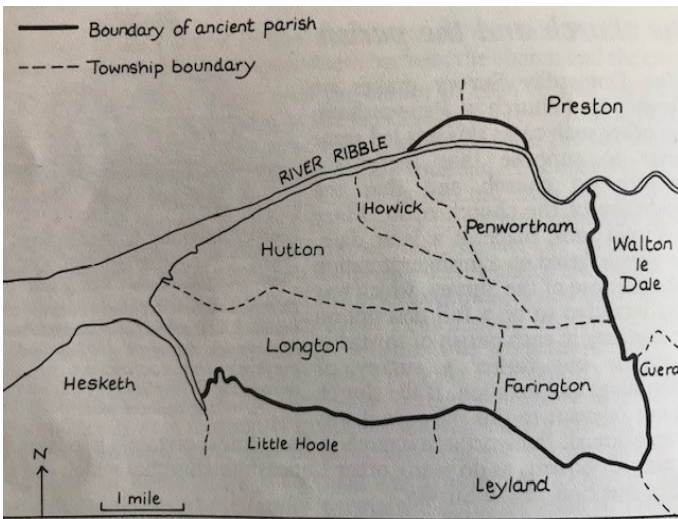


A Walk around St. Mary's Parish Boundary, Penwortham.

Background.



Map courtesy of Alan Crosby from his book "Penwortham in the past"

Penwortham is one of the ancient parishes of Lancashire. Until the 17th century it comprised of the townships of Longton, Howick, Penwortham, Farington and Hutton. In the early medieval period it also comprised of Brindle.

The earliest written record of a church at Penwortham dates from the 1140's.

St. Mary's Parish once covered, the whole of the manor of Penwortham, but as St. Leonard's Church in Middleforth grew further, it was soon able to manage its own affairs and in 1959 became a conventional district but still in the Parish of St. Mary, Penwortham.

Further growth took place with Penwortham becoming part of the Central Lancashire New Town. It was therefore decided that St. Leonard's could stand alone from St. Mary's and a new benefice of the Parish of St. Leonard, Penwortham was established on 1 April 1972 by an Order in Council dated 1 March 1972. The area concerned was taken out of the ancient parish of St. Mary and also from the parish of St. Paul, Farington.

St. Mary's Church.

The oldest part of the church is the chancel. The west tower was added in the 15th century, and the nave and aisles were replaced in 1855–56 by E. G. Paley. The church is built in stone, and has a slate roof. The tower has diagonal buttresses, a west doorway, a window with Perpendicular tracery, an ogee-headed niche with crocketed pinnacles, and an embattled parapet with angle pinnacles. It is Grade II* listed.



Distance: 7.74 miles

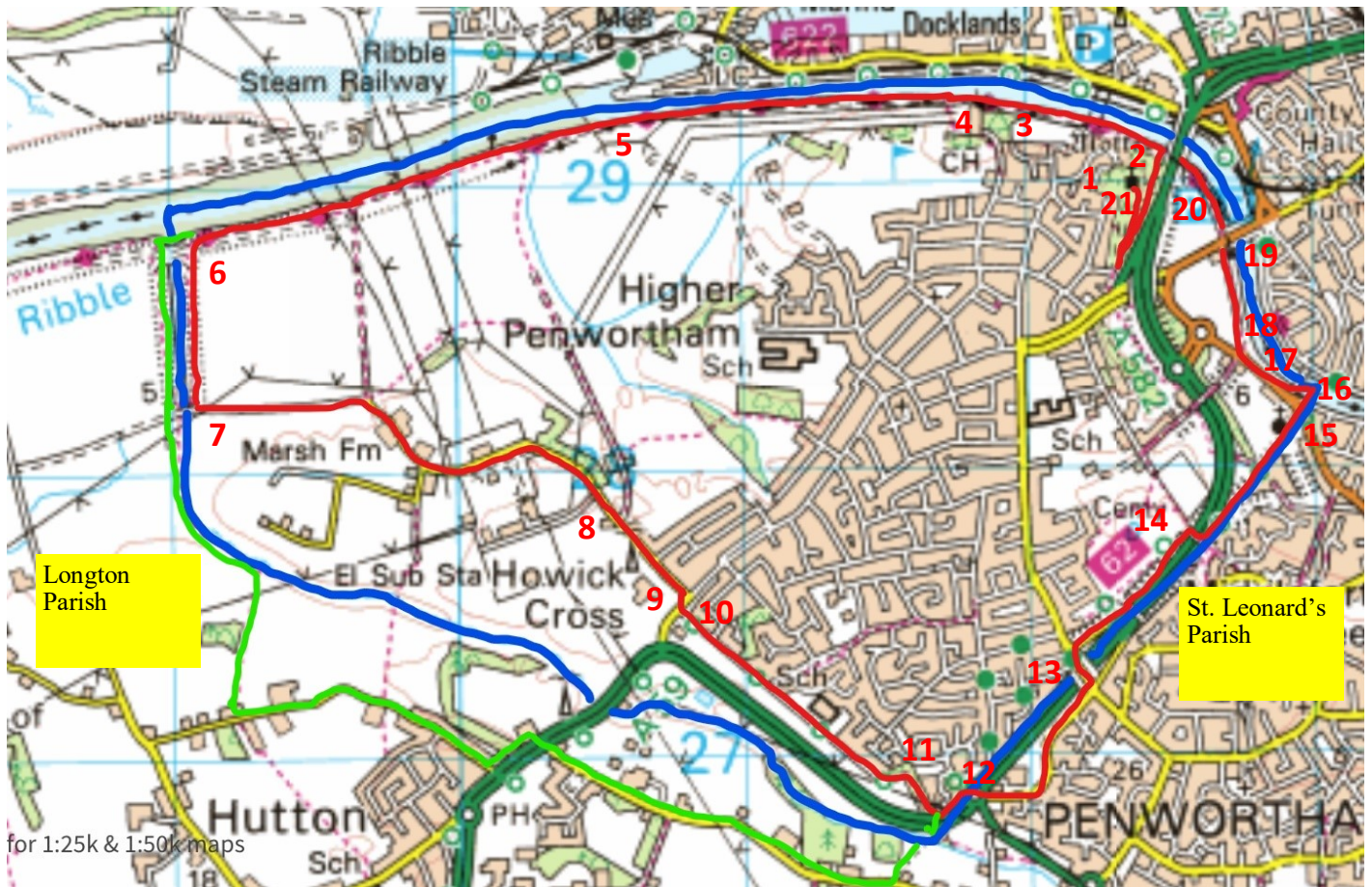
Time: 3 to 3½ hours plus time for refreshments.

Grade: Easy. Some steps and inclines. Uneven ground in places.

Clothing: Boots with reasonable tread are advisable.

Map: OS Explorer 286 Blackpool & Preston

The entire route is suitable for walkers. Some of the route is suitable for wheelchairs, cyclists and horses. I have created a separate boundary walk for St. Leonard's Parish and the two may be combined to make a 9 mile walk.



St. Mary's Parish is 2.8 Sq Miles.

In 2011 the population was 10,544. The number of occupied households in 2011 was 4,294

Legend

Boundary— **Blue**

Walk where away from boundary— **Red**

Alternative route — **Green**

Directions:



Fig 1

Start: St. Mary's Church, Church Ave, Penwortham PR1 0AH although the route can be commenced anywhere. *The oldest part of St. Mary's Church is the chancel which dates from the 14th C and west tower (15th C).*

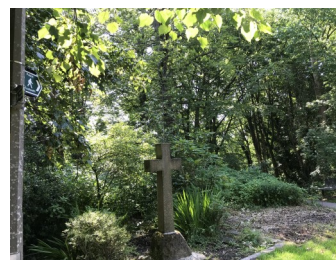


Fig 2

1. Walk from St. Mary's Church (Fig 1), in a southerly direction down Church Ave as far as the cross on the left. Follow the path down the steps. (Fig 2)

At the bottom of the steps, turn left and walk along the path through the woods. You will hear the noise from the Penwortham by-pass on the right.

2. At the end of the path you will see the Penwortham Fly-over (Fig 3) which carries traffic over the River Ribble. The bridge and by-pass was completed in 1985. Turn left and commence walking the boundary in an anti-clockwise direction. With the river on your right.



Fig 3

3. On the left is the former site of the Ribble Generating Station, a coal fuelled power station that provided electricity to a large area of Lancashire from 1925 to the early 1980's then demolished. The road becomes a large open space with a small harbour wall on the right. (Fig 4)



Fig 4

This harbour has been redundant for many years but was used on 3 occasions in 2011 and 2014 when barges from Ellesmere Port each carrying a 270-tonne transformer section arrived on a high tide, docked overnight and unloaded the following day. They were then carried along the A59 by low-loader at 2 mph to Penwortham Electricity Sub-Station at Howick. You will pass under many transmission lines on this next stretch.

4. After the modern electricity sub-station, pass through another kissing gate (Fig 5) onto a rough track. Penwortham Golf Club is to the left. Take the higher path for better views of the surrounding countryside, river and Riversway Docklands on the opposite side of the river. Follow the "Lancashire Way" and "Ribble Way" signs.



Fig 5

5. You will see the entrance to Preston Dock across the river, otherwise know as "The Bullnose". At a very low tide, sand banks take up much of the width of the river here. (Fig 6). *Preston Dock was opened in 1892 and at the time was the largest single dock in the country. The basin was named after Queen Victoria's first son, Albert Edward due to the Prince laying the dock foundation in 1885. The dock is 15.9 miles from the Irish Sea and provided a port for shipping until its closure in 1981.*



Fig 6

Keeping going along the river walk, pass the wooden directional post, then go through through the gate (Fig 7). The footpath continues in spacious grazing land.



Fig 7



Fig 8

6. You are about to leave the river when you reach the stile and footpath sign (Fig 8). This is a primitive footpath and very overgrown in places. Before you do, take a look at Mill Brook where it enters the River Ribble. This is the western boundary of St. Mary's Parish and also of the Howick township.

If you were to cross the brook here, you could take the footpath which runs parallel to the brook but which takes you eventually to Hutton via Ratten Lane. If it is wet, I recommend you take this path as there is slippery bank at the end of the primitive footpath. They both join together however at the farm track (Fig 10). See also Green route.



Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

7. We are now going to leave the boundary as no footpaths are nearby. At the farm track, turn left and walk in an easterly direction until you reach the "T" junction, then turn right. (Fig 11). Keep to the right where there is no footpath. Walk up the hill, passing Howick Row cottages (Fig 12) and the Penwortham Sub-station generators on the right.

There is a public footpath on the left which takes you to Blashaw Lane, should you wish!



Fig 13

8. Continue along Howick Cross Lane. You will pass a few farm houses. *Of special interest is Hesketh Farm built in 1700 or earlier. It is a Grade II listed building and described as: A brick house with a roof of slate and some stone-slate. It has two storeys with attics, and has a T-shaped plan with a main range with a cross wing on the right. The doorway has a segmental head, and above it is a datestone. The windows are casements, also with segmental heads. In the cross wing is a stairlight window, and there is a blocked doorway and blocked windows, some with 17th-century-type hood moulds. (Fig 13)*

Along the lane is the entrance to the National Grid - Penwortham Sub-station.

9. Following several houses on the left and a farm on the right, you will soon reach Liverpool Road. Before you cross the road, why not sit down on the bench and take refreshments.

Admire the Grade II listed Wayside Cross. (Fig 14)

The cross was restored in 1919, The only original part is the base that consists of a roughly cube-shaped block 75 centimetres (30 in) wide by 60 centimetres (24 in) deep. This stands on an inscribed stone plinth, and carries a cross 1 metre (3 ft 3 in) high. The inscription states that it was restored to commemorate peace in 1919.



Fig 14



Fig 15

10. Liverpool Road is much quieter than it was due to the new by-pass from Broad Oak traffic Island to Howick Cross.

Cross Liverpool Road at the crossing and walk along Howick Moor Lane. The parish boundary is still Mill Brook which is culverted under Liverpool Road to the south west of Howick C E Primary School.

On the right are the new All Hallows Catholic High School sports fields. When the lane comes to an end, continue along the footpath with the school on your left.

All Hallows Catholic High School is a coeducational secondary school located in Penwortham in the English county of Lancashire. Established in 1975, it is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided school administered by Lancashire County Council and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool.



Fig 16

11. At the end of the footpath (Fig 16), you reach the Broad Oak Traffic Island. The boundary is Mill Brook at the where Harrison Lane merges with Broad Oak Lane. (Fig 17) This involves crossing over the island to the right. Its only a five minute walk but here is a picture if you don't want to go there! Unless you are combining the St. Leonard's parish Boundary Walk, (Fig 18) you must return to the island.



Fig 17



Fig 18



Fig 19

12. The boundary between St. Mary's and St. Leonard's Parishes is the centre of the by-pass travelling in a north-easterly direction. As there are no footpaths down the dual carriageway, we will take the footpaths on either side. Cross over the islands at traffic lights and take the footpath alongside Booths on Millbrook Way in St. Leonard's Parish. (Fig 19)

***E.H. Booth & Co. Ltd** was founded in June 1847 when 19-year-old tea dealer Edwin Henry Booth opened a shop called *The China House* in Blackpool. In 1863, he added the sale of wines and spirits, and branches were opened in Lytham in 1879 and Blackburn in 1884. The business was incorporated as a private limited company in 1896. Edwin's son John opened cafes in the stores in 1902 and invited all staff to become shareholders in 1920. It has remained owned by the Booth family and staff ever since, comprising over 250 shareholders in 2011 and with no individual having more than 12% of the total shares. The current chairman, Edwin J. Booth, is the fifth generation.*

Booth family and staff ever since, comprising over 250 shareholders in 2011 and with no individual having more than 12% of the total shares. The current chairman, Edwin J. Booth, is the fifth generation.

13. At the junction of Millbrook Way and Cop Lane, turn left. Cross over the bridge, cross over Cop Lane and aim for the footpath / cycleway to Preston alongside Cop Lane School. (Fig 20). You are now back in St. Mary's Parish.



Fig 20

Cop Lane C E Primary School, first known as Penwortham School, was built in 1878. The first schoolhouse however, built in 1830 is still in place further along Cop Lane just beyond Hill Road South. Continue along the footpath / cycle path passing the Hurst Grange Park Extension on your left.

14. At the junction, turn right taking the cycle path (62) to Preston. (Fig 21) Take the bridge over the dual carriageway and take the steps down to the left. Alternatively bare right and take the sloping footpath which takes you to the same place.

The boundary is the old West Lancashire Railway line (WLR) on your right. Walk along this footpath until you get to Leyland Road.



Fig 21

The WLR, like many smaller railways, was opened in stages, finally linking Preston and Southport in 1882 when the West Lancashire terminus at the bottom of Fishergate Hill was opened. At the Western end of the line, the company also had its own Terminus, Southport Central. After only 10 years, the line struggled to make a profit. More and more passenger trains were able to use the main Preston Station via the ELR and Whitehouse Junction. As a result the station closed to passengers except for use during two Preston Guilds. The line continued with goods traffic until it was named in the Beeching Report and was closed in 1964. Broadgate Cycles were based at the redundant Fishergate Station until moving to Hawksbury Drive in the late 1970's.

15. At Penwortham Methodist Church, cross Leyland Road using the island in the centre of the road for safety. (Fig 22)

The original chapel was built on Pear Tree Brow in 1813. Re-built in 1833, this building, which is now privately owned, displays a blue plaque on the wall to commemorate its origin.

In later years there was the need for a larger church in Middleforth, and so the church on its present site was opened in 1910 to cater for the growing congregation.

At the time when Penwortham Bridge Methodist Church (to give it its full name) was first opened, the nearby bridge, dating back to 1750, was the lowest bridging point of the River Ribble. Prior to the construction of the 'old' bridge, the only means of crossing the river was ferry-boat or ford just a few hundreds yards up the river.

Middleforth gets its name from the Middle Ford.



Fig 22



Fig 23

16. Take the short footpath at the back of the cottages to the river. The old West Lancashire Line (WLR) or strictly speaking the piers of the bridge carrying a gas pipe line are still in place. (Fig 23).

17. Take time to look at Old Penwortham Bridge. (Fig 24) The bridge is built in stone and consists of five unequal segmental arches.



Fig 24

The cutwaters rise to form refuges at the sides of the footpath. The parapets curve to form walls on the south side. The bridge is also a scheduled monument and is Grade 2 listed. The river is the boundary.

18. Walk along the footpath on Leyland Road (river side). Turn right under the barrier and take the track alongside the allotments.

This area is known as "The Holme". This was once an island of 38 acres and used for grazing of cattle by both Penwortham and Preston Townships. There was a semi circular stream "Narrow Water" which surrounded the island roughly where Leyland Road is now. The reason for the common status was that the boundary between the two townships had not been decided. When the old channel was stopped up and the river bank was improved in the mid 19th C the boundary was fixed as the centre of the present course of the river. However Preston City Council manage the allotments at both Penwortham Holme East and Penwortham Holme West!



Fig 25

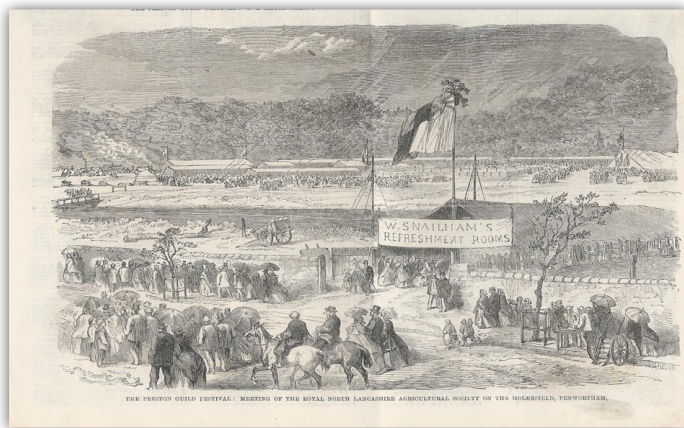


Fig 26



Fig 27

The North Lancashire Agricultural Society show was held on this land during Preston Guild in 1862. The engraving (Fig 26) shows the event in progress. The artist would be standing on Broadgate. The river runs at the back of Mr Snailham's Refreshment Tea Rooms. The marquees and show rings are on the Holme. A temporary bridge, crosses the river (left). The Liverpool Road "New Bridge" built in 1915 can be seen in Fig 27, with St. Walburge's R C Church in the centre overlooking all of Preston and its environs. Designed by J A Hanson (of Hanson Cab fame) and consecrated in 1854, this marvel by the Ribble has the third highest steeple in the land at 309 feet (94m).



Fig 28

19. At the top of the hill, watch for approaching traffic. Cross Liverpool Road with the above "new bridge" on your right and walk towards the gate. (Fig 28). There are more allotments on your left. Go straight on to the Penwortham Fly-Over.

20. Immediately after the bridge, turn left and walk back through the woodland footpath to the steps. (Fig 29)



Fig 29



Fig 30

21. At the top of the steps, turn right and make your way back to the church. If the gate is open, have a look at the Lych gate, take a closer look at the church and the gravestones. (Fig 30)

There are three Grade II listed gravestones in the churchyard.

There is a tomb chest of 1814 which commemorates John Horrocks, Member of parliament and cotton manufacturer, and members of his family. The tomb chest is in a rectangular enclosure surrounded by cast iron railings with urn finials.

Look at the slab of 1662 which commemorates Peter Taylor. It is rectangular on a stone base, and contains an inscription in raised capital letters filling the entire surface.

There is a gravestone dated 1686 which commemorates Edward Hollinhurst. It consists of a rectangular stone slab on two rectangular stones, and is inscribed in raised capital letters.

There is also a sundial (Grade II) in the churchyard. It consists of two circular steps, a square plinth, and an octagonal column with a circular moulded capital and top. On the top is an inscribed brass plate and an openwork gnomon.

Philip Walsh

#Lockdown during COVID19 - June 2020.

Sources:

The Church of England

"Penwortham in the past" by Alan Crosby. Carnegie Press 1988

OS Maps on-line

www.southribble.co.uk

www.preston.gov.uk

Thanks to the Vicar and Wardens of St. Mary's Church

Photographs: Philip Walsh