

This route began life as a single pond venue but has been expanded to include some legwork with more diverse prospects. What was a small venue is now a route which includes the River Dane and the well known Three Shire Heads.

Start at (large red dot) the substantial metalled lay-by (SK 012 699 – Elev: 435m) on the A54 (Buxton to Congleton) road, 1.2km from the A537 (Buxton to Macclesfield) road.

From the lay-by walk back a few metres towards the A537 and through a gap in the roadside safety barriers, offering access to authorised vehicles. It is also a marked public footpath. Follow the obvious vehicular track downhill, through a metal gate and you will see a stone ventilation stack on your right. Navigate the path around and below that stack, downhill to another metal gate, which you should be able to see even with *some* mist about.

Follow the obvious footpath track beyond the gate with the River Dane on your left. That track is invariably a serious mud bath until you reach Three Shire Heads. It now appears cattle are churning the mud and this is amplified by the unusually voluminous evidence of cattle. You will pass through more gates and cross boardwalks en-route to the Three Shire Heads waterfalls.

As you cross the tiny bridge at Three Shire Heads (Panniers Pool) take the gate ahead of you and up the steep track (after stopping to take endless pictures / video of the waterfall). If you want pictures or video without people in the frame, best visit off-peak.

When you meet the finger-post bear right again, up a steep stone track which turns left towards the top. In theory the public footpath is to your left passed the farm but signage is absent and that was referred to Staffordshire Council a long time ago. For now turn right along the road then left through the substantial vehicular access gates. The fingerpost there has been compromised. Follow that well established vehicular track, eventually through another gate and continue straight, downhill, to a final gate. NB: A farm yard full of motor vehicles like a scrap yard on your left.

Once through the gate you are turning left up a track parallel to the river, first navigating down the big stones to the far side of the river off what is effectively a bridge. Walk passed a gate on your right with a sign for Blackclough Farm. Follow the path a short distance parallel to the river then bear right along the obvious uphill track.

After 50 metres the track swings right about 90 degrees and from that turning point you should be able to see a drystone wall in the far distance (NNW) with a metal gateway. The highest elevation of several walls. If there is heavy snow or dense mist (mist very common) use a compass and follow NNW uphill until you hit the drystone wall with the metal gate in. Part way up you have the company of a wooden fence on your left and a drystone wall on your right. You are mid-point.

Once through the metal gate in the drystone wall turn left along the unmistakable path and through what was once a quarry. At this point, on a clear day. You should be able to see your motor again on your left on the A54 in the far distance. Follow your nose until you hit the river. Scramble down and cross the river. Scramble up the steep stone slope, swing left past the finger post and re-join the track that leads back to your motor.

Stop en-route at the moorland pond on your right. I have not studied the pond mid-season yet but water levels fluctuate dramatically, affecting establishment of marginal vegetation. A fellow photographer informs me he has seen Odonata species and Lizards.

Route = (GPS) 6.6km – Document last reviewed: 15.04.2022