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Wycoller to Boulsworth Hill and Lad Law

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Free car park at Wycoller (SD 926395)
Ordnance Survey map	OL 21 South Pennines – Burnley, Hebden Bridge, Keighley and Todmorden.
Distance	8.6 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk to Boulsworth Hill and its summit, Lad Law, starts from the very pretty hamlet of Wycoller in Lancashire. Wycoller's origins can be traced back to 10,000 BC or more, originally agricultural, then moving to weaving in the 18th century. The valley narrowly avoided being turned into a reservoir in the late 19th century but following local outcry, an alternative water supply was found. The then Water Board retained ownership until the early 1970s, when Lancashire County Council bought it and created a country park so preserving Wycoller.

The hamlet contains the impressive remains of Wycoller Hall, which has a massive fireplace and alongside it, an unusual keyhole shaped recess. The hall was built in the 16th century and is said to be the inspiration for Ferndean Manor in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre.

Alongside the hall is Aisled Barn, now an information centre. This was built in 1630 and is impressive for its magnificent Cruik beams. Do not miss it.

Along the valley are some great bridges, not least the Clam Bridge which is made of a huge single stone.

Looking down on the hamlet is The Atom, a panopticon sculpture from which there are good views of the valley and Boulsworth Hill. To reach The Atom is but a short walk up the old coach road, a clear path from the back of the Aisled Barn – just over a quarter of a mile. If you go to look, note the ancient slab rock field boundaries. Return to Wycoller to continue the walk.

After leaving Wycoller, the walk route is straightforward and easy to follow. There is a bit of a climb up Boulsworth Hill to the Lad Law summit - about half a mile, earning an amber traffic light but nothing too severe. It is a "figure of 8" route, so a shorter walk could be done by omitting the second loop to Boulsworth Hill.

There are no refreshment opportunities en route, other than at the tea rooms at the Wycoller Craft Centre but some good rocks on which to perch at Lad Law whilst you munch your sandwiches.

The walk starts from the car park at Wycoller. To get there, take the B6250 off the A6068 to the east of Colne where there is a brown tourist sign for "Wycoller Country Park 2 miles". Follow the signs from there. There is another car park at the Atom if

preferred which is accessed via the road opposite the Emmott Arms at Laneshaw Bridge. This also has a brown tourist sign for "Wycoller Country Park 2 miles".

Start: From the car park at Wycoller (SD 926395), turn right to walk along the little footpath alongside the road then the road itself, turning right as you cross the stream, until you get to Wycoller Village. Go left over the packhorse bridge to see the ruin of Wycoller Hall, the visitors centre set in an old cruik Aisled Barn.

Behind the visitors centre, is the old coach road, which gives the option to climb to see the Atom, a panopticon (a structure from which there are views in all directions). Return to the hamlet to continue the walk.

With the hall at your back, turn left to follow the broad track to the left of Wycoller Beck. Pass the iron age Clam Bridge, a single slab of stone believed to be previously a standing stone.

Come to a four-way fingerpost (SD 937388) and take the track straight ahead following the concrete track to Dene House Farm – part of the Bronte way. Go straight through the farmyard, ignoring the path off to the left.

Follow the track through the field, with the wall on your right. When the wall bends to the right, keep straight ahead up the hill, guided by a yellow footpath arrow. At the top of the field, go through a kissing gate and turn right (SD 942381).

Cross a stream via a wide bridge and climb the hill at its far side, turning left to follow the fingerpost for the Pennine Bridleway and Thursden Valley. The path crosses the moor and sections of it are paved with stones.

On reaching a road, keep straight ahead, still following "Pennine Bridleway" and "Thursden Valley 2½ miles".

On reaching a gateway by a barn at Lumb Laithe farm, turn left (SD 928369). There is a small sign on a post for "Boulsworth Hill Circular Walk". This section of path is shown on the 1:25000 OS map by a brown dotted line indicating a permitted bridleway (as opposed to a Right of Way). Follow the concrete track as it climbs to a covered reservoir. When you get to this, the route goes to its left.

You reach the plateau by a collection of large rocks (SD 934361). Turn right (203° magnetic) for the white trig. point which should be visible on the horizon. At the trig point (SD 930356) are a few flattish stones where you can sit to eat your sandwiches, whilst enjoying the good 360° views.

From the trig. point, follow the obvious descending footpath (271° magnetic) which bears slightly right. Pendle Hill is ahead of you, slightly left, on the horizon. You drop down for almost a mile to join a broad track (SD 921367) which is the Pennine Bridleway once more. Turn right.

Stay on the track for about half a mile. You pass the end of the concrete track you ascended to the reservoir and a mere 50 yards or so beyond this, turn left over a stone stile (SD 928370), then bear slightly left. Follow the left hand boundary of the

field and at the bottom of the field, go over a stile and follow the path as it passes along a depression (“valley” would be a bit OTT!).

The path comes down to a concrete bridge (SD 922373) over the stream but if you want to deviate left here, for only 25/30 yards, there is quite an attractive waterfall, Lumb Spout.

Return to and cross the concrete bridge. Follow the track to Lodge Moss Farm, going through the farmyard to the right of the house. On reaching the tarmac road (SD 921376), keep straight ahead, downhill.

You arrive at the attractive village of Trawden. We do not venture too far into it – about 0.3 of a mile. Look out for a cobbled area to the right (SD 913384), which is the bus terminus (opposite Lane House Farm). Turn right and descend the cobbled track. At the start of this, is a short section of rail from the old tram system, which was in existence from 1901 to 1934.

Walk down the cobbles. You are looking for a footpath on the right, about 30 yards from the tram rail and which is easy to miss. It is just after the driveway to a bungalow and alongside a hedge. There is a stile with a footpath arrow which takes you into a field. Continue to follow the line downhill crossing the stream at the bottom via a footbridge.

Keep to the left hand boundary of the next field and climb the short hill through the trees. Go through a walkers' gate and between the farm buildings (SD916385) and follow the drive. After crossing a cattle grid, at the bend, take the footpath off to the left, through the small gate.

Follow the right hand boundary of the field, go through the gate by the farm (Little Laithe), then turn left (SD 922383). It is now more or less a straight line back to Wycoller.

At the next farm (Germany Farm) go left to follow its drive. As the drive bends sharply left, keep straight ahead to follow the wall on the right. Cross a little wooden bridge and go over a wide stile and keep to the right hand boundary of the field. Ignore the footpath arrow indicating a path off to the right. You pass Raven Rock Farm and cross another wide stile.

The path passes through a narrow wooded area. Keep straight on here and ignore any other paths off. The path descends into the valley. After descending some steps, join a tarmac lane and turn left.

You soon get back to Wycoller by the clapper bridge. Turn left back to the car park.

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