

D3 Forest of Trawden – Worsthorne Moor Fringe

The moorland fringe along the Burnley-Colne edge forms a relatively narrow band along the steeper western escarpment edge of the South Pennine ridge. It is the transition between high moorland summits of Boulsworth Hill and the lower agricultural landscapes which form part of the wide Lancashire Valley containing the industrial towns of Colne, Nelson and Burnley. Land cover is characterised by improved and acidic grassland enclosed by stone walls into small to medium sized regular fields. Post and wire fences supplement the walls as a stockproofing measure. The short steep slopes of this area of moorland are cut by many tributary streams of the Ribble which form shallow valley cloughs such as Gilford Clough, Wycoller, Callow Brook and Thursden Brook. At the junction with the moorland edge several of the valley heads have been dammed to create small water storage reservoirs as at Swindon, Hurstwood, Cant Clough and Coldwell. These shallow valleys contain vestiges of the semi-natural woodland cover with wooded areas at Thursden Valley and around Hurstwood forming habitats of considerable nature conservation importance. Other characteristic features include the small stone quarries which have to a large extent revegetated and also provide areas of diversity. Settlements are characterised by isolated stone farmsteads sheltering in clefts on the slope, with villages such as Mereclough, Worsthorne and Trawden occurring at the junction with the lower agricultural land (E4).