

Penwortham Heritage Trail

Higher
Penwortham
Circular
Walk

Discover Penwortham's Hidden Histories!

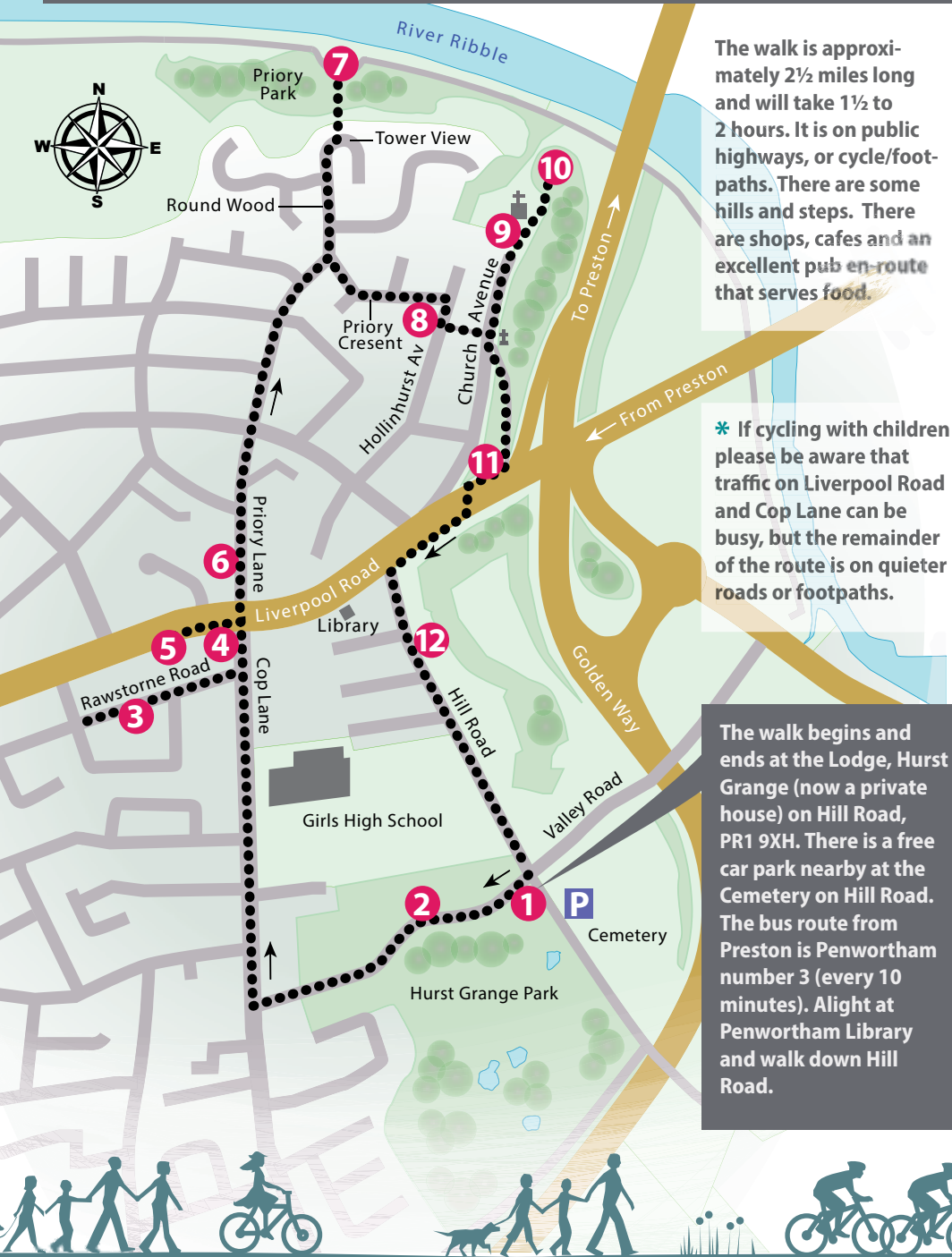


*William & Fanny Ravenscroft
and family outside Hurst Grange Lodge.*

William is at the wheel of John Forshaw's Napier car, c1910 Photo courtesy of Mrs Joyce Askew

**SOUTH
RIBBLE**
BOROUGH COUNCIL
forward with
South Ribble

Finding Your Way Round



The walk is approximately 2½ miles long and will take 1½ to 2 hours. It is on public highways, or cycle/footpaths. There are some hills and steps. There are shops, cafes and an excellent pub en-route that serves food.

* If cycling with children please be aware that traffic on Liverpool Road and Cop Lane can be busy, but the remainder of the route is on quieter roads or footpaths.

The walk begins and ends at the Lodge, Hurst Grange (now a private house) on Hill Road, PR1 9XH. There is a free car park nearby at the Cemetery on Hill Road. The bus route from Preston is Penwortham number 3 (every 10 minutes). Alight at Penwortham Library and walk down Hill Road.



Higher Penwortham

This walk covers part of Higher Penwortham and includes sites dating from the Norman Conquest to the 20th century.



Penwortham new bridge, built 1915

Penwortham was very rural until just before the Great War; the first large scale development began in the 1920s, with the sale of large amounts of land by the local squire, Lawrence Rawstorne. From 1915 a new bridge over the river connecting Penwortham directly to Fishergate Hill in Preston gave access to the town and its markets, the railway station and the newly built dock, allowing the development of housing and the conversion of rural Penwortham to a suburb of Preston. The river has literally shaped the contours of the township as its waters created the valley that separates Preston and Penwortham, and has been a barrier, a means of protection, and a transport system up into the hills to the east and the sea to the west, providing food in the form of fish, and fertile floodplains and marshes for grazing cattle.

1 The Lodge, Hurst Grange

This building is the gate-house for the original mansion on what is now Hurst Grange Park. The mansion was built in 1850 by a barrister (soon to become a County Court judge) William Adam Hulton and his family. The main house was demolished in 1938. The lodge was added around 1890 and for many years was the home of William and Fanny Ravenscroft and their two sons. William was employed as coachman to



the second owner of the house, a solicitor called John Forshaw. In 1908 John Forshaw bought a motor car, believed to be the first private car in Penwortham, and William became chauffeur to Mr. Forshaw but remained coachman to Forshaw's wife, who preferred to travel the old fashioned way!

Below is a detail from a painting by John Jenkinson - 'View of Preston from Penwortham Hill' c1820. It is believed to have been painted from a position close to Hurst Grange Lodge and shows the old Penwortham bridge.

Courtesy of Harris Museum & Art Gallery



Now follow the path into the park until you come to a building on the right . . .

2 Hurst Grange & Coach House



Stop for a moment by the coach-house on the main path through the park. You are standing on the site of the house built by William Adam Hulton. The coach-house was built at the same time (1850) and is all that remains of the original build. It contained stalls for 2 or 3 horses and a carriage house which was later used to garage the motor car. William Adam Hulton was a deeply religious man with an interest in antiquity. He belonged to the Chetham Society and wrote articles on the history of medieval Penwortham. The Forshaw family would have known the Hultons as both men were lawyers, but they were very different. Hulton came from a long-established gentry family, but John Forshaw was more of a self-made man and very ambitious. He was Mayor of Preston at one time, and gained the Freedom of the Borough for his involvement with the creation of Preston Dock.

Continue along the path through the park until you emerge into Cop Lane. Turn right and continue along Cop Lane past the Girls High School and cross over using the zebra crossing until you reach Rawstorne Road on the left. Continue down Rawstorne Road to number 26 . . .

3 Rawstorne Road

As you turn into the Conservation Area that is Rawstorne Road you will notice 12 semi-detached houses on both sides of the road that have a particular charm. They date to the late 1880s and were built by, and on land owned by, the 'Squire' of Penwortham, Lawrence Rawstorne, as an investment. Most people rented houses at this time, and there was scope for making money from the increasing population of Penwortham. The design of these properties is unusual in Lancashire, as they were built in the Arts and Crafts style made fashionable in this period by people such as William Morris, Edward Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll. This style was more often seen in the south of England



and available only to those with sufficient wealth to employ the most skilled craftsmen and the finest quality of materials. The Arts and Crafts movement affected all spheres of domestic design, including architecture, furniture, garden design and decoration. Until the 1920s this road was known as Penwortham Hill and only changed to Rawstorne Road, to commemorate the squire and his family. The first house on the left, on the corner of Morningson Road, served as Penwortham's police station until the 1930s.

Go back onto Cop Lane and turn left and you will see . . .



4 The Water Tower

This prominent landmark in Penwortham was built in the early 1890s by another member of the Rawstorne family who was the vicar of the parish church. For some time the purity of the water sources in Penwortham had been causing concern. People used the two or three public wells in the township if they didn't have a well of their own. The public wells were sometimes contaminated and the start of the building of Preston Dock altered the water table, causing some to dry up at times. The tower was built on an existing well and its purpose was to store water for dry periods and to prevent contamination. By 1895 piped water was brought to Penwortham from Preston, so the tower was not in use for long, if at all. It is now a private house.



Now turn left onto Liverpool Road and on the left you will see . . .

5 The Fleece Inn

This lovely old inn dates at least to the 18th century and possibly even earlier. It sits on the main road from Preston southwards to the port of Liverpool, crossing the river via Penwortham Old Bridge. This was a turnpike road created in 1771, and had a toll gate close to the inn. A proportion of tolls paid by travellers was used to fund the maintenance of the road. Where the inn stands was known as 'Penwortham End' and in the Victorian era was a hamlet of two inns, a smithy, the toll keeper's house, the stocks,



and a few cottages plus an important well. All inns in this rural area were also farms, and the Fleece was no exception. Most farmers were tenants of their land, and the custom was to meet at the inn on Lady Day (the 25th March) to pay their year's rent to the landowner (possibly Squire Rawstorne). They were rewarded by the landowner with a good dinner and plenty of beer!

Cross by the lights and go into Priory Lane, the next building is on the left . . .

6 Penwortham Sunday School



Built in 1839 by the Rawstorne family. Compulsory education was brought in for all children in 1870. Before that date the wealthy paid for their children's education, the poor relied on the local 'dames school' where pupils were taught very basic reading and writing for which they paid a small sum per



week, or on charities (often religious) which provided education for a lucky few. 'Sunday' Schools in the 1830s had the sole purpose of teaching the local children to read the Bible. However once they could read the Bible they could read other things too, so it was at least a basic form of education and didn't prevent the children from working on the farms, or in the cottage industries, for the other six days of the week! Part of this building was later demolished as it protruded into the narrow road.

Continue down Priory Lane and go into Round Wood, then turn right into Tower View. Go through the small gate at the bottom of Tower View into Priory Park

7 Priory Park and the Quays



This is the site of Penwortham Power Station which opened in 1925 and closed in the early 1980s. The River Ribble has been used to transport goods and people from Neolithic times. It is tidal at this point and was broad, shallow and meandering with a tendency for silting, so it was not until the 19th century that work began on containing its floodwaters within walls, and the idea of constructing a dock put forward. Preston lies close to two very successful docks, those of Liverpool and Lancaster, and Preston's worthies wanted a share of the prosperity gained from the trade of goods such

as cotton. Just west of the new flyover bridge, stood what was Victoria Quay, and just behind it the New Quay Inn, with Victoria Warehouse and Mill close by. The mill was for cotton spinning, the raw cotton unloaded at the quay. At the right time of the tide sailing vessels up to 300 tons could dock here, but soon the demand for larger ships prompted the building of the Albert Edward Dock. The first ship to enter the dock was chartered by Edwin Booth (Preston grocers).

Turn back into Tower View and Round Wood and then turn left into Priory Crescent. At the end of Priory Crescent turn right into Holinhurst Avenue and you will see the entrance to a ginnel on the left; opposite the ginnel stood . . .

8 Penwortham Priory

You are precisely on the site of Penwortham Priory. As the name suggests this was originally a religious house founded about 1140 by the local baron Warin Bussel. Bussel provided the money and land for the foundation, and asked Evesham Abbey to provide the monks and administration, thus it became a 'daughter' house of Evesham Abbey. It was always small scale and when threatened with dissolution in 1538 the Abbey gave up Penwortham Priory, on a lease, to John Fleetwood, a wealthy Lancashire lawyer.



It remained in the Fleetwood family until 1749. The estate was bought by the Rawstorne family who rebuilt it in splendid Gothic style in 1830-32 and finally sold off the estate in the 1920s, when it was demolished and the land used for housing development. The Rawstornes did not like the Priory much as its size made it hard to heat and damp in the winter, so they lived for most of the time in their smaller Georgian house in Hutton, letting out the Priory to tenants.

Continue along the ginnel (cyclists should dismount), turn left into Church Avenue and you will see . . .

9 St Mary's Church



The parish church stands on a lovely site, high on an escarpment which would at one time have overlooked the River Ribble flowing below. There is written evidence of a church on this site from the 1140s, though the present building dates back, in part, to the 14th century. The chancel is the oldest part of the building. The tower is 15th century, though has had many repairs and alterations, as has the nave. In 1856 a catastrophic fire in the vestry destroyed the church's registers and other important papers so that valuable information was lost on the history of Penwortham during the first half of the 19th

century. Erosion has brought the edge of the escarpment ever closer to the church building and resulted in the loss or tilting of gravestones. Look inside the lychgate where you will see a brass plaque dedicating the gate to the Hultons of Hurst Grange.

If the lychgate is locked take the entrance to the left and then go to the right of the church. (Cyclists should dismount). At the back you will see . . .

10 Castle Hill

Castle Hill is a regular earthen mound now covered in grass. This structure dates to just after the Norman Conquest. Its original height is estimated at around 100 feet above the level of the river below, but erosion and landslides have reduced it in height. The castle which topped the mound was constructed from wood, so nothing remains today. The purpose of this building was defensive: the Normans were still in the process of conquering much of the north of England and the River Ribble was a vital navigable route towards the Pennines. Evidence of another similar 'fort' was found in Tulketh, on the opposite bank of the river, so the two forts would have stood sentinel on either side of the river.



Now re-trace your steps but continue along Church Avenue until you reach the entrance to a footpath on your left, just past the cross. (if you are cycling continue along Church Avenue and turn sharply left at the end onto Penwortham Hill). Walkers should follow the footpath (there are some steps) down into Church Woods and eventually you will emerge at the bottom of Penwortham Hill. Turn sharply to your right and continue up the hill until you reach . . .

11 War Memorial

This monument was erected in 1920 to commemorate the lives of Penwortham men who died on active service in the Great War. In recent years the site has been cared for by an enthusiastic volunteer Friends group with the help of the local authorities, and has won awards from Penwortham in Bloom. One casualty of WWI has a surname that is familiar on this walk – Thomas Geoffrey Rawstorne. He was the second son of the Squire and his wife Edith. His older brother, also called Lawrence, had died of disease on his way back from the Boer War, so the Squire lost both of his sons in war. Thomas died of wounds on the first day of the third battle of Ypres, 31st July 1917; his body is buried in a war grave in Belgium.



Cross over Liverpool Road by the dropped kerb and via the central reservation. Turn left into Hill Road. Part way down Hill Road on your left you will see . . .

12 The Oaks' Garden Wall



The Oaks was a large Grecian style villa built in 1837 for John Cooper, a Preston cotton magnate, and designed by the Kendal architect George Webster. Webster was involved with building or rebuilding a number of houses nearby, including Penwortham Priors 1830-32, Bank Hall 1832 and Howick House 1835, so perhaps his reputation spread amongst the gentry and newly-wealthy industrialists of the area. The house stood on a site off Hill Road, but was accessed by a long drive which joined Valley Road almost at the point where it opened into what is now Leyland Road, (then Penwortham Lane). The Oaks was demolished in the 1920s and the land used for rebuilding but there is one very fortunate survival – the lovely old red brick kitchen garden wall. You will find this in Hill Road, some 50 yards down on the left, almost opposite Greyfriars Drive. The grounds to the Oaks were extensive and landscaped, and the kitchen garden was enormous, containing a number of greenhouses.

Continue down Hill Road until you reach the Lodge House where the walk began.

