

WEST PENNINE MOORS

Belthorn
Heritage Trail
MAP & GUIDE



Belthorn Village
One in a series of village
based Heritage Trails within
the West Pennine Moors
Heritage Trail

www.westpenninemoores.com



Belthorn Village Heritage Trail

This is one in a series of Village based Heritage Trails, written jointly by local communities and Countryside Services operating within the West Pennine Moors Partnership.

Belthorn was a small, traditional coal mining and hand weaving village of approximately 220 houses and is situated on the edge of the West Pennine Moors in East Lancashire between Blackburn and Haslingden. At over 1,000 feet above sea level, Belthorn is one of the highest villages in Lancashire and this walk is set in the hillside around the village and can be quite strenuous in parts.

You should allow approximately 2 hours for the walk, which is about 2¼ miles (3.5km) long. Before setting out it is advisable that the correct clothing is worn, dependent on the time of year. A 1:25,000 scale map may also come in handy. Except for any hot dry period during summer, stout walking boots are strongly recommended.

Some features of this walk, such as stiles or fences, may change over time.

You should therefore always take an up-to-date map so that you can check your whereabouts if the signs quoted are not present.



The walk starts and finishes at the Dog Inn and is approximately 3.5km (2¼ miles) in length. **1. The 'Dog Inn' is easily found in the centre of the village on Belthorn Road. If we start our walk here, you will see the drum shop directly opposite.**

Originally the 'Grimshaw Park Co-op' store, it provided the main source of provisions for villagers. There are still residents in the village who worked there as youngsters. At the side of the drum shop is Holden Street, where the last remaining village shop/post office is located. This is your last chance to stock up with crisps, chocolate and soft drinks.

2. Continue along Holden Street (which was built around 200 years ago for handloom weavers) until you come to a swing gate, which gives you access to the recreation ground. Walk clockwise around the perimeter.

If you look to the far distance (NNE) you will probably see 2 plumes of white smoke. These are the flues of 'Ribble Valley Cement' of Clitheroe and to their right the mass of Pendle Hill, famous for its witches long ago. In the middle distance you can see a line of traffic on the M65 and the large residential area of Accrington.

3. Continue around the perimeter, passing a 'dog bin' for your pets' convenience should it be required. When you reach the wall end turn right into Donkey Ginnel, running adjacent to the village cemetery. Continue through to Chapel Street with its short stone cobbled road surface and so on to Belthorn Road.



If you look downhill from this point you will see a terrace of cottages on the right hand side. These were built over 200 years ago, originally with no back doors. The only access was via the front door; their toilets (privies) were sited on the opposite side of the road where the detached bungalows now stand.

4. Turn left up Belthorn Road and you come to Belthorn Primary School on your left. A short distance further up the hill you will see 2 similar stone-built bungalows on the right-hand side.

This is where the previous school once stood and the bungalows now occupying the site were largely built of recovered stone from the old school. Further up the hill and again on the right you will see a large detached house. This was originally an Inn and was built in 1792 by Robert Yates and known as 'Bell in the Thorn'. Just before the top of the hill, Bank Fold Lane falls away sharply. The adjacent corner house was once Belthorn Police Station and the village constable resided here.

5. Continue straight ahead, coming off the highway on to an unmade bridleway called Tower View.

The house on the corner of Belthorn Road and Tower View was once a windmill and, dependent on the weather on the day of your walk, you will understand why it was sited just there. From this location you can see Blackpool Tower sticking up on the horizon and just to the left you can see 'The Big One' on the Pleasure Beach. Further to the left is Darwen Tower and to the left again you will see the TV and radio transmission mast at Winter Hill above Horwich. If it is particularly clear, look towards Blackpool and you can see the River Ribble estuary.



6. Walk along Tower View noticing a modern date stone '1781' set into the wall of one of the houses. Continue along the track for 400 metres down to a stone wall, turn right at the corner and cross the stile. You have now entered land owned by United Utilities and leased to a local farmer. Sheep are always in evidence and more often than not cattle are also present. Having climbed the stile follow the track downhill to the waymarker, near to the stone remains of farm buildings.

This farm was called **Windy Banks** – you may soon realise why.

7. Take the path downhill and descend to Pickup Bank reservoir.

Notice the typical Oak/Birch clough woodland has been fenced in parts to the valley sides. Maintaining a stock proof woodland aides natural regeneration of the trees. This is now one of the best woodlands of its type in the region and plays host to a diverse range of plant, bird, mammal and invertebrate life. Pickup Bank Reservoir (known locally as Doby Reservoir) was constructed in the 1840s to supply water to Blackburn.

8. Just before reaching the reservoir climb the stile into the garden/yard of **Hole House**. Walk to the left of the house following the fenceline out of the yard. Follow waymarked path across field to fence line. Turn south towards stile at the bottom corner of field and then onto track.

The following is a short and very steep optional detour to the 'New Inn'.

After crossing the stream at Dick Bridge climb the stile ahead of you to walk steeply uphill crossing the broken wall to the top. Go over a stile in the wall and walk to the left to the house.

This is the former 'New Inn'. An inscribed stone flag set into the wall above the porch reads, "New Inn, licensed dealer in foreign and British spirits, ale, beer, porter, tobacco, by order 1837". Apparently, many years ago, prisoners being transferred between the courts in Manchester and Lancaster Prison would be lodged there overnight and shackled to the walls of the cellar. This was also the site of Dick Bridge Mills, c1780, which closed after the construction of the reservoir.

Retrace your steps back to **Dick Bridge**.

9. Follow the track with the stream to your right perhaps catching glimpses of Brown Trout and Gig fish temporarily trapped in deeper pools. Cross a second small bridge and turn sharp right following the track back up to Belthorn.

Approximately 400 metres along this track you should notice the remains of the old colliery sidings on the left-hand side. If you look down the hillside you will see what appears to be the remains of a boundary wall or hedge. This is in fact all that is left of a double track narrow gauge railway line. Many years ago, coal mining was a local industry with sites in the area of the Grane Road. This rail track was used to transport the coal from Belthorn to a lower level. The method used was to fill small wagons with coal at the top of the hill, the weight of which propelled them



downhill, at the same time pulling the empty, lighter wagons up the hill to be filled in their turn.

10. Just past the **colliery workings** at an S-bend in the track, look again into the field on the left and notice a small, square, low-walled compound with two Sycamore trees.

This is in fact a recently restored burial ground for the once locally prominent Scholes family. Looking south back to the 'New Inn', notice to the right on the pinnacle of a hill a second similar graveyard. Many people believe these small graveyards to be Quaker burial grounds. This graveyard along with the second New Inn both have headstones, which is the giveaway. Quakers did reside in the area and a third much larger burial ground exists nearby without any memorial stones. Their basic lifestyle had no need for such indulgences.

11. From now on you are steadily climbing uphill, passing isolated **cottages and former farmhouses** all on the left-hand side.

Many years ago Bank Fold House, (now named Lower Bank Fold Farm) whose gable faces the left-hand side of the lane, was the home of a 'lady' occupied in the 'oldest profession', who provided her service to passing miners on their way to and from the coal mines at the bottom of the hill. It was said she sat in a rocking chair on the side of the veranda plying her trade.

12. Turn sharp left and walk past the frontage of **Lower Bank Fold Farm**. Looking uphill to your right, the gable end of Higher Bank Fold Lane Farm will be visible.

The building was last used as a farmhouse in 1987. The incumbent was a local character named Albert Hope, who lived there with his sister until age overcame them. When once seen by police because his cattle had again strayed onto Belthorn Road and caused untold damage to the gardens, Albert said, "I keep telling them (the cows) not to go up there but they take no notice, you know!!" Over 100 people lived in the **Bank Fold** area in the mid-19th century – mostly handloom weavers.

13. Continue through a five bar gate and into an open field. Veer off to the left to pass between holly thickets where there is a stile. Cross a second stile and continue on towards the holly hedge and out of the field over a drystone wall and onto the lane. Turn right and continue uphill to an imposing mansion.

Named 'Woodhead', the house was built in 1860 and owned by many generations by the Yates family (whose walled graveyard lies on the prominent hill adjacent to the New Inn). The Yates's were a large and prominent family in the area hence the local Parish of 'Yate and Pickup Bank'. Indeed Major Yates officiated in the dedication of the village memorial in 1910. In bygone times, on hot summer days, Woodhead hosted many village summer fetes, galas and garden parties.

14. At the driveway entrance to **Woodhead**, bear right and follow part of an ancient walled and cobbled packhorse route, through mature Sycamore woodland. Passing Lower Paddock House Farm entrance, continue uphill passing the cottages on Top Fold and back onto Belthorn Road.

The corner cottage (No29) was the home of the last handloom weaver in Belthorn.

Make your way back to your form of transport and we hope you have enjoyed your day in and around our beautiful village of Belthorn.

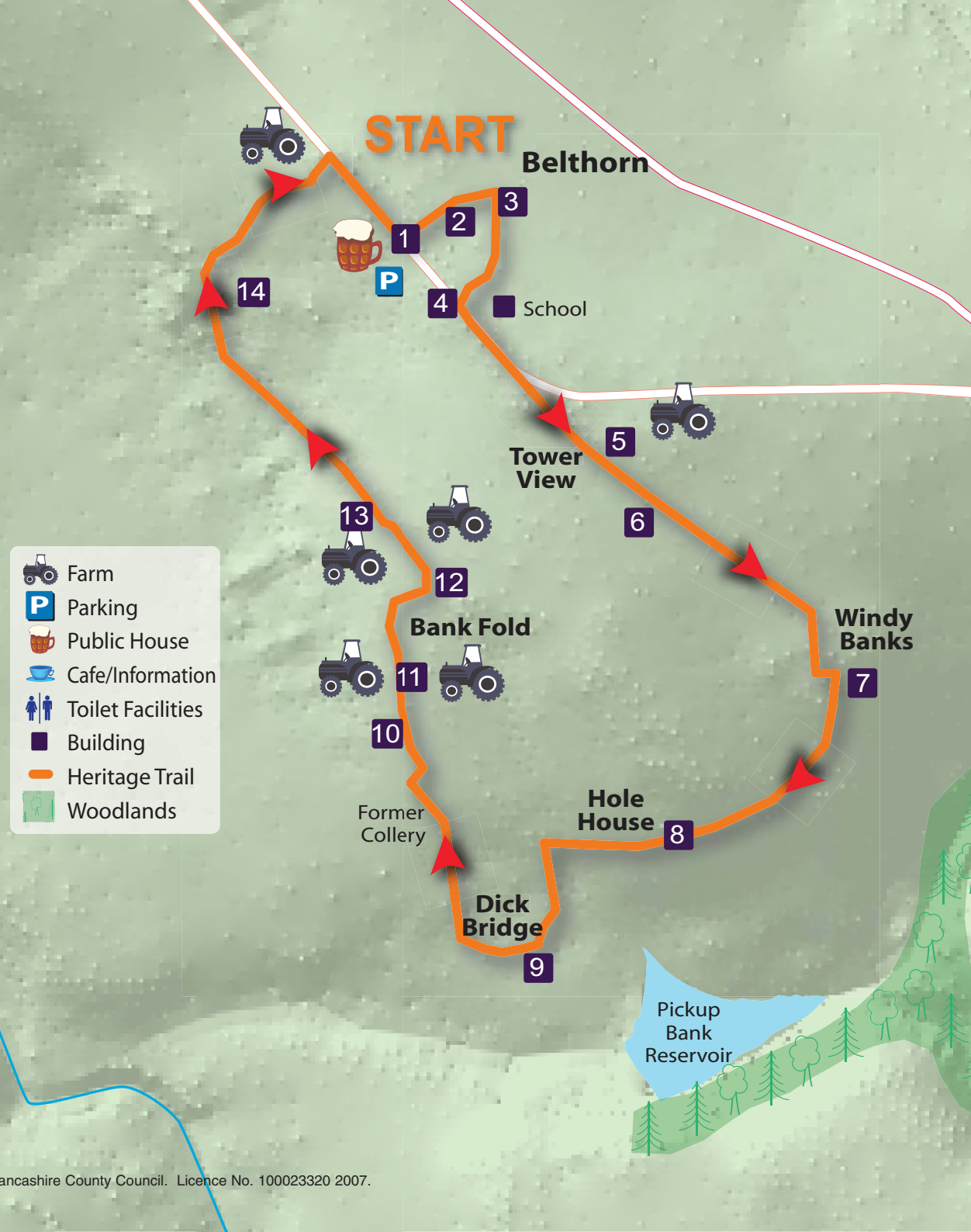
Additional Information

Ordnance Survey Explorer Series, Sheet No. 287 'West Pennine Moors' shows all the public rights of way in the area.

Explore! Discover! Enjoy! The West Pennine Moors

Explore 90 square miles of unspoilt moorlands, numerous reservoirs and beautiful woodlands

- ▶ Discover hidden valleys and explore some of the many historic villages
- ▶ Enjoy getting close to nature – see curlews, peregrines and brown hares
- ▶ Wander the long distance walk, the Witton Weavers' Way – the full 32 miles or one of four shorter circular walks
- ▶ Large areas of the West Pennine Moors are designated 'Open Access'. See Ordnance Survey Explorer series Map No. 287 West Pennine Moors.



How to get there

- ▶ Belthorn is located about 3 miles (5km) southeast of Blackburn, just off the B6232, close to J5 of the M65.
- ▶ The nearest main line rail station is at Blackburn, with a regular bus service from Blackburn, Haslingden and Rawtenstall.
- ▶ For details of public transport links, telephone Lancashire County Council's TravelWise Information Line on 0870 608 2 608.

West Pennine Moors Information Centres

Great House information centre (Cafe nearby)
Rivington (01204) 691549.

Jumbles information centre & Cafe
Jumbles Country Park (01204) 853360

Roddlesworth information centre & Cafe
Tockholes (01254) 704502

Clough Head information centre & Cafe
Haslingden (01706) 830162

L.C.C. Countryside Service 01772 534709
www.westpenninemoores.com

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Countryside Services (01254) 691239
email countryside@blackburn.gov.uk
www.blackburn.gov.uk

The Country Code

- ▶ Be safe – plan ahead & follow any signs
- ▶ Leave gates and property as you find them
- ▶ Protect plants & animals & take your litter home
- ▶ Keep dogs under close control
- ▶ Consider other people