Twenty -five   SMITHY BRIDGE – PENNINE WALK TO SUMMIT LOCK.

This is a very good Pennine walk with great views. By using well-trodden paths it avoids the disadvantages of bog and of ankle breaking moorland tussocks.

Take the train to Manchester Victoria and from here catch the train to Bradford. Alight at Smithy Bridge (stop after Rochdale).

On leaving the platform turn right and over the level crossing to go uphill. Notice the distinctive windows on some of the weavers' cottages.

Eventually the road turns left, but keep straight ahead onto the path that goes by the right hand side of the former Beach Hotel of 1902.

Now just follow the side of the reservoir and enjoy the views. Turn left around T.S. Palatine, and right at the café building. After going over a small stone bridge you come to a road island with four large stones in it.

Take the right hand road and follow this keeping the stream on your right.

Pass a stone mill on the left and go straight ahead in front of the short row of cottages and turn left at the end. Follow this track uphill and under the motorway viaduct. *Look behind you for a lovely view. Notice how there is much evidence of mining or quarrying in this little valley.*

Keep on until you face a row of former weavers' cottages, now used as stables then fork left steeply uphill. *You will see there is an old mill and yard behind the cottages.*

At the top turn left to cross the bridge over the M62 *(ignore this instruction if you weigh more than three tons).* Turn right and then bear left through a small farmyard.

Follow the track left after it goes through a stone wall.

Continue straight ahead where you join a tarmac lane. Ignore another road left to the golf club. Another narrow road trails in from the left but keep straight on *However at this point if you want you could go left past a small brick bothy to get directly back to Littleborough via a path by a wood.*

Your route joins another road at a bus stop. At this point follow road to right. *(Blackstone Edge is above you ahead).*

Cross over a bridge and take the path immediately left.

This path traverses the hill under the overhead power lines. Drop to cross the main road and on to the bridleway signed on the other side of the road.

You will come to a finger post where you turn right. After a little way take the left fork towards the trees and across a fine little stone bridge over a stream. You will come to a farmyard where the path is diverted forty-five degrees to the right to continue in the original direction above the farm.

Where the path enters open country follow the blue topped public bridleway posts.

At one of these posts you cross a very small bridge over a stream. Then go straight downhill to join the road bearing to the right and down to the lock. *This is West Summit Lock No. 37!*

Cross the canal bridge. *Ahead is the Summit Inn – Thwaites ales and food.*

Go left onto the canal bank. This is now a lovely canal-side walk past cottages and mills back to Littleborough. *On the right a couple of locks down is the Sportsman's Inn with real ales and food.*

At the edge of Littleborough a main road crosses the canal at the same level. Go down under the bridge at the end of these locks. Continue and the towpath comes out onto a road. *The spire of Littleborough church is on you right.*

Cross the road and go left to the end of the railway fence. The entrance to Littleborough Station is on the right.

Turn first left in the tunnel for the Manchester platform. *Straight through there is a Co-op supermarket built on the old goods yard if you need any shopping.*

CLASSIFICATION: A LONGISH WALK OF ONLY MODERATE
                     DIFFICULTY.
                     COUNTRYSIDE, GOOD VIEWS, PUBS, CANALS.

                     RAIL FARE: category ONE.

Maps: OS 1:50 000 sheet 109