

THE WALK

We know, we know – the more astute of you will point out that Widdop is in that other place (whisper it, Yorkshire), so how can it be a Lancashire walk?

However since this is our 75th contribution to Life! magazine, we have sought a special dispensation; for although this walk undoubtedly starts elsewhere, the best part is in Lancashire. All in all this is a pretty wild walk in the border country of the South Pennines. It is a landscape of sweeping moors littered with outcrops of millstone grit eroded into weird forms by the action of wind, water and ice.

Start: Widdop Reservoir (right). From M65 junction 12 turn right onto A682 towards Brierfield. After 1/2 mile turn left at traffic lights in Brierfield centre onto Halifax Road. Keep on this for 1 1/2 m to reach a T junction close to Nelson Golf Course. Turn right. At Haggate turn left at the Sun Inn. After 2 1/2 m turn right at a junction. The road drops into the Thursden Valley before climbing up spectacularly towards Heptonstall and Hebden Bridge having all the feel of a border pass which is exactly what it is for once over its summit you cross into Calderdale. The car park is beyond Widdop Reservoir on the right.

Directions: Car park to Lad Law. 5k 3m From the car park cross the road obliquely right and find a way through the tussocky grass and heather onto the edge of the moor. The idea being that once you reach the edge (you'll know it when you see it) bear left and follow it, roughly parallel to Widdop Reservoir, towards a prominent high point on the skyline. (Grey Stone Hill) On the way you will encounter a number of rock outcrops. Grey Stone Hill is a fine view point. The route now turns north westwards (right) to a large outcrop called Dove Stones a little under a mile away. It is a tough mile for there isn't much in the way of a path. The largest rock, a little way to the left of the main group, is Dove Stone. It looks nothing like a Dove. From here the route follows the contour round to Lad Law. If the prospect of forcing your way through more peat and heather daunts you be of good cheer for since reaching Dove Stones you are now back in Lancashire! Dropping off from the outcrop bear left keeping height as the route begins to swing towards Boulsworth Hill. Below its highest point there is a fence to negotiate before scaling up the last few metres. Once on top it is a short way to the trig point.

Lad Law to car park. 6k 4m Lad Law provides a wonderful viewing platform with a panorama encompassing a good chunk of Red and White Rose counties. From the trig point bear left, past a distinctive outcrop on the edge (the



Crossing county line



eponymous Lad Law Stones), and cross a stile. The footpath (one of the clearer ones) leads down the flank of the hill, and after crossing a stream reaches a flat, grass covered area evidently once the site of a building. From here a landrover track leads out to the Widdop Road, a mile away. After all the exertion over the moors you'll appreciate this track and you'll make good progress along it. When you reach the road turn left and then pick up a footpath on the

FACTFILE

Distance: 11k 7m

Time: 3 – 4 hours

Summary: A demanding moorland walk

Map: OS OL 21 South Pennines

right which keeps roughly parallel to the road and indeed will bring you back to it shortly after crossing the border into TOP. Then at a footpath sign turn right onto the Burnley Way. After crossing a brook the route begins to climb along the fellside with a ruined wall on your left. Here you will have fine views of the reservoir. 1400m from the road it meets the downward track that is now part of the Pennine Bridleway. Turn left and walk downhill to the end of the reservoir close to a utility building clearly inspired by Egyptian monumental architecture. Turn left across the dam. A footpath on the right a short distance from the road will take you back to the car park.

● Walk devised by Malcolm McCulloch and described John Griffiths and Bob Clare. Hit www.lancashirewalks.com for more walks exploring the diversity of the Lancashire countryside.



BIRDWATCH

with Kate Humble

It's an exciting time in the garden at the moment. Everything is starting to grow and the breeding season is in full swing. The birdsong in my garden can be deafening and the colours and smells of the flowers are gorgeous. Spring is finally here and there's no better time to get some earth under your fingernails and some air in your lungs. A good way to add more splashes of colour is to put bedding and herbaceous plants in your borders. These can be picked up for minimum cost in all garden centres and if you're not sure which ones are native and the best for wildlife, ask a member of staff or visit the RSPB's Homes for Wildlife website for information at www.rspb.org.uk/hfw. Remember to use peat free compost to plant them which is much better for the environment. Once they're in, you can sit back and relax watching all the different bees, hoverflies, butterflies and other insects that come to drink the nectar of these plants. And providing food for insects means you are also providing food for baby birds, hedgehogs and amphibians. Making your garden a beautiful haven for wildlife of all shapes and sizes.

It's important that we keep putting out traditional food for birds at this time too. Don't forget the food you put out could well be feeding hungry chicks as well as adult birds for the next few weeks so if you put out leftovers in addition to seed mixes, make sure they are broken down into small pieces. It's best to avoid peanuts during the breeding season as they are a little too big and can be difficult to digest.

I know I don't need to remind you that if you find a baby bird out of the nest, please leave it alone, however vulnerable it seems and however much noise it is making. The parents won't be far away and your intervention could do more harm than good. By providing them with food, water and shelter, you will already be playing your part.

Keep an eye out for our summer visitors from Africa making their big push north. Thousands of birds head into Northern Europe, including Britain, to breed. You could be lucky enough to see weary travellers like chiff chaffs, willow warblers or blackcaps stop off briefly at your bird table to feed and take a rest. If they do, that's a sure sign that you're doing everything right!