

# BRIDGEND HERITAGE TRAILS, BOLLINGTON

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



## TRAIL NO. 5 - DIGGING THROUGH THE PAST

From town to farm and from quarry to canal this undulating walk takes you through a constantly changing landscape of life and work. Ranging from valleys to moorland you'll discover a little of what lies beneath the surface of Bollington.

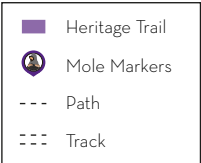
Walking with Kids? Ask for a copy of our 'Mole Quiz'!



**6.5 miles**

**Difficulty:** Moderate with a few uphill sections in the first half.

[www.bridgendcentre.org.uk](http://www.bridgendcentre.org.uk)




## Bridgend Centre to Grief Field

With your back to the Bridgend Centre, turn right along Palmerston Street. Continue past the car park on the left and up the road, straight across the mini roundabout then 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 and start to climb up Smithy Brow. Looking to your left you will soon see 'The Nab', the grassy mound on the skyline, rising above Sowcar Fields.

At the fork turn left in Spuley Lane and after 150 yards you will see a signpost on the right  1 into a field. Cross the stile and walk diagonally left towards a building.

## Hedgerow to Bakestonedale

Pass through the yard to turn right into Hedgerow. After 50yds turn left through a wooden gate  2, and along the path diagonally to the right. Follow the wall round to the left and through a kissing gate.


Now head diagonally right towards a post and follow the Gritstone Trail signposts, to descend to the packhorse bridge, which crosses Harrop Brook. In the not-so-distant past coal mining still took place further up the valley, in Harrop Wood.

Cross the bridge, through the gate  3 and climb uphill to meet a wall. Go through the kissing gate and continue forward up the hillside past two duck ponds on the right, again following the Gritstone Trail.

Go through another kissing gate and follow the Gritstone Trail marker forward passing a hedge on the left. Climb diagonally right towards the end of a wall below the clump of trees, crossing over a track that leads to Berristall Hall Farm on your left.

When you reach the wall turn right, and follow the footpath, with the wall on your right and trees on the left following an ancient track.

“Many of these sunken tracks can be found around Bollington, if you know where to look. The drovers took their wares on packhorses along these, from village to village – a unique transport system’

Follow on to a gate  4 then carry on forward with the wall on your left across two fields until you descend steeply to cross over a stile and meet a road.

## Bricks, Mines and Horse Gins

‘Bakestonedale Road The road is so named because of the local stones – ‘bake stones’. Apparently these could be used for making bricks because they wouldn’t ‘fly’, which means that when they were heated at very high temperatures they didn’t spit or split.’



Taking care, turn left along Bakestonedale Road and, after about 120 yards, cross right into a lay-by. Go through the gate first bearing left, then fork right 📍 5, following the bridleway up over the hill. You may see a capped mineshaft on the right, more evident on winter.

‘6 or 8 women worked there during the War. Mrs Wheat was known as the ‘Maid of the Mountain’, because she lived up Moorside. They’d be stacking the bricks in the drying shed as they came off the Whitaker brick machine. That’d keep them busy!’

Continue uphill on the winding bridleway and as the track flattens you may see another capped shaft emerging into view between two trees. A third is also visible across the field on your right in the middle of a ring of trees.

‘They used to put pit props across and then back fill with soil and plant a ring of trees. The whole idea was the roots knotted over the top, to seal it. If you were lucky it worked, if not they’d collapse in on themselves!’

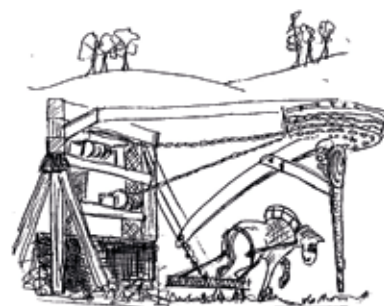


Approaching the top of the hill the path joins a broken wall and fence. Keeping this fence to your left and ignoring the path going off to the right but noting ‘The Story of Coal’ feature, continue straight ahead. The fenced-off quarry is on your left and as you climb you will be rewarded with spectacular panoramic views over Moorside Quarry, the Cheshire Plain and beyond.

Skirting round the quarry keeping the fence on your left, turn left through a gate and follow the bridleway downhill. Passing through a gate there is a small pond in a dip on the left, which is thought to be the site of a Horse Gin.

‘Horse Gin is really short for Horse Engine – the horse was the power to pull men and coal up the mineshaft. You can identify a Horse Gin by a series of upright stones, which are the remains of the circular cobbled path, walked by the horse.’

Ahead, you will see a walled track which you are aiming for. Follow the meandering path downhill and then cross over Moorside Lane, through a gate into the walled track of Birchencliff.



## Birchenccliffe to Breck Quarries

Birchenclyff slowly descends to meet ponds right and left, where a stream crosses over the track. Having negotiated this, go through a gate, 6, past converted farm buildings on your right and continue as the track turns into a road. Proceed downhill to emerge onto Shrigley Road and turn right.

Continue carefully along Shrigley Road, for approximately 200 yards, then cross left to join a footpath signed 'Poynton'. Go through a metal gate and a kissing gate 7 and head diagonally right across the field. Bear left to a kissing gate before you reach the buildings then walk diagonally left across this field to a fingerpost left of a farmhouse.

Go through a kissing gate 8 and follow the path straight ahead between a hedge and a wooden fence, then right into a hedged ginnel. Go through a gap into a lane and turn left. Follow the lane between caravans, to meet a bridge over the canal. Cross over and down the steps to turn right under Bridge No. 19.

'During the 1926 strike, times were so hard that the miners dragged the bottom of the canal with rakes, for coal that had fallen in off the barges, because they were so desperate for fuel!'



Walk along the towpath until Bridge No. 22 then take the steps on the right up 9 and left over the canal bridge onto a track, leading to Sugar Lane, where you turn right. Continue along taking great care because of the dangerous bend, and after 150 yards, take the track left to Long Lane.

Where the track forks, bear right and follow it past Breck Farm. As the track then bends left, go straight ahead through a wooden squeezer stile, entering an ancient walled track.



When this finishes and joins another, bear right and continue uphill. Ignore a track to the right and continue with the quarry-workings on your left 10, forward through mountain bike tracks to a path onto Long Lane, where you turn right.

## Beehives and Coal Bunkers

If you look left you can clearly see a capped shaft on the other side of the lane in a circle of trees. Follow Long Lane, noting four other capped shafts on your left, all encircled by trees. To your right are panoramic views across the Cheshire Plain. When you reach Long Lane Farm on your left, notice the square recesses in the stone wall, at right angles to the road.



‘The farm was built in 1610. The garden wall is a National Monument – it mustn’t be destroyed or damaged. It’s a stone wall with square indentations – they look like bricked-up windows, only very deep. That’s where they put the bee-hives – in the wall.’

Continue downhill until reaching a signed footpath on your left. Go through the stile  11 next to a gate, then diagonally across the field to a second stile, and follow the wall on your right, passing Green Lane Farm. The next stile  12 descends into a track, where you turn right. You are now in Green Lane.

‘During the war years we would walk through Hammonds fire-brick works on our way to Lyme Park over Bakestone Moor. I remember the smoke and the acrid smell, most likely of coke firing the bricks. Most vividly in my mind, I recall the stacks of fired bricks of all shapes and sizes piled untidily, lining both sides of the road.’

Walk to the end of the Lane, and then continue straight down Beeston Brow, which curves to the left and brings you back to the main road. Carefully crossing over, you arrive back at the Bridgend Centre. ■

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.



## 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](http://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...

# Digging through the past

A 6.5 mile circular walk skirting around Pott Shrigley and returning via the canal and farmland, starting and ending at the Bridgend Centre.

## Follow the mole markers.

The fifth of the Bridgend Heritage Trails looks at the industry based around the natural resources that Bollington is sited on. For over two centuries many inhabitants earned their livelihood mining coal and fireclay in the 200 or so mines in the locality. Different extraction methods, coal yards and brick works scarred the countryside. This walk takes you through landscapes where adits, soughs, spoil heaps, gin circles and bell pits can still be seen. The route leads from townland to farmland and from moorland to towpath showing not just the diversity of the environment but the differences in how we use it from past to present.

‘There’s a geological freak in the area – it’s one of the only areas in the country where there’s all the ingredients to make bricks – water, fireclay, shale, stone and coal. Coal is to heat the kilns to dry the fireclay to make the bricks – it’s very, very rare to get them all together.’

Younger walkers! Follow the trail of moles and see if you can spot what’s natural and what’s not along the way. Plus there’s a Mole Quiz to get you under the surface of the walk... Download it yourself or pick one up at the Bridgend Centre.



With thanks to The Hobson Trust

Photographs courtesy of the Bollington Photo Archive