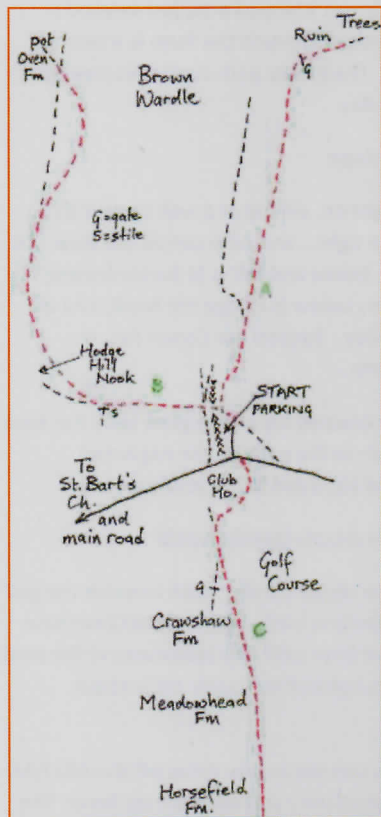


Strolling Whitworth

Simply lovely little Walks

STROLLS 12 – A, B + C LOBDEN

START and NATURE OF WALKS Drive up Whitworth Rake, past the Red Lion and the Golf Club turn, pass through the gap between the golf course and a raised tee, turn left, and park. From here there are three different, out-and-back walks, all short, and ranging from flat to mildly sloping. They are included in this series because one of the principal joys of walking in Whitworth is being up on the tops, and these provide accessible glimpses of that pleasure. The surfaces are surprisingly sound, so footwear shouldn't be an issue – but you are up high, so wear, or carry, one more layer of clothing than you think you'll need.



Before you start, take in the panorama in front of you - Crook Hill wind farm to the left, Blackstone Edge, the M62 to Yorkshire, Littleborough close to and Oldham further back...and you can have fun picking out specific places you recognise.

STROLL A, the shortest and flattest

Face the raised tramway behind your parking spot. Your side of the gap is a track heading right. Simply follow this track as it heads out beneath the eastern flank of Brown Wardle. How far you go is up to you. You can return on the same track, or try one that runs parallel, a little above, beside a drainage channel, so you can enjoy the gentle bubbling of water. This is the only still-functioning one of a network of these channels around Brown Wardle that used to feed water down to Rochdale.



As a goal, you could go as far as the ruins of Brown Wardle Farm, just beyond a complicated gate near the furthest stand of trees. Beneath the farm is a vaulted cellar, where meat was prepared and stored. The grassy path continues down to Watergrove reservoir - a good extension one day.

STROLL B, also short, with a flat start, then a slope

Go through the gap in the tramway and straight on, aiming at a wall some 200m. ahead. Stay on the track as it curves up to the right... and now comes the view. To your left is the golf course with its clubhouse, below and left is St Bartholomew's Church, and some of its gargoyles, immediately below is Hodge Hill Nook, and of course a huge chunk of Whitworth fills the valley. Beyond are Cowm Res, the quarry, Rooley Moor and Scout Moor wind farm.

Your goal might be just above Pot Oven Farm (named for a long-gone kiln). For ease of walking, stick to the track rather than switch to the path by the neglected drainage channel. And back, lungs full of good air, mind full of lovely view.

STROLL C, a bit longer, and the outward half is mostly (gently) uphill

Cross the road you arrived on, and walk up the rough curving track towards the golf clubhouse. At the car park, bear left on the obvious track, which skirts Crawshaw Farm (alpacas and geese), and passes a second farm with two sculptures in the yard - not to everyone's taste maybe, but then non-naturalistic public art is about provoking thought rather than worship.

Your goal should be the third farm, which you can see as you come off the A627(M) at Rochdale. If you can see *this* from *there*...what *can't* you see from up here! The Pennines running down to Derbyshire, Oldham, Manchester of course, maybe Jodrell Bank, if the telescope's raised, Chill Factor ski slope, Alderley Edge, Fiddler's Ferry power station, the Clywddian Hills in North Wales... Glad you came? JF



'The path goes ever on...yet feet that wandering have gone/turn at last to home afar'
Bilbo Baggins