

Penwortham Heritage Trail

Two
Circular Walks
in a **FIGURE**
of **EIGHT**

Discover Penwortham's Hidden Histories!



Free School, Cop Lane

Courtesy of Lancashire County Council's Red Rose Collections
www.redrosecollections.lancashire.gov.uk



**South
Ribble**
Borough Council

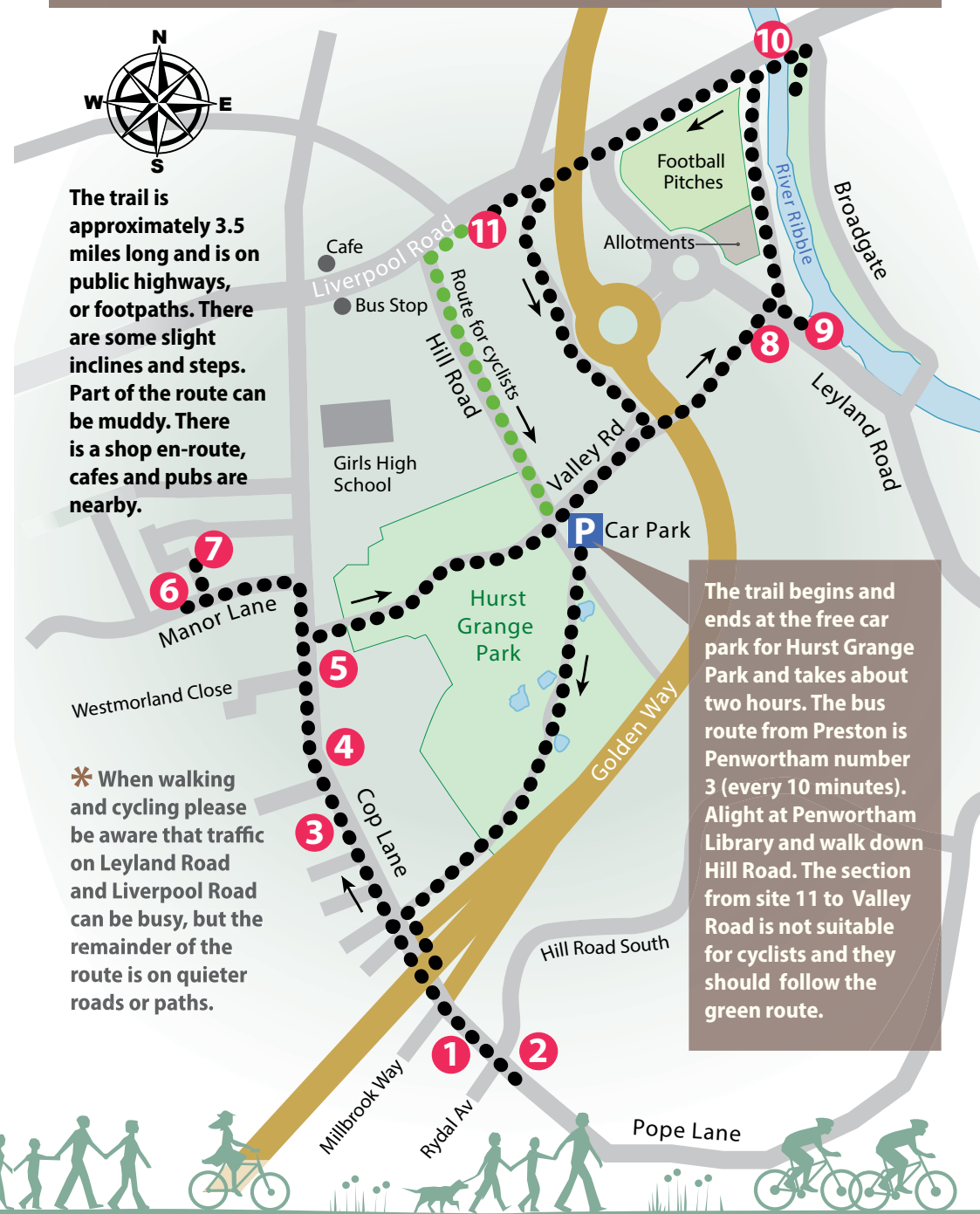
Finding Your Way Round



The trail is approximately 3.5 miles long and is on public highways, or footpaths. There are some slight inclines and steps. Part of the route can be muddy. There is a shop en-route, cafes and pubs are nearby.

* When walking and cycling please be aware that traffic on Leyland Road and Liverpool Road can be busy, but the remainder of the route is on quieter roads or paths.

The trail begins and ends at the free car park for Hurst Grange Park and takes about two hours. The bus route from Preston is Penwortham number 3 (every 10 minutes). Alight at Penwortham Library and walk down Hill Road. The section from site 11 to Valley Road is not suitable for cyclists and they should follow the green route.



Discover some of Penwortham's old cottages and a new bridge across the River Ribble

Despite the developments of the 20th and 21st centuries there is a lot of Penwortham's fascinating history still in existence, if you know where to look!

This trail begins at Hurst Grange car park on Hill Road and is in two halves. The first half discovers some of the hidden histories of houses that are on and around Cop Lane. They are not necessarily grand houses, many are hidden away and hardly noticed. They are unremarkable but pleasing old cottages and farm houses. They are the homes of ordinary people who worked as linen and cotton spinners and weavers, farmers, market gardeners or fishermen in the Penwortham area.



A Lancashire handloom weaver at work

After the first half of the trail, you return to Hurst Grange car park and then continue on footpaths that take you along the river bank and into more remote areas. You will discover Penwortham's second river bridge opened in 1915, 165 years after the first bridge was built at Middleforth. This second larger bridge provided direct access from Preston to Higher Penwortham and was intended to transform the township. It aligned Fishergate Hill and Penwortham brow with a wide embankment built across Penwortham Holme.



Courtesy of Lancashire County Council's Red Rose Collections

Following the sale of the Priory and the surrounding estate, large areas of land in higher Penwortham became available and were snapped up by builders during the building boom of the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, the population became commuters with easy access across the bridge to places of work in Preston.

Above and below: Penwortham Bridge, opened on June 9th, 1915, linking Fishergate Hill with Penwortham Brow



From Hurst Grange car park go through the black gate entrance to the park near the flag pole. Follow the path past the pond on your left and take the right hand fork. Follow the path past two more ponds until you reach a gate where you turn right along a tarmac path to Cop Lane. Turn left at the end of the path and cross two slip roads with pedestrian lights. Cross Cop Lane by the pedestrian lights. Continue left along Cop Lane and after crossing Millbrook Way, on the right you will see . . .

to the front doors are well worn suggesting they were busy places in the past. In 1841 there were 21 people living in the four cottages, 10 children and seven adults who were weavers and one agricultural labourer. As purpose-built weavers cottages this row is unique in Penwortham, though there are a number nearby in Leyland. The builder was Rev. William Fisher.

Continue past Rydal Avenue and on the opposite side of Cop Lane you will see . . .

2 The Old School House

1 Fisher's Row



This row of four cottages was built in the late 18th/early 19th century and is shown on the 1838 tithe map. The higher cottage on the left is not shown and must have been added later. The initials WF 1838 were found on plaster work inside by the current owner and have been preserved, so it suggests the end cottage was built very shortly after the survey of this part of the tithe map. They were all built with outside earth closets and the later cottage had a 'double seater' which is still in situ today, though not in use! These are 'step houses' that is, houses with a raised ground floor and a lit cellar. These were the homes and workplaces of hand-loom weavers, initially of linen cloth and later of cotton. The stone steps up



Looking at these two photographs you would find it hard to believe that they are the same building.

The rounded windows and door are the only thing that gives it away. It was built in 1830 and appears on the tithe map of 1838. At that time it had an area of land surrounding it so that the school children had some outside space. In 1851 the school was run by two teachers, Richard Walmsley and Hannah Mossman. By 1878 the school was replaced by one now known as Cop Lane Junior School. The Old School House subsequently became the home of the school master and his family. The old photograph was taken in 1902.



Retrace your steps and continue back along Cop Lane for 550 metres (1/3 mile) and on your left you will see . . .

3 New Acre Cottages



This row of cottages has a plaque with the initials RB & AW and the date 1819. The higher cottage on the left was added later and has since been altered. The tithe map of 1838 states that the landowner was Robert Worthington, so possibly the initial B was his middle name and the AW refers to his wife but there is no confirmation of this. The tithe map (1838) shows a piece of land to the rear named Worthington Acre which would suggest that Robert Worthington was the original builder and gave his name to the field although the field was actually nearer two acres in size.

Continue along Cop Lane and on the opposite side by the bend in the road you will see . . .

4 Cop Lane Farm

Originally two houses, the lower section dating back to the 1600s and the higher added about 100 years later. Some older residents will know it as Smalley's Farm as it was tenanted by the Smalley family from 1913 to the 1940s. Another cottage belonging to Cop Lane Farm stood on the site of the children's playground on Hurst Grange Park. This was used as a tied cottage for a farm worker.



Continue along Cop Lane and opposite the junction with Westmorland Close you will see . . .

5 Woodlands, 111 Cop Lane



Behind the trees on Cop Lane stands a well-built late Victorian/early Edwardian villa. In 1936 this house was the scene of the brutal murder of the owner, the wealthy spinster Miss Martha Ann Cragg. The house was broken into by an intruder; the only other resident was her companion/housekeeper, Bertha Somers who raised the alarm. The intruder escaped through the back garden and onto the fields at the rear, which are now part of Hurst Grange Park. Presumably Miss Cragg had disturbed a burglar. Police believed the attacker may have been a tramp who was also responsible for a spate of burglaries in the area. A huge man-hunt was immediately started throughout the North West. Local lore claims the man was never caught, but a cottage family nearby gave food to a stranger who came to their door some days later; it is thought he could



have been the culprit. This event is remembered with great sadness by the oldest residents of Penwortham even to today.

Continue along Cop Lane and turn left down Manor Lane, after crossing Manor Avenue on the opposite side of the road you will see . . .

7 The Manor House



Tucked away and surrounded by more modern houses is the Manor House, one of the few surviving cottages from the late 16th century. The owner of the property believes it should actually be called Hollinhurst House as it was tenanted by the Hollinhurst family until the late 16th or early 17th century. The house was surrounded by just two acres of land and could be described as a smallholding although the tenant had right of access to four acres of moss land.

6 Legrows, Manor Lane



The title map shows this was originally two cottages, now made into one. The land was owned in the 19th century by a Monsieur le Gros, who was possibly of Flemish or French Huguenot descent, hence the name of the cottage. It was a farm house with 17 acres of land comprising five fields that were predominately for livestock. The old photograph shows Sarah Ann Wilding.

Cross over Manor Lane and turn back towards Cop Lane, on the left you will see a ginnel opposite Manor Avenue. Take the ginnel to the end and on the right you will see . . .

Turn back down the ginnel and turn left towards Cop Lane. Cross Cop Lane and turn right. After number 101 Cop Lane take the path on the left that leads through Hurst Grange Park. After passing through the park you will reach Hill Road.

This is the half-way point in the 'figure of eight' walk and the less energetic may wish to save the second half of the walk for another day. Or, to continue, go down Valley Road and take the footpath on the right that goes up a slope to a bridge that crosses the Penwortham by-pass. At the end of Valley Road on the right is . . .



8 The Lodge House

The Oaks and the Lodge House viewed from the Preston side of the River



You may wonder why this building has been included on the Heritage Trail. The interesting thing is that another building stood on this site and the present house was built around it and then the original building demolished. The original building was the Lodge House for the Oaks, a large mansion on Hill Road built in 1837. It was the home of John Cooper, a Preston cotton manufacturer and was accessed along Valley Road. The Oaks was demolished in the 1920s.

Turn right along Leyland Road and cross over to see . . .

9 Fish House Bridge

This bridge crosses Fish House Brook which is culverted. The Fish House is of mediaeval origin and was a place for storing fish garths. Fish garths consisted of a line of poles or stakes driven into the river bed with gaps between filled by hurdles of woven branches or brushwood to act



as fish traps. The Fish House also served as the headquarters of the manorial river bailiff. It was the bailiff's task to make sure the fishermen from different townships abided by the rules of the fisheries. The Fish house stood on a promontory of land jutting out into the river. Fishing the River Ribble was an important activity for catching salmon and salmon trout, the lesser fish were ignored.

Turn back along Leyland Road and take the road that leads to Penwortham Holme Car Park. Go past the allotments and football pitches on your left until you emerge on to Liverpool Road. Turn right and you will see . . .

10 Penwortham Bridge



Dated 1912, this bridge with its wide sweeping stone arches transformed access to higher Penwortham and relieved traffic congestion on the narrow 18th century bridge at Middleforth. It was one of the earliest major road schemes undertaken by Lancashire County Council jointly financed by Preston Corporation and the County. With foresight it was made wide enough for four lanes of traffic. It involved the demolition of the Regatta Inn at the bottom of Fishergate Hill and the closure of the shipyard on the river bank. Work also involved building an embankment across Penwortham Holme and the widening of



Liverpool Road, up Penwortham Hill. Access to Higher Penwortham now became more direct and convenient. The bridge was opened in 1915 but some of the landscaping and the planting of Elm trees on either side was delayed until after the end of the First World War.



Walk over the bridge and at the centre, glance over to the opposite side and you will see the date stone for the bridge (PENWORTHAM BRIDGE BUILT 1912). Continue to Broadgate and take the path to the right of the bus shelter. Go to the right and where the path meets the river wall you will have a good view of the bridge. Retrace your steps and notice the fine terrace of houses on Broadgate. Go back over Penwortham Bridge and cross Leyland Road by the lights and climb up Penwortham Hill. Half way up the hill, opposite the War Memorial you will see an opening in the fence with and an overgrown footpath. Take care going down the steps and at the bottom is the now disappeared . . .

11 Site of St Mary's Well

St Mary's Well or more accurately a spring, was famous for being the cleanest source of water in the area and was attributed with healing properties. Water poured into an oblong stone trough that was situated down a zigzag footpath

just below the main road of Penwortham Brow. A path still leads down the steep bank but there is no trace of the well. It is suggested that the water supply disappeared after the building of Preston Dock and the alteration to the course of the River Ribble. Local people used to walk a mile or more to access their favoured water source. It was also a site of pilgrimage.



E. Beattie, drawing of St Mary's Well, Courtesy of Harris Museum & Art Gallery

Go back up the steps and walk back down Penwortham Hill. Take the footpath to the right after the flyover bus stop. This takes you into a remote area of land where you can see wild flowers and possibly deer. Follow the path for 100 metres which can be muddy and go through a gate on the left and over a stile, follow the path between the houses and the road until you reach Valley Road. Turn right and you will come to Hill Road. Turn left to where the walk started.

The text for this publication is based on information from 'Hidden Histories of Penwortham Houses' by Elizabeth Basquill and 'Penwortham in the Past' by Dr Alan Crosby.

