

WALK 24 WHITWORTH SKYLINE

START LOBDEN GOLF CLUB

(NB Ideally park below the golf club please, rather than in its car park – at weekends definitely so.)

DISTANCE 14 MILES

TIME BETWEEN 4 AND 8 HOURS

NATURE OF WALK A CHALLENGE!

The annual walk goes clockwise one year, then anticlockwise the next. These are anticlockwise instructions, giving you the option of walking just the first 5 miles of the Eastern Skyline (and hopping on a bus to get you back to below the start). You could then do the 9 miles of the Western another time. Or you could mix and match – **red numbers** on instructions and map show where the Skyline route intersects with others in this series. And, of course, you could start at Britannia, say, or Healey Corner. If history is your thing, you'll want to download the commentary available at <https://soundcloud.com/user-405332957/sets/whitworth-skyline-walk-eastern-anticlockwise-route>. The **yellow numbers** in the words, and the **flags** on the map, show the places to tune in.

Walk down the Golf Club track **10**, looking ahead/left to the gap **4/19/20** in the raised tramway. Pass through and onto the path **3/11/12** which appears initially to head towards St Bart's Church **[1]**. Just before the wall step right: the old drainage channel is immediately to your right, and you should follow this as it skirts right **[2]** all the way round Brown Wardle **[3]**, past the Home Guard shooting huts, and across the flat gap **2/18** between Brown Wardle and Middle Hill. Approaching Middle Hill bear left, through an often

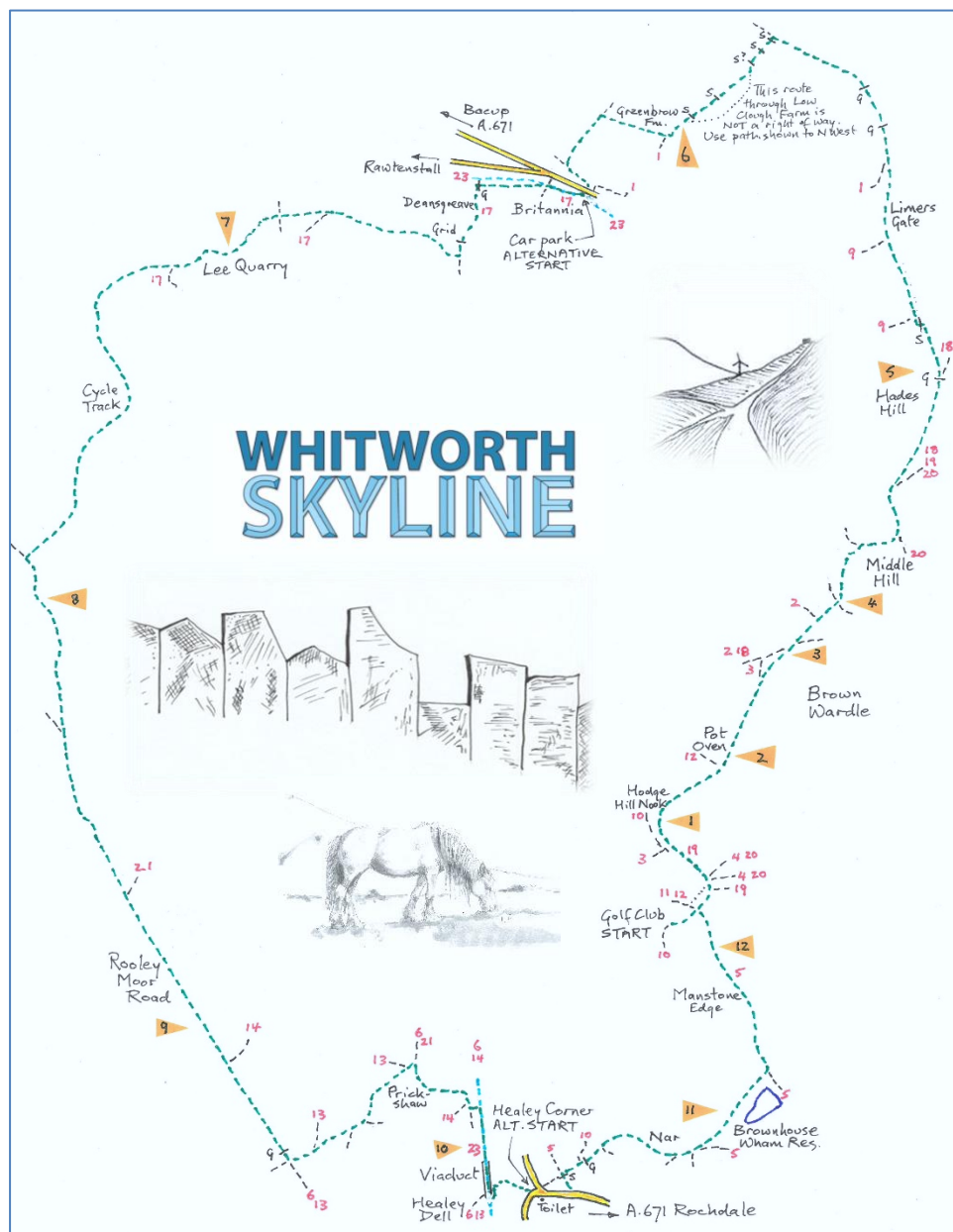
squelchy dip, then up an undulating path on the left flank of the hill **[4]**. At the top swing right between mounds and you'll see the wide windfarm access road. Turn right onto it, and walk a leftward loop to the point where the road trends off up and right. **19/20** Near the end of this bend there is an easy, safe way across the ditch to your left – don't jump, please. Now turn right, directly up the mossy slope. Soon you'll meet a broad track, directly ahead, next to a fence, which you should keep on your immediate right. Follow the obvious track, straight on, over the brow of Hades **[5]** to a gate. **18** Go through, but NOT down the obvious path (you'll end up in Yorkshire!): instead keep left, along the line of the fence, but not too close because that's rather tussocky and boggy. Just beyond a little cross-wall (over the fence) there's a stile. That's your goal.

Cross, and continue in the same direction as before **9**, along Limers Gate, gradually trending towards the left-hand wall, but not crossing it. You'll find yourself between walls/fence for a long while, and the walking here can be uneven and rather boggy if there's been recent rain, so take some care. **1** You'll eventually pass through a little gate, then, one field on, through a big gate where the ground is rarely anything other than glutinous. Follow the dogleg of the tall wall to your left, maybe picking your way carefully over or around innumerable streams and bogs, as far as a tall wall-stile. Climb up and over with real care – beware wire, and the steps can be rather slippery if it's wet. Once over go straight ahead across this field to a second, lower, stile. Go straight down the next field to a curious third stile. Down then, **but NOT through the farmyard**. Alec Thorpe kindly allows us to do that **ONLY on the occasion of the annual Skyline community walk in May - it is not a right of way**. At the little barn follow a clear footpath sign up to the right. The path contours above the farm, then, round the corner, you need to spy a well-marked stile half-left across the field. Now head for Greenbrow Farm, where you'll find another stile (or an open gate). **[6]** Here it's down again, following a

broad track **1** as it sweeps right to join the tarmac road that leads you down to the main road at **Britannia**. **1/17/23**

Cross the road, and join the cyclepath at the back of the car park. After 200m. cross the farm road, and select the left-hand path ahead (so that the old railway cutting dips down on your right). Go the length of this path, past the goats. At the bridge behind the Lancashire Sock factory turn left and go steeply up. Negotiate the cattle grid, then go hard right beyond the underground reservoir. Follow this old tramway all the way to Lee Quarry. **17** At the first crossroad (the blue Rossendale Council building is down to your right) go straight over, to the left of the first sculpture that pokes its head above the waste heap. After 100m., ignore the track going flat left, staying on the broad track till it starts to swing *down* and left. Stop here briefly and get your bearings. Straight ahead are wind turbines – that's your direction of travel. So, down the broad track, and right, to pass either side of the first pool, onto a potentially slippery bedrock track **[7]** heading for the big BURG graffito, then, keeping to the right of the second pool, go 70m. up the horrible scree **17**, and right, towards the re-emerging turbine. There's a short flat bit, then your way swings left and down onto a track which becomes a cycle path running to the left of a brook. Follow this up onto the open moor. Beware bikes, and give way to them please: this path was built for them principally, as the many ramps and cambered bends attest. Finally you'll hit Rooley Moor Road.

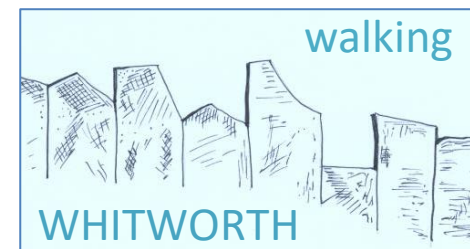
Turn left, downhill, and simply stay on the road **[8, then 9]**, until you reach the broad gate, where you turn left, following a Pennine Bridleway sign. **14/21** Ignore the first left turn **13**, then, at another PBW sign, go left and down, across the cattle grid **6**. At the next fork **14**, take the left, still going down, until the road swings right up to Prickshaw **13**. At the corner **6** (with *another* sign) go right, in front of the houses, **13** then left, down possibly slippery setts (care needed),



swinging right, then quickly left down shallow steps onto the old railway line. Go right, 6/10/23 pass under Station Road bridge [10] and cross the viaduct. At the far end drop off left 6 – take care: the steps are uneven and often slippery. Then it's right, up the hill to **Healey Corner 10**, where there's a public toilet.

Go straight ahead, past the toilet, on the right of the flat main road towards Rochdale. At the boundary, just past the smallholding and opposite Gandy Lane, cross carefully and go up a shady lane to a stile at the top, then swing right 5/10 (stone wall to your right) up to an obvious gate. Please secure this gate behind you. Walk the flat path to a giant stone at Nar, then straight ahead at the last house (with the reservoir wall on your right) [11] to the end of Brownhouse Wham Res; then left 5 up Man Stone Edge [12] to the Golf Club on your left. JF

Moorland Pony: Lindsay Ellis-
Fairhurst Logo: Beth O'Malley
Windy Gap and Flagstone Wall: JF



There are many splendid walks in Whitworth, but we couldn't let this series end without this one. As anyone who has taken part in the mid-May annual community Skyline walk will tell you, this is not a half-day stroll but a proper little expedition, so if you are new to walking treat this one seriously. It is a wonderful walk, over very varied terrain, most of it with stunning views. The annual walk attracts people of all ages, but it's a different prospect walking 14 miles alone rather than with 400 others, and without guide flags, checkpoints offering first aid and orange juice, and a meal at the end. So your footwear must be sturdy, you should take in your rucksack at least one more layer of clothing than you think you'll need, plus waterproofs, along with a first aid kit, some lunch, plenty of liquid, a phone and, arguably, OS Map 21 (South Pennines).

Thanks to all who have offered kind words about these leaflets. May you have many happy days walking, amongst these hills and others further afield. JF/SF

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