

A Hodder Trod at Whitewell

We start at Whitewell. You can plug the postcode BB7 3AT into your Satnav, or use the what-3-word tag **troubles.bulky.helping** to find Whitewell, or if you prefer paper maps, the OS grid reference is SD65864683.

There is ample free parking next to St Michael's before we head back up to the main road in front of the Inn and look for a small road opposite, where Whitewell Social Hall is located. Our path heads out up the hill past the hall, to a stile on the right, which we take this before continuing across fields toward a farmhouse at Seed Hill.

As we approach the farmhouse, we see a rather curious tunnel portal over to our right, and head toward that – it's a water supply line. Our route continues around Seed Hill, heading Southwest, following the contour lines. We notice a series of "manholes" which presumably cover access points to the pipeline, and as we come round the hill need to cross several gates which are unusually large and ornate for such an isolated location.

As we progress around the hill, the road that we left at Whitewell gets ever closer, and before long we see a gate onto the road. We go through that gate and then turn left to walk along the road for a short while (about 200m). The road is generally quiet, and visibility is good, but as ever, please take extra care. Ahead of us on the right hand side, we see Ing Wood coming up to meet the road, and as it does so, we find a stile into a field with a path running along the left hand side of a small beck. Our path heads south west, and diagonally across the field parallel to the woodland that cloaks the edge of the Hodder.

From here we follow the Hodder downstream. The right is way is not on the riverbank but is never more than 200m away from the water, and the path is generally clear with waymarked gates. The path soon approaches the river quite closely and at this point we need to cross a ford over a tributary beck - this will only be an issue in exceptionally bad weather. At the time of our walk the ford was easy crossed even though the stepping stones that feature later in the walk were unsafe.

After the ford we start to head away from the river again, crossing a couple of newish wooden kissing gates, before heading uphill to meet a metalled track - this is the access for the farm at Stakes, and we head right along this road as far as the farm and then turn right to either use the stepping stones over the Hodder, or as we were obliged to do because of the water levels, to look at them before finding a safer route.

If the stepping stones are passable, feel free to cross, then when you meet a minor road, head left, then left again at a junction. In 200m you will see a gate into a field opposite Hodder Hole Wood – where we meet the safer, but longer route that we describe next.

To find a safe alternative to the stepping stones head back the way we came and at the end of the farm buildings take the footpath on the right and then climb steeply uphill – soon gaining excellent views down onto the farm. We are heading South now, and as the field levels off we head for the far corner, and then continue along a clear but largely abandoned field boundary with woodland ahead of us. We follow the edge of the woodland and soon arrive at a stile onto a road where we see Doeford Bridge.

We cross the bridge, and follow the road uphill until we see a second bridge on a sideroad to the right. This one takes us over the curiously named river Loud – a tributary of the Hodder. We now

follow this very quiet road for about 800m looking out for a footpath leaving the road on the left. This is the point where we re-unite with the route over the stepping stones.

We now head along the left hand side of the meadow to find a stile at the far end– where we find a road, but then continue on the track opposite. This lane continues North and then bends round to the right to head toward Knot Hill enjoying great views over toward Pendle hill on our right before we come to a barn conversion on the left and a Limekiln on the right (easily missed). We take the track to the left of the barn conversion and follow the lane down to a cluster of buildings at Lower Greystoneley – where the road goes steeply downhill to a ford. This can be slippery, so we recommend using the wooden footbridge slightly upstream – before continuing along that lane to Higher Greystoneley, where we follow the track up to a minor road.

At the road we head right, noticing the signage to the Wild Boar Park. We don't go that far though – just 25m down the road we see a stile opposite and take a path through the field toward the farm at Fair Oak. The path continues to the left along a track through the farm to emerge next to the farmhouse. At this point we head left and then before we arrive at the next house see a track on the right – this is our onward route. Navigation on the ground is not as complex as the description suggests, but if in doubt download the GPX.

We are now on a path parallel with the Hodder – heading upstream, and on the opposite side of the valley to the first leg of the walk. We now head consistently Northeast gradually skirting round New Laund Hill, until we start to head downhill with great views ahead over New Laund farm toward Dunsop Bridge.

Our next milestone is New Laund Farm. We have a choice here:

If the river is low, head right at the farm and down the left hand edge of the woodland to the stepping stones over the Hodder – then back up to St Michaels.

If the stepping stones are not favoured – or you just want a longer walk, head left past the farm buildings, then the cheese press and on to a Y-junction in the lane: We head right and follow the track up to a minor road.

At that road we turn right and follow it down to Burholme Bridge – a late 18th century Grade II listed structure.

We cross the bridge and follow the road round to the right heading toward Whitewell. There is no alternative to road walking for about 400m, but we soon see a stile on the right giving access to a permissive path through the meadows at the side of the Hodder – the path is clear and essentially just follows the line of the road, but safely segregated from the traffic.

We follow this path all the way back to the Inn at Whitewell where we rejoin the road to end the walk at St Michaels, and if you didn't use the stepping stones on your route we recommend a brief diversion to see them – they are clearly signposted from St Michaels.

- **Total distance 14.4 km (8.8 miles)**
- **Total ascent 300 m**
- **Moderate walk**