

THE WALK

Longton Brickcroft is one of a number of sites around the county where industry has been supplanted by nature. Until the early 1970s clay was extracted from the area on the edge of the village of Longton. When the site was worked out it was left and within a relatively short time was colonised by plants, insects and birds. Pits became ponds; ponds that could be stocked with fish. In the 1980s the old workings became subject to a fierce environmental dispute when a developer was given permission to build houses on the site. In the end a compromise was worked out for a partial build leaving the amenity that can be seen today. In 1998 the Brickcroft was created a local nature reserve managed by South Ribble Borough Council. This walk starts from the visitor centre and a circuit of the south pond nearby is recommended before commencing the walk proper.

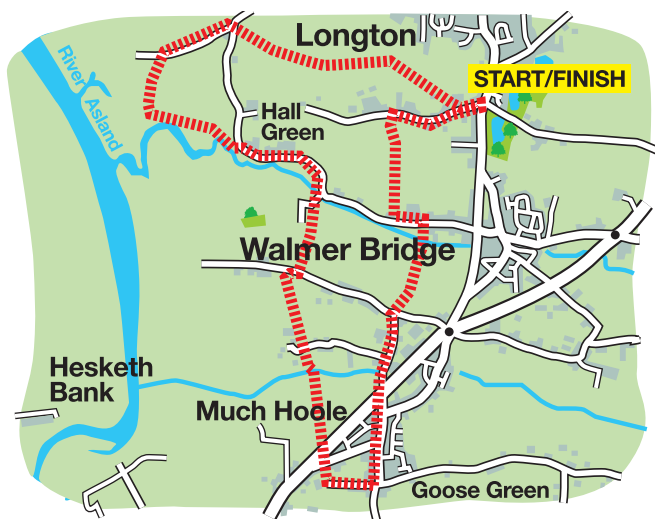
Start: Longton Brickcroft. From Preston city centre take the A59 towards Liverpool. At Hutton roundabout take the second exit Liverpool Old Road. Follow this through Hutton and then Longton. The Brickcroft is on the left immediately after Drumacre Lane, before you reach Walmer Bridge.

Directions: After the circuit of the pond (mandatory) walk pass the visitors centre to Liverpool Road. Cross and turn into Hall Lane. Walk down this for just under 600m and take a footpath on the left. Keep ahead on this for 600m as it crosses pastures to reach Hall Carr Lane. Turn left. Now walking towards Walmer Bridge after 250m turn onto the drive of the first property on the right. The footpath is on the immediate right of the garage. After a footbridge the path enters a large open pasture.

After a stile bear slightly right to reach a stile giving out onto Station Road. Cross into Brook Lane and follow up to the very busy A59. The next part of the walk is optional depending on whether you would like to avail yourself of the services of Much Hoole. The route crosses the A59 continuing on Brook Lane and then turns right onto Liverpool Old Road to enter the village. Follow this past the Smithy Inn back to the A59. Cross with care and take a footpath opposite which in spring and summer maybe hard to locate in the hedge. [Readers declining the attractions of Much Hoole can pick up the path by turning right along the A59 and walking 600m towards Liverpool to reach it.] Initially the path keeps close to the field boundary on the



Stroll's a real brick

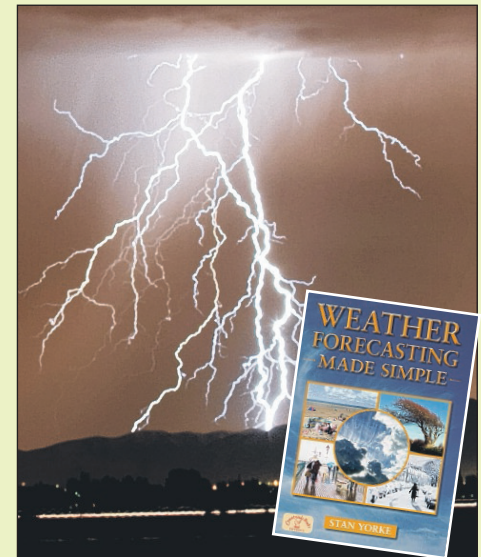


left. After crossing Rakes Brook the path soon arrives at the end of Pines Lane. The route continues along a path that skirts a large property to the left. After 300m the route crosses the old railway line that linked Preston and Southport and was closed after 1964. Continue to a stile by a metal gate leading onto Station Road. Turn right and then left onto a track that takes you towards a nursery (plants!). Follow the path as it bears right and then crosses into the adjoining field. After two stiles the path bears left

FACTFILE

Distance: 8k 5m
Time: 2 - 3 hours
Summary: Flat easy walking
Map: *OS Explorer 286 Blackpool & Preston

to join the farm drive that leads to Hall Carr Lane. Turn left. Keep on the lane as it passes the extended farm complex of Hall Green on the right, then, as the lane bends to the right keep ahead on a footpath that crosses pasture to a stile besides a metal gate. Cross this and after a footbridge turn right onto a track leading to the Dolphin Inn. (Alternatively you can walk along the embankment before you and turn right to reach the Dolphin.) Walk along the lane and turn right into Hall Carr Lane. Almost immediately take a footpath on the left. This leads across pasture for over 1400m. Over on your right you will see a mast and then a water treatment plant. The path reaches a lane (Meadow Head) that leads past some impressive glass houses to turn right. At its junction with Hall Lane turn left for the Brickcroft. *Walk devised by John Griffiths and Bob Clare. Hit www.lancashirewalks.com for more walks exploring the diversity of the Lancashire countryside.*



NATUREWATCH

The weather men (and women!) seem reluctant to issue confident forecasts more than one week in advance despite the vast technological resources at their disposal. So what can we do? We all want to know what the weather will be for the week ahead in order to plan our days. Even with TV forecasts it can be difficult to interpret the meaning of the weather charts, and reliability is doubtful beyond a 24 hour period. Author Stan Yorke shares these frustrations and has looked at what we can do ourselves to forecast the weather - which turns out to be quite a lot. His new book, *Weather Forecasting Made Simple*, explains in simple language the basic weather principles, how to interpret daily weather forecasts and how to predict local weather, thereby gaining a better comprehension of Met Office and TV forecasts. The book also contains a special illustrated section on how to "read" different skies and cloud formations.

Stan says: "Weather forecasters are getting better, but still have a long way to go, so it is easy to understand the appeal of being able to forecast what the local weather will be doing for yourself." Countryside Books are offering copies of *Weather Forecasting Made Simple* to *Life!* readers at a special price of £4.99 - £1 off the £5.99 cover price - inclusive of P&P. Print your name, address and book title on a sheet of paper and send it with a cheque (payable to Countryside Books) to Blackpool Gazette Offer, Countryside Books, 2 Highfield Avenue, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5DS; ring Newbury (01635) 43816 or email: info@countryside-books.co.uk. We have six copies to give away. Answer the question: What does Met stand for? Then send your entry, with name, address and phone number, to: Weather Book Competition, *Life*, Editorial, The Gazette, Avroe House, Avroe Crescent, Blackpool, FY4 2DP. Closing date September 3, 2010. Usual Gazette rules apply.

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