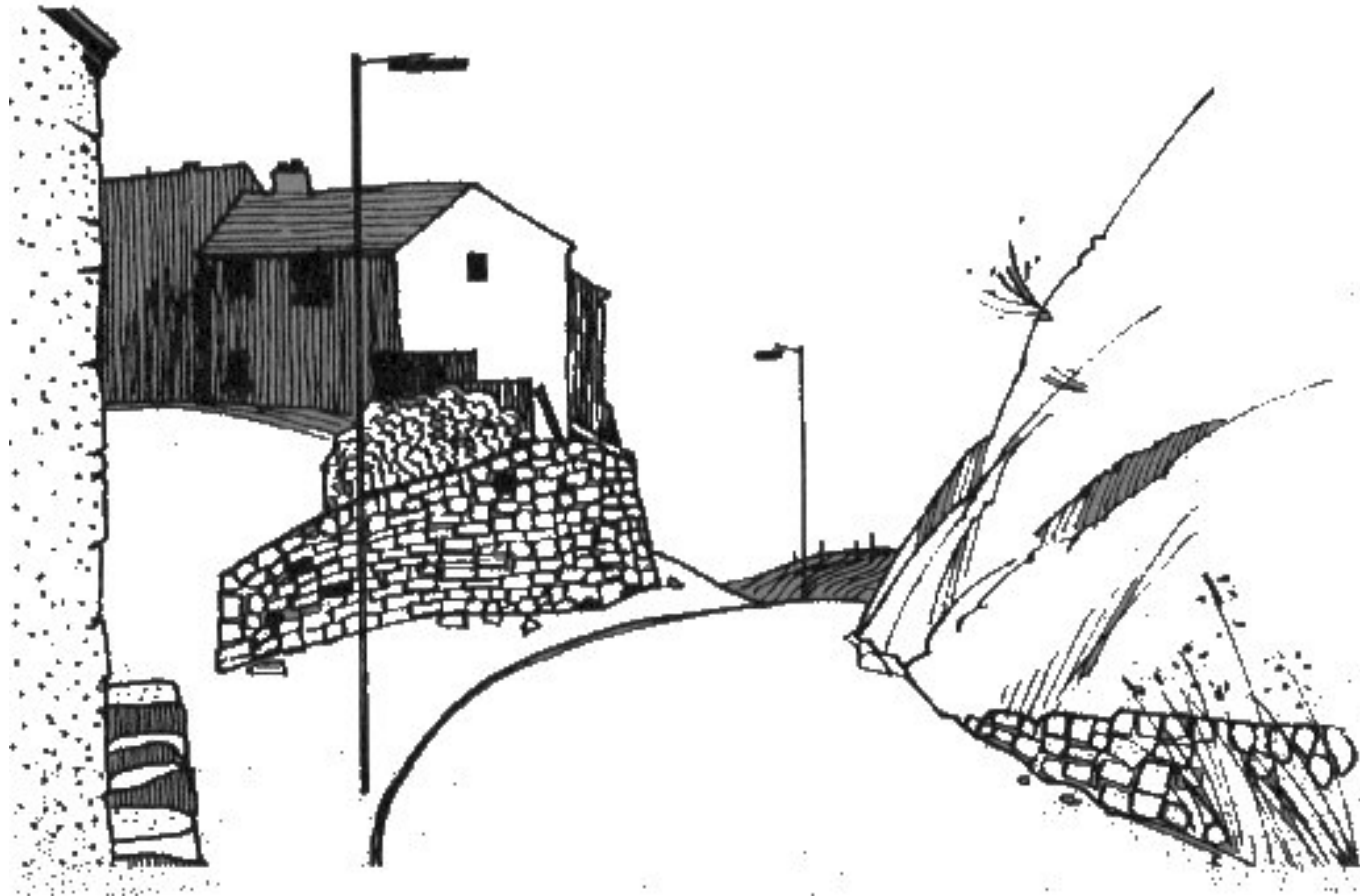


Mossley Civic Society



Local Interest Trail No. 1 Upper Mossley

START at the George Lawton Hall, Stamford Street.

The life-sized sculpture of a woman, dressed as a traditional mill girl with baskets of bobbins, stands outside George Lawton Hall, the site of the original Albion Mill. Mill girls formed the backbone of the industry and represent the town's textile heritage.

Walk up Stamford Street, past the bus shelters and market ground.

The market ground at the beginning of the 20th century was a centre of entertainment. Travelling theatres used to play in tents set up on the market ground, presenting everything from "Maria Martin" and "Nobody's Child" to "Hamlet" and "Lady Audley's Secret".

On market day - Friday afternoons - lit by paraffin flares at night, there would be a puppet show "Mossley Bobs". (See 'Story of Mossley' p72.)

The Fish and Chip shop facing the market ground is reputed to be the oldest, or possibly the second oldest fish and chip business in the world. It was started in a wooden hut in Stamford Road, then transferred to a wooden hut on the market ground before opening in the present premises.



The name of the Fleece Inn on the right is a reminder of the woollen trade carried on in the town before cotton spinning became the major industry. Other similar local inn names were The Pack Horse and The Shears Inn.

Continue the walk by going up the road towards Ashton, keeping to the footpath on the left hand side.

The fire station on the left was the site of the Bull's Head, which was a stopping place for the stagecoach which ran from Huddersfield to Manchester.

Unfortunately, the Bull's Head got into a poor state of repair and had to be demolished a few years ago.

Across Stamford Street was the pawn shop. It was the centre of great activity on Saturday afternoon when the Sunday suit would be redeemed, to be pawned again on Monday morning.

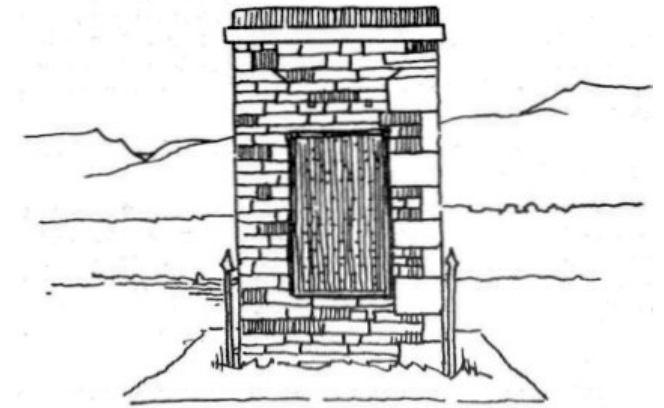
Near the Bull's Head was the Common Lodging House. These were both signs of the poverty in the late 19th and early 20th centuries which, with increasing affluence, have happily disappeared.

The building on the corner of Anthony Street was the Lancaster Working Men's Club. In 1892/3 during a long strike over a reduction in cotton workers' wages, 800 loaves, 400lbs of bacon and 200 gallons of soup were distributed from the L.W.M.C.

Opposite Anthony Street you will see Stamford Riding Stables. These buildings are over 300 years old and the house still retains the original beams which are unsquared tree trunks. The arch which led to the stables was taken down a few years ago when the beams became unsafe. The building at the side of the cottage was the coach-house.

Continue up the road as far as St. George's Church (foundation stone laid 1879). Go through the Lych Gate (erected by public subscription as a war memorial after the 1914-18 war).

Just before the drive reaches the church, turn left along the path into the churchyard. Ahead of you, you



will see what appears to be a tall, narrow stone wall.

This is a memorial to a soldier, John Whitworth, who was born in Mossley in 1782 and died in 1848. He entered the service as a Drummer in 1804 and served until 1825. He was a Field Bugler during the Peninsular and Pyrenean Wars. The story goes that in the heat of an engagement, he was once ordered to sound "Retreat" but, from his position, he could see the true situation between the opposing armies and sounded "Advance" instead, resulting in a British victory. He was arrested for disobeying orders, and he faced a court-martial. He was discharged and severely reprimanded, but after a few days he was made a drum major. It is also said that when the Leeds/ Manchester Railway was opened in 1830, he greeted the Duke of Wellington as he passed through Eccles station with a blast on his bugle. The Duke recognised John Whitworth's bugle-call and asked to meet him, "...a brave man".

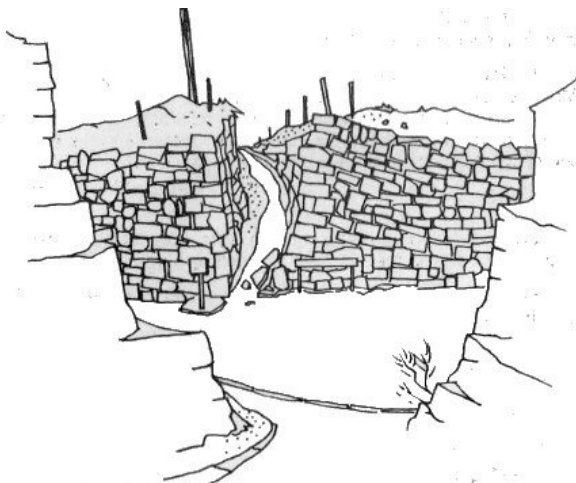
Look at the far side of this memorial and you will see that this was part of the wall of the original church built 1756/6. Access to the old church was by way of the arch at the Bull's Head mentioned earlier.

There are several 18th century gravestones in this part of the churchyard, some against the perimeter wall.

Beyond the Churchyard wall here, you can see the site of the old Methodist School / Church. The Methodist Sunday and Day School was halfway down Wyre Street. The burial ground for the Methodists before the opening of the present Cemetery may still be seen behind the present Methodist Church.

Retrace your steps to the church drive, cross this and walk straight ahead with the church on your left and the Garden of Remembrance at the School on your right. Leave the church by the gate ahead and keeping the play area on your left, follow the road around the new houses. Notice one of the cottages ahead of you (Walker Fold) has a date stone showing the year 1652.

Turn left along Barkwell Lane, which was part of an old salt road from Northwich. Salt from Cheshire would be essential for preserving home-killed meat. Notice too a short row of old houses on the right which are four storeys tall on this side. Many houses in Mossley were built like this on the slopes. The top two storeys of these houses have their entrances on the main road from Ashton, and the bottom two storeys are "underhouses" with entrances in Barkwell Lane. All the older houses originally had stone roofs. Some still retain them. Roofing stones were quarried from Luzley.



At the end of the lane, turn up to the right to the main road, then immediately left up Luzley Road.

Luzley is the name of this hill and it is (as is the name of Mossley itself) of Saxon origin. "Lussley" is from the old English word llose - a pigsty and was in Henry VI's time common land. An old covenant between Sir John de Assheton and his tenants laid down the number of pigs the tenants could hold. (See 'Story of Mossley' p.54)

Just before the cottages on the right, stop to look over the wall. Notice across the road the old well or horse trough.

Long before the present Ashton road was made, this junction, now known as Mossley Cross was an important crossroads. It was the junction of an ancient British track between the earth-fort on Bucton to the signal station at Hartshead. Bucton (now known as Buckton) lies on the Micklehurst side of the valley, identified by the quarry workings on the right flank of the hill. A Roman road ran over Luzley.

Before the Parish Church of St. George's was built, people in Mossley had to go to Ashton to church. Here at Mossley Cross there was an old preaching cross which was still standing in 1823.

Continuing up Luzley Road a little way, after the pair of cottages you will come to a house which was formerly the Pack Horse Inn. In the early 19th century this was a stopping place for "The Pilot", the stagecoach from Leeds to Manchester.

It is worth going a few yards through the stile on the left-hand side of the road. From here there is a splendid view of the valley and the hills across.

Return to the road and go down the path opposite the stile on to the main road. From here you can see why Bucton and Hartshead were signal stations.

If you wish, you may return to the George Lawton Hall by turning right here, down the main road. Otherwise, cross the road to Broadcarr Lane, leading



up to Hartshead. At the beginning of this lane there is a Public Footpath to Knott Hill.

This name derives from the Danish King Cnut (Nute, Knott), who passed through Lancashire on his march into Cumberland in 1031. This footpath is a pleasant walk but tends to be somewhat muddy in places.

Carry on a short way up Broadcarr Lane, as far as the old cottages on the right. From here, looking to the left, there is an extensive view over Audenshaw, Denton and Manchester.

The monument on the hill ahead of you is Hartshead Pike, the site of one of the national chain of beacons lit in times of war or insurrection.

Hartshead Pike is mentioned in the Chronicles of Ashlyne as Canute's Tower. The old site is marked by a few large grinding stones. The present structure was built in 1863 to commemorate the marriage of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII.

Returning to the actual trail: continue up Broadcarr Lane, passing the second building on the right. Shortly before reaching the third building on the right, turn sharp right onto a track into the field. Follow this footpath across the field, enjoying views in all directions. Towards the end of the field the track drops down to a stile. There are stunning views across Mossley from here. The cross to your left was erected by Mossley Churches in 1994. Follow the fairly steep path down the hill in the direction of St. George's Church.

This will bring you back on to the main road at the side of the Billy Goat Inn (formerly the Church Inn). Turn left and follow the road a short distance back to the start of the walk.