

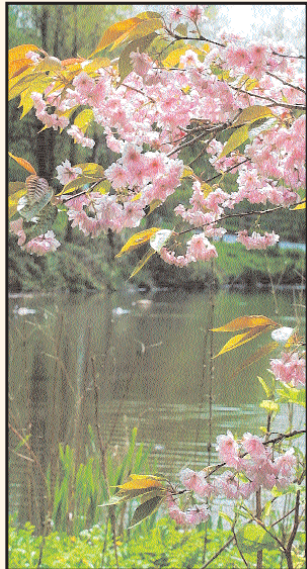
Socialscene

Out and about in Oldham

life in Oldham

Walk: Diggle Flat Trail
Distance: Three miles.
Time: One to one and a half hours at a leisurely pace.
Calorie burn: 200+
How do I get there?: The route starts from the car park at the Brownhill Countryside Centre. Head from Oldham Mumps up Lees Road (A669) and take the turn off for Delph. You will now pick up signs for the A6052 for Dobcross and come onto Dobcross New Road. The centre is on the right at the junction with Wool Road (A670).
Public transport: Call GMPT on 0161 228 7811 for bus details for the area.
Parking: Free parking places at the Brownhill Centre.

Flat walk full of industrial highs and lows

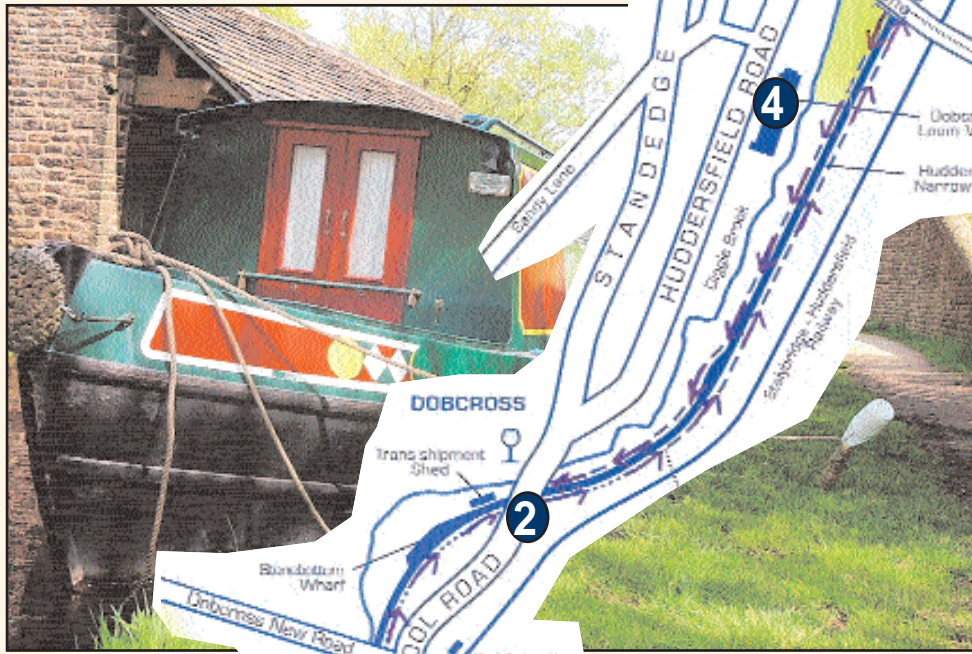


This is our 14th feature in a series of seasonal articles aimed at encouraging people to get out and about, explore the borough and get healthy in the process. With the help of the Oldham Ramblers' Association, Oldham Council and Countryside Rangers we hope to reintroduce you to the beauty on our own doorstep. This week we take in a level walk by the canal

As we near the end of this popular series, we return to an area that we touched on earlier - Diggle.

The Diggle Flat Trail is exactly as its name implies - a flat walk that is within the capabilities of all age groups and follows much of the Huddersfield Canal Sculpture Trail. This is a pleasant stroll and there are plenty of places to stop for a pint and a pie!

1 The walk begins at the car park at the Brownhill Countryside Centre. (The centre was opened in 1916 as a transport depot for the Saddleworth Urban District Council and was converted into a countryside centre in 1982. Many leaflets for local walks are available here.) You are heading out of the centre and following the path of the canal. On our outward journey we will head along the right-hand-side of the waterway with Stonebottom Wharf (the name speaking for itself) on the left.



2 Past the wharf is the trans-shipment shed. (This was built in 1797 and used for storing cargo from boats to be taken by road until 1811 when the tunnel was opened. The main shed

was in the car park opposite, with water inlets going into the shed so the boats could be unloaded

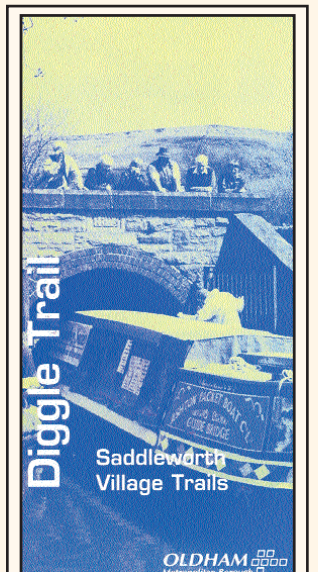
under cover.) Passing under the Wool Road you carry on up the canalside through a tranquil and natural area with plenty of wildlife and flora. The Stalybridge and Huddersfield railway line is not too far away on your right.

Eventually you will cross Ward Lane and head up to the end of the opening half of the walk at the Standedge Tunnels.

3 At the tunnels you should pause and admire the triumph of this Victorian infrastructure. (There are four tunnels, of which three were built for the railways and one for the canal. All of the tunnels exceed three miles in length and the first - a railway tunnel - was completed in 1846. Only one of the tunnels is used today and that is the one for the narrow boats. At the time of its completion, narrow boats had to be 'legged' through the canal tunnel by men putting their feet on the tunnel walls and pushing the boat along.) You now cross the tunnel and come down on the opposite side of the canal with the old Warth Mills on your right. (These were built in 1780 and used for fulling, which made the cloth bulkier by dampening and beating it.) Diggle Village is not far off to your right if you want to take a minor detour for refreshments. If not, stay on the trail and you will again enjoy a more green area of the canal complete with a number of sculptures completed as part of the Public Art Sculpture Trail along the canal (You can complete the whole sculpture walk by seeing Walk Two in this series. All of the walks are

on our website at the address below.) Pass under Ward Lane again and keep on the track.

4 The trail will take you down past the Dobcross Loom Works, which are on your right. (These were built in 1861 and closed in 1967. Wooden pallets are now manufactured here by Shaws.) The walk is now clear all the way back to the start point, crossing back under the Wool Road and giving you the chance to take a closer look at the trans-shipment shed as you continue back to the start point.



This week's walk is available as a leaflet that can be found at most Tourist Information centres and countryside centres in the borough.

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