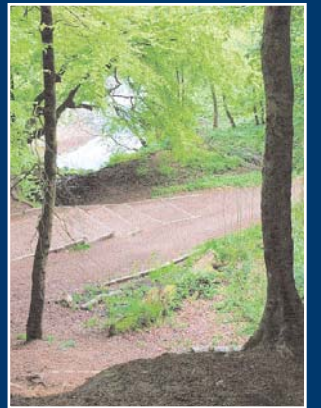


Socialscene

Out and about in Oldham

life in Oldham

Going in circles can be such fun



Walk: Woodhouses Circular
Distance: Two and a half miles
Time: Around one and a half hours
Calorie burn: 300+
How do I get there?: From the centre of Oldham follow Ashton Road and turn right onto Coalpit Lane and then left onto Stannybrook Road and past the garden centre onto Newmarket Road and the signposted countryside centre.
Public transport: The nearest bus stop to the centre is on Newmarket Road. Call GMPTE on 0161 228 7811 for details of buses.
Parking: There is free parking at the countryside centre.

This is our ninth feature in a series of 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 places of beauty and interest on our own doorstep. Last time we visited Daisy Nook Visitor Centre we headed in a north-easterly direction, but this time we are heading west to Woodhouses.



DAISY Nook and its immediate surroundings are some of the most attractive in the borough, and this week we revisit the area to head off in a westerly direction.

Our route follows the Hollinwood Branch Canal, crosses a golf course and goes through the heart of one of the prettiest protected villages in Oldham. There are wonderful views, wildlife and unusual plants and vegetation. It's a peaceful and relaxing stroll for all age groups. What are you waiting for?

1 Start at the Daisy Nook Visitor Centre (The centre was opened in 1987 and has an exhibition room with displays and information about the area. There are refreshments and toilets). Leave the car park and cross Stannybrook Road. Go over the stile and onto the tow path by the disused Hollinwood Branch Canal. Follow this path for approximately half a mile, passing by a small wooden bridge on the left-hand side.

2 This is Littlemoos Camp and a site of biological importance. (The canal is a vital wetland with uncommon aquatic vegetation and wildlife. Littlemoos Camp itself was once a military camp retained as an open space with parking and pad-

docks.) Follow the path to a right hand junction with a bridge on the left.
3 At Cinderland Bridge (named after Cinderland Hall which is close by and still standing as a working dairy farm. One of the reasons for the bridge was to allow the farmer to cross the canal to tend his livestock) you leave the tow-path and follow the footpath arrow which points through

a squeeze stile and then slightly to the right over a step stile. Go down through Brookdale Golf Course and through the small woodland to a wooden bridge and cross over.

4 This is Ash Bridge, which crosses the River Medlock. Follow the footpath straight up from here and through the middle of the golf course.

5 Brookdale is a full-sized 18-hole course for private members, but this is a public right of

way. (Golf courses are often valuable areas for wildlife and this one is no different, having woodland, grassland and wetland areas.)
6 The route across the course comes out onto the main road through Woodhouses, Medlock Road. (Woodhouses Village is a conservation area because it was felt important to preserve its character. There are many old buildings here, such as the Diamond Hall farmhouse and Old School.) Turn right and walk along the pavement and past the shops and pubs to the other end of the village. Turn right after the primary school and back onto the public footpath, then go over the stile and pause for a moment to take in the surroundings. (Here you can enjoy good views of Hartshead Pike and Werneth Low.) Continue down a field by following the

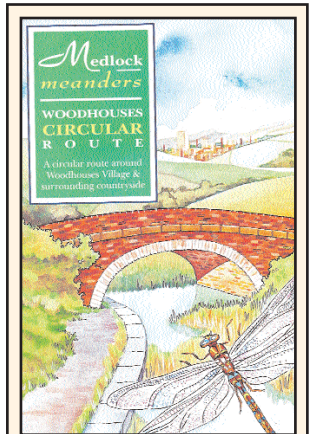
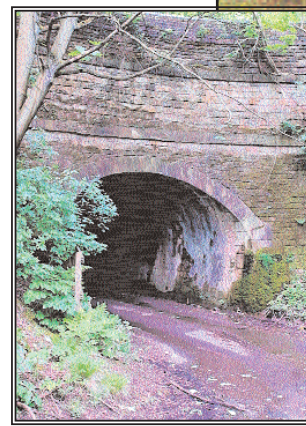
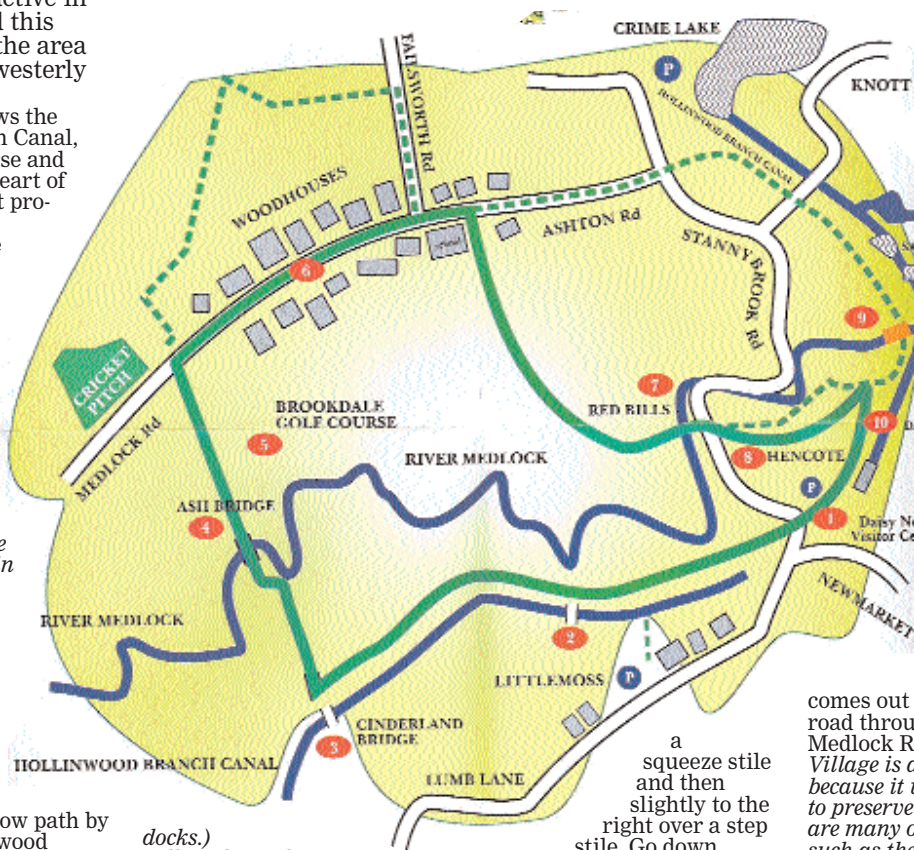
yellow footpath arrows to the left, go over another stile and along one side of the field through some scrub and woodland and over some rough land down towards Daisy Nook Farm.

7 You are now at Red Bill's. (This was so named after a former landlord, William Simister, who had red hair and a red beard. It was previously called the House of Common.) Cross the bridge and go over the road, then turn right past Hencote Cottage (once a popular tea room with local people). Turn left into Daisy Nook Country Park by the cottage, with a meadow on the left and woodland on the right.

8 The woodland is owned by the National Trust. (The Trust owns 15 acres of woodland in Daisy Nook which is managed for it by Oldham Countryside Service.) Follow the path alongside the meadow and then up a set of steps and past a small grave. (There is some dispute about whether it is a monkey or dog buried here.) Go along the top of a mixed woodland beside fields on the right. At the far end, descend by the sloping wall onto the tow-path by the canal.

9 Before continuing, walk a few yards to the left and admire the

aqueduct. (This impressive structure was built to take the canal over the River Medlock. From here there are also good views of the fairground site, woodlands and Hartshead Pike) To complete the circuit, turn back from the viaduct and along the tow path down.
10 You will now pass through what is known locally as 'The Dark Tunnel'. (This is Booodle Tunnel and was dug out in the 1920s. At this time of the year it hosts an array of wild flowers.) To complete the circuit, carry straight on back to the Visitor Centre.



This week's walk is available as a leaflet from countryside centres around the borough. Selected leaflets are available at Tourist Information centres.

Next week: Don't miss our guide to another great scenic Oldham walk

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