

Beamers Trail



WITTON
WEAVERS
WAY

Walk
No. 1



BLACKBURN
with
DARWEN
BOROUGH COUNCIL



WEST PENNINE MOORS

6 miles / 9.6km

(easy with some moderate
ascents and descents)



BEAMERS TRAIL 6 miles / 9.6km (easy)

The Beamers Trail forms part of the long distance Witton Weavers Way.

This is a beautiful walk covering both hill and valley, so some sections are fairly steep. This is particularly true at the start of the walk, but it should present no problems to the average walker. Stout shoes or boots plus waterproofs are recommended. You are strongly advised to use these walk details in conjunction with OS Explorer map No. 287, West Pennine Moors.

START. Witton Country Park main car park, off Preston Old Road BB2 2TP, GR 662271

PUBLIC TRANSPORT. ½ mile from Cherry Tree railway station. A frequent bus service operates along Preston Old Road

PARKING. Main car park of Witton Country Park



1-2

The Beamers Trail and the Witton Weavers Way begins in the picturesque Witton Country Park, a legacy from the Feilden family, wealthy landowners.

The 480 acres of mixed woodland, parkland and farmland surrounded the now demolished Witton House (built in 1800). The estate was bought by Blackburn Corporation in 1946 and opened up to the public.



1. View from Yellow Hills

From the main car park of Witton Country Park follow the road up to the wooden sports pavilion. Just before you turn right behind the pavilion, have a look at the visitor centre.

Set in an old 19th century stable block, the centre now houses a small animal collection, tearoom and information point.

For opening times, maps and trails contact Countryside Services (01254) 55423.

Follow the road behind the wooden pavilion or the path next to the ornamental lily pond. Then turn left up into Big Cover Wood. Cross the footbridge on the left over the brook and follow the path up through the wood, with open fields visible on your left. Go through the kissing gate out of the wood and follow the path across two fields, passing Higher Gardens Plantation on your right, then through the wooden gate onto Under Billinge Lane.

Witton Country Park is especially good for bird life. Along this section of the walk look out particularly for woodland species such as Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker, at any time of the year.

2-3

Turn left and immediately right through a gateway and follow the path that climbs left into Billinge Wood. Continue straight on at the first junction and on emerging from the wood climb the stile on the left-hand corner of the car park. Cross the field, making for the small 'hump' and continue along the path. These fields are known locally as the Yellow Hills¹ because of the covering of gorse bushes on their southern slope. On your right is the Clog and Billycock pub restaurant. Its name came from the unusual dress of its one-time landlord, as billycock is the old name for a bowler hat. Opposite the pub is one of two fine 18th century rows of handloom weavers' cottages. In the distance you can see the restored Woodfold Hall (now luxury flats), which was besieged in 1818 by 6,000 handloom weavers demanding an advance of wages. You then climb a stile into another field, go over the brow next to the quarry pond² and drop down the field, keeping to the fence on the left. Behind this fence is the deep disused Butler's Delph quarry. It is named after the Butler family of Pleasington Hall and was one of the last working freestone quarries in the area. Climb the stile at the bottom of the field.



2. Quarry pond on Yellow Hills

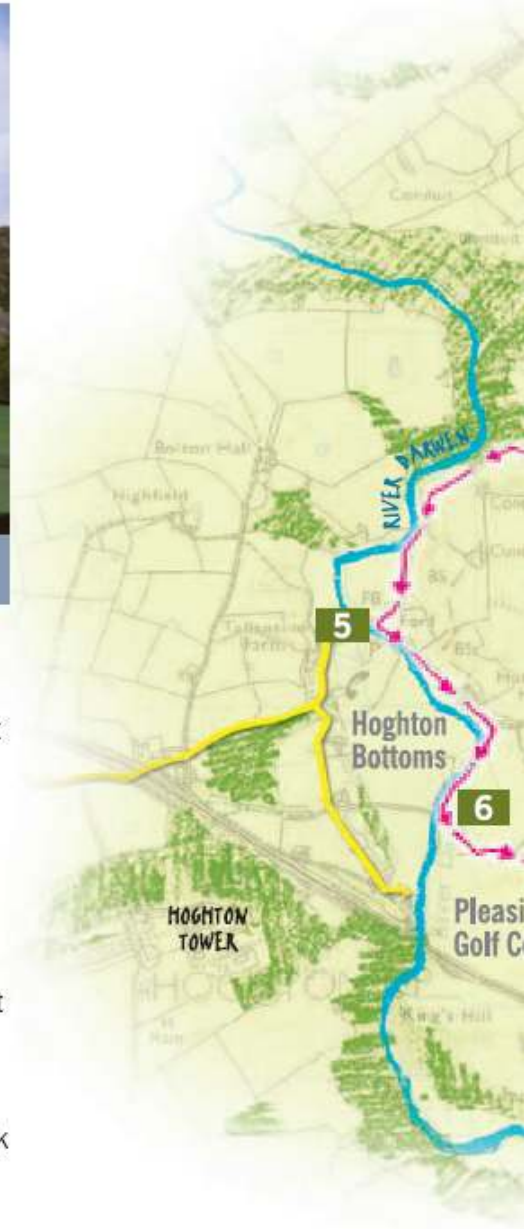
3-4

Turn left along the lane and almost immediately, just in front of a telegraph pole, turn right down the path into the wood. 50 yards into the wood take an indistinct right fork and climb the stile into the field, heading for the gate straight ahead. Go through the gate and continue ahead, keeping close to the trees on the right. Climb the stile at the gate and continue along the track, emerging onto the road which links Billinge End with the village of Pleasington.

4-5

Go straight across the road and through the gate. Follow the path towards Close Farm, going through the gap in the hedge on your right and skirting the garden fence to find the stile on the right hand side of Close farm. Go over the stile then immediately left past the farmhouse. In woodland behind Close Farm are the remains of a medieval alum mine. The workings extracted aluminous shale for Sir Richard Hoghton

of Hoghton Tower during the 17th and 18th centuries. Continue down the field straight ahead, following the line of the hedge on your right. Head for the gully that appears ahead and slightly to the left. Climb the stile on the right hand side of the gully. Follow the path, then steps, downhill then right following the fence on your right all the way down to the River Darwen. As the path meets the River Darwen follow the path past the Scout Hut to Lowe Park Farm. Climb the stile at the corner of the buildings, going past the farmhouse and through the gate.



3. Stone bridge at Hoghton Bottoms

WITTON WEAVERS WAY



5-6

On reaching the river turn left down the track, following the river on your right. Mallard, Kingfisher and Heron can all be seen on this stretch of the river. Follow the path alongside the river, bending to the right and reaching the stone bridge³. Upstream notice Hoghton Bottoms, a good example of a water-powered mill site, with a weir, race and mill stile all clearly visible.

Above the river is the imposing setting for historic Hoghton Tower. You will be able to catch a glimpse of the rear of the 16th century mansion. It was here that James I is said to have knighted the loin of beef – sirloin. It is open to the public but it is best to check the opening times (01254) 852986.



River Darwen



USEFUL INFORMATION

Witton Country Park Visitor Centre
(01254) 55423

Hoghton Tower (01254) 852986

Butlers Arms (01254) 201561

Clog and Billycock (01254) 201163

The Railway (01254) 201520



5. The Railway - alternative starting point

6-7

Turn left along the track. On your right is Pleasington Golf Club, an 18-hole course which has an excellent reputation among golfers nationally. Go through the stile in the wall on your right and follow the wall to the left to reach the next stile. Climb the stile into the open field and follow the fence up out of the valley. Over the next stile and onto a track that will lead you to Pleasington Village and the Butlers Arms. Pleasington was the manorial seat of such families as the Ainsworths and the Butler-Bowdens. As well as another fine row of handloom weavers' cottages it also boasts two public houses, both with crown green bowling greens.

The Railway⁵ is next to Pleasington railway station (a short distance from the Priory); This could be an alternative starting point using public transport.

7-1

Go straight across the road, continuing down the track with Pleasington Priory⁴ on your left. The Gothic Roman Catholic church has a doorway that is of special interest. The imitation Norman pointed arch features kneeling monks with an elaborate rose window above.

Continue down the sandy path to emerge at Pleasington playing fields. Turn right along the road to Butler's bridge. Once over the bridge turn immediately left along the river footpath to return to the starting point.



Witton Country Park Visitor Centre

THE WEST PENNINE MOORS

EXPLORE! DISCOVER! ENJOY!

- Explore 90 square miles of unspoilt moorland, numerous reservoirs and beautiful woodland
- Discover hidden valleys and explore some of the many historic villages
- Enjoy getting close to nature – see Curlews, Peregrines and Brown hares
- Wander the long distance walk, the Witton Weavers Way – the full 32 miles, or one of the shorter circular walks
- Large areas of the West Pennine Moors are designated 'Open Access'



see Ordnance Survey map Explorer series No. 287 West Pennine Moors.

**For more information contact
The Great House Barn 01204 691549 or
visit www.westpenninemoores.com**

NOTES FOR WALKERS

ESSENTIAL KIT

The OS Explorer No. 287 (West Pennine Moors) provides excellent aid and information on all areas covered in this guide. (Ordnance Survey
tel: 08456 050505 / www.ordsvy.gov.uk)



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are travelling to the start of the walk using public transport, please contact

Travel Line on:

Tel: 0871 200 2233.

Web: www.traveline.org.uk

National Rail Enquiries

Tel: 08457 484950.

For information on local attractions, events, places of interest and accommodation, please contact **Blackburn Visitor Centre.**

Tel: 01254 688040.

Email: visit@blackburn.gov.uk

Web: www.visitblackburn.co.uk

Alternatively visit the **Blackburn with Darwen website** at:

www.blackburn.gov.uk/parks

Blackburn with Darwen Countryside Services Office. *Tel:* 01254 55423

for countryside information and events or

email: countryside@blackburn.gov.uk



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Reprinted September 2010 by

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