

WALK NO 9 - Harden Hike This walk rises steadily via a secluded valley to Harden Moss and returns via Royd Edge Clough

Distance - 3 ¾ miles Time – 2 hours Route Type – Moderate

Facilities: Toilets & Refreshments - (link to food & refreshments page on website)

Parking: Meltham Village Free Parking (Large car park rear of Carlile Institute and another off Clark Lane)

Bus Routes to Meltham – From Huddersfield 324; From Holmfirth 335 ; From Slaithwaite 335

From the free car park at the rear of the Carlile Institute, walk forward onto Huddersfield Road and turn left towards the centre of Meltham. Turn right at the crossroads to walk on Holmfirth Road (past the fire station). Continue for about 500 yards to the lowest point of a pronounced dip in the road. Turn right and walk up tree lined Royd Road.

Royd is an Anglian word for clearing. The building at the bottom of Royd Road on the left was Royd Edge Special School. The building is crucifix in plan and was formerly a convalescent home given to the town by Charles Brook junior in 1871. On the right, the old buildings were Lane End Dye Works, its water wheel was there till the 1950's.

Climb the road for a ¼ mile then fork left into the signposted and unsurfaced track called Harden Hill Road. Walk ½ mile up the track and cross a stile on the right by a way-marked gate. The exit from this field is hidden from here and the footpath is not clear. Follow the direction of the way-marker diagonally across the field and, as the ground declines, the path veers left towards a stile by a field gate which now comes into view.

This deep wooded valley called Harden Clough is well inhabited with bird and animal life. The word 'harden' is Anglian in origin and means 'valley of the hares'. Our route runs along the steep left bank. After rain the path may be muddy and slippery so care should be taken.

After the stile, follow the contour path ahead, parallel to the stream some distance below on the right. Cross the stile in the wall ahead into the wood and immediately after the stile, zig-zag left and right up the slope on a less defined path which then runs on a contour above the trees for some distance, passing several way-markers on trees.

Cross an intermediate fence stile then walk ahead to a wall stile. From the wall stile, follow the contour path above the trees to reach a further stile in a fence. When over the stile, turn left as signed, keeping close to the fence. The next section can be very muddy. Some way up, before the fence bends right, turn left into a dip, climb slightly and walk ahead past the lower (rear) side of Wood Cottage and the kennels.

Wood Cottage used to be a Youth Hostel.

After crossing an intermediate stile, cross a stile by a gate into Harden Moss Road. Turn right into this unsurfaced track which skirts the lower boundary of Harden Moss Farm. If, instead, you turn left after the stile and walk up the short length of lane to the main road, carefully cross the road and walk along the road opposite for a short distance, views of the upper Holme Valley open up with Holme Moss beyond and Black Hill the high point to the right. Return to where you deviated from the route.

Harden Moss Farm is well known for its annual sheepdog trials. The actual site is the first open field on the left after climbing from the dip in the track. Looking right at this point, Harden Hill can be seen across the clough recently walked. This appropriately contoured hill, was used for horse racing until the late 19th C complete with grandstand. It is now part of the fell race course run annually in the trials programme.

Harden Hill and Harden Moss Roads were designated in the Enclosure Act of 1832 as private carriage roads, both extending to the southernmost boundary of Meltham.

Continue along Harden Moss Road which after some distance descends past a farm on the right to meet the metalled surface of Royd Road. Walk down the road and a short distance. After passing Fox Royd Farm turn left into Hebble Lane track.

The entrance to Royd Wood is on the left. Planted for the people of Meltham to celebrate the 2000 millennium by the Woodland Trust.

Go down the track past Intake Farm and on into the path, cross the bridge, turn right, ascend the rough track alongside the mill dam and reach the level, now surfaced lane which finally exits into Calmlands Road near a farm building.

When crossing the bridge at the lowest part of the last section look left and see the bracken covered valley stretching into the distance. This is Royd Edge Clough, a popular picnic spot within easy reach of Meltham.

Turn right and continue to the bottom of Calmlands Road then turn left and retrace the first part of the walk back to the village centre.

It is strongly advised that walkers follow the route instructions carefully, particularly where crossing private land and comply with the countryside code at all times. It is recommended that boots or strong shoes are worn and weatherproof clothing is carried when undertaking this walk.

Recommended OS map:- Pathfinder map 702 (SE01/11), 714 (SE 00/10) and Outdoor Leisure 1 (Dark Peak)
Adapted from Meltham & District Civic Society 10 walks around Meltham (walk8)

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