

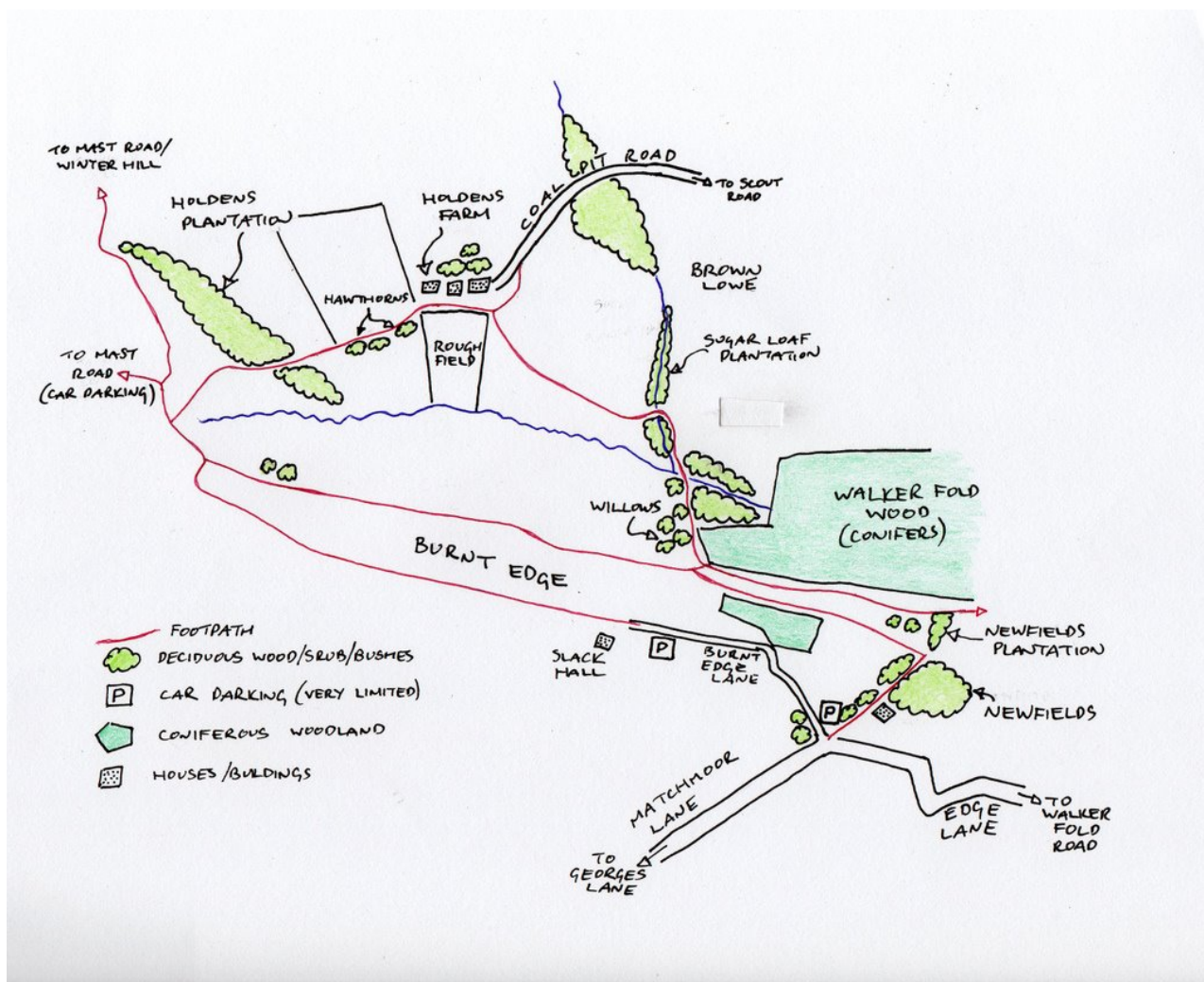
# THE 'HORWICH' MOORS

## Part 3: Burnt Edge Moor and Holdens Farm

by Ian Mckerchar

Perhaps the most productive and varied habitat in the site, Burnt Edge has moorland, a fairly extensive conifer wood, a small Beech wood and areas of Hawthorn hedge, rough grassland and young deciduous plantations. It can be accessed via footpaths from Mast Road to the north or by parking at two locations:

- A small parking area (no more than three or four cars) at the junction of Walker Fold Road and Colliers Row Road (in fact where one turns into the other). Turn north off Chorley Old Road (B6226) by the Bob's Smithy Inn and follow Walker Fold Road until just before a sharp right turn before the conifer wood in front of you. The parking area is on the left before the bend, opposite the small cottage. Alternatively access to the same car parking spot can be made from Belmont Road (A675) onto Scout Road which should be followed (soon becoming Collier's Row Road) until passing the sharp left hand bend over the bridge with the conifer wood to your right. The parking spot is then immediately on your right. Once parked here, continue on foot north (away from the road) along the footpath where good views over Walker Fold Woods can be obtained before it eventually brings you out at the bottom of Burnt Edge and the myriad of footpaths leading from there.
- The other parking spot for Burnt Edge can be reached either along Matchmoor Lane off Georges Lane or alternatively via Edge Lane off Walker Fold Road. Coming from Matchmoor Road turn left into the rough track immediately before the right turning for Edge Lane. If coming from Edge Lane, on reaching the (cross roads) junction with Matchmoor Lane continue straight across. Parking is best immediately along this rough track, on the left hand verge by the large trees. It is possible to drive further down by car but turning is awkward and the track unsuitable for drivers of any vehicles they wish to keep in one piece! After parking by the cross roads continue north along the track (the small short grass fields to the east here have held Ring Ouzel) which will lead you along the top of the escarpment along the western edge of Burnt Edge. Burnt Edge itself can then be accessed from the footpaths at the northern edge of the escarpment which lead you gently to the valley bottom, rather than chancing the shorter but potentially more painful shortcut down the rather steep, rocky side.





At the junction of Matchmoor Lane, Edge Lane and Burnt Edge Lane there is parking for only a few cars along the latter lane (seen here). Parking is available further along Burnt Edge Lane but again, it is very restricted. Parking at the junction seen here is an excellent starting point for checking New Fields (see below) and then for exploring the entire Horwich Moors are beyond.



The track to New Fields from the road junction in the image above. The track is a public footpath and leads to the left of the house.



New Fields is a small, isolated copse of mature deciduous trees that has provided some quality county birding and is worth spending time viewing into. New Fields Plantation lies in a small valley running off to the left of picture and has also harboured interesting migrants.



Looking south-east down Burnt Edge Valley towards Walker Fold Woods at the bottom. The moor here is has proved very productive for Ring Ouzel and does well for pipits including once an overflying Richard's.



Looking down Burnt Edge Valley again. Standing on the rocky sided escarpment to the right (there is in fact a bench to sit on there!) affords an excellent view over the entire moor below and across Smithills Moor to the north. From here is an excellent spot to scan for raptors, specifically Harriers quartering the moors but Red-footed Falcon has twice graced Burnt Edge so keep your options open.



The southern end of Burnt Edge Moor with the beginning of Walker Fold Wood. The small area of deciduous trees and bushes in the centre of the picture on the valley floor can attract migrant passerines and has included both Spotted and Pied Flycatchers whilst the valley itself (often particularly the steep side) can hold Stonechat, good numbers of Meadow Pipits and often Tree Pipit during passage.



Looking north-west over Walker Fold Woods. The woods have resident Coal Tits and have proven reasonably productive for Crossbills. Centre picture is Holdens Farm with the Beech prevalent Holdens Plantation to its left running up to the horizon. The area of Holdens Farm is superb and has proved very fruitful with its combination of bushes, fence lines, small plantations and sympathetically managed rough fields.



Holdens Farm is on the right of the picture and the plantation of the same name on the left. The few sparse Hawthorns just to the right of centre in between the farm and plantation, mark the footpath and both they and the grassy fields directly to the north and south can be very attractive to birds. The area of planted rough grassland and saplings actually around the farm itself can also be particularly productive and has been provided for the benefit of wildlife. Immediately behind Holdens Farm is another area of cover (along with a bee hive) which can harbour birds but is more difficult to view.

**Ian McKerchar, December 2009 (revised October 2010)**

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