

Description

Poynton nestles in the foothills of the southern Pennines and today it is a thriving large village. Few visitors realise that Poynton once had the largest coalfield in Cheshire, with 74 pits. Coal mining ceased in 1935 but there remain many clues to this former industry. Apart from providing a glimpse of the industrial past, the walk passes many attractive houses, covers a short stretch of the Macclesfield canal, and provides glorious views over Lyme Park and beyond. Refreshments and toilets are available along the route and, if possible, take time to visit the Anson Engine Museum with its giant scale model of Poynton (c1900).

1. From the Civic Hall car park entrance, turn right and walk up Park Lane through the Shared Space area.

Shared Space, where vehicles and pedestrians have equal priority, is a modern approach for a vibrant 21st century village centre. However, the scheme has also tried to acknowledge Poynton's industrial past. The metal plates on the pavement bear the names of some of the former Poynton pits and there are four Gateway features on the main roads representing Mining, Agriculture, Industry and Aviation.

2. At the mini roundabouts, turn right and walk down London Road for 400 yards passing Poynton Sports Club.

3. Turn right down Woodside Lane and before the entrance to the Kingswood Development turn left up the signed footpath.

This path is Prince's Incline, the longer of the two main inclines on the Poynton Collieries railway system (the other being Lady's Incline). Originally rope-worked, it was converted to locomotive haulage in 1889 and was built to take coal from the many pits in the area either to the main Stockport road or to the Macclesfield Canal.

4. After about 600 yards continue ahead through the gate and cross straight over the road continuing along the Incline.

The long building on the left of the path was the office block and comprised the cashier's office, the pay window, stable block and workshop for the colliery estate. Just past Towers Yard Farm, in a field on the left hand side is the original gunpowder storage house.

5. When you see Davenport Golf Club on the right go through a gate. Do not take the right hand path but continue forward along the Incline.

6. Cross the track, pass through the kissing gate and continue up the hill with the golf course on your right.

7. Passing through two more gates, you will shortly see an information board giving details of the local colliery network at the Albert Pit area in the 1840's.

8. On reaching Middlewood Road, cross over and turn left along the pavement. After 200 yards, turn right through a metal kissing gate opposite German Lodge.

9. Follow this path to a wooden stile and turn left along Prince Road crossing over Carleton Road/Hilton Road before reaching a bridge over the Middlewood Way.

The Middlewood Way follows the line of the former Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple railway. This was built in 1869 and had links serving the collieries around Poynton. The line closed in 1970 and is now a walking, cycling and horse riding route of approx. 10 miles between Macclesfield and Marple.

10. Continue ahead and go through the wooden gate until you reach the Macclesfield Canal.

The Macclesfield Canal was opened in 1831 at a cost of £320,000 and was built to serve the mills, mines and quarries of Marple, Poynton, Bollington, Macclesfield and Congleton. It is over 26 miles long and connects with the Peak Forest Canal in Marple and the Trent and Mersey Canal near Kidsgrove in Staffordshire.

11. Turn right along the towpath.

* At this point you can shorten the walk by continuing along the canal until you reach Bailey's Trading Post at Poynton Marina – Point 16

12. Pass under Bridge 14 and walk up the steps to go over the bridge. Then turn immediately right over the stile and walk under the pylons keeping the wire fence on the left.

13. Walk slightly right across the field to a stile and then bear left to another stile. Here, turn sharp right and follow the line of trees. Continue straight ahead keeping the wire fence on the right.

The former gas holder on the right hand side was originally sited at the gas works near Poynton Station but was later moved to be used as a water tower serving Higher Poynton. The cast iron makers' plates of 1877 are visible on the side.

14. Passing the gas holder, cross the stile and turn right by the fence. In 60 yards turn right and then walk diagonally right with the barns on your left. Pass through a low metal gate.

15. At the tarmac path turn right and walk down the hill.

In 100 yards you arrive at Hilltop Cottage on your left. This was a former winding engine house for the Reform Pit nearby. The house was once known as “Longchimney” after the long chimney which is still evident on the north side.

16. Go through the stile and continue to the canal. Here, turn right to walk over the bridge with the canal on your right.

17. Passing Bailey’s Trading Post on the left, continue for about 50 yards and turn left through the opening to the car park and then downhill for about 100 yards. Baileys trading post is a good opportunity to stop for a quiet cup of tea or coffee. Opening times may vary.

18. You now arrive at Nelson Pit Visitor Centre where free public toilets can be found (not always open). The Centre was built on the site of a former colliery and contains a comprehensive study of the history of the Poynton Collieries (Admission is free).

19. At the car park entrance turn right, passing the Boar’s Head pub on your left and walk down Anson Road.

20. Pass the entrance to the Anson Engine Museum and continue walking down the road to reach Middlewood Road. Here, cross the road and turn left. Tearoom available at Anson Engine Museum.

The whitewashed cottages were built in 1815 by the colliery owners, the Warren Bulkeleys, to house miners and their families. The cottages were built with solid brick walls, 9” thick, and with stone slate roofs. A brook runs through the front gardens which the miners used to grow vegetables and water livestock. This area is called Petre Bank from “Pear Tree Bank” in reference to a sand bank which lay behind the cottages.

Shortly before the junction with Park Lane, the remaining buildings of the former Lady Pit can be seen. The first one was the Capstan house and the second one, the Old Pump House.

21. At the road junction, turn right up Park Lane and immediately right on to Towers Road. Continue for 50 yards and turn left through the wooden gate. Walk down the length of Lady’s Incline.

Lady’s Incline was the course of the railway to Lord and Lady Pits. Look for some brickwork on the path which indicates the location of the wheel pit at the top of the rope-worked incline. This was a self-acting incline with the weight of loaded trucks running down the incline hauling up returning empties.

22. At the end of the incline turn left along Woodside Lane and retrace your steps along London Road and Park Lane to return to the Civic Hall car park.

For further reading refer to “Poynton, A Coal mining Village 1700 to 1939” by W H Shercliff, D A Kitching and J M Ryan available online and in book form.

Additional information

The Anson Engine Museum is one of the country’s specialist museums, has a unique collection of over 250 gas and oil engines, many maintained in running order. It shows the development of the modern combustion engine and boasts a giant scale model of Poynton (c1900) showing the position of the coalfields.

The museum is open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter to the end of October. www.enginemuseum.org

www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk



Spring 2019



A walk round Poynton’s mining heritage

Distance: 6 miles

Duration: 2 hrs 45 mins

Height Gain: 278 ft

Start Point: Civic Hall car park (free) off Park Lane, Poynton.

Sat Nav: SK12 1RB

Grid Ref: SJ 92363 83578

Features: Heritage trail, interesting buildings, museum, canal, panoramic views, café, pub and toilets.

