

Calderdale Way, walk route – dramatic West Yorkshire!

Brighouse, Southowram, West Vale, Norland, Ripponden, Mill Bank

(11.5 miles; start satnav HD6 1PQ)

This section is a relatively easy introduction to the walk.

Start the walk at Sainsbury's supermarket in Brighouse, by the A641. Join the canal towpath to the left of and behind the supermarket. Follow the towpath on the right of the canal. Go under a road bridge and later over a small bridge to join the left side of the canal. Continue to the Avocet factory and turn right over the bridge to the main road. Cross over and then left up the dirt track into Freemans Wood.

Keep the wall on the left to pass a gate on the left and ignore a track branching up right. Continue to a stile on the left-hand corner of the wall. Over the stile a path and the 'Cat Steps' lead down to 'Fort Montague' farm, at Cromwell Bottom.

At the bottom of the steps, turn right up a grassy track into Cromwell Wood. Continue uphill until the path becomes a walled lane. Then turn left, at footpath sign, down and over the stream and up to a small gap in the wall. At the top turn right for a few yards then left through a stile into a field. Follow up with wall on right to a stile in the top right-hand corner.

The path now bears right, then left and through a stile into School Lane. Continue to the road, then right, up to the road junction at **Southowram** (2.3 miles).

Turn left up West Lane, passing Marshalls on the left. After Marshalls, the road continues to rise then drops down steeply. As the road descends, keep to the left, ignore road bearing off right. At right-hand bend, turn left at way-marked post. This is site of a lone house.

On entering the lane below the house, immediately angle right past some boulders to a stile. Go into a field and follow wall on right. Continue down to a wall stile on the right. Go over the wall, and follow the path downhill to skirt just left of a school. Continue to a stile at the right hand corner of the wall. Go through the next field to another stile taking you to the main road.

Turn left and head towards the farm. Here there is a sharp right-hand bend and then a left-hand bend. At this second bend take the stile on the right following the path downhill and left to a gate. Go through the gate and turn right down to a stile and then, following a winding path as it brings you out on the busy A629. Cross over the dual carriageway and then enter path and go left then right, down towards the canal at the bottom.

Emerge on the canal at the canal locks and cross to the other side. Turn right and follow the footpath with canal on the right. At the main road junction, turn left. Follow the road under the bridge, on the right hand side, to a car park. Join the rising path, on the left of the car park at a 45° angle to the road, to Clay House at **West Vale** (2.2 miles).

Go between Clay House *which was built around 1650, a former home of the Clay family, now publicly owned* and barn, to the rear of the house. Cross lawn to gap in boundary wall into the start of North Dean Wood.

Go half-right as signed and up a narrow path. This levels and becomes broader. Ignore steps on right, down to car park but instead go left on main path. At junction, take left rising path and continue to a 'T' junction at a wall. Go right then left at junctions up to steps at top of wood. Turn right, with fields on left.

Continue along top path, do not deviate right. Eventually go through wall pass into a descending track. Turn right and follow down 40 yards and then angle left alongside wall on left, ignoring downward link path to Copley village.

Keep to the wall as much as possible until you reach another stile. Go left over this and circle clockwise, around a boulder strewn mound. Keep close to the fencing on the right and follow to end of field. Go through a metal gate to the main road and turn right, down to the sharp bend and road junction. This is the Clough Moor Bridge at **Norland** (2.5 miles).

Go left on the signed path and onto Norland Moor, aiming for a squat pylon. Turn left by a wall and stone slab 'bridge', alongside the stream, continuing on to a stone cairn. Here take the right fork, along a rising path. This becomes a very straight path towards a metal fence at a disused underground water tank.

Follow the path edge to reach Ladstone Rock. Follow path keeping to right until the end descent to the main road. Go ahead and down until approximately 100 yards after the caravan park entrance (on left)

Turn right along a potholed track passing farm buildings and descend until you reach a stile in the left-hand side of the wall, just after a sign on right.

Here the path crosses a field to a track and eventually on to the main road. Turn right downhill. Pass the Fleece Countryside Inn and leave the main road taking the right fork, quieter road down to St Bartholomew's Church in **Ripponden** (3 miles).

Go past the Church, and across the River Ryburn packhorse bridge to The Old Bridge Inn. Follow the cobbled road up to the main Halifax to Rochdale road (A58) cross over and walk up Royd Lane.

After a short distance, approx 300 yards, go right through stone gate-posts below a bungalow, bearing left through a stile. This now follows a paved path through fields to Birks Farm. When emerging through a small gate, bear left to follow another track in between walls.

At the top go through the gate and follow the wall on the left to emerge through a wall stile in to another lane. Bear left up here to arrive at Soyland Town. Turn right to pass Making Place Hall.

After approx 100 yards, go right, through a stile on a paved path onto Highfield Lane. Turn right towards the farm and then next left through a stile leading through fields. Then down steep steps to an access lane. Bear left then immediately right down Foxen Lane to **Mill Bank** bottom (1.5 miles).

(bus service to Halifax at the top of the road, in Mill Bank)