

Lancashire Walks

Worsthorne



The Gorples Dale running almost due east from Worsthorne near Burnley is one of the finest moorland tracks in the north of England. Leaving behind the last vestiges of settlement it takes you up into the treeless uplands of the South Pennines – exhilarating anytime of year, but at the close of winter, particularly bracing, especially if you catch a cold, bright day. However there is one drawback; although starting in deepest Lancashire, the route strays over into Calderdale, a metropolitan borough of that other place. But do not let this put you off enjoying a wonderful walk.

Start: Worsthorne village square close to the church. From the M65 junction 10 follow signs for Burnley FC. After passing Turf Moor on your left continue up Brunshaw Road. In just under a mile from the football ground turn left at a mini roundabout (Brownside Road) in the direction of Worsthorne.

Distance: 15 Km 9½ miles

Time: 4-5 hours

Terrain: Overall this is a demanding walk with over 1000 feet of ascent. Route finding on return leg could be difficult in mist.

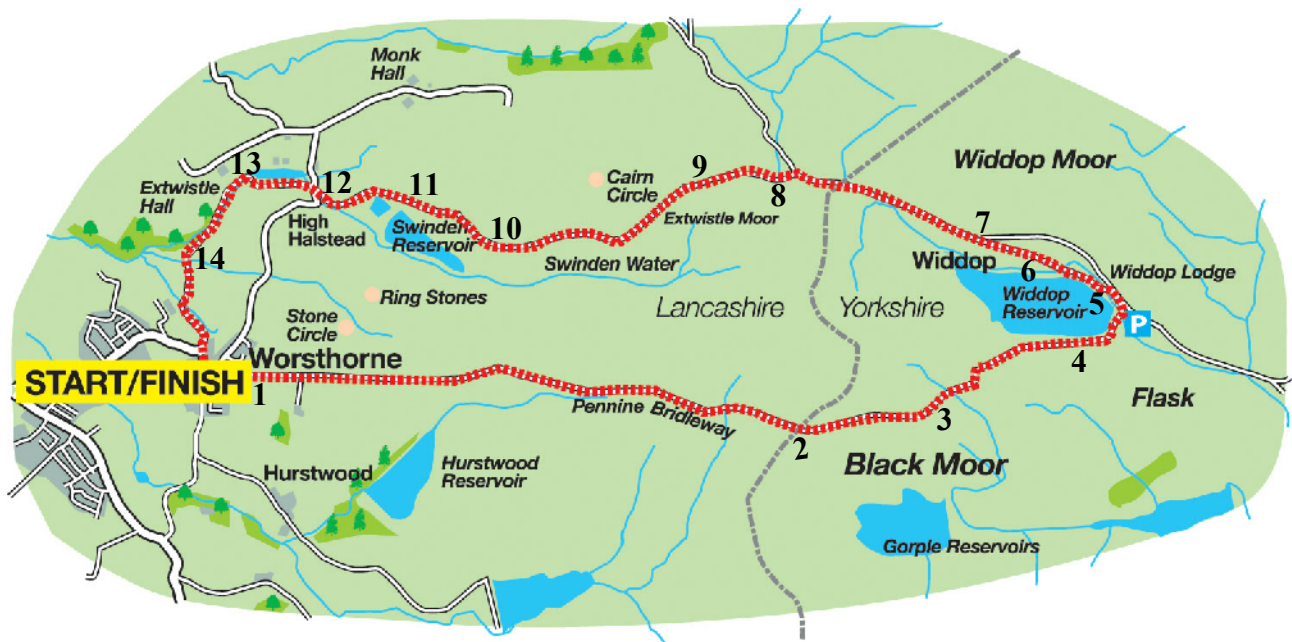
Map: OS OL21 South Pennines.

1. Worsthorne to Widdop Reservoir (6½ Km or 4½ miles: 2 hours)

Follow the sign post to Gorples Dale onto a road that takes you past the church on your right. To begin with the road has a tarmac surface (**Pic 1**) but as you past the last small holdings transforms into a stony track. It leads resolutely upwards climbing steadily. From time to time it is well worth looking back if the weather is fine for views across Burnley to Pendle Hill. Beyond electricity pylons the Pennine Bridleway joins the track from the right. Looking down to where it comes from there is an especially pleasing view of Hurstwood Reservoir. Of course all this is diversion of the real task of climbing the heights before you. After 4k over an hour's exertion the track levels out. (**Pic 2**) Off to the right you will see a gritstone outcrop giving its name to Harestones Hill. Indeed millstone grit becomes something of a theme on this lonely ridge with a great deal of it strewn around. The ones to the left are the Gorples Stones. For the next 1000m the track crosses the plateau ridge before making a long descent to Widdop Reservoir. (**Pic 3**) Keep on the track as it crosses the dam end (**Pic 4**) to reach a road.

2. Widdop to Worsthorne (8½ Km or 5½ miles: 2½ hours)

On reaching the road turn left and then 150m take a footpath on the left (**Pic 5**) than drops towards the reservoir passing Widdop Lodge which seems an exceptionally isolated place to live. Keep on the footpath as it skirts the reservoir until you reach a footbridge on the right. (**Pic 6**) This is close to the end of the reservoir. Cross the bridge and turn left with a feeder stream on your left. The permissive footpath will bring you to the road. (**Pic 7**) Turn left. Keep on the road until it levels out. At this point take a footpath on the left across boggy ground. Beyond a footbridge (**Pic 8**) the path improves but requires a degree of concentration to keep to it. After passing through a gate (**Pic 9**) it substantially improves on a long descent towards Swinden Reservoir. However as you near the reservoir wayfinding becomes less straightforward. Keep on the track to reach a second gate in a wall. After this the track skirts below the heaps of old workings to reach a gap in a wall. Now the track completely disappears. Its line drops below a rounded hill before you and then keeping parallel to the reservoir on your left arrives at a gate in a wall. (**Pic 10**) After this the path becomes a little more discernable. The electricity pylon before you provides a good aiming point. (**Pic 11**) Next to it is a squeeze stile leading into a very muddy field. Drop down to a ladder stile which will put you into a farm yard. The tarmac drive will take you down to Swinden Bridge. If time is an issue turning left on the road will take you to Worsthorne in 20 minutes but this would miss out on a lovely riverside amble. Cross the road to take a track besides Lee Green Reservoir. (**Pic 12**) Follow the track as it crosses the dam end (**Pic 13**) and then turn left over a stone stile. Follow the stream for 600m 10 minutes until in woods, you reach a wooden stile on the left. Cross this and then cross the stepping stones over the stream. (**Pic 14**) At the top of the steep bank turn left to reach the drive of a farm house. Follow the drive which will bring you back into Worsthorne.



Map by Chris Wyatt at The Blackpool Gazette

Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5



Pic 6



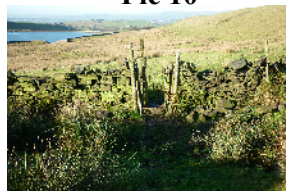
Pic 7



Pic 9



Pic 10



Pic 11



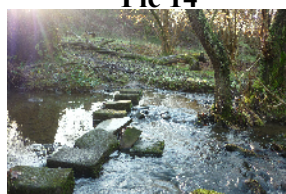
Pic 12



Pic 13



Pic 14



Pic 15

