

Walk Two: Ridley Lane

- 1. Start** at the junction of Moor Road and Ridley Lane and walk along until it crosses the Wymott Brook and makes a 90° swing to the left. At first you will pass market gardens, go down the slope to the flood plain of the River Lostock and will cross the river by Littlewood Bridge. *The river is tidal to this point and there is a data recording station on the right. Occasionally a herd of Fallow Deer can be seen in the fields* You will pass Littlewood Farm on your left and Stanning's Folly (Wood) on your right.
- 2. When** Ridley Lane makes a right angled bend to the left go across the railway line going through the field gate. Go straight ahead to cross a FOOTBRIDGE. Turn LEFT keeping the brook on your left. After about 50 metres leave the track by the river and turn RIGHT up an incline to a field higher up.
- 3. Turn** LEFT and keep along the edge of the field then go through a gap in the tall hedge and turn LEFT to walk along the embankment beside the brook. Eventually the path wings round to the left. You will come to a line of trees on the left and 30 metres after these turn RIGHT to go through a boggy hollow full of nettles and cross a ditch by an overgrown grass BRIDGE.
- 4. Go** upwards towards a large hedge and continue along it keeping it to your Right. *The hedge is full of Blackthorn blossom in April and sloes in autumn. A variety of wildflowers grows in its shelters including Cow Parsley, Meadowsweet, Celendine, Veronica Speedwell, Coltsfoot and Cranesbill.* At the end of the field the path becomes a grassy track. Go past stables on your right and a stone cottage on the left.
- 5. Turn** RIGHT along a wooden fence. Go past the back gardens of the cottages. Just before the electricity pole on the left go LEFT through the hedge via a STILE. Go straight ahead towards a stile facing you but before reaching it take the STILE on your left along the edge of a cricket pitch. Cross the FOOTBRIDGE and come out on the road via a STILE. *A detour to the right will bring you to the Blue Anchor which serves food.*
- 6. Turn** LEFT along the main road and when the pavement ends cross the road and go down the lane on the right through the enclave of Over Hall. *Look out for the interesting Over Hall and its barn dated 1728.* Turn RIGHT to continue along the main road. *Look left beyond the hill created by landfill to see the line of the Western Pennines; going from left to right you can see Great Hill, Winter Hill and Rivington Pike*
- 7. Where** the pavement ends cross over to the left side. *Look over the stile to see the lake created when clay was dug out for the brickworks. It has been developed as a fishing lake. Mallard, Grebe, Swan and Heron are frequent visitors. Note the modern carved milestone, part of a series of stone carvings commissioned by Croston to celebrate the millennium.*
- 8. Just** before the roadbridge over the Lostock go over the STILE on your left. Keep along the edge of the river on your right until it comes to the confluence with Wymott Brook. Follow the embankment round to the left. At a barbed wire fence with willow trees go RIGHT and leave the embankment to go down to Wymott Brook. Turn LEFT over the STILE.
- 9. Keep** along the brook on your right. *Parallel with you to the right is the Ormskirk to Preston Railway line.* Cross a FOOTBRIDGE then almost immediately turn RIGHT across a second FOOTBRIDGE. Continue straight ahead keeping beside the hedge on your left. Go over the STILE and cross the railway track. **DO NOT GO OVER THE FOOTBRIDGE AND STILE** facing you but turn LEFT immediately keeping the ditch on your right.
- 10. An** overgrown path leads to another FOOTBRIDGE which you cross to get onto a solid roadway. Follow this up and over the hill ignoring other stiles. *This is an artificial hill created by tipping household waste, landscaping it, covering with top soil and planting grass and clover. The strange objects in the fields release methane gas from the underlying waste. At the top of the hill turn round to get an opportunity to see the fine view. The tall grey object on the western horizon is the gas holder at Southport.*
- 11. At** the bottom of the hill turn RIGHT over a STILE into a field and then almost immediately Left over a STILE and a FOOTBRIDGE. This is the worst part of the walk since it is invariably muddy.
- 12. Turn** RIGHT onto Ridley Lane and retrace the route to the starting point.