

Countryside & Rights of Way

The Bronte Connection (Stanbury)

4¹/₂ miles (7.2km) Circular walk

Walk Start Point

Stanbury bus terminus, Hob Hill at the western end of Stanbury Main Street.

Car Parking

Very limited parking near to the bus terminus. There is however an informal parking area 300yds up Back Lane (see map), where the walk route passes by, so you could start your walk from there. Please park with care and consideration, do not block field gates or access tracks.

Public Transport

Bus service 664 to Stanbury operates Monday - Saturday. On Sundays service 918 offers a limited service. Both services start at Keighley bus station.

For further details contact Metroline: 0113 245 7676.

Walk Information

The walk is suitable for most reasonably fit occasional walkers; has the added attraction of linking three important sites associated with Emily Bronte's novel, "*Wuthering Heights*". Starting with an easy first 13/4 miles (3km) following the Pennine Way over Haworth Moor to Top Withins Farm. Then as you make your way across Wuthering Heights on Stanbury Moor the terrain changes to rough open moorland with long heather, the occasional boggy section and the crossing of two streams. The return journey is a little easier across rough moorland grass, following footpaths and farm tracks as you make your way down past Ponden Reservoir, to your finish back at Stanbury bus terminus.

You will require good wind and waterproof clothing, along with strong waterproof walking boots, a South Pennines OL21 ordnance survey map and a compass could also prove invaluable as you cross open country, especially if mist, fog or low cloud is expected. Food and drink are also recommended.

Compass bearings given in the walk instructions are for a guide only and should be checked by the individual walker on the day of their walk.

Dogs

Due to restrictions across open country between Top Withins Farm and Penistone Crag on Stanbury Moor, dogs are not permitted on this walk.

The Walk Route

From Stanbury bus terminus, walk up Back Lane (the narrow lane leading uphill from the bus terminus), at the first road junction continue straight ahead, following the road as it changes from a hard surface to a rough track and eventually past the rough informal parking area. Just beyond the parking area the rough track divides, take the right hand track uphill to the gate and cattle grid at the top of the incline. Go through the gate and out onto open moorland to where the track divides into three, once again follow the right hand track and continue uphill all the way until you reach Top Withins farm (ruin), 1¹/₂ miles ahead, passing as you go the former farm houses at Lower and Upper Heights. On reaching Top Withins Farm, which is thought to be the setting which inspired Emily Bronte's "*Wuthering Heights*", walk round to the rear of the building and take the narrow well-defined path leading steeply uphill and slightly to the right, in a north-westerly direction. Follow this narrow path across moorland and keep right when reaching a point where another narrower path bears left. You will shortly see the Delf Hill trig point ahead. At the trig point (444m/1456ft above sea-level) take in the amazing views all around, from Boulsworth Hill and Pendle Hill to the left across the Yorkshire Dales and around towards Leeds and beyond.

To continue, stand at the trig point in the direction you arrived and take a narrow path at roughly 40 degrees to the right – in the distance on a far valley you will see some white painted buildings in the same direction. Follow this path which leads downhill and is fairly ill-defined, if not invisible in some places across rough tussocky heather and grass. Take care on this section as the ground is uneven. You will pass some exposed peat columns on your right and here the path becomes indistinct. Ahead you should be able to see a small valley or clough towards the foot of the slope, heading across from left to right. The far bank of this clough is covered in bracken. Make your way downhill towards this and you will eventually see a stream. Cross the stream near to a grouse butt via a timber deck bridge and head up the bank, turning right to join a path which runs along the top of the stream side. Follow the stream side path and you will come to some timber boardwalk which passes more shooting butts.

After a short distance, a long distance view of the Worth Valley opens up in front of you with Ponden Reservoir ahead, here the path divides. Our route is to the left, uphill following the well-worn footpath along the escarpment of Kirk Brink and soon passing between Ponden Kirk (Penistone Crag) on your right and the dry stone wall remains of a sheepfold on the left. Continue along the

path as it eventually turns right and crosses a stream. Once across the stream follow the well-defined path, straight ahead at first then as it bears to the left, towards the dry stone wall corner. From the wall corner the path goes downhill following the dry stone wall on your right and heading for the building, which can be seen below.

On nearing the building the path divides again, our route bears to the left downhill across the rough grasses of Ponden Slack to meet a well-worn track, which crosses from left to right. Turn right here and follow the track towards a field gate and stile. Climb the stile to walk down the double walled track as it meanders downhill passing a farmyard on the right, before eventually reaching the junction with another track which crosses from left to right. Turn right here and walk downhill through the houses and farmyard which makes up the hamlet of Ponden, passing

on your left Ponden Hall (Thrushcross Grange), before following the road as it turns right downhill bearing left at the bottom of the incline and alongside Ponden Reservoir.

At the far end of the reservoir near the dam wall turn right off the wide surfaced road to walk uphill following the unmade track for quite a distance, until you reach a gate and stile at the top end. Climb the stile to emerge onto another track at Buckley Green bottom, turn left uphill and follow the track straight ahead as it changes to a surfaced road.

Follow the road to its junction with Back Lane, the road we walked up earlier, here public transport users turn left downhill to the bus terminus and car users who parked at the informal parking area, turn right uphill for 150yds/137m to find your vehicles.

Just for Interest Along the Way

Haworth and Stanbury Moors: Both moors have long been associated with the Bronte family as the walk you are about to go on outlines. Over more recent times the moors have become important natural water gathering areas and are managed for grouse shooting. The moors have also been designated SSSI's (sites of special scientific interest), home to varied wildlife, some of the many birds to be seen are grouse, curlews, ring ouzels, lapwings and meadow pipits. Many wildflowers and grasses can also be found with ling and bell heather being the most predominant, seen at its best in mid to late August. Since September 2004, both Moors have been designated 'Open Country'.

Top Withins Farm: The farm was a typical Yorkshire hill farm and although Top Withins has been associated with Emily Bronte's novel 'Wuthering Heights', the building bears no resemblance to the one she describes in the novel, however, it is generally accepted that the buildings location is what Emily had in mind when she wrote the novel.

Penistone Crag: This large outcrop of gritstone is thought to have been a favourite haunt of the Bronte's, Emily named the rock Penistone Crag and she described the location as being the meeting place of Cathy and Heathcliff. At the base of the rock there is a hole just large enough for an adult to climb through. Emily talks about this hole in the novel, calling it the 'Fairy Cave', local legend suggests that unattached people passing through the hole will marry within the year. Access to the 'Fairy Cave' is down a very steep embankment, therefore it is not recommended for safety reasons that you attempt to climb down. A good view of the 'Fairy Cave' can be seen from the hillside opposite as you continue your walk.

Ponden Hall (Thrushcross Grange): Originally dating from 1634, Ponden Hall is generally thought to be the house Emily Bronte renamed Thrushcross Grange, home of the Linton family in her novel Wuthering Heights. Emily, Charlotte and Anne Bronte were regular visitors to Ponden Hall, being good friends of the Heaton family who lived there in the mid 1800's.

Ponden Reservoir: Built in the early 1870's as a compensation reservoir for the former Keighley corporation water works, to supply water to the mills of the Worth Valley. The reservoir, now owned by Yorkshire Water, supplies drinking water via the national Grid to where required within the Yorkshire Water Area.
Buckley Green Bottom: Former home and work place of Timmy Feather 1825-1910. He was the last of the handloom weavers in the Haworth area, his grave can be found in the graveyard near to Haworth church.

Footnote

We hope you enjoyed your walk. If so tell your friends, if not, or you have encountered any problems please tell us at:

Countryside and Rights of Way Service
4th Floor, Britannia House,
Bradford BD1 1HX

e-mail: danny.jackson@bradford.gov.uk
Tel: 01274 432666

