

12. Lancashire Hot-Pot: Walsden & Todmorden

Duration: 1½ Hours

Walsden Cricket Club and Todmorden Cricket Club are located just inside the western boundary of Calderdale, but both play in Lancashire-based competitions: WCC in the Central Lancashire League and TCC in the Lancashire League. This walk takes you from ground to ground – from Scott Street to Centre Vale – and takes in much more besides.

Leave your vehicle in **Riggs Garden Centre** car park, Rochdale Road, Walsden. Have a look round the giant store and then cross over the main road to visit the gift shop and café.

Watch some play at Walsden cricket ground, just a few hundred yards up the road in the direction of Walsden itself. The history of WCC is dominated by **Frank Scott** – hence Scott Street (the name of the ground) and Scott House (one of the nearby blocks of flats). When you leave the ground re-join the main road, go over the railway bridge, but locate the short private road to the right of the last house on the opposite side of the road. Go down the path, ensure you close the gate at the end; go right and then drop down left onto the towpath of the **Rochdale Canal**. Head towards the church spire you see in the distance – in the direction of the centre of Walsden.



The WCC logo

Sauntering down the towpath, you will encounter joggers, walkers and fishing enthusiasts (look out for the **Todmorden Angling Society** plaque on your left). If you're thirsty or hungry, you'll be glad to know that the **Cross Keys** pub will soon appear on your left – feel free to pop in for a drink or a bite to eat! You'll also spot a small stream on your left that starts to run parallel to the canal.

If you're fond of guitar bands you'll be reassured to pass through the Travis Mill Lock 28. There's a church and school to your right, and then an excellent landmark on your left (**Grandma Pollard's Chippy** – famous for its homemade pies!). Through a gap in the houses on your left you'll spot Walsden train station (could be useful later).



The Rochdale Canal at Walsden

More locks follow. **Walsden Junior School** appears on your left, a Halifax Building Society plaque (1990) on the other bank of the waterway. Now, have a guess how far you are currently away from Manchester and Sowerby Bridge. A milestone you come to on the towpath very soon should help you out here!

Cross the main road when you come to it, and re-join the canal on the right-hand side. There are more locks and a road bridge to go under. Then a huge iron bridge appears in the mid-distance – you can just see a church spire through the arch of the bridge and a viaduct on your right. Also, a spectacularly large wall appears on your left – just marvel at its size!

Another church emerges on your right. When you come to the big green iron structure that spans the canal, come off the towpath and turn left into Todmorden town centre via the main road. Here there are lots of fine buildings to admire: an old **Industrial Society** building to your right, Todmorden Library on your left. St. Mary's Church and **Todmorden railway station** are also on your left. When you spot a small bridge to your right look out for a small plaque: have a guess what natural calamity struck the town in 2000.



Todmorden Town Hall

Go under the viaduct, past the market on your right. There is what looks like an ex-cinema (now a Netto!) and a college on your left, and a police station and war memorial on your right. At this point, look out for another handsome church and a street named after a city in Australia that is a regular Test match venue (how appropriate).

On your left, you then meet **Centre Vale**, home of **Todmorden Cricket Club**, and also a **public park**.



Centre Vale 100 years ago

When you've enjoyed a spot of top-notch Lancashire League cricket, you have three options:

1. Re-trace your steps and wend your way back to Walsden by foot.
2. Look out for a bus going to Rochdale and jump on it – you're only a couple of minutes away from Scott Street and Riggs.
3. Visit the railway station and take any train heading for Manchester – they should all stop at Walsden (the next stop down the line).