

Sponds Hill (413m) and Black Hill (Whaley Moor) (410m) from Lyme Park

Summary

Starting from Lyme Park, the walk goes through parkland and moorland, passing the medieval Bow Stones and Dipping Stone.

Start/Finish

Lyme Park National Trust Car Park – Postcode: SK12 2NR

National Trust membership will give free parking, otherwise the cost is £9. An alternative approach would be from Kettleshulme where there is free roadside parking.

1. From the National trust car park, exit to the south along the Gritstone Trail heading in the direction of Knightslow Wood. Go through a large gate and follow the path uphill through pine trees and through a gate into the wood. Fork slightly left and follow the clear path through the woods exiting at another gate. Continue on the path straight ahead, uphill, across the parkland. On leaving the Lyme Park estate, continue straight ahead, passing a house on the left, to reach a metalled road.



Lyme Park car park



Gritstone Trail sign



Knightslow Woods

2. Turn left on the ridgeway track for a few yards to see the Bow Stones on the left. According to Historic England, the Bow Stones are two Anglian cross shafts set in a single base stone, dating not later than the 10th century. They are known as the 'Bow Stones' because of a local folk tradition that Robin Hood and his followers re-strung their bows near here.



The ridgeway leading to Sponds Hill



The Bow Stones

3. Turn around and retrace your steps heading south along the old ridgeway. After about a kilometre, the trig point can be seen on the right. It is on private land which is not accessible without climbing a fence. Anyway, the summit of Sponds Hill is about 300m further on, where the viewpoint is marked on the OS maps. There is an orientation table at the summit.



Sponds Hill trig point



Sponds Hill summit

4. Return along the ridgeway, heading north, for about a kilometre. At point 386 (on the OS 1:25,000 map) also marked by a signpost, there is a footpath on the right. Take this path which follows the dry-stone wall downhill. As you descend, the path becomes a more obvious sunken track. As the walled track comes to an end, the path bears left and right and leads to the road.



Track leading off the hill



and down following a sunken track



Looking across to Black Hill



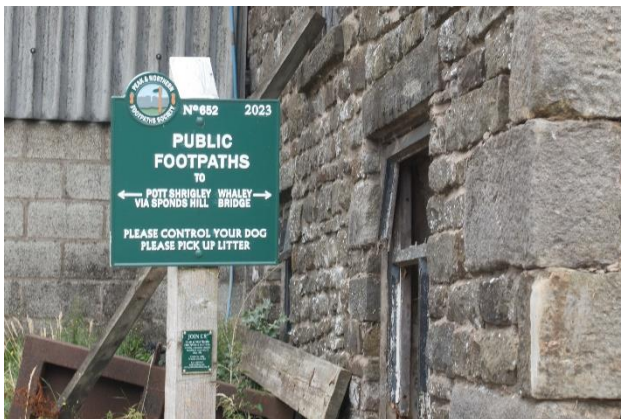
path bears left then right

5. Cross the road to follow the narrow lane opposite, going steeply downhill, through a wooded area and steeply uphill. After about 700m, take the track to the left, towards Bailey's Farm.



Track leading to Bailey's Farm

6. Follow the track to Bailey's Farm and continue straight ahead. On exiting the farm, the right of way follows the edge of the field continuing through to Cornhill Farm. Continue ahead on the metalled road passing New House Farm, an 18th century Grade II listed building, and Fall Hey Farm. The right of way takes a path descending to the right, although the main drive continues ahead. Both tracks meet again at the road.



Bailey's Farm



approaching Cornhill Farm



Farm house

7. Before the cattle grid by the road, turn left taking the large track uphill. After about 100m, on reaching a cattle grille turn right through a gate and head uphill. The path heads through gorse bushes; keep straight ahead to reach a dry-stone wall. This can be crossed via a stile to the left or open gate to the right. Follow the track more gently uphill, crossing a stile over the next wall and then follow the track to the left to reach The Dipping Stone. According to Historic England, the Dipping Stone is an example of an early medieval wayside cross which also functioned as a boundary marker. Although it lacks its shafts and cross heads, it is reasonably well preserved and is important as one of the regional group of twin-socketed wayside crosses which also includes the Bow Stones and Robin Hood's Picking Rods.



before cattle grid turn left along track



before second cattle grid turn right through gate



The Dipping Stone

8. Follow the clear path, in a westerly direction, over grassland. Pass an isolated hawthorn tree on the left, and a few metres further on cross a dry-stone wall (pictured below). After crossing the stile follow the wall uphill. Where there is a bit of a dip it becomes fairly boggy. The summit of Black Hill is in the corner of the area of open access land.



edge of open access land



Black Hill summit

9. Head diagonally south west across the open access land, back to the path. Cross a stile and continue ahead to the track that leads to the High Peak Special School. Cross this track and keep straight ahead to Higher Lane, crossing a footbridge as the road is approached. Cross Higher Lane and take the steps opposite, heading uphill and passing a house on the right. At the road, cross over, and pass through an area of Mountain Ash trees. Continuing ahead, cross a stile and head towards Lyme Park.



looking back to Black Hill and High Peak School



open land leading to Lyme Park

10. Cross the dry-stone wall, turn right and follow the wall on the right. On reaching a fork, the official public right of way forks left and curves round to the right. At the bottom corner, cross a stile and follow the path back to the house at Lyme Park and return to the car park.



Steps into Lyme Park



follow the wall downhill



view with Stockport and Manchester in the background

Walk details

Grade – moderate

Distance – 12.8km/8 miles

Ascent - 520m/1710 ft

Walk time - approx. 4 hours

