climb the stile. Follow the left-hand fence line to the corner of the field, cross the ditch on a small wooden bridge and climb the stile. Continue down the edge of the field over another stile and halfway down the next field climb a stile between a gate and a twisted old oak tree. Follow the hedge line down to the wood. At the bottom of this field climb the stile into the wood and cross the footbridge over Sheep Bridge Brook. **In this area there is evidence that a clash took place here during the Civil War, with the remains of 40 horses and various relics having been unearthed.**

On emerging from the wood go straight ahead through the field keeping the wall on your left. Climb the ladder stile alongside the motorway and follow the path until it emerges onto Stockclough Lane near Higher Whitehalgh Farm.



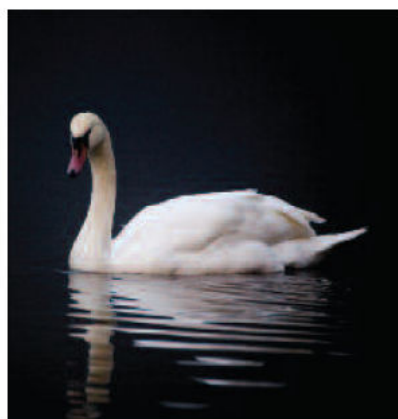
Memorial to John Osbaldeston

14-15

Turn right onto the lane and under the M65. After about 400 yards turn second right towards Lower Whitehalgh Farmhouse. Do not go into the farmyard but go left through the gate following the track along the wall. Follow the path, then turn left towards the farm at Fowler Fold. Climb the stile in the wall to the right of the buildings, then walk up the farm track to the road. **On a clear day Black Combe in Cumbria can be seen to your left.** Cross Brokenstone Road, climb the stile and continue ahead, keeping to the fence on your left passing Horden Farm. Climb the stile and continue down the track to Livesey Branch Road.

15-8

Turn left along Livesey Branch Road, then right down Pinewood. Stay with the road as it curves round. Then just past Burford Close go through the railings down the narrow lane to the right. Cross the canal returning to the library.



Swan on canal

USEFUL INFORMATION

Hare & Hounds, Abbey Village
(01254) 830334

Vaughn's Country Cafe
(01254) 708568

THE WEST PENNINE MOORS

EXPLORE! DISCOVER! ENJOY!

- Explore 90 square miles of unspoilt moorland, numerous reservoirs and beautiful woodland
- Discover hidden valleys and explore some of the many historic villages
- Enjoy getting close to nature – see Curlews, Peregrines and Brown hares
- Wander the long distance walk, the Witton Weavers Way – the full 32 miles, or one of the shorter circular walks
- Large areas of the West Pennine Moors are designated 'Open Access'



see Ordnance Survey map Explorer series No. 287 West Pennine Moors.

For more information contact The Great House Barn 01204 691549 or visit www.westpenninemoor.com

NOTES FOR WALKERS

Essential Kit

The OS Explorer Map No. 287 (West Pennine Moors) provides excellent aid and information on all areas covered in this guide. (Ordnance Survey tel: 08456 050505 / www.ordsvy.gov.uk)



Further Information

If you are travelling to the start of the walk using public transport, please contact **Travel Line on:** Tel: 0871 200 2233.

Web: www.traveline.org.uk

National Rail Enquiries

Tel: 08457 484950.

For information on local attractions, events, places of interest and accommodation, please contact **Blackburn Visitor Centre.**

Tel: 01254 688040.

Email: visit@blackburn.gov.uk

Web: www.visitblackburn.co.uk

Alternatively visit the **Blackburn with Darwen website** at:

www.blackburn.gov.uk/parks

Blackburn with Darwen Countryside Services Office. Tel: 01254 55423

for countryside information and events or email: countryside@blackburn.gov.uk



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