

## WALK 5

## RUSHY HILL

A slightly quirky walk, on decent terrain, with no great difficulties. Some outstanding views out of the valley.

START Whitworth Square

*There's a limited amount of parking in The Square, so if it's full drive up Whitworth Rake – the road in front of the old Red Lion – to a little car park about 150 metres up on the left. There's further parking at the top: over the cattle grid, straight on, through the gap, then left to some rough hard standing on the right with a panoramic view. (From here, your start is on the path immediately to your left/ahead, across to the continuation of the road you drove up.)*

TIME 1.5 hours brisk...but slow down and enjoy the views!

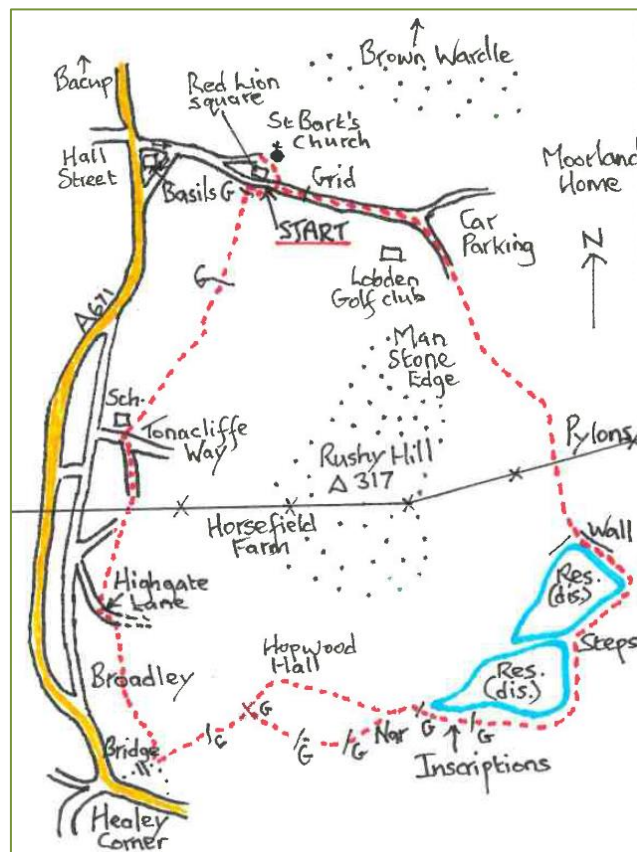
DISTANCE 3 miles?

FOOTWEAR Sensible – good footpaths

\*

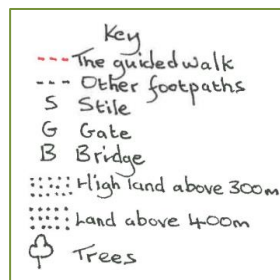
Go up from The Square, either directly via Whitworth Rake, or by ascending the steps to the left of the houses at the top of The Square and using the path through the graveyard.

*The famous Taylor family lived in The Square and you will pass their burial vault at the top of the steps. The Taylors were, in the 1750s, blacksmiths with a talent for mending animal fractures. They applied their talent to humans. Early generations were known as 'bone-setters', but*

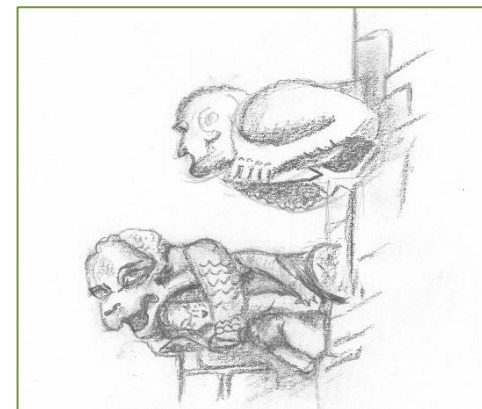


Map by Steve Flood

*succeeding generations became qualified practitioners, earning a national reputation for their herbal cures. Whitworth Heritage Centre on North Street (07434703972) has much more on their fascinating history, as does the leaflet for Walk 3. Also in the graveyard are the old town stocks, dating from 1683, but apparently never used for punishment.*



*St Bartholomew's Church was built in 1529, removing the need for worshippers to walk into Rochdale. The present building dates from 1850, but in 1984 it was gutted by fire. Local people raised funds to rebuild, but the church is now quite a lot shorter than the 19<sup>th</sup> century version.*



Gargoyle selection. Pencil/wash drawings by Leanne Davidson



If you've come through the graveyard, go either side of St Bartholomew's Church - the eeriest of the many gargoyles are found to the left – then join the Rake just below the cattle grid.

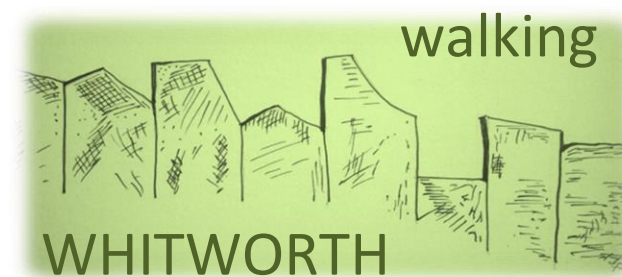
Ignore the turn to Lobden Golf Club and keep on up, passing through the gap between the 9<sup>th</sup> tee and the hill up to the club. Stay on the road (signed Moorland Home on a large rock) until it dives smoothly down to the left. *Note Brown Wardle to your left, where you may well see ponies or cattle belonging to any of the Commoners who have right to graze their animals on the open moor.* Don't go left to the Moorland Home, but straight ahead, on the rough stuff, with views of Blackstone Edge ahead of you, and descend to Brownhouse Wham reservoir.

Go through the gap in the res. wall and walk ahead with the reservoir on your right. After 200 metres or so there are steps down to a disused second reservoir. If the weather's fine look out from here to a wide, wide horizon-scape, from Crook Hill windfarm to your left, via Blackstone Edge, the broad tower of Oldham Civic Centre, possibly Jodrell Bank telescope, and the skyscrapers of Manchester city centre, right round to the power station at Fiddlers Ferry near Warrington to your right. Now walk down the steps and straight ahead along the obvious path. At its end pass through the wall, turn right through a kissing gate and enter an avenue of hopeful saplings. To your left have a close look at the inscriptions carved into the low rocks. Beyond the rocks is a flat path through a field: halfway across is a curious notice. The path narrows between fences, popping you out at the hamlet of Nar.

Just to your right is a large boulder (with another inscription), at the start of a flat track, which you should take. 100 metres along you have a choice – either continue along the flat track past a couple of idiosyncratic homesteads in a curiously boulder-strewn Wild West landscape; or bear up to your left, past the house, then down left at the brow (for 25 metres) to an unpromising

little gate on a raised ledge: walk across this field to a second gate, then across a second field, bearing right at its far end to a stone stile to the left of a field gate, over which you'll be reunited with the flat track you left earlier. Head left. Whichever your route you'll come to a metal gate – please shut it after you. Bear left and down, but *before* you pass under the bridge turn right up a narrow, twisty path, between silver birch trees, that leads you past a drowned quarry working that looks either enticing or forbidding depending on the weather.

Turn left on the road at the top, then, after 35 metres, go right onto a signed footpath with a yellow post to prevent cars from parking - there should be a tall fence on your left and small quarries on your right. Enjoy the profusion of heather and whinberry. Follow the path down to Horsefield Avenue, walk the short length of that, turn left onto Tonacliffe Way, then after 50 metres go right as though you are about to enter the school. The moorland path starts next to the school gate, and you'll now follow this for a while, past the Moorland estate, across the open Tonacliffe Tang, and along the top of the Waingap estate. If you're lucky you might see roe deer hereabouts. At the very far corner of the houses is a wooden gate. Go through, then sharp right, down a slightly precarious-feeling path to a point opposite St Bartholomew's Church on Whitworth Rake. The Square is about 200 metres down the hill. JF



There are splendid walks in Whitworth around Cowm Res, and into Healey Dell - but how about something a *bit* more adventurous? There are plenty of moorland paths, but how do you get to them; are you allowed; and can you get back without retracing your steps?

Well, you could be brave and just *go*...or you could take one of these guides. All are circular; all start from a place where you can leave a car; all fit comfortably into a morning or afternoon or a long summer evening; all have ups (to give you views) and downs (obviously); and all have route instructions, recently revised, along with a clear, simple map and a small helping of history.

Whitworth, you'll find, has a fantastic network of paths that can be knitted together into satisfying walks. And then? Invest in OS Explorer map OL21 (South Pennines) and explore. You might even find some walks that are half as good!

## WALK 5 - RUSHY HILL CIRCUIT

Reprint funded by Crook Hill Community Benefit Fund and Whitworth Sports Council