

BRIDGEND HERITAGE TRAILS, BOLLINGTON

Circular walks that explore the local countryside and bring Bollington's past to life



TRAIL NO. 2 WOODS & WILDFLOWERS

Follow the enchanting Harrop Brook through woodland whose tranquil charm and abundant wildlife hides a colourful past. Discover local characters and historical figures who have made their mark on this intriguing corner of Bollington.

Walking with Kids? Ask for our 'Wood and Wildflowers' kids' quiz!

5 miles
(with short cut, about 4 miles).
Difficulty: Moderate to easy walking, with some strenuous hilly sections

www.bridgendcentre.org.uk



Bridgend Heritage Trails

The Bridgend Centre has created eight circular local walks that explore how industry, transport and farming have shaped the fascinating heritage of Bollington, with local people bringing the trails to life in their own words.

Walking with kids? The trails have special interests for younger walkers with markers to follow and surprises to uncover on the way. **Plus there's a kids' quiz for each trail to add to the fun! Download it yourself or pick one up at the Bridgend Centre...**

All the walks start and end at the Bridgend Centre, 104, Palmerston Street, Bollington, Cheshire SK10 5PW. Open Mon-Fri 10-4.30, Sat 10-1.

Parking: Pool Bank car park on Palmerston Street just along from the Centre.

Toilets are available at the Bridgend Centre.

Recommended map: OS Explorer 268.

Although we aim to be accurate, be aware that things can change, structures become wobbly and surfaces slippery. Make your own judgements, stay safe and be prepared!

The Bridgend Centre

The Bridgend Centre is a local, independent charity, playing an active role at the heart of the Bollington community. We offer many services and activities that help to promote quality of life for everyone.

Our range of walking activities and information provide a great opportunity for people to exercise in the great outdoors, which has been demonstrated to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Find out more at www.bridgendcentre.org.uk

Drop in after your walk for tea and cake, or a browse in our Aladdin's den of a charity shop...

Woods and wildflowers

A 5 mile circular walk along the Harrop Valley, starting and ending at the Bridgend Centre.



Follow the flower markers.

The second of the Bridgend Heritage Trails, this walk follows Harrop Brook through enchanting woodland before returning via an ancient Salt Trail. A feast for the senses in every season, look out for bluebells in spring and an abundance of wildflowers in summer. Packed with history, from battlefields to buildings, mineshafts to trade, along the way you'll meet some intriguing characters, such as the 'Midnight Milkman' and the Black Prince.

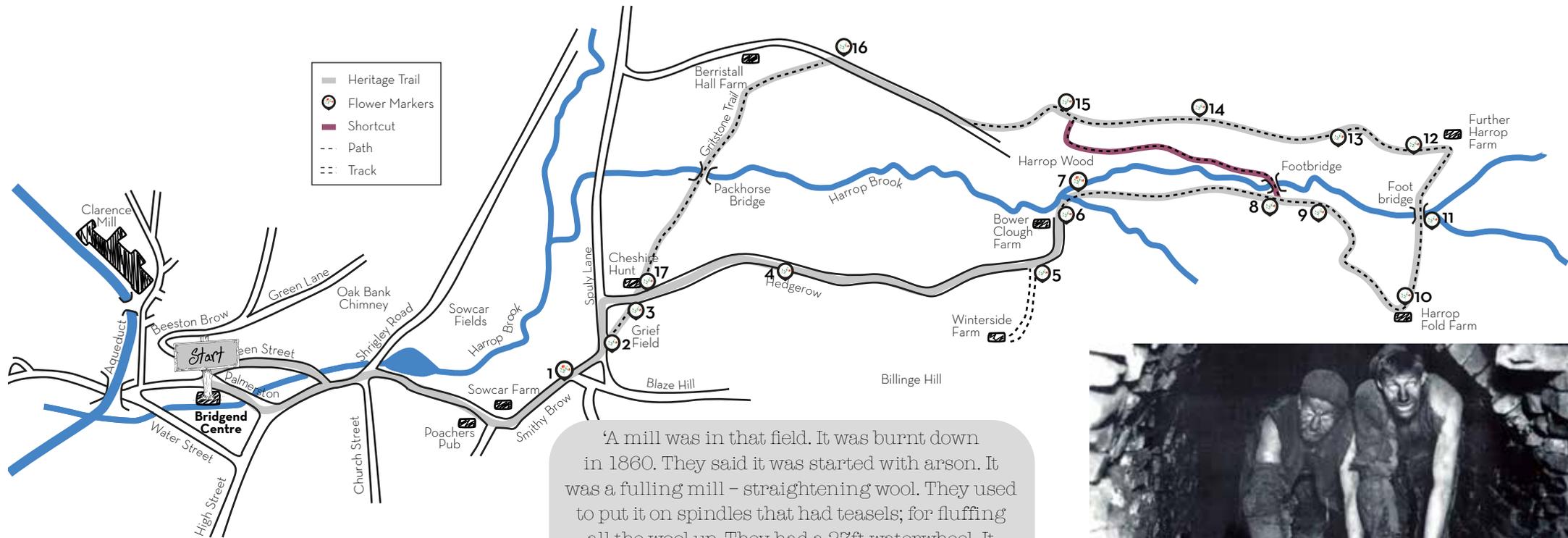
"It's called the Salt Trail 'cos it's a trader's route. It comes from the crossroads at Charles Head. Off Further Harrop Farm track, there's a Roman Barrow - you can see it in the field. It was excavated by the University of Manchester in 1936 and there was a pot inside with all the jewels in the middle - a burial."

Younger walkers! Follow the trail of wildflowers and play a few tunes on the musical instruments you'll find hidden in the woods. Plus there's a 'Woods & Wildflowers' quiz to get you going.. Download it yourself or pick one up at the Bridgend Centre

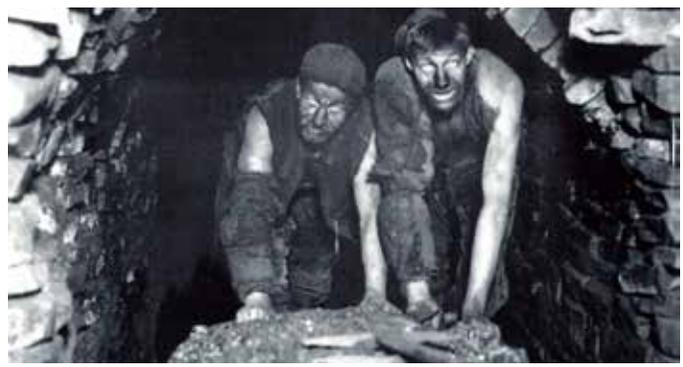


With thanks to The Hobson Trust.

Drawings courtesy of Carlo Eaves, Anthony Holland, Michael Moore and Bollington Photo Archive.



‘A mill was in that field. It was burnt down in 1860. They said it was started with arson. It was a fulling mill - straightening wool. They used to put it on spindles that had teasels; for fluffing all the wool up. They had a 27ft waterwheel. It was called “The Little Mill at Sowcar”.’



‘At Bower Clough Farm lived a man called Caleb Jodrell. He was a part-time coal miner and he had a small dairy herd - 34 acres. Presumably he’d be mining his coal and come home to milk the cows, and at midnight he was just about ready to deliver the milk. They called him “The Midnight Milkman”!’



Bridgend Centre to the Grief Field

With your back to the Bridgend Centre, turn right and proceed along Palmerston Street. After approx. 100 yards you will pass a car park on the left.

Continue up the road, past Church Street and straight across the mini roundabout. A few steps further on, take a gentle fork right to carry on along Ingersley Road.

Head past the ‘Poachers’ pub, originally called ‘The Masonic’, the road curving to the left. You now start to climb up Smithy Brow and looking to your left you will soon see ‘The Nab’ rising above Sowcar Fields.

At the fork turn left into Spuley Lane 1, following the sign to Pott Shrigley, and after 100 yards, you will see a signpost on the right into a field 2. Go over the stile and then diagonally left towards a building.

‘We walked where the footpath is years ago and it’s called the ‘Grief Field’. There was a battle fought on that field - Bonnie Prince Charlie on his way back to Scotland. A man who lived there actually found a stabbing dagger in his garden. Just the metal part; the handle had rotted off.’

Hedgerow to Harrop Wood

Go over the stile 3 and turn right onto the tarmacked track. This is Hedgerow. Look out for 4 along the way. To your left the Harrop Valley is unfolding before you. Following the track, pass a sign for Winterside Farm on the right 5. Continue for about a mile until the track peters out in the yard of Bower Clough Farm.

Proceed through the gate 6 and down the steep, often slippery, slope. At the bottom cross the first bridge of stone slabs over Mellow Brook, but following the signs, turn sharp right just before the next bridge over the Harrop 7. After a short distance the path, originally a cart track, enters Harrop Wood.

Originally an ancient woodland, many of the trees in Harrop Wood were felled for the war effort. Since then, however, it has been left to its own devices, and now offers a unique insight into local wildlife.

Harrop Wood to Harrop Fold Farm



Cross a stile into the wood looking out for a large wooden musical instrument on your left!

‘Mr Allaby was poaching in the war. Never turned up for work the next morning. Went to look for him and he’d fallen down a mineshaft. Only fell on his bag of rabbits – rabbits saved the day!’

A little further along, you’ll find a second instrument (the vertical clonker). Just beyond it you can see a capped mineshaft through the trees. A little further on, keep an eye out for a faint path on your left. This leads to a waterfall, which you may be able to glimpse through the trees. Here you can sit on the bench and pass the time of day.

‘There’s a big pool there, where they used to dip the sheep, in the old days before the chemical methods they use now. They just threw them in the stream and they had to swim out. My daughter threw Sooty, our dog, in to teach him to swim – threw him up in the air and he landed like a stone and disappeared for what seemed like minutes! Came out paddling like mad!’

Back on the track, continue along until you reach a signpost where a footpath heads off to the left ⑧. Here, you can choose to continue straight on, or follow this path to the left and take a short cut through Harrop Wood to rejoin the path further on. The short cut is easy walking. The main route involves some climbing, but you will be rewarded with spectacular views across the Harrop Valley and beyond.

Short Cut

Follow the left-hand path down to the Brook. Go over the stile, cross the bridge and then turn left. Keep walking with the fence and the brook directly to your left.

Harrop Brook is now on your left. You will come to a gate with a stile to the right and a quaint little dog hatch. There is a capped mine close by on the left.

The path now leads upward and then levels out for a while. Where it forks, follow the lower path. At the next fork, go left and descend to a stile ⑮. You’ve now rejoined the main route.

Main Route

Continue straight ahead up the track and ignoring the path on your left, take a right hand stile next to a farm gate ⑨. Proceed until the track ends at a field and turn right, following the footpath sign over a stile in front of a facing gate. Follow a sometimes boggy track, crossing a stile and carrying on forward into a lane which brings you into the farmyard of Harrop Fold Farm. ⑩.



‘It stems from the old Norse nickname of ‘hari’ for a hare, so Harrop Fold would have meant “The Valley of the Hares”.’

Turn left into the farmyard, and left again past the house to approach a facing stile. Stay right of the wall and fence and, keeping forwards after the next stile, go downhill and over the footbridge ⑪. Climb up the steps over the stone wall. Climb upwards, with a fence on the right towards Further Harrop Farm.

Further Harrop Farm to Smithy Brow

Further Harrop was built in the 12th Century. The Black Prince had a dairy farm there and bred Shire horses as warhorses. I think he was killed in a battle in France.’ (Edward, Prince of Wales, was the eldest son of Edward 3rd of England. He fought in the Hundred Years War against France in the 1300’s)



Turn left immediately before the farm, following the wall and keeping left of the buildings. Head towards a sign and stile in the field ⑫ then continue ahead along this track and over a second stile, bearing right before the old wall, then over a stream. Turning left, cross a facing stile ⑬. The well-defined track leads straight ahead, with a wall on the left, and spectacular views all around. Crossing a field and over a stile ⑭, go straight on along the path through the trees. Note the short cut path joining from the left, and eventually drop down to a stile ⑮.

A steep drop brings you to cross stepping-stones over the brook and after climbing the bank you will emerge onto the hillside. Walk downhill to join the track and turn right along it. As you climb up the hill you will see 'White Nancy' atop Kerridge Ridge, which rises above Blaze Hill in the foreground. If the conditions are right, you might see the Welsh Hills rising in the distance towards the West.

'The Gritstone Trail - that was an old Salt Road, you know - ancient packhorse track, probably older than Roman. They used the salt as currency and preserving food.'

Go through the small gate next to the farm gate and continue along the track, crossing over a cattle grid. Ahead are the buildings of Berristall Hall Farm.

'I've got a piece of newspaper that's framed in the living room of Berristall Hall Farm, from when Oliver Heathcoate was there. It's all about the Black Prince, saying he lived here.'

After about 50 yards leave the path  16 and walk diagonally left towards a corner fence. You'll see two small ponds ahead as you descend the slope. You are now following the Gritstone Trail.

Continue in the same general direction, crossing over the stream on the stepping-stones. Go through a gate and then follow a path (sometimes quite muddy) between two fences, then through another gate. Follow the path downhill and through a gate just in front of Harrop Brook, then cross over the bridge.



'That Packhorse Bridge - it's not Roman, and it's not as old as people think it is. It was built in 1860's by one of Len Stubbs' ancestors. Probably put on the site of an ancient one.'

Climb up the hill following the signposts. Cross the wooden walkway across boggy ground and you will come to a wire fence with a gate to the right. Go through the gate and across the field with the wall to your right. The building on your right is the former 'Cheshire Hunt' pub.

Carry on diagonally across the field to go through a gate in the wall  17 back onto Hedgerow. Turning right, follow Hedgerow until it meets Spuley Lane, where a left turn brings you back to Smithy Brow.

Sowcar Farm and the Bridgend Centre

Descending back to Bollington, you will see the buildings of Sowcar Farm overlooking Sowcar Fields and Harrop Brook.

'According to the hand-written deeds at Chester, there was a building here in the 1300's. Part of this building has been here for 600 years.'

Retrace your steps back towards the Bridgend Centre, and, just after the butcher's shop, take a right turn down Queen Street, the top of which is called Defiance Brow.

'When my Grandad worked in the Oak Bank Mill he told me there was shifting sand underneath, on the right of Defiance Brow. The wall buttresses you can see now were for the original houses - you can even see the old fireplace in the living room.'

As you reach the bottom you will cross over a millrace. You are now following the path of Harrop Brook again, as it meanders behind the houses and emerges to flow under the bridge at Palmerston Street. Shortly afterwards it joins the River Dean, behind the Bridgend Centre, and you are now back at the start of the walk. ■

Be aware that the waymarkers placed in the landscape may be subject to unknown forces such as the weather, groundwork and vandals. Treat the map and directions as your primary guide!



And that's it! We hope you enjoyed your taster of the people and places that have made Bollington what it is today.

Don't forget to check out our other Bridgend Heritage Trails!

Walking with kids? All the walks have a specially designed kids quiz that you can download yourself or pick up from the Bridgend Centre.