

THE STANZA STONES WALK

A Fifty Mile Upland Walk

From Marsden to Ilkley visiting the Stanza Stones



Created By

MICK MELVIN

Stanza Stone Sites

Snow: Pule Hill Quarry SE03135 10800

Rain: Cow's Mouth Quarry SD96400 19163

Mist: Nab Hill Oxenhope SE03380 32712

Dew: Rivock Edge Silsden SE07380 44952

Puddle: Ilkley Moor SE11058 45195

Beck: Backstone Beck Ilkley SE12548 46817





The Stanza Stones Walk: Devised by Mick Melvin.

A fifty mile upland walk from Marsden to Ilkley visiting the six Stanza Stones carved with poems written by Simon Armitage.

Walk 1: Marsden to Mytholmroyd Starts: SE047115 = 30.25Km/18.08mi

Leg 1 Map: OL21 South Pennines

Turn left into Old Mount Road, after 50 Yards turn right at the footpath sign near to Throstle Nest cottage. After 130 yards follow the rough path left before the gate and in a short distance cross a step stile into a field. Walk left for ten yards and look for a footpath winding up the hill to the right running alongside a depression (not the farm track). Enter the farmyard and pass close to the farm building on the right hand side and emerge through a gate onto the open moorland. Once past the farm follow the left hand field wall alongside a sunken track and after passing through a gate enter an area of rough pasture. Walk forward for approx 70 yards until you cross the farm track. Set your compass to 230°M and follow the top of a low ridge which by-passes the damp ground on your right. Keep on this bearing for approx 175 yards following a feint path which gradually swings right crosses a stream and begins to climb the hill, running parallel with a wall, which is then followed in a westerly direction to the next "right angled" corner. Leave the wall and follow the feint path in a north Westerly direction toward the air shaft which can be seen in the distance. Here you will pick up a prominent path coming from right to left. It is worthwhile walking over to the memorial cross to sample the views down the Colne Valley.

Return to the air shaft and take the wide path going south west. When the edge of the escarpment is reached at a National Trust Land boundary marker, the path turns due south with the land falling away to your right. Follow the escarpment edge for 300 yards until you arrive at some large rocks on the right and an incline dropping down the hillside. Descend this incline until you are level with the foot of the crag and pick up a path on the left which climbs steadily up the hill beneath the crags. Upon entering the quarry make your way around the remains of the old winch house at the top of a steep incline. If you look to your right after crossing the incline you will see the Poetry Seat sited on the edge of the hill and commanding a fine view over the Colne Valley below. Beyond the Poetry Seat the Snow stone is facing you on the right.



From the Snow stone, return to the top of the incline and begin to descend. Approx a third of

the way down, look for a narrow path crossing from left to right and descending to the left hand side of a ventilation shaft and passing between two spoil heaps. Here you meet the main path coming in from the left. Follow this path which runs close to and parallel with the A62 trunk Road. Once past Owlery and immediately after passing Moorlands Farm watch out for a wooden gate in the wall to your left and a path leading down to the road. Cross the road and using the pavement, walk towards Marsden passing Shepherds Boy Buildings for 220 yards, to where a pair of steel guard rails leads into a walled lane on the left.

Marsden to Mytholmroyd: Leg 2

Turn left into the lane and walk down to the bottom where you arrive at Redbrook Clough, turn right and after crossing the stream follow it down to a beautiful little pack horse bridge “Close Gate Bridge” also known as Eastergate Bridge, where the confluence of two Pennine



streams forms the River Colne. The bridge is on the route of the Huddersfield to Rochdale packhorse trail. From the bridge, climb up Willykay Clough and then keep to the Station to Station Walk, changing to the Pennine Way at Haigh Gutter where the two paths come together at the A640. Follow the Pennine Way over the Pennine watershed and Blackstone Edge to reach the White House Pub on the A58 Halifax Road. From the White House walk towards Halifax for approx 250 yards and turn left through a gate once again following the

Pennine way. Walk along the Pennine Way for about a mile until you are approaching a quarry across the catch water drain to your right. As you approach the quarry, watch for a small stone arched bridge spanning the catch water drain on your right about 75 yards before the crags. The path leading from the bridge affords a close up view of the face carrying the Rain stone carving. The poem can also be seen from the main path if you continue along the gravelled track. Alternative route: If you enjoy a bit of adventure, return to the stone arched bridge and you will see a very faint path heading up the hill to the left in the direction of some flat topped rocks. Set your compass to 067°M and strike out over the moor which is not too boggy or rough. Ahead you are aiming directly at an electricity Pylon and just before you reach it, you should arrive at a footpath crossing from right to left. Turn left onto the path and in a very short time you will reach the embankment at Light Holme reservoir and the permissive path onwards.

After visiting the Rain Stone, walk in a north westerly direction to skirt the shallow depression on your right and aim for the left hand side of the electricity pylon in front of you. Take the gravel track which passes the pylon on the left hand side and head in the direction of White Holme Reservoir. Remain faithful to the permissive path which skirts White Holme Reservoir and follow the path



alongside White Holme Drain until it begins to turn in a Westerly direction just before reaching the Cloven Stone. Follow the northern edge of the path round the curve and watch out for a very feint path going in the direction of “Two Lads” cairns, north East Bearing 041°M.

Marsden to Mytholmroyd Leg 3

Cross this boggy ground and upon reaching the cairns change the Bearing to 117°M and aim for the shooting box about half a mile away to the south East. From this newly restored shooting box follow the feint path in a north Easterly direction to Cove Hill to reach a step stile and a gate. Cross the stile and walk towards the farm building ahead but don't go through the gate into the yard. Instead, as you reach a wall corner on your right look to the right for a narrow path which descends the steep hillside on some old stone steps arriving at the stream in Turvin Clough. This is a lovely little stop and a nice place for a break.

Follow the stream down Turvin Clough taking the uphill path left at the first stile. Soon the path develops into a wider track which can be muddy after rain. The path now is high above the stream until you emerge on a narrow metalled lane. Keep to the lane turning right to pass the Hinchcliffe Arms pub and you arrive at the church in Cragg Vale, St John the Baptist in the Wilderness. Turn left here where it states private road “Public footpath” and follow the Elphin Brook on occasion using permissive paths, down the valley toward Mytholmroyd. After walking beside the river through two fields the path reaches a narrow lane on a bridge. Turn right and then keep straight ahead down this narrow tarmac lane (Castle Gate) running parallel alongside the B6138. Watch out for an indistinct turning left into a house garden, which is in fact part of the old paper mill. The path descends through the garden and crosses the stream via Paper Mill Bridge to follow the left hand side through Paper Mill Wood high above the stream once more. Before beginning your climb uphill into Paper Mill Woods take time to take a look over both sides of Paper Mill Bridge to see the old abandoned buildings of the paper mill and the wooden water wheel below you in the river. The path now is high above the stream, which at this point is called Cragg Brook and there is a steep drop into the valley on the right. At a fork in the path take the right hand branch which drops down once more to stream level and enters a paddock.



Marsden to Mytholmroyd Leg 4



Emerge from the paddock onto a lane which drops down to cross a bridge (Spa Bridge) The Bridge is named after a small spring (Cragg Spa) which is sited just before the bridge on the right. In the nineteenth century the Spa was a minor visitor attraction as the water was considered to have health giving properties. Local histories describe the spa as being ‘dressed’ each May. The area was restored in 2010 by Calderdale Countryside volunteers and there are now steps down to the

sulphur spring and a seat to rest on. At the next bridge 'Clough Foot' turn left before the bridge and look for a gate on the right leading into a small pasture. Once again our way forward continues on concessionary paths before reaching a metalled farm lane beside a caravan park. Follow the lane to the right to arrive at the main B6138 at Dauber Bridge. Cross Cragg Road at Dauber Bridge and walk about 70 yards uphill, locate a set of steep stone steps climbing the hillside on the left hand side of the road. At the top of these steps as you emerge into a field, the path turns left and goes along the top of the wood on the eastern side of the valley down into Mytholmroyd the birthplace of the poet Ted Hughes.



The Stanza Stones Walk: Devised by Mick Melvin.

A fifty mile upland walk from Marsden to Ilkley visiting the six Stanza Stones carved with poems written by Simon Armitage.

Walk 2. Mytholmroyd to Haworth: = 17.38Km/10.8mi

Map: OL21 South Pennines

Leave Ted Hughes' birthplace and return to the bridge across the Rochdale Canal. Immediately after crossing the canal bridge descend a flight of stone steps on your right and walk along the towpath to the next bridge. The canal here is the subject of Ted Hughes' poem (The Canal's Drowning Black) Cross this bridge and walk towards the house with the large arched window facing you, turn left along a short section of lane and take the track at the left side of the red brick building. Take the track which branches off to the right uphill and climb steeply to the top where a metal gate leads into a field. At the top of the field enter the farmyard via a step stile and proceed up the lane in front of you, soon passing between two houses turn left when you reach the metalled lane and walk up to where the lane takes a sharp



turn right. Look to the right for a step stile up on the top of the wall. Climb the stile and follow the way marked path up the steep hill beyond to emerge onto a road where you turn right and walk for approx. 100 yards before turning left at a sign reading Wicken Hill. Follow the farm lane up 40 yards until you see a walker's gate on your left before the house. Take this gate and the path which runs behind the house, over two ladder stiles then turning right to cross a third step stile. Head in a north easterly direction to reach a wall corner, keep the wall on your left and walk into the next corner and cross a ladder stile into a field. Now in front you can see a low building set in trees, aim for the building and cross another ladder stile. Once over this stile, aim to the left of the building

heading for a gate in the top wall of the field. Once past this stile turn right onto the Calderdale Way. Very soon the path divides, take the left fork, leaving the Calderdale Way and shortly you will see a standing stone looming up in front. The stone (Churn Milk Joan) is the subject of Ted Hughes' poem of the same name. There is a seat (Cranley's Seat) near to the stone on which you may take a short rest if needed. You may wish to exchange a coin of your own for one of the coins left in the top of the stone as is the tradition. Many paths

radiate out from Churn Milk Joan; the one you are wanting departs in a north Easterly direction passing close to some old shooting butts. Wistful photographs by Fay Godwin of the butts and Churn Milk Joan are featured in “Remains of Elmet” a wonderful book of poems by Ted Hughes. Keep on this path next to the shooting butts and in ten minutes you arrive at a high wall corner. Don’t take the path which descends beside the wall, instead look for a path (not on the map) which goes left heading north and shortly joins a more prominent path coming in from your right heading north West.

Mytholmroyd to Haworth: Leg 2

Stay on this path which can be wet after rain but provides excellent view left into Luddenden Dean, cross the Back Clough stream at Dimmin Dale and continue until you reach a catch-water drain crossing your path. Turn left at the drain followed very soon by a right turn and keep to the footpath as far as another standing stone. You are now standing on High Brown Knoll with the Trig Point only yards away to the left. You will be returning to this stone but I’m sure that you will want to visit the trig point first. The summit of High Brown Knoll holds one of the Trigs visited on Andrew Bibby’s Six Trigs challenge walk, a walk which I can thoroughly recommend. Return to the standing stone and instead of turning right, back to where you came from, keep straight ahead on a narrow path descending through the heather leading back to the catch-water drain where a little stone bridge crosses. Cross the drain and turn left to walk along the eastern side. Keep to the catch-water drain, first going north and then north easterly until you reach the embankment at Warley Moor Reservoir. Just before the drain empties into the reservoir, turn left to cross it and take the path going to the right skirting the edge of the water. After crossing two wooden bridges on this sometimes muddy path you arrive on a grassy track heading east along the northern bank of the reservoir. The track turns north east passes through two walls and one gate. At the second cross wall, turn left down the banking and pass through a large gap in the wall to pick up a feint path which takes you across two fields to a step stile onto the lane. Once on the lane turn right and in 30 yards take the gate on the left onto the moor. This gently climbing track winds uphill and into an area of old stone delphs Nab Hill. Three hundred yards after the stile the track narrows and passes between two walls.



Mytholmroyd to Haworth: Leg 3

As soon as you emerge from between the walls take the track going left (north east) slightly uphill and in front you will see a large cairn fashioned into a rough shelter. Walk forward to the escarpment edge and there, ten foot below you, resting among rocks on this otherwise heathery slope lays the Mist Stone. From this vantage point you have breathtaking views over



Oxenhope to Haworth and up the Aire valley. Approx. 30 yards away to the east you can see another stone shelter. This structure serves two purposes in that it is primarily a shelter from the elements and it is also, when seen from the sky, a stone sculpture in the shape of a question mark. The shelter provides a good spot to eat lunch with its stunning views down the valley. Return to the track which has now become a path through the peat hags and remain faithful to it until you

reach a left turn after crossing Little Clough. Turn left here and soon you reach wide Hambleton Lane crossing from right to left, turn left and follow the lane down to the Bronte Way. Our way on now follows the Bronte Way, initially to Oxenhope crossing the famous Keighley and Worth Valley Railway Line with its connection to the film adaptation of Edith Nesbit's moving book *The Railway Children*. The route takes in Bents House, known in the film as *Three Chimneys* the iconic family home of the Waterbury family. The Bronte way carries onward to Haworth, home to the three illustrious Bronte sisters and now the site of the Bronte Parsonage Museum.



The Stanza Stones Walk: Devised by Mick Melvin.

A fifty mile upland walk from Marsden to Ilkley visiting the six Stanza Stones carved with poems written by Simon Armitage.

Walk 3 Haworth to Ilkley = 32.44Km/20.16mi

Maps: OL21 South Pennines---Explorer 297 Lower Wharfedale

Leave the little square in front of Haworth Parish church (St Michael and All Angels), walk up Main Street turning right before Haworth Visitors Centre, carry on along Changegate until the junction with North Street. Turn left along North Street and in fifty yards turn right into a narrow lane with a finger post reading "Public Footpath Private Road".

Keep straight ahead through the yard and you soon enter a green track which continues on behind a cemetery and leads through four fields to Lower Oldfield Farm. Skirt around the farm on a narrow ginnel and, after crossing the yard at the rear, look for a



concealed ladder stile in the corner behind an oil tank and some bushes. Descend the field keeping a depression and the fence on your right, and after passing through a step stile you come to a very striking pack horse bridge (Longbridge) crossing the River Worth.

Go across the bridge and turn to the right. Don't go into the field on the left; follow the River Worth downstream for a short distance and cross the stile beneath the trees into the next pasture. As the river bends to the North West your path goes north following a stream uphill. Follow the path uphill bypassing a farm on the left and passing through a small copse, until



you reach Lower Scholes Farm and enter the yard via a narrow ginnel. Turn left into the yard and then right before the gap in the houses and walk forward to a large metal gate blocking your way on. The way on goes through this gate and bears slightly left towards a large tree on an overgrown path. Pass the tree on the left and keep right at a fence and a boundary stone hidden in the long grass. The path now passes through a number of stone wall stiles and enters Covey Wood. Once in the wood take the broad

path on the left that rises slightly uphill past a memorial seat and crosses a stile on the far side of the wood. Walk across the broad field beyond the stile and another wall stile leaves you standing on a bend in a track leading to Green Well Farm. Turn left up this farm track and as it begins to turn left again look for a stile in the wall on the right hand side of the track. Walk along the wall on your right and pass through a gap into the yard at Near Hob Cote Farm. Turn left out of the farmyard and once past the wall on your right, look for a gap in the wall with two stone steps in front of it leading onto a parallel drive. At the second drive turn right along it for 20 yards and pick up a path striking off to the left that takes you into the bottom left corner of the field. This stile is in a bad condition at the time of writing and I am attempting to have it repaired. Carry on with the wall on your right as you negotiate this field and pass over a stile to reach a stony track leading off in front of you. Take this track to the next lane junction in front of Denby Hill Farm. Turning left along this lane brings you shortly to a junction with Hob Cote Lane, onto which you turn right for approx. 20 yards before taking the public bridleway on the left (Irish Lane). After the initial left hand bend this lane heads straight as an arrow to a junction with Turnshaw Road. Turn right onto Turnshaw Road and almost immediately after the road bends to the right take the stone stile on the left into a field and follow the path into Griff Wood. On emerging from the wood the path continues until you reach a metalled road at Slack Lane.

Turn left and then right to cross the rough ground which forms a triangle of road junctions and walk down Gill Lane into the hamlet of Newsholme. Once past the Chapel, go round the sharp right hand bend and then turn left between the two houses to enter a grassy track. The track makes a sharp left turn but you go forward through the gap descending the steep hill, through the wood at the bottom and reach the site of a pack horse bridge and clapper bridge in attractive Newsholme Dean.



Take time to look at the bridges in this pleasant spot which was a popular picnic and bathing place for locals during the 1940s and 1950s. Walk across the bridge turn right and pass through a gate at the side of a farm building. The path turns immediately left and goes through the adjoining gate and then turns right. Keep straight ahead then turn right following the garden wall through the trees to a junction with a more prominent track. Don't take this track, stand with your back to the track that you came on and look up to the top of the grassy bank before you, and you will see a walkers' gate set in the wall along the top.

Haworth to Ilkley Leg 2

Make your way up the banking and go through the gate. Remain on the feint path which ascends the steep field with a stream on your left side until you emerge through a stone stile next to a wooden gate onto the road (Todley Hall Road). Turn left along the metalled road for approx. 100 yards to arrive at a stone wall stile into a field on your right. Once over the stile you need to cross seven more stiles and the same number of fields before arriving at Pole Road, named after the old county boundary stone Pole Stoops situated along the road in the field to the left. Walk left along the road for approx 100 yards to a lay-by on the right. At the

far end of the lay-by the field wall forms a corner jutting out into the road. The Pole Stoops can be seen protruding above the wall in the corner on your right side. A better view can be had when you make the turn right 20 yards beyond the lay-by at a finger post beside an iron gate. Once past the gate turn to your right and the leaning stone (Pole Stoops) can be seen in the wall at the top of the field. Straight ahead a wide gateway leads into a second field. Keep walking in the same direction along the bottom of the hill and cross a step stile leading into a



smaller field. Once over the stile, walk diagonally left to the far bottom corner and pass through a steel gate with a second gate on your right.

Go through this gate and turn half left and follow the wall in front into the corner of the field at the bottom. There is a finger post and a stile into a lane. The stile here needs treating with caution as at the time of writing; a steel wire has been strung across the steps which could cause a bad accident to the unwary.

Turn left along the lane and in 40 yards turn right into the paddock and out onto a track leading into the farm yard (America farm). Walk straight ahead between the two cottages to reach a gate near the wall on your left. Pass through the garden to the right and take a second gate into a meadow. A short walk following the left hand wall down a field takes you through a gate and out into a large field and a cluster of farm building away to your left. The footpath here crosses this field towards these buildings before doubling back along a farm track to a point very close to where you entered the field. My personal opinion is, if a crop is growing in the field, to follow the wall on the right for 50 yards to regain the path as it leaves the field through a gate, then to stay on the metalled track until you reach another farm on Ellars Road. Cross Ellars Road and walk through the farmyard at Long House, follow the track where it turns left after the last of the farm buildings. Walk through two fields until the second cross wall and a very muddy gateway. Make your way up the third field passing a ruined building on the left side and aiming just to the right of the top wall corner and a wall stile. The stiles drops you into a shallow stream which is easily avoided and continue up the next field aiming to the left of a clump of trees to locate a stile in the corner of the wall. Turn left and keep on the path passing through the yard at Valley Farm. The path continues as a walled lane which you remain on until you pass through a gate into a long field. Cross a wall stile at the other end of the field close to a telephone mast. Keep on the path as it crosses two more walls and a narrow wood, then rises gently up to the top right corner of the second field before emerging onto a farm track alongside a cattle grid. Turn left along the farm track and after a quarter of a mile turn left again onto the bridleway where a track crosses your path from the right and winds left down the hill in the direction of a wood (Curren Wood). The path bends left before the wood and descends the hill in a north westerly direction. You are now on the Millennium Way which once past an old quarry on the right, bends right and becomes a metalled lane (Moor Lane) which is followed down to the B6265 Main Road.



Turn to the left along Main road and cross over at the controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left again. Immediately after a red telephone box turn right into Green Lane and follow the lane down to the bottom until the junction with Lyon Road. Turn right onto the track (Millennium Way) at the junction and follow the Millennium Way where it crosses the Keighley Skipton railway line then across two damp fields and emerging via a stile onto the side of the A629. Remain on this side of the dual carriageway along the grass verge until you can cross to the other side at an uncontrolled crossing just before the roundabout. I must stress that great care is required here as the road is very busy. Cross carefully over the Bypass A629, there is a crossing but it is not controlled. Walk along the left side of Keighley Road A6034 in the direction of Silsden village crossing the River Aire on a bridge. About 100 yards after the bridge look to the other side of the road for a gap in the wall and a finger post, cross the road to pass over a narrow little footbridge into the meadow.

The walk initially follows the Millennium Way as far as Holden Bridge. From the bridge follow the track which goes to Howden Park Farm, but immediately after going through the gate into the farmyard turn right and follow the grassy track which runs parallel to the electricity pylons and rises through Alder Carr Wood to reach Jayhill Farm and further to Holden Gate.



Haworth to Ilkley Leg 3

At Holden gate follow Holden Lane to the right for approx ¼ mile until you arrive at a gravel track leaving the road on your left and a Public Bridleway sign. Take this bridleway and follow it round to the left. Before you reach a telephone mast turn right into a gateway, ignore the large metal gate and go through a small gate on your left and follow the path, through one more gate to the metal gate at the entrance to the wood.

Take the path which leads into the wood for approx 200 yards until it turns sharply to the left. There in front of you are the Dew Stones.

After visiting the Dew Stones continue along the track which runs between the forest and the fields on your left until you reach a gravel track coming from left to right. Turn left onto the track and then immediately left again back into the forest. Keep faithful to this forest track and after leaving the forest through a wooden gate you reach the farmhouse of Black Pots on the right of the track.



Keep straight on along Jenny Lane for approx 1/3 mile and until you reach Doubler Stones Farm on your left. Immediately before a bungalow on the right, leave the track to the right and follow a feint path with the Doubler Stones on your right in a northerly direction passing through a gate and a stone stile in a wall to arrive at Black Hill. Once through the stone stile it is worth walking forward for 50 yards to the edge of the escarpment and take in the views up Wharfedale as far as Bolton Abbey and Simon's Seat.

Return to the stone stile and don't cross it, follow the wall in a south easterly direction over Addingham High Moor. When the walls converge you can cross the wall on your left through a narrow gate and make your way to the trig point. Once past the trig point cross a new stile in the wall corner and continue following the right hand wall until you reach the West Buck Stones. Next, visit the East Buck Stones and continue walking south east until you have past the wireless station at Whetstone Gate.

About 100 yards beyond the wireless station the path becomes paved with stone flags and near to the Thimble Stones turns east.



Keep looking out on the right side of the path and, approx 150 yards beyond the Thimble Stones, you will see the next Stanza Stones (Puddle Stones) laid out on the heather.

Leave the Puddle Stones and aim for the next trig point which you can see in the distance to the East. From this lofty height we descend to take a look at the Twelve Apostles Standing Stone Circle, before dropping down the Dalesway link path to Gill Head (Backstone Beck).

Cross the beck and turn right to follow the well worn path down the left hand bank of the stream. Watch out for the Cup and Ring marked rock on the left side of the path. After crossing over a major footpath with a stone water channel in the valley on your right, and reaching an area where multiple paths converge, keep going north and cross the stream close to an area of rocks and pick up the path which follows the right hand bank of Backstone Beck. Follow the path which runs close to the beck through some dramatic scenery and descend a very steep rough path (care needed) until you can see the wooden bridge beneath you.

As you approach the bottom of the steep section of path, look out for a large boulder in the gorse on your left between the path and the stream. Squeeze past this boulder and you will see the Beck Stone standing upright in the middle of the beck. After visiting the Beck Stone return to the path the way you came and carry on down to the wooden bridge. Cross over the bridge and walk into Ilkley past the tarn where our walk finishes at the railway station.