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## Wiswell to Sabden

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Pendleton Road, Wiswell. Roadside parking (SD745374).
Ordnance Survey map	OL287 West Pennine Moors
Distance	10 Miles
Date of Walk	27 February 2015
Traffic light rating	

**Introduction:** This walk from Wiswell (pronounced “Wizzle”) takes you over the 1462 ft high Spence Moor and down into Sabden. Overall, it is an easy walk with a bit of a steep, though short climb back up to Wiswell Moor near the end.

Wiswell is so named, either from Old Molly’s Well, which became known as the wise woman’s well **or** because there was a local Saxon chief called Wisa, Wigga or Wysa and it had (and still has) a well. The latter explanation sounds more credible to me. You will see the well on the last stage of the walk.

It is a very attractive upmarket village which has won best kept village in the “Hamlet” class several times and proudly displays its “trophy” plaques.

Sabden was originally a farming, quarrying and handloom weaving town. Cotton mills flourished, then the high quality of the water in the valley attracted the calico printing industry. Sadly the industry died in the 1930s and most other industry seems to have died since, leaving a typical ex-industrial town with a somewhat melancholy look. However, the locals seem very friendly and the town is surrounded by lovely countryside.

From the top of Spence Moor are long distance views over Ribblesdale, and south to Blackburn, Burnley etc – or at least there should be. On the day I did this walk, low cloud rather impeded the views. Pendle Hill is next door, to the north.

Ideal picnic stops are a little in short supply, though there is a pleasant grassy area (SD 802381) along the lane after Sabden Fold. There are also a couple of pubs in Sabden.

The walk starts from Wiswell. There is no specific parking area but Pendleton Road in the centre of the village is amply wide enough for roadside parking. As a common starting point, the walk starts from the pleasant village “garden” area at the junction of Pendleton Road and Moor Lane. There is a phone box and flag pole here and benches, handy for boot changing.

To get to Wiswell, turn north-west off the A59 at a roundabout just outside Clitheroe on to the A671. Left and left again over the A59 will take you into the village.

**Start:** From the phone box/flag pole (SD 745374), walk up the hill (Pendleton Road) and turn right on to Moorside Lane (SD 747375) (not to be confused with Moor Lane mentioned above). Follow it to its end and take the footpath marked with yellow arrows to the right of the entrance to Wiswell Brook Farm.

Follow the path climbing up the moor, under some power lines, towards the radio mast.

Just before the mast, go over the left hand of two stiles (one either side of a wall) and follow the path left of the mast.

On meeting the track to the mast, go straight across and follow the path as it descends. When you meet the track to the farm, turn left then quickly right through a walkers' gate marked with a yellow arrow. Cross the narrow field and through a second walkers gate then turn left, on a broad track (SD 757371). There is a large sign here which tells you this will take you to The Nick of Pendle.

When you reach the road, more or less opposite, are two broad tracks from the road. Take the one on the right. Follow this briefly and as it curves left, branch off to the right across the rough grass towards a lower broad path. You should be heading more or less towards the reservoir (Churn Clough Reservoir).

Turn left on the lower path (SD 776385). You will pass a three way fingerpost. Continue in the direction of "Churn Clough" and "Craggs".

Go through a kissing gate and take the path on the left.

As you come level with the reservoir, there is a narrower path off left but ignore this and stay on the main path.

The path bends left by a stream. Stay on it and do not be tempted by the stile into woodland.

Keep following the obvious path and when you come to a kissing gate (SD 785394) through a wall, **do not** go through it but turn right to follow the wall on a concessionary footpath.

Follow the wall until you reach another kissing gate. Follow the path from here on to Spence Moor (SD 790394).

From the top of the moor, the path descends gently to a ladder stile. Go over this and continue in the same direction.

After dropping down to a kissing gate, turn right and follow a series of ridges and stream down to the corner of a wood (SD 805790). At first glance, it may not be obvious there is a path here. Follow the left hand edge of the wood (Cock Clough Plantation). Do not take any routes into the wood but follow its edge down to the tarmac lane at Sabden Fold. Turn right here.

Follow the lane to the entrance to Old House Farm and turn right (SD 807383). Follow this old lane for half a mile and after passing some farm buildings, go through a gate. The track starts to climb slightly and turn right. On the corner, branch off to the left.

At the property with a wind turbine, go through the walkers' gate to the left of the property. Follow the well marked path down through the fields, arriving at a farm. The path goes to its left over a stone step stile. Then go through a kissing gate on to the

farm track. Turn left, passing a historic farm at Dean (SD 789374) with stone mullion windows, dating from the 1574. This is the oldest farm in the valley.

Continue along this track, arriving in Sabden just a field away from St. Nicholas Parish Church. Go straight ahead along St Nicholas Avenue. At the main road, (Padiham Road) turn right then left on Whalley Road following the road sign for "Whalley 3 miles".

Follow the road for three quarters of a mile through Sabden. Pass the national speed limit sign and the sign (if you were coming the opposite way) for Sabden. Look out for a farm gate on the right (SD 768369), with an old stile next to it (not easy to spot). Go through the gate and head across the field, initially in the direction of the radio mast on the hill.

The path gradually curves slightly left, crossing a footbridge and goes to Lower Barn Farm, passing to its right via a stile. Keep straight ahead, ignoring the turn to the right.

Just past the property, cross a stile and turn right to follow the stream.

You lose sight of the radio mast for a while but keep plodding uphill and it will appear again. At the top of a large steep field, go through the gate and follow the right hand boundary of the next field. At a gate, turn right.

At the tarmac lane (SD 754378), by the sign for Bramley Farm Cottages, turn right and almost immediately left following the public footpath finger post.

The path climbs steeply uphill alongside the wall to the brow. Ignor any turns off.

At the brow, with the radio mast on your right, go left through the gate, then bear right following the white footpath arrow downhill, towards Wiswell. Go through a farm gate then quickly through another on the right. Then follow the left hand boundary of the field.

At the entrance to Sheep Cote Farm, join the road and turn right back to the phone box/flag pole in Wiswell. On the way, watch out for the ancient well on the right. This was recorded in the 12<sup>th</sup> C but is probably much older.

