

Strolling Whitworth *Simply lovely little Walks*

STROLL 3 PRICKSHAW

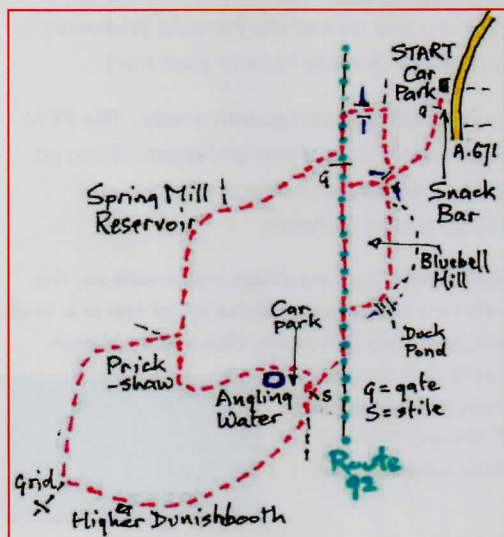
START Snack Bar opposite Oakenshaw Avenue

BUS STOP Oakenshaw Avenue

DISTANCE Longest stroll in the series, but hardly excessive

NATURE OF WALK Easy woodland start, then up a memorable old cart track to an award-winning moorland hamlet.

Pass through the kissing gate onto a track which becomes part of the Pennine Bridleway (so you might be sharing with horses) to a narrow bridge. Cross, then turn left immediately, so that Bluebell Hill is at your right shoulder. Don't cross the next bridge (below the totem pole), but stay right, join the main Healey Dell path, going left, then, 100m. ahead, right, up a shallow slope to an odd stile. Squeeze through, then turn back



on yourself up a twisting track past Whitworth Angling Club's quiet water...where you might spot an opportunistic heron.

There are a few paths like this in Whitworth, but this one is in exceptional condition, because it's in use still – though for cars and tractors now rather than for horses (which would get purchase up

the middle) and carts (the wheels of which would glide smoothly along the flags and big rounded setts up the sides...wouldn't they!?) It's not the easiest surface to walk on: should you come down this way in or after damp weather, be a horse, or watch every step if you opt for the edges.

Soon you're at Prickshaw. The track passes in front of the fine conversions facing east to Tonacliffe and Brown Wardle – see what else you can pick out – to a junction. It's well worth popping round the leftward bend for a look at the row of smaller cottages and the little village green.* Note also the old gas lamp-posts – and the moorland behind the village lifting your eyes to the sky.



Prickshaw by Peter Williams
Worth a look?

And then it's back to the junction, from where you go down the hill – carefully, especially in damp conditions - past the reservoir entrance and round a swinging right bend. The hill, the bend

and this sometimes muddy track are also part of the Pennine Bridleway – indeed you can share it pretty much all the way back to your start.

When you hit the main Healey Dell path you can go either way. The PBW goes left, then right over a broad river bridge, then right again. If you go right, take the next left before Bluebell Hill to the narrow bridge you crossed earlier. At which point, up you go to finish.

POSSIBLE WALK EXTENSION *Don't retreat from the village green: walk on. This setted track develops into a country lane with a lovely old-fashioned feel to it. Walk about 200m. then take the first left, on a track that passes Higher Dunishbooth Farm, and becomes a straightforward path that will wind you gently down to the curious stile below the angling water. Just don't turn off into any fields, or cross any cattle grids. From the stile, simply retrace your steps. JF

