

**Trip Report:** Stoodley Pike

**Date:** April 13th, 2019

**Group:** Steve (leader), Sarah, Mike W, Mike H and Jim

**Route:** A loop from Withens Reservoir including Stoodley Pike (adapted from Walking Britain)

**Total Distance:** 8.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** 1300ft

A surprisingly small group of walkers for a fine and dry Saturday in April but at least that made for simple logistics. The route as described on the Walking Britain website ([www.walkingbritain.co.uk/walk-1291-description](http://www.walkingbritain.co.uk/walk-1291-description)) starts in Hebden Bridge but to avoid any parking problem in the town and cut 10 minutes off the driving time we instead made for a small isolated, car park on the moors, next to Withens Clough reservoir. We started out on a metalled lane which soon became a track and then a path across Bell House Moor. For the most part it was dry underfoot but, as if to just remind us that this was a moor with a capital M, we suddenly found a very boggy section, which Jim failed to give enough respect and almost lost a boot.

The map in this area showed a lot of paths and matching the map with the ground here proved a bit of a challenge. But the view was good, looking down into the Calder Valley and the towns of Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge. We descended towards the latter and entered a pleasant stretch of woodland just above the town and running parallel with the Rochdale Canal in the valley bottom. At the end of the wood the route description started to make sense again as we emerged near an obvious radio mast with a view of the monument on Stoodley Pike in the distance.

Compared with most of the BUMS outings this year, a notable feature of this walk was the lack of any dogs! But although we had no dogs with us we did nearly gain one on the way. We were stopped on a quiet lane by two ladies in a car with a lovely young collie which had apparently become parted from its owner. As we hadn't seen anyone looking for a lost pooch we couldn't do much other than admire it for several minutes and then provide some directions.

As we reached the Pennine Way we found a wall to use as a windbreak and made a shortish lunch stop. It was then less than a mile to the monument on the Pike, which contains a spiral staircase of 39 steps - without windows! - up to a balcony about 40 feet above ground level. According to Wikipedia: *The monument replaced an earlier structure, started in 1814 and commemorating the defeat of Napoleon and the surrender of Paris. It was completed in 1815, after the Battle of Waterloo (Napoleonic Wars), but collapsed in 1854 after an earlier lightning strike, and decades of weathering. Its replacement was therefore built slightly further from the edge of the hill.* We continued on the Pennine Way along an escarpment with views of Todmorden down in the valley. At a point known as Withens Gate we picked up the Calderdale Way and followed it back to our starting point near the dam of Withens Clough reservoir.

Although the walk was a bit shorter than expected there weren't many complaints as three of the participants had put in some miles on the Dales Way earlier in the week and seemed happy to be back at the Dysart by mid-afternoon!