



## Walks around Bagnall - Walk 3

- **Distance:** 2 1/2 miles
- **Key Waypoints:** Village Green - Pond Bay - Bagnall Grange - Tomkin - Moor Hall - Bagnall Springs - Village Green
- **Summary:** 2 1/2 mile circular walk from Bagnall Village Green, exiting the village via the site of an old quarry and proceeding down Old Mill Lane to the site of an old corn mill. The route then passes 'Pond Bay' - a lovely spot where the brook widens, allowing you to take in the tranquillity of the beautiful countryside in this part. The route proceeds past Bagnall Grange, affording excellent views over Stanley Pool before passing Moor Hall Farm and returning to the village via the well at Bagnall Springs.

### Route Guidance

- 1** The starting point for this walk is the Village Green with Buttercross in the centre. Buttercross originally comes from the word "Bartercross", referring to the place where livestock used to be sold. This particular cross was erected by the monks of the nearby Hulton Abbey. The cross which stands in the church yard over the road is probably the original, since trading often took place in church grounds.



- 2** Leave the village green and start to walk down the hill in the opposite direction to the Stafford Arms to a small green parking area. Bear left across the parking area to seek a stone squeezer stile in the corner.



- 3** Continue down through an old quarry to reach Mill Lane. Here, turn left to walk down the lane to Pool Meadows Farm.



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### Route Guidance

- 4 Follow the road down Old Mill Lane for around 150 metres. Take the squeeze stile straight ahead just before the road starts to bend around to the left.



- 5 Continue ahead down the field for a short distance to seek a stile on your right. Pass over and continue along the man made ridge down to a footbridge. This is a lovely spot where the brook widens, allowing you to take in the tranquillity of the beautiful countryside in this part and think back in time. This is a good place for a break, picnic or to take photos. Please remember to take any rubbish with you.



- 6 This area is known as Pond Bay and was the site of an old corn mill. The mill is shown on Yates map of Staffordshire in 1775 and operated on the stream that now runs into Stanley Pool. This stream went down the valley where it also operated the Stanley Mill before it re-joined other streams flowing to Denford, then onto the River Churnet to the Cheddleton Mill. Years ago a number of steps had been formed out of the broken half circular millstones where a footpath was created with the collapse of the pack horse humped bridge over the stream. The bridge was mainly used for taking horses to the Smithy at Tomkin. Sadly now there are no visible signs left since the dam burst and the mill wheel was washed away to be carried down stream nearly a quarter of a mile to Stanley Moss, almost opposite Stanley Head Farm. The present stream marks the course of the original overflow from the mill pool. The last owner of the mill, Mr George Coxen-Jones, resided at Horton Hall. The mill was demolished and the redressed blocks of stone went to make a barn at Bank House Farm. The Mill House stood on the Stanley side of the bridge.

*(Information taken from an article in the Hanley Reference Library by D. R. Holdcroft. Recorder to the "Old Nortonian Society")*

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- 7** Pass over the footbridge and continue ahead over a stile and up the steps in front of you. Continue in the same direction across the field, bearing slightly to the left.



- 8** Cross the stile onto the lane. This is the old salt way or the Monks Way, now known as Old Mill Lane. Turn right up the hill.



- 9** Continue ahead passing through Bagnall Grange. This house had close monastic connections since Hulton Abbey owned the grain mill next door. A trackway ran between the two. The Hulme Family, owners of the mill in the 18th Century, lived at Bagnall Grange. Continue ahead up the farm track to reach the main road at Tomkin.



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**10** The story goes that in 1745, a young Scottish soldier from Bonnie Prince Charlie's Army, was retreating to Derby and strayed from the main army. He was captured in the Leek area and flogged and hung from a sign post in Leek. They tried to make a drum of his skin, but failed. He was taken and buried here in Tomkin but due to unnatural occurrences in the village it was decided to give him a Christian burial in Endon Church yard. Hence this area is called Tomkin from "Tom's Skin".

*(This version of the story is per the Six Towns Magazine, April 1964.*

There is conflict on whether or not this story is true. Another version from the Six Towns Magazine dated July 1970 states that a local boy called Tom was captured by the Roundheads and taken to the cellar of Tomkin Farm, chained to the wall and skinned alive. It is said that the chain hooks are still embedded in the walls today. No one can be sure on the real tale but it makes for some interesting history to the place!

*(Another version from the Six Towns Magazine dated July 1970)*



Optional detour to visit Tomkin Chapel and old well

Route

**11** **Detour Option.** As an optional detour from the main route, you may wish to visit a pretty old well and Tomkin Chapel, which are just 100 metres off the route here in the direction indicated. To make the detour, continue to the main road then turn right. The road bends round to the left before going up a hill. The well is partly hidden on the left and the Chapel, dated 1865, shortly after on the right.



Old well



Tomkin Chapel



Knowsley Common

**12** **Further Detour Option.** If you are taking the detour and wish to take it further, continue up the hill to a small but rewarding picnic area known as Knowsley Common, with its far reaching views of the Staffordshire Moorlands. If you've taken the detour, once complete, retrace your steps back to the top of Old Mill Lane and seek a finger foot path sign next to a stile into the field where "Route" is indicated above.



13a



13b

**13** **Main Route.** Pass over the stile where "Route" is indicated above into field. Bear left across the field to another stile on top of an ancient man made ridge by Moor Hall Farm. After passing this second stile, bear right to walk down the side of the ridge.

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- 14** Moor Hall Farm was built on the site of a moated farm house dating back to the 16th Century and possibly used as a longhouse. It probably has even earlier connections. A stone axe head was found here in 1964 and is now in Hanley Museum. (*Information from "On the Fringe of the Moorlands" edited by Robert Speake*)
- 15** Walk down the side of the ridge to a home made stile which is just a board across two birch trees. After crossing this stile, keep to the right as much as possible, aiming for a further stile in the corner of the field.



- 16** Cross the first stile you come to. Do **not** cross the second stile immediately after leading to the right. Instead, continue ahead, keeping to the right side of the field you have just entered. Pass through a further stile between two large holly bushes.

- 17** Continue down the field, keeping to the right. At the bottom of the hill, pass a stile next to a wooden gate. Continue ahead again, following a slightly winding farming track as Spring Bank wood comes into view.



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- 18** On reaching Thorney Edge Road with Spring Bank wood opposite, pass over the stile and turn right. Within 100 metres, you will reach a ford crossing the road and a well after the ford to the left.



- 19** On approaching the well, the road bends round to the right before the steep hill of Springs Bank. Continue all the way straight up the hill, passing an old quarry on your right to come back into Bagnall village.

