

Poynton Walk 1 The north-western part

Starting at the junction of Vicarage Lane with A523 London Road North, at the Bulls Head Inn. Westwards along Vicarage Lane to Lower Park and through to the Woodford Road. North along Woodford Road to Mill Hill Hollow. Footpath eastwards past Barlow Fold back to the A523. North along A523 to Norbury Hall, then back southwards to Anglesey Drive. Through Poynton Park and back to the main road at South Lodge, then along the rest of this part of London Road to the centre of Poynton at Fountain Place.

The Old Village

This plan from 1789 shows that the area of the main London Road by Poynton Pool and what later became Vicarage Lane was very different then to nowadays. The main turnpike road runs from left to right, with the "Road to Wilmslow" (now Vicarage Lane) running up from the bottom to join it. At this time, and for many years afterwards this was the centre of "Poynton Village" with some 20-25 cottages around the toll gate at the road junction. What is now South Park Drive is marked "Road to the Coalpits" and a branch off it goes to the Hall, where the pedestrian entrance to the park is now. The coal carts came down here to the "Coal Yard" in the trees between the lake and main road.

This coal yard became the site of the "Crescent Inn" in around 1797, a posting house and stabling for the road stagecoaches from Manchester to London (the journey time was then 28 hours!). Only some stone walling remains nowadays, with the site being used as a council storage yard, but a small survivor from the old days is this drinking trough in the main road wall, formerly fed directly from Poynton Pool behind.....



This later plan is an extract from the 1906 large-scale Ordnance Survey of the old village area. The positions of the Crescent Inn and the drinking fountain mentioned above are shown, together with the old village houses opposite. The Inn later became the local Doctor's residence for some years, but was sadly demolished before 1950.

This picture looks north along a very tranquil London Road North about the same time as the map. The "Poynton Terrace" houses and the Bull's Head are at near left, with the old cottages beyond the Vicarage Lane junction. They were whitewashed in an attempt to brighten them up in 1891, but finally cleared away before 1950 as unfit for further habitation. Road traffic comprises a lone cyclist, and a group of residents are holding an animated conversation in the middle of the main road! The Crescent Inn just peeps out from behind the trees on the right.



And here is the west front of the old vicarage, about the same time. This fine building was also demolished by 1950; the Vicarage moved around 1930 to its present site further south along London Road which we will come to later in this walk. People still occasionally come looking for it on Vicarage Lane though!



The Bull's Head public house and cottages

William Salt built the pub and its adjoining cottages in 1845 and was the first landlord here. Various later publicans also ran a butcher's shop business in one room. The pub was re-fronted about 1900 and extended southwards into one of the original four cottages (known as Salt's Row).....



The next block of seven, Poynton Terrace was put up around 1855 by John Bryning, with an ornate name-stone. It was sometimes referred to locally as Bryning's Row, or Post Office Row.....



The right-hand picture above (kindly sent by Jim Potts of Dorset) was taken in around 1884 and shows his great-grandfather, Thomas Potts, proprietor of the grocery shop at the northern end of the terrace, with his wife Charlotte and four youngest children. By then this was also the village Post Office, formerly run by Bryning from his old shop opposite the Crescent Inn. It moved again, along to Lyme Terrace when Charlotte died in 1907. The shop became Wainwright's hardware, then latterly Pheeby's general store. The date stone reads J.B. (John Bryning) and appears to be 1865; however the terrace is listed in the 1861 census so is probably 1855. There are now only six houses in the terrace as the shop was demolished around 1970 to provide access to the new telephone exchange; the date stone seems to have disappeared then.

Finally before we leave the old village, right is another c.1905 picture, a postcard view with Poynton Terrace at left, "X" marks the Bulls Head Inn, presumably where the sender had been staying.



Preserved section of the old Wilmslow turnpike

This former main route westwards was superseded by Chapel Lane further to the south (now Chester Road) by around 1819, but beyond the end of the Vicarage Lane houses it has been kept as a "greenway" separate to, and on the north side of Glastonbury Drive. This tree-lined section gives a very good impression of what a main road must have looked like in the days of horse-drawn transport.....



Park House Farm

Just after the old route crosses Poynton Brook by the recently-rebuilt Phillips Bridge, this solid, square Victorian estate farmhouse dating from around 1874 (on the site of an earlier farmhouse) may be seen on the right hand side; a public footpath runs along its driveway and through the farmyard, which retains many original outbuildings.....

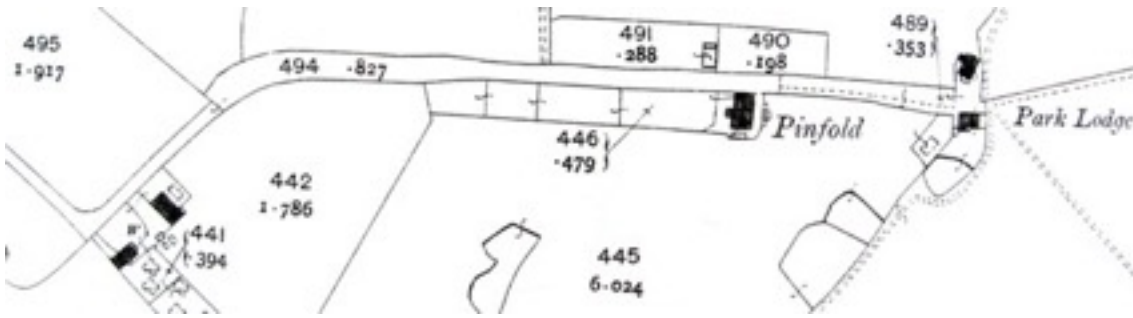


Beyond, the old turnpike continues directly westwards, passing through another pleasant stretch across green fields, before arriving at the former lodge house, seen in the centre of the second of these 1980 pictures.....



Lower Park Lodge

This was thought to date from the downgrading of the former turnpike road to an estate track, and the enclosure of Lower Park (i.e. that belonging to Poynton Hall which lay beyond the Lake) around 1819. Derelict for many years, it was extensively rebuilt and enlarged as a dwelling house in 2001 in similar style to the original, but the new date-plaque gives an original building date of 1780. Our second picture shows the original building, and the condition it had deteriorated into by 1980.....



The former Wilmslow turnpike route now becomes Lower Park Road, with a few pleasant older cottages; that known as Pinfold is shown on the right, and formerly comprised four separate cottage dwellings.....



Haybrook Cottage

Around the bend in the road to the left, beyond the modern bungalow is this listed farmhouse, a 17th century brick shell, but externally much modernised.

The name Haybrook curiously does not appear on the above 1906 OS map extract or any other old maps we have seen. Instead, in some of the Victorian censuses it is shown as "Jepson's Tenement", and is the only building shown as being within this small, detached part of the former parish of Worth.

The old Turnpike road used to continue straight on here, to join Woodford Road beside Lower Park Cottage, but was diverted westwards when the railway line was built in 1845.



Continuing along Lower Park Road to its junction with the main Woodford Road and turning right, we come to....

Dog Hill Green cottage



The 1906 map shows that this was the original Farmhouse, of 17th century brick but somewhat rebuilt in the early 19th. It is a listed building.

The red-brick **Hill Green Farm** on the opposite side of the main road (pictured right) was built around 1910 so is not shown on this map. The older farmhouse then became a farm worker's cottage.



Confusingly, what is shown on this and other older maps and in the census as Doghill Green Cottage is further to the north. Derelict for some time (right), It has been extensively rebuilt in recent years in a pleasant style, and is now known as Mill Hill Lodge (picture left)



Mill Hill Farm

Dating from c.1840 in brick, this lies just to the north again, at the top edge of our map extract:



Mill Hill Hollow

Woodford Road becomes narrow and twisty as it descends into Mill Hill Hollow, then crosses Poynton Brook at Millhill Bridge, recently rebuilt and strengthened but still narrow. This is the boundary between Poynton and Hazel Grove, the large buildings of Millbank Farm lying within the latter.



The large Victorian house on the left hand side of the road is un-named on the map but known as Mill Hill House (left)

The map indicates just two farm worker's cottages to the south west of the house, but others were soon added in the same style to form the row shown.....



The solitary building on the south east side of the bridge shown as Brook Cottage was on the site of the earlier Poynton Mill. The first known references to a corn mill here are in 1500 and 1589. The mill ceased work in the 1830s and was demolished by 1887. The replacement cottage has also now gone, a modern house "Hollow Brook" being on the site.

It seems surprising that no other buildings are shown on the map, opposite Mill Hill House, as some of them at least look older than 1906, as shown in the pictures below. We now follow the



footpath shown by the double row of dashes running south east on the above plan, past these houses.....



Poynton Mill leat

The modern large house "Tanglewood" incorporates a millstone presumably found lower down in the valley. Beyond, the footpath runs eastward alongside a shallow depression, which is the sole remaining feature of the old corn mill. This was the leat carrying water to the mill wheel from the stream near to where it leaves the Norbury Brook near Barlow Fold House. It is now dry, but the course is very clear for most of its length, nowadays partly obliterated by the new road.....

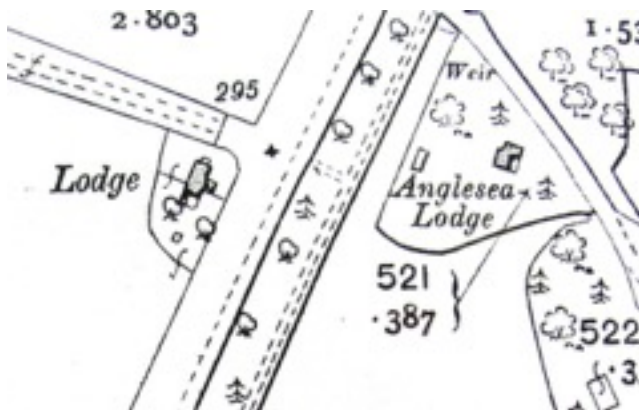


Barlow Fold House and Lodge

The present fine house was built 1844 in Regency style by Lord Vernon for his estate manager and was much extended in 1879 by Manchester architect Alfred Darbishire. Amongst the outbuildings is a generator house containing the original Gunther turbine, c 1890 (listed), an early example of domestic electricity installation.



An ornamental bridge carries the driveway over Poynton Brook. The Lodge by the main road also dates from 1844 (picture below).



The Anglesea Lodge on the other side of the main A523 road was one of five controlling entry to the Poynton Hall estate (see below); it was demolished in the 1920s and the site is now the fishermen's car park for Poynton Pool. This is what it looked like circa 1910, viewed from the main road junction.....



Sir George Warren's proposed canal to Stockport

Difficult to believe nowadays, but the service road off Anglesey Drive fronting nos. 52 to 84 London Road North was once a canal! This was built circa 1765 as part of a proposed canal from the Poynton coal pits to their main market at Stockport, and would have used the new Poynton Pool as a feeder reservoir. The extent of what was actually constructed is shown on the 1793 Terrier map (left) and 1849 Tithe map (right), the latter also showing what is now Anglesey drive to the hall and a feeder connection from Norbury Brook at top centre.....



All this part of the scheme was on land owned by Sir George, but to go any further to Stockport would have required an Act of Parliament; this was thwarted by the Duke of Bridgewater to protect his own colliery and canal interests (and not helped by the fact that Warren had courted then married the Duke's fiancée some years previously!) The scheme was then abandoned.

This is the view from Anglesey Drive looking north, with the canal route in the roadway, and the bank on left with footpath being the intended towpath (the main road is off to the left)....



A little way up Anglesey Drive on the north side, the present ornamental pool (left) is where the route from the coal pits would have joined the feeder from the pool. Before the houses were built, there was clear evidence of an unfinished lock chamber on the east side, leading up to Birches Pool. There is further evidence of this route on the east side of Towers Road, a shallow depression leading to what was the "Serpentine Pool" shown on the above map (now dry).

Walking northwards on the "towpath" parallel to the main road, a few yards before Towers Road there is a wider section of dry canal bed and a hump in the path; it has been suggested that this is where the leat to Poynton Mill (see above) would have started, going west, with a bridge over it.....



....and beyond Towers Road, another pond (left) which is where the main canal to Stockport would have started, going westwards.

Norbury Hall

Going briefly northwards along London Road, just beyond the Hazel Grove boundary is this very old habitation site owned by the Leghs of Lyme. The present rather sinister-looking building was occupied in 1851 by a tenant farmer and latterly by the well-known Cartwright family. Our pictures were taken about 1985, when the frontage was rather less obscured by vegetation than nowadays.....



A short detour along Mill Lane from the Fiveways road junction leads to the site of the old Norbury manorial corn mill, on the south side before reaching the railway bridge. It was disused after 1905 and largely demolished about 1920, but the foundations and wheelpit were excavated and surveyed in the 1980s, prior to their expected destruction by new road-building (which did not occur until 2016!) Here is an old print of the mill buildings.....



The old turnpike road bridge over Norbury Brook by the garden centre was rebuilt 1824 and widened 1828 (as clearly visible underneath). The farm known as Higher Barn dating from pre-1790 was just south of the bridge, on the west side of the main road, its site now occupied by a modern dwelling. There was also a public house hereabouts, the Miners Arms, from about 1845 to 1903. It was closed down on the orders of Lady Vernon, who objected to the cat-calls from drinkers as she passed by in her carriage!



North Lodge

This was the site of a toll-bar on the main road until 1878. The former Lodge House to the Poynton Hall estate was demolished and rebuilt much larger in 2004 but the old date plaque with Vernon coat of arms was retained. Our first picture shows North Lodge in around 1990, before its recent rebuilding, from across the main London Road, with the narrow entrance to Towers Road going off to the right.

The second image shows the plaque incorporated into the new house, with rebuildings dated 1904 and 2004.....



There was once a coal sale yard to the rear of the lodge operating circa 1830-1840, reached by the lane now leading to Towers Farm. It was served by a tramway running along the length of what is now Towers Road.

Tower's Farm house nearby was built 1874, another solid square Victorian structure.....



The main Turnpike Road - Embankment and Milestone

The main road (now A523 London Road) was completed in 1762, running from Sandon (Staffordshire) to Bullocksmithy (Hazel Grove). The route was laid out by the celebrated surveyor John Metcalf, "Blind Jack of Knaresborough" and here runs along a dam built at the same time to enclose the waters of a new **Poynton Pool**, a large ornamental lake in the grounds of Poynton Hall.

The dam is only some 12ft in height, and the lake correspondingly shallow; the road ledge on the south side is some 4-5ft below the top of the dam. The milestones (see also two others on our walk 2, along London Road South) are cast-iron plates dating from circa 1824, mounted on stone, and are "listed". The road was freed from toll in 1878, passing to the Highways Board, then to Cheshire County Council in 1894.....



Our other pictures show: centre, the topmost level of the dam, with the lake on the right and the main road lower down at extreme left, through the trees, and (above right) on the west side of the road looking north, with the shallow causeway bank clearly visible.

Poynton Hall

Continuing to walk southwards alongside the lake, this is the view of Poynton Hall in its park that we would have had around 1770, looking eastwards. On the extreme right the stables and estate yard known as the Towers can just be glimpsed....



A second print from a few years later (above right) shows more detail of this, and the Estate Map of 1849 shows the layout, with what is now Towers Road running from top to bottom and South Park Drive coming in from centre left.

The Poynton Hall shown here was built in the 1750s to the form shown in the prints but was pulled down around 1870. The original "Towers" were erected about 1600 as part of the first hall, and became a stables and dairy complex after 1760. In the 1850s they were converted and greatly extended to form a new house, "Poynton Towers" (right). This mansion was finally demolished in 1936 after a fire and the last traces of the old original towers had gone by 1950. The parkland and estate was sold off piecemeal in the 1920s.



Here is the 1906 OS plan of the same area.....



The view of the park across the lake corresponding to the above old prints now looks like this, with 1920's and more recent houses hidden in the trees.....

The Paddock, a fine 1930's house now stands on the site of the buildings marked as stables on the 1849 plan....



And the former Towers Cottage, shown just a few yards SE of the big house also still survives, though much rebuilt in recent years.....



A remnant of the Towers ?

Just one very small part of Poynton Towers possibly remains today, some ornamental posts and the curious structure (left) in the garden of a modern bungalow adjacent to Towers Road. This may cover a well or an entrance to underground cool storage rooms. These may extend under the roadway and part of the field on the opposite side, as there is another entrance to an Ice storage chamber in a grassy mound 100 yards due east from here.

South (or Village) Lodge

Situated where the main carriage road to the Towers, now called South Park Drive, meets London Road North, this small lodge was built around 1750 in brick. Although a listed building it was sadly derelict for many years, and an attempted renovation in about 1990 was not completed. The structure was finally restored in 2002-3.....



Miner's Library and Newsroom

Built 1854 by Lord Vernon. Converted to two ornately-gabled cottages in 1919, listed. The first picture is circa 1900, still as the reading room, and the second is recent. Note how the level of the roadway has been raised over the years.....



The former Colliery Mortuary?

This little building is just a few yards south of the old reading room and adjacent to the site of the main coal yard, which was operating here from 1845 to 1950. The colliery railway crossed the main road here on the level.

At the eastern end of the coal yard, between the two colliery railway inclines was Buck's shirt factory, established around 1885 in the old Woodside stables which dated originally from 1874. The premises were later much altered and expanded but the shirt manufactory closed down in 1943. Post war, this was the home of "Bukta" sportswear until about 1980. The buildings were demolished around 1988, replaced by the present Kingswood houses. There is a photo in "Poynton, a Coalmining Village", page 11.



Park Terrace and Lyme Terrace

Immediately opposite the reading room, comprising seven cottages and dated 1892, Park Terrace was the last block of workmen's housing built by the colliery company for rent. The above map shows that the house at the south end (Park Cottage) was always larger than the others. Note the ornate terra-cotta date plaques.....



Next going south along this side is a terrace of three larger houses built 1898; these were for the senior clerks at the Colliery, and have a different style of date-plaque.....



The last of this group, "Lyme Terrace" is similar to the 1892 block but dated one year earlier and comprises only six cottages. The one at the northern end had the former village Post Office in a single-storey extension (the upper part was added in recent years).....



The modern (former police) houses are on the site of a much larger Edwardian police station building, demolished in the 1950s.

Woodcroft (picture left below) was an attractively-designed 1930s era private house, demolished in 2023. The redevelopment work here has opened up a new side view of the present Vicarage (right, also seen right, below) which was built in 1910 as the village Doctor's residence, called Oak Meadow, when he moved from the Crescent Inn site. The single-storey side extension at the rear (again recently demolished) was his surgery. By about 1933 he could no longer afford a retinue of household servants so went to a new smaller house across the road, Priorsleigh (now the dental surgery, see below). His old house then became the vicarage, replacing that shown earlier on Vicarage



Lane when the whole of that area was being cleared for redevelopment. The current vicarage will in turn be replaced by a new, smaller one to its rear, under construction in 2024, and the older building will then be sold.



Returning to the east side of the main road, Priorsleigh House on the corner of Park Avenue has a fine set of "Cheshire Chimneys". It served as the village doctor's surgery for many years before becoming a dental practice.....



And just a short way along Park Avenue itself, another 1930s house has a variant on the "Poynton Diamonds" theme (left).

The remaining houses on this side of London Road are fine late-Victorian or Edwardian "Gentleman's residences".....



Fountain Place and the Queen Victoria Jubilee fountain

The ornate fountain is of cast Iron, manufactured in 1897 by Wilson & Co, Manchester; it is a listed structure. The four lamps were originally lit by gas. At the time this was just a rural crossroads; the Poynton Place shops on the East side (right) were built in 1900 - note the "Dutch" gables. Those on the West side date only from the 1920s.

Our pictures of the fountain (below) were taken before it was recently moved, when it was on its original site at the NW corner of the road junction. It has been thoroughly renovated and moved to the new pedestrian area near the SE corner opposite.



This concludes the first of our five walks around the parish. Walks 2 & 3 both start from where we leave off here, at Fountain Place in the centre of the modern village of Poynton.



K. A. Jagers

September 2010, revised and updated October 2012, March 2013, June 2020, August 2022 and April 2024.