

Frodsham Pond Trail – a walk for all seasons

The Frodsham Pond Trail was developed by Frodsham Wildlife Conservation Group, in association with Frodsham Town Council.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is correct. Frodsham Town Council cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Ancient tracks and field paths pass by eight ponds on this delightful walk. Discover the changing moods of Hob Hey Wood, the rolling Cheshire farmland and the valley of the River Weaver throughout the year.

The Frodsham pond trail is slightly over 8km/5miles long so allow 2 to 3 hours to complete, or just walk a small section.

There are a few stiles, walking over fields and a reasonable amount of climbing involved in the complete route.

The route is designed to take advantage of distant views and it may be walked in any direction. Ordnance Survey Explorer 267 may be useful for this walk. Refreshments are available at the Travellers Rest.

By bus or train – it is a little less than 1km from the Main Street bus stops and the railway station to join the trail on Townfield Lane.

By car – limited parking at Crowmere (SJ 521758) Bradley Farm crossroads (SJ 532771), Langdale Way (SJ 526778) and Frodsham Bridge (SJ 529784). Of these, the road with a wide verge leading to Crowmere from Manley Road is the best and the directions start from here.

Countryside care

Many public rights of way are on private land. Please respect this by keeping to the path.

Don't stray on to private land to explore other ponds you may see on the way.

Ensure that dogs remain under close control, preferably on a lead.

The paths will be muddy in bad weather – **so be prepared.**

Should you encounter problems along the trail concerning rights of way please report them to the Public Rights of Way Unit, Highway Development, Cheshire West & Chester Council, The Drummer, Winsford, CW7 1AH, or telephone 0300-1288123.

Directions

Starting from Crowmere, take the track past a cottage on the right and follow it left and downhill into Marl Pits (more details in section at end). Pass through the wooded area and up to a kissing gate onto a field access point and a road just beyond. Turn right downhill and then left into Top Road. Follow this around two right hand bends to reach the main road (note the fine views over the Weaver Valley and the quarry

below the road just before the first right hand bend). Carefully cross Kingsley Road and pass over a stile almost opposite.

Follow the right hand boundary of two fields to arrive at an awkward hollow through a hedge into the next field. Again, follow the right hand boundary, but just before meeting Watery Lane swing sharp left alongside the hedge, and cross the fields to Bradley Lane. Turn right and walk past Brook Pit Hollow to the crossroads at Bradley Farm.

Go left at the crossroads, and left again just past Dingle Farm into Hob Hey Lane and along the ancient packhorse route towards Hob Hey Wood. Where the track narrows, pass through a kissing gate on the left to take a permissive path along the edge of a field. After 200 metres this drops down into the wood (more details in section at end). At the path's T-junction, turn right to shortly reach the old track again. Turn left to cross a substantial bridge and then follow the main track up hill. A short distance after the track levels out, you will reach Hob-Hey Pit on the left. Then continue along the track to reach Townfield Lane.



Hob-Hey Pit



View NE from Hob-Hey Pit

Turn right along Townfield Lane which soon becomes a rough track as it passes a small play area and then the top of Langdale Way which provides a good viewpoint. Carrying on along the track, look out for a gap onto a footpath on the right, just before the track bends gently to the right. Follow this footpath downhill to reach First Pit next to Ellis Lane (note that just as the path starts to go downhill, it diagonally crosses a narrow field on the left to access the field containing the pond).



First Pit, Ellis Lane

Follow Ellis Lane to the right for 500 metres until a kissing gate. Take the downhill path to the left towards the River Weaver. This is not a public right of way but appears to be the farmer's preferred option for walkers to take. [If this permissive way is closed for any reason details of the actual public right of way can be found at the end of the directions section]. Turn right alongside the River Weaver and continue to the old lock. Beside Frodsham Cut is Boden's Lock Orchard, planted on the site of the old lock houses. In the field behind the orchard is a *scrape* (shallow sheet of water) which attracts birds especially in wintertime. This can be approached, if desired, over a stile.



Orchard at Boden's Lock



Route towards the cattle bridge



View from the cattle bridge

From the lock, walk upstream, beside the river, to the cattle bridge. Walk up the track to your right to Ellis Lane again. *The definitive right of way map shows that halfway up the track the way turns left across a field to a small pond (Brickfield Hollow) where it turns right and follows the top of a bank. At the time of writing this is inaccessible. To visit the pond there is a small gate a little beyond the cattle bridge on the river side path (this is only a permissive access and can be removed or blocked in the future).* Turn right along Ellis Lane to shortly arrive at a gate on the left onto Broad Lane.

Take Broad Lane and in 100 metres follow it round to the right to commence a gentle but steady climb past Top Barn Field Pit, Twelve Acre Pit, and Crookacre Pit before returning to the Bradley Lane crossroads.



The start of Broad Lane



Top Barn Field Pit



Twelve Acre Pit

Crook Acre Pit





View to South East from Broad Lane

Continue ahead along Watery Lane past Millfield Pit. Do not take the path to the right immediately past the pond which is close to where you turned sharp left earlier in the walk, but carry on to the next path on the right. Take the path diagonally across a field to the garden of Bradley Upper Mill. Carry on, over more fields, to reach Kingsley Road again.

Turn left and take the turning on the right. Look out for the old lion's head drinking fountain in the wall on the opposite corner (it may be under the ivy). Walk up the side road for 300 metres to find a public footpath on the left through woodland. This path, is the one through the old marl pits that you took at the start. As an alternative you could continue up the road and through a rock cutting, but care will be needed on the blind bend.

If the permissive way down to the river mentioned above should be closed off it will be necessary to follow the actual public right of way which is roughly in the same direction as Ellis Lane across a meadow. Help to finding the exact route is given in the pictures below:



From the kissing gate at the end of Ellis Lane the precise route is to the foot of the slightly steeper slope as indicated by the footprints.



Once over the brow make for the right hand edge of the trees on the left i.e. the centre of this picture

Turn left in front of the trees and walk downhill to a gate and stile and then make straight across the field to a stile in the mature hedgerow opposite (just visible in the picture below).



This will bring you to the old lock and orchard where you should follow the route given above to the cattle bridge

To find out more about ponds, see the following links

www.pondconservation.org.uk

www.field-studies-council.org

Hob Hey Wood

Hob-Hey Wood is a *clough woodland* (a wooded area of steep slopes leading down to a narrow valley, usually with a stream running through it). The mature woodland is a little over 10 acres and has been purchased in portions over many years by Frodsham Town Council. The initial purchase was the ultimate outcome in the fight against a plan to have motorbikes in the wood. It was valuable enough to have it graded as a site of biological interest (C classification) and have a blanket tree preservation order. The most recent purchase took place towards the end of 2012 and included about one acre of meadowland, on which a community orchard has just been planted. It also includes a small overgrown pond which expert opinion has suggested is left

untouched. There are various paths around the wood, one of which crosses a bridge into a new plantation with public access. The new plantation is growing well and is already making a useful extension to the council-owned wood.

Marl pits.

Marl Pits is just what it says, a series of worked-out marl pits through which a public footpath provides a useful route avoiding a narrow rock-faced blind bend on the nearby road. Most marl pits hold water because of the clay base and many Cheshire ponds are old marl pits. However, this site is particularly dry because it has been worked down to sandstone. Not all of this area is owned by the town council charity, but the adjacent land owner has agreed to leave it in our care. After various path improvements the latest work has been the gradual reduction in the canopy to see at what point some ground cover growth is initiated. This work continues. Marl is a mixture of calcium carbonate and clay which gives it slightly alkaline properties and was therefore useful in conditioning acidic soils. Another major use of marl was in the manufacture of cement.