

WESTMORLAND DAMSON ASSOCIATION

Lyth Valley Damson Walk.

The best way to enjoy damson country is by bicycle or on foot. There are numerous small country lanes and footpaths that wend their way through woodland, farmland and villages, and at a slower pace you have more time to explore and fully appreciate the distinctive character of damson country. The map highlights a walk around the villages of Row and The Howe where damson trees are prolific.

Please note that these two villages have narrow, winding lanes with no parking and are not suitable for exploring by car. It is recommended that cars are left in the lay-by opposite the Lyth Valley Hotel on the A5074 and that the walk is undertaken on foot.

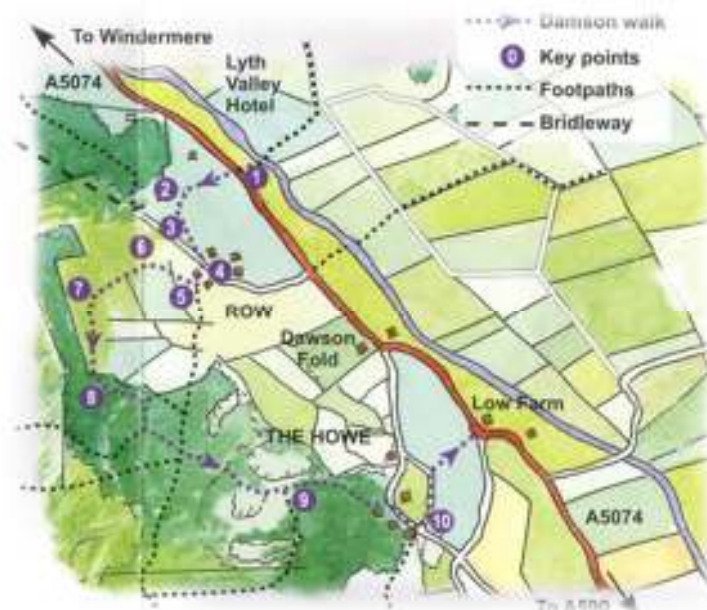
Directions

From the lay-by (1) on the A5074, take the path opposite the Lyth Valley Hotel. This is a steep uphill section with damson orchards on either side. Where the path forks, take the left-hand fork in front of an old lime kiln (2).

The path soon becomes a wide track. On the right is a restored dew pond (3), created to provide a ready source of water for livestock.

Continue on to the village of Row, passing a damson orchard on the right. Notice the massive stone trough (4) set into the wall on your left at Sibble Howe. After Barrow Tenement, take the first track on the right, pass in front of Row Farm and turn right up another track. At the top of this track (on the left) is a good example of a well-maintained orchard (5).

Continue through the gate and follow the footpath round by the wall. On your right is another lime kiln (6) with the incline plane still visible. Lime kilns were used to heat limestone rock to sufficient temperatures to produce quicklime. This was then applied to the acidic soils on the reclaimed mosses to neutralise or 'sweeten' them.





Continue following the path adjacent to the wall (7). This wall marks the boundary of the intake fields - fields that were 'taken in' by the villagers from the surrounding common land.

Eventually the path enters a wood through a gate. Keep following the path next to the wall. The wood (8) is a mixed ash and hazel coppice, which may have been used to produce charcoal for the lime kilns. The path gradually diverges away from the wall and eventually meets a track with waymarkers. Turn left here and follow the track downhill past a series of quarries. The

track eventually joins another coming in from the right. A little further on lies a huge abandoned millstone (9). This may have been intended for use in a gunpowder works. Limestone was ideal for grinding the components for gunpowder as it did not produce sparks. Continue on the track through a gateway (where another old kiln can be seen on the right) and down into The Howe.

At a T-junction turn right and follow the road downhill. Opposite a house called Draw Well, turn left down a narrow lane. This takes you past several orchards with damson, apple, pear and bullace trees (10)

At the end of the lane on the right, a squeeze stile leads onto a footpath to Low Farm. On the left is a large terraced damson orchard and on the right, a line of damson trees marks a field boundary. Descend towards **Low Farm**, where there is a small damson orchard adjacent to the farm buildings. Cross over a stile and exit onto the A5074.

Either retrace your steps to the start of the walk or return along the A5074 to the Lyth Valley Hotel.

(3.5 miles/5.6 km, approximately 2 to 2½ hours)