

Starting point: Hebden Bridge Library

Distance: approximately 4 miles

This round walk takes in a variety of habitats, including woodlands and heather moorlands that easily accessible from Hebden Bridge Library. There are some steep ascents and descents and some of the paths can be slippery in wet and icy conditions.

1. Start at the entrance to Hebden Bridge Library on Hope Street. Turn left on to Albert Street and follow it to the junction with Keighley Road. Turn left and cross the road at the crossing. Turn right and then sharp left up Birchcliffe Road
2. 60 yds from the bottom of Birchcliffe Road cross over to Stubbing School. There are rare rustyback ferns growing on the walls here - the lime cement providing a habitat for them that is otherwise absent in the district. At dusk in the summer months you might encounter bats that roost in some of the older trees and buildings in this area. Continue uphill past the school on to Osborne Street.
3. At the end of Osborne Street continue straight on into Common Bank Wood. Sycamore, sessile oak and holly are found, but the wood is dominated by beech trees, below which little else grows. You will see occasional ferns, mosses and grasses such as wavy hair-grass below the trees, but even beech saplings struggle to grow beneath the dense shade cast by the mature trees.
4. Follow the path as it winds up through the woods until you reach a low 'step-over' gate.
5. Cross a small stream and bear left up through a field keeping to the right of the stream, continue along path until you reach Wadsworth Lane. Cross the road and continue right along the pavement.
6. After crossing Manor Drive, the pavement ends and is replaced by grass. Take a left turn through young sycamore trees by a bench and up a few steps until the path joins Rowlands Lane, which at this point is a stony track.
7. Turn left on to the lane and follow it for its length, approximately 650 yards. Stop and enjoy the fine views over towards Heptonstall over to your left. The stone walls on the right hand side of the lane support a diversity of mosses and other small plants - from small cushion forming species on the wall tops to mats of feather mosses species and ferns at the wetter less exposed bases.



8. Continue up Rowland Lane past its junction with Sandy Gate Lane on the left, after which it is called Lane Ends Lane. Halfway up this lane take a track to the left past Foot Kiln Cottages. Immediately after the terrace of Cottages take the footpath on the left through a gap in the wall.
9. Follow this path, keeping gardens on the left and fields on the right. Soon you will arrive at a junction with another footpath. Turn right here and after approximately 45 yards follow the path to the left keeping the wall to some cottages 100yards ahead. Pass through a gap in the wall and pass in front of the cottages (Lower Chiserley).
10. At the end of the track turn right past more cottages (Chiserley Field Side) past Old Town Junior and Infant School where you will arrive at Billy Lane, next to the Post Office. Cross over Billy Lane and go right up Old Laithe Lane opposite the post office.



11. The lane goes between fields until it reaches cottages and an old cast iron lamp post. At the cottages follow the footpath to your left on to the moor. The path runs along the moor edge with heather and bilberry to the right and fields below to the left. There are fine views over to Heptonstall, Stoodley Pike and Hebden Dale from here.
12. Once on the moorland you might see meadow pipits rising up from the heather. After 150 yards the path crosses a larger track and you will see the walls of Old Town reservoir ahead to the right. Keep the reservoir to your right and continue along the path. The vegetation here is upland heath – dominated by heather, bilberry and purple moor grass. After approximately 220yds the path splits. Go right and follow the path for 140 yards along the side of the reservoir. Then head out left on to the moor.
13. The vegetation here has developed on the site of an old quarry. Young saplings of birch and rowan are now beginning to colonise the heather and the area will eventually become woodland if not grazed or cut.



14. After walking through the heather, the path eventually reaches a metalled lane (Slack House Lane). Go sharp left on to the lane and follow it down between high walls and hedges. The lane becomes shaded by trees and emerges at Wainsgate Chapel. In early summer the bright yellow flowers of the Welsh Poppy are abundant here.
15. At the end of the lane cross over to Old Town Mill Lane. Follow the lane past the Old Town Cricket Club and the mill on your right, and further on the recreation ground on the left until you get to Walker Lane. Turn right on to Walker Lane and follow it downhill for 220yds until reaching a row of cottages called 'Club Houses' on your right. Turn right in front of the cottages. At the far end the paths continues between stone walls bordered with attractive cottage garden plants until reaching a gate. Take the path that diagonally crosses the field immediately in front of the gate (NOT the path that follows the wall to the right).
16. The path passes through an old pasture that supports some interesting grassland species including lady's mantle, yellow rattle, bird's-foot trefoil and pignut. During May look out for the rare inky black chimney sweeper moths which lay their eggs on the pignut plants.
17. At the far end of this field the path passes through a gap in a wall and steps down in to a scrubby field overlooking Ibbot Royd.

The vegetation in this field is a mosaic of young trees such as hawthorn, sessile oak and birch, acid grassland, heather and tall herbs and grasses. It is very valuable habitat for breeding birds such as willow warblers whose plaintive song can be heard from early spring into the summer. In the autumn look out for brightly coloured grassland fungi, including several waxcaps. Many species of these beautiful mushrooms are now quite scarce and can only be found in old unimproved pastures and lawns.



18. The path descends steeply to a marker post at the junction with a track. Turn right on to the track and follow it until you reach a stone bridge over a stream, and small waterfall at the head of Nutclough Wood.
19. Keep to the right of the stream and take the path along the top of the ravine formed by the stream. Typical birds of this habitat include dippers and grey wagtails which can often be seen in fast-flowing sections here and on the series of makeshift dams further downstream.

20. Shortly after the bridge, just below the path on the left is a mature wych elm tree that has survived Dutch elm disease. You can recognise it by its rough lopsided leaves.
21. As the path descends alongside the ravine it becomes quite narrow so care is needed. The ground below the trees is quite bare in places owing to the shade of the large beech trees but extensive patches of bluebells can be seen in the spring. At the bottom of the path pause by the mill pond, which is frequented by mallards, heron and, very occasionally, by kingfishers. Continue along the path, down some steps past a moss-covered mill race and onto Keighley Road.
22. Cross Keighley Road and go left down the hill along the pavement back into Hebden Bridge centre. Descending the hill, you can see Hebden Water below the impressive stone buttress.
23. At the crossing at the bottom of Keighley Road retrace your steps to Hebden Bridge Library where you will be able to find a range of books and other resources to help you identify and interpret things you have seen on the walk.

