

## THE WALK

**T**he flat lands of the Lancashire Fylde are not such popular walking destinations as its hills. Yet a walk in this area can be just as rewarding, especially on a dry day in late winter.

This is a fine walk to introduce you to the quiet countryside of the Fylde. Remarkably there are fine views to be had on this route especially towards the Bowland Fells.

**Start:** Catforth Village Centre. From junction 32 M6 take the A6 northwards towards Garstang. At the traffic lights at Broughton turn left onto the B5269 towards Woodplumpton and Inskip. One mile past Woodplumpton turn left onto School Lane. This will bring you to Catforth village centre.

**Directions:** From the corner of Bay Horse Lane keep ahead northwards along Catforth Road. In a little over 200m turn right onto a footpath and cross two fields until you reach a footbridge across Woodplumpton Brook. Do not cross the bridge but turn right and follow the brook downstream. This field will be typical of all the fields that follow. Flat it may be but it is not entirely easy walking – especially after periods of wet weather when the ground becomes saturated.

After crossing School Lane cross a footbridge over the brook and continue with the brook on your right.

After a stile enter a large pasture and bear slightly left away from the brook towards a canal bridge. When you reach the bridge named Whinnyfield) access the towpath and turn left under the bridge.

The Lancaster Canal constructed in the late 18th century can lay claims to being one of the most attractive waterways in Britain. You now have the pleasure of an hour in its company.

Between Ashton basin in Preston and Tewitfield there are no locks on the main stretch.

This allowed a “fast” packet boat service to be established which could average 10 miles an hour between Preston and Kendal.

With the water on your right continue along the towpath for over 3k/2 miles.

The waterway cuts through pleasant unassuming countryside with good views across to the high fells of Bowland.

After nearly an hour turn left onto a footpath just before pylons cross the canal on a right hand bend.

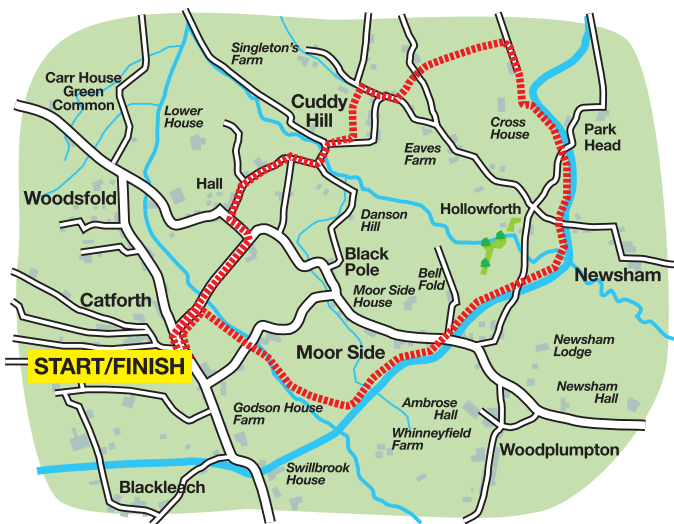
Follow the hedge to a stile and then turn right. Cross the next stile into a lane that passes close to large houses.

Keep ahead for 300m and then turn left onto a footpath that passes through the yard of a house.

This path traverses three fields and after



# Canal and field walk



the fourth reaches Bensons Lane. Cross Bensons Lane to a stile and after walking through a garden cross the next stile with a hedge on your right. Turn right at the next stile in the hedge and continue to reach the rear of the Plough at Eaves. The route now winds its way through a network of paths and lanes on its way back to Catforth. Turn right onto Eaves Lane and bear right at the junction on Brierley Lane. After almost 200m turn left on to a

## FACTFILE

**Distance:** 10k/6m

**Time:** 2.5 – 3.5 hours

**Map:** OS Explorer 286 Blackpool & Preston

**Summary:** Flat, easy walking, but with muddy field corners and stiles

footpath that takes you across two fields to reunite you with Eaves Lane. Turn right.

Follow the lane round to the left over New Mill Bridge and then turn right into Cinder Lane. Keep on Cinder Lane to its junction with B5269 Lewth Lane. Though not busy by town standards nonetheless this is a busier stretch of road than any encountered thus far.

Turn left and then at Lewth Farm turn right on to a footpath accessed by a metal gate on the right.

Keep ahead with the hedge on your left. The path crosses a number of wooden footbridges and then with the hedge now on your right reaches Woodplumpton Brook which is where you came in. Cross it and keep ahead to retrace your steps back to the car park.

**Walk devised David Johnstone and described by John Griffiths and Bob Clare. Visit [www.lancashirewalks.com](http://www.lancashirewalks.com) for an illustrated version of this walk.**



## NATUREWATCH

With Len Blacow

**A**s we move towards March, there are more signs of spring winning its annual tussle with winter.

The days are lengthening and temperatures are rising, spring flowers appear and activity amongst our birds and animals becomes more noticeable. Listen out for early morning bird song, you may hear a great spotted woodpecker drumming on a branch hoping to attract a female and warn other males to keep out. Those of you living near the coast may hear curlews calling as they fly inland to their breeding sites. Here in Wyre we are blessed with a population of brown hares – a walk through rural farmland should reveal their presence. Watch for them careering around the fields and occasionally boxing. This behaviour is not – as once thought – part of their courtship, but females fending off unwanted attention from males.

We have arranged a brown hare workshop on Sunday March 6, where you can learn all about hares and how to help with a population survey aimed at finding out how many hares live in our area.

On Sunday March 20 we have a walk through some of the best brown hare habitats, or you can work with an artist to produce your own portrait of a hare. Urban wildlife can be exciting, so why not join us on a walk through two small woodlands connected by a path along a good example of damp grassland habitat.

We will be looking for signs of spring and listening for great spotted woodpeckers. If you are new to walking or thinking of starting, why not join the Countryside Rangers in a map reading workshop, an indoor and outdoor event aimed at teaching you all the skills you need to get the best out of your walks.

We have a walk with a difference on Thursday March 24 when we will take the Super 8 bus from Garstang to Scorton and walk back via the Lancaster Canal.

Why not learn about gardening for wildlife at a session on Saturday, March 19.

Full details of all our walks and events can be found in the recently published 'What's On In Wyre 2011' guide, available free from tourist information centres, the Civic Centre in Poulton, Wyre libraries or online at [www.wyrebc.gov.uk/Find/Active\\_Wyre](http://www.wyrebc.gov.uk/Find/Active_Wyre)