

Tourism Marketing

Marketing & Communications
Unity House
Salford Civic Centre
Chorley Road
Swinton
Salford
M27 5FJ

Telephone: 0161 848 8601

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to all those involved in compiling this heritage trail:
Emma Foster
Christine Whitefoot
Nick Catford www.disused-stations.org.uk
Jason Lawton (photography)
The Tourism Marketing team



www.industrialpowerhouse.co.uk

If you've any suggestions for improvements to this walk or if you have any memories, stories or information about the area, then do let us know by emailing industrial.heritage@salford.gov.uk

Monton and Roe Green Loopline heritage trail

**Railways, coal, physics,
lighthouses and barges**

A self guided walk around Monton
and the Bridgewater Canal

Salford

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Introduction

This circular walk begins and ends in Monton village and follows the 'loopline', the old route of the Roe Green railway line, before returning along the towpath of the Bridgewater Canal.

The walk is 2 miles and should take approximately 1 hour to complete. The walk is accessible for wheelchair users, but please be aware that in wet weather the path alongside the canal can become very muddy.



To find out more about Salford's heritage, as well as events, trails, what to do and what to see, www.visitsalford.info is the place to go for ideas, information and inspiration. Discover tasty places to eat and drink, investigate Salford's fascinating heritage and explore our marvellous museums and galleries.

And we want you to be a part of it. Send us your pictures, reviews, top tips and comments to info@visitsalford.info and don't forget: check www.visitsalford.info for the very latest news, competitions and updates on everything that's hot in Salford.

The Bridgewater Way will enhance and regenerate an important historic canal route for a new role as a safe, accessible connection between the communities along the route. The whole length is 40 miles / 65km, and approximately 4.9 miles / 8km of this will connect communities across the west of Salford such as Barton Aqueduct in Eccles, Liverpool Road, Patricroft and the station, Monton, Worsley and the Delph, and Boothstown Basin.



The Bridgewater Canal Trust is currently completing the first stretch of the Bridgewater Way in Salford from Liverpool Road, Eccles to the M602 and this should be open from June 2008. Please note that parts of the route may be closed for short periods during construction, and detailed information about footpath closures can be found on the website www.bridgewatercanal.co.uk. It is proposed to complete all the works for 2011, the 250th anniversary of the original opening of this historic canal when the Bridgewater Way route will be fully open for all to enjoy.

www.bridgewatercanal.co.uk



The Trail Your walk begins at Monton Green.

Monton Green

If arriving by car, park at the free car park on Monton Road and walk down towards Monton Green. If arriving by bus (numbers 33 from Manchester and 33 & 22 from Eccles), get off at the Monton Green stop.



You are now standing in the heart of Monton's conservation area which, as well as the green itself, incorporates the Unitarian Church, including a former school with caretaker's house; a lodge built in 1875 to the Earl of Ellesmere's former estate; and a club house with bowling green.

Monton Green was part of the estate of the Earl of Ellesmere, but on 8 November 1895 he agreed to make it an open space for public use.

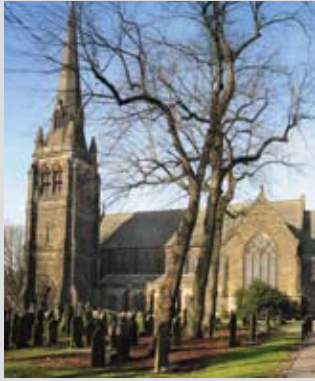
The grade II* listed Unitarian Church was built between 1873 and 1875 and replaced the original Monton Chapel built in 1697. Note that the tower and steeple are separate from the main body of the church - this is because they were an afterthought and not part of the original plan. They now house the bell from the original chapel which was retained in memory of the earlier building. The lychgate was erected in 1895 in memory of Henry Leigh.

Notice the Institute of Physics blue plaque on the side of the church which reads 'John Henry Poynting FRS 1852-1914 Physicist, born in Monton, discovered the Poynting vector and weighed the earth. Attended this church until 1878.' John Henry Poynting was the son of the vicar of the church and was born in a cottage on Monton Road where Prince's apartments now stand. Craters on Mars and the Moon are named after this famous Monton son who was professor of physics at Birmingham University from 1880 to 1914.





Railways, coal, physics,
lighthouses and barges...



Walk past the green with the church on your right and head towards the entrance to the loopline, up the slope directly ahead of you.

In 1848 an infant school attached to the church was opened and the principles on which it was managed led to it taking a high place amongst local educational institutions. The present grade II* listed Memorial Schools were built circa 1864 in memory of Mr and Mrs J Booth and of Silas, Lucy and Esther Leigh who had done so much for the children of the church.

Salford's railway lines are an important reminder of a bygone Victorian age, inextricably linked to the development of the coal mining and railway industries in the region. Today, some of these old railway lines have been converted into public footpaths or 'looplines', providing attractive walkways across the city.

Stop at the top of the slope - you are now standing on the site of the old Monton Green station. Monton Green station was opened in November 1887, mainly to cater for suburban commuters into Manchester and was located here alongside the entrance to the Worsley Golf Club. The station was in operation for over 80 years and the last ever train to leave Monton Green left at 10.48am on 5 May 1969 along the Tyldesley loopline heading for Liverpool.

Up until the early 19th century most of the Duke of Bridgewater's coal in Salford was mined and transported by his underground canal system and then distributed by the Bridgewater Canal (more of that later!). However by the mid 19th century new coal mines, including at Brackley, Linneyshaw and Mosely Common, meant that the increase in production could no longer be handled by the canal network.



Continue up onto the main path and continue to follow it.



Continue straight along the loopline until you reach the remains of the old Worsley station.

In 1864 the London and North Western Railway Company opened a new line from Eccles to Wigan via Tyldesley - today this forms the Tyldesley loopline - and in 1870 a new branch to Bolton via Little Hulton was opened - the Roe Green loopline - along which you are now walking. It was originally only open to colliery traffic, until 1875 when the first passenger services began.

The Farnworth and Worsley Journal of 1874 reported on the opening of this new line:

'To those passengers who have been compelled when visiting Manchester to choose the uninviting route via Moses Gate, or the depressing and cheerless route to Tyldesley, the new line will be a great boon...(it) passes through a district which...abounds in natural beauties, in undulating valleys and clear rippling streamlets, in glorious meadows, rich and green, interspersed with winding roads, protected by hedgerows glistening with hawthorn and looking down upon Nature's carpet of green, amidst the blades of which the cowlip and the primroses love to bloom'.

No doubt the landscape has changed somewhat since the 19th century, but there is still much to admire along the route. The Roe Green loopline in particular is today important for its woodlands which are the result of natural seeding and growth following the closure of the line in 1969 and which are now the home to a wide array of wildlife.



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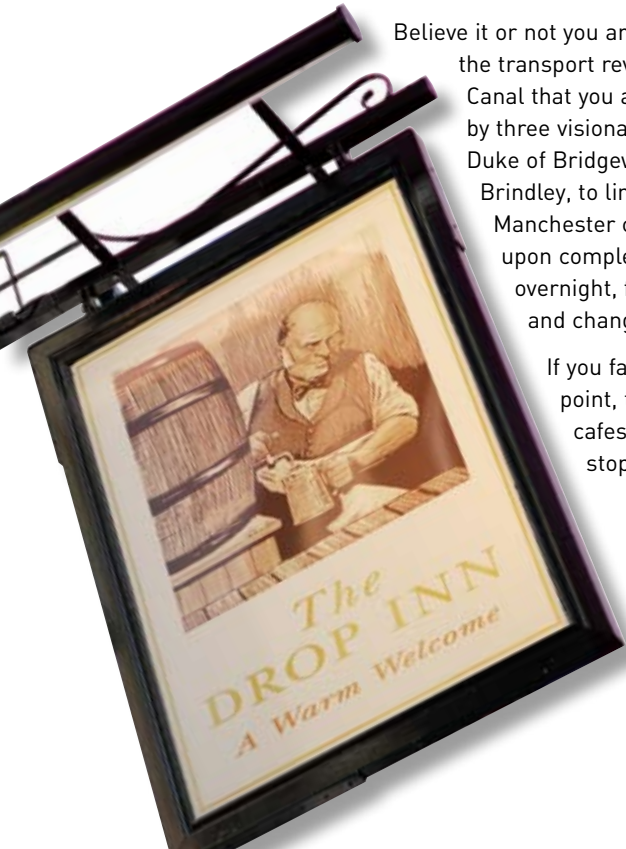
Continue just past Worsley Station until you reach Hollyhurst Road leading onto the main Worsley Road. Turn left and follow Worsley Road along towards Worsley village. Continue on until you reach The Green. Turn left here to follow this road alongside Worsley Green on your right until you reach the footbridge over the canal.

Worsley Station was built after the demolition of six earlier cottages. Earth excavated from the new line was used to level nearby roads, including the infilling of the very deep hollow at Greenleach Lane known as Fairy Fells. The cutting of the first soil prior to building the station was performed in 1861 by the second Earl of Ellesmere.

(The Roe Green loophole does continue from here up through Worsley, Roe Green and all the way to Little Hulton if you wish to continue on a longer walk. Access routes to and from the line can be found at Greenleach Lane, Walkden Road, Bridgewater Road and Prescott Street.)

Believe it or not you are now standing in the birthplace of the transport revolution in the UK! The Bridgewater Canal that you are now standing next to was built by three visionary men, Francis Egerton the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, John Gilbert and James Brindley, to link the coal mines of the area to Manchester city centre. Work began in 1759 and, upon completion, the price of coal was halved overnight, fuelling the industrial revolution and changing British history forever!

If you fancy a break in your walk at this point, there are a number of pubs and cafes in Worsley Village where you can stop for refreshments.



Turn left after the footbridge and walk alongside the Bridgewater Canal back towards Monton.



Continue along the towpath until you return back at Monton.

The Bridgewater Canal boasts some impressive statistics: its total length is 40 miles, with the main stretch between Runcorn and Manchester measuring 28.5 miles. Including the bridge you have just crossed, the canal is spanned by an amazing 78 bridges along its length.

With the links to the Manchester Ship Canal, The Duke of Bridgewater saw the commercial possibilities of carrying more than coal along the canal and by 1855 approximately two million tons of raw cotton from Liverpool. Other cargo included maize, wheat and rice from Italy and Australia, lead from North America and paraffin from Burma, and, of course, passengers too.

The passenger service began in 1769 and by 1781 there were daily sailings to Runcorn. Another service ran between Manchester and Worsley, taking a speedy two and a half hours. The most famous passenger was Queen Victoria, who paid a visit to Worsley in 1851.

On your return to Monton, look out for the famous local landmark, the lighthouse! A local resident with an eye for the unusual built this 36 foot high folly which catches the eye of passing narrowboat owners and walkers. As Monton is 30 miles from the coast, no ships have ever wandered this far off course so far, but the Monton lighthouse is on hand just in case...



If, after your walk, you fancy some refreshments, you could pop into Cromptons at the Waterside on the opposite side of the canal. On a fine day you can sit outside on the waterside terrace and watch the barges pass by. Alternatively walk a few more yards back into Monton village and choose from the Coffee Shop, Felicinis or, in the evening, Blacksticks restaurant.

Or if you wish to continue your walk you can follow the route of another of the area's old railway lines just off Monton Road, before the Monton House Hotel, you will find the entrance to the Monton Walkway which follows the old Patricroft to Molyneaux (later Clifton Junction) line and now takes you as far as the East Lancashire Road in Swinton.

If this walk has whetted your appetite to find out more about the local area, log onto www.visitsalford.info to download the Worsley Village Heritage Trail.



