

Poynton Walk 2 The south-western part

Starting at Fountain Place & the Parish Church in the centre of Poynton. Westwards along Chester Road, past the station to the "Finger Post" junction with Woodford Road and Distaff Farm. (Optionally) further along Woodford Road to Woodford Church and back if desired. Back to Lostock Hall Road; down that and then by footpath past the end of the oold Woodford Aerodrome runway to Lostock Road, passing under the very low railway bridge and on to the main A523. Southwards along London Road, over the railway bridge and as far as the milestone, then back northwards right through to Fountain Place.

Parish Church of St. George

A listed building, erected in 1858-59 on the site of a 1789 chapel. Designed by Crowther in a late 13th century style, it is constructed of coursed rubble from the local Hig Lane Quarry (off Coppice Road, beyond the Newtown Cottages). The church was consecrated as St. George's by mistake; it was intended to be St Mary's! The steeple/bell tower was not added until 1884-5, by Medland & Taylor of Manchester, and the bells installed 1887. Prior to this, the single bell is reputed to have been hung in a tree.



Until demolition around 1900 there were two old terraces of miner's cottages close to the church: **Eight Row** was next to the graveyard where Ash Lodge now stands, shown on the left of this 1871 OS map extract. **Poynton Place** (called Church Row in the 1881 census) of seven dwellings on the east side of London Road, the site later occupied by the District Bank (now the Panache restaurant).

The plan also shows a public house, the Church House on the SE corner of the crossroads, but this is not recorded as such in the 1871 census, and nothing further is known about it at present. The censuses show a grocery shop there, which became a Co-op branch by 1925. The picture shows it on the right, circa 1910....

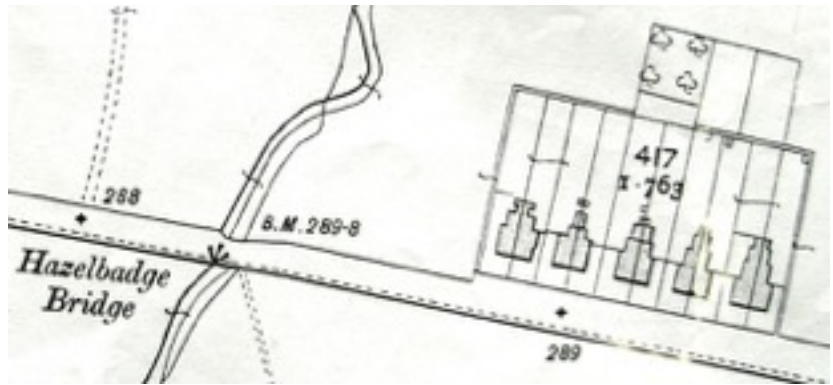
Chester Road going westwards at this time is tree-lined on both sides; the small building indicated between the church and the Eight Row cottages was called Chapel Lodge in the 1841 census and Church Lodge in 1851; it no longer survives. The road between the church and the railway station was a country lane between fields and



orchards until 1896-7, when the first of a set of five pairs of semis was erected. These are even nos. 58-64 on the north side. All originally had names: Croysdale, Glendale, Lyndhurst and Shrigley View respectively.

During the next seven years, three further pairs were added (nos 48-56), all in different styles, and getting bigger each time!

The full set of 10 houses are shown on the 1906 map extract (right); from the east, the new names were Clairville & Beechville, Woodlea & Felbrigg, and Oakdene & Ashdene.



Poynton's third railway station

This was constructed and opened 1887 by the London & North Western Railway Company, replacing the 1845 station situated at Midway which we will see later in this walk (the second station was opened 1869 at Higher Poynton on the line from Marple to Macclesfield).



The plan shows the station area as it was in 1906, and the above pictures are of the main buildings around 1990, and the neat down-side waiting room in 2009.

The pictures below are looking northwards from the down platform and compare circa 1950, before electrification, and with the signal box and junction with the colliery branch railway in the background, with the 1990's view. The elegant lattice footbridge had to be replaced to



accommodate the overhead wires, and the platforms have been greatly extended northwards, though nowadays very rarely used as most stopping trains are only of three carriages.



The two cottages beside the approach road are contemporary with the station buildings, and housed railway workers.....



In the station yard on the west side was situated William Booth's silk mill, purpose-built in 1919, still at work in 1981 with the original Jacquard looms, but regrettably since demolished. There is a photo in "Poynton, a Coalmining Village", page 12.

Brickworks

This was established here by the Colliery Co. in 1874, with a rail siding off the main line as shown on the above plan. It was closed down around 1926; all surface buildings have long since been demolished, but the remaining topology including two clay pits is of some interest. There were further claypits on the west side of the railway, accessed by a low narrow-gauge tramway tunnel which was filled in many years ago.



Site of Gasworks, also junction of colliery railway system with main line

This was the second Poynton gasworks, also run by the Colliery Company and with its own railway siding, started up here in 1877 and working until 1935. The foundations of the retort house and gasholder can be still seen.....



The route of the former colliery railway is also clear as it diverges from the main line behind the now-extended up platform - it was reduced to a short siding in 1935 and all rails were removed by 1958.

Lower Park Farm

Confusingly, this is situated on Chester Road rather than Lower Park Road; the fine farmhouse is now surrounded by more modern buildings and is easily missed.

The full-height angled gable on the south-east corner is unusual and distinctive, no doubt to catch the best of the morning sunlight. It dates from a major rebuilding and enlargement of the farmhouse in around 1910.....

There was also once a brickfield and kilns behind Lower Park farmhouse, which was thus sometimes called Brickyard Farm, for example in some of the Victorian censuses.



Continuing westwards along Chester Road, the only other older buildings before Woodford Road is reached are a pair of cottages at nos 218-220, dated 1916 (picture left).



The Finger Post

The junction of Chester Road and Woodford Road was always known thus. It sounds as though there should have been a pub of that name there, but as far as is known, there never was. Instead it relates to the former wooden three-way direction signpost at the road junction; most such once had them, but for some reason only this one was specifically referred to by that name. It is a shame that the old sign has long gone, a replica could easily be created and there is plenty of space for it on the verge! On the north-west corner, the two cottages are called "Finger Post Cottages" (picture right). These appear to have been built originally as Broad Oak farmhouse, and divided in around 1855 when the farmer, Jepson, moved along the road to Brickyard Farm (see above).



Lower Park Cottage & Distaff Farm

A short diversion northwards on the road to Hazel Grove brings us to Lower Park Cottage (shown as *Pleasant Cottage* in several of the Victorian censuses), now hemmed in by newer housing on the east side (below); again this is not on Lower Park Road, which is north of the railway line and already covered in our Walk 1....



Immediately opposite on the west side of the road (and just inside Woodford parish) is Distaff Farm, with its large old farmhouse, somewhat rebuilt and extended over the years.....



The extensive barns here were restored and converted to a large dwelling in 1996 (above right); a new date-plaque gives the year of original construction as 1562. Both the farm and barn are best viewed from the footpath passing to their south, through the gate from the main road and running across a field to the old approach road to the oil terminal.

Returning to the Finger Post junction and continuing westwards along Chester Road, the Poynton Parish and modern County boundary is reached again about 100 yards beyond the junction with the oil terminal road. Here, on the north side by the slight bend was the site of an old farmstead called Bower Stumps, rendered as "Bar Stumps" in the 1841 and 1851 censuses no doubt due to the very heavy local accent of the then occupant! A footpath used to run through the former farmyard, but was obliterated when the nearby new roads were built. An archaeological survey of the foundations was carried out in 2016, but nothing whatsoever remains visible here nowadays.

Before resuming our main walk around Poynton, an optional extension towards Woodford Church and back is worthwhile. The next farmhouse going westwards on the north side (right) is Walnut Tree.....



On the south-east side of the junction of Bridle Road with the main road is a fine group of former handloom weaver's cottages (left), and finally Woodford parish church is of interest, being an early all-brick construction.....



Lostock Hall Farm

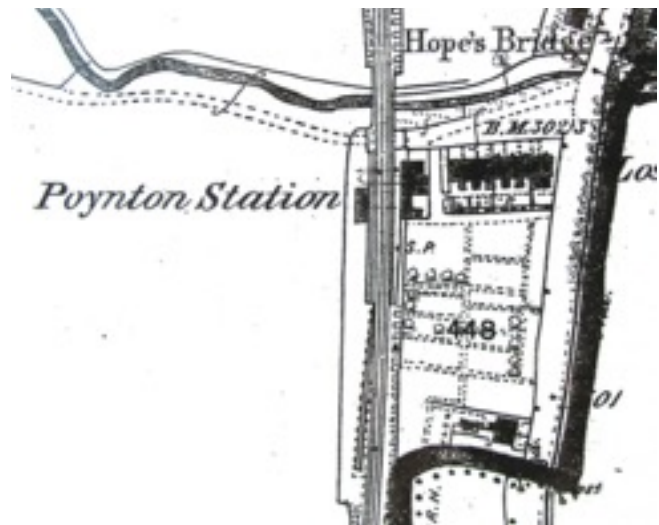
Retracing our steps eastwards along Chester Road almost as far as Poynton station, the last turning on the right (south side) is Lostock Hall Road. This takes its name from the ancient farm lying beyond its further end, and surrounded by a network of somewhat indistinct public footpaths. The old main farmhouse building is late 16th century with additions from around 1810, a listed structure but woefully derelict for many years. It comprises a timber frame clad in red brick, mostly later rendered.....



Just beyond the house on the left, a footpath continues over a stile then on a serpentine course, generally eastwards, alongside and around the perimeter fence at the end of the old Woodford Aerodrome's main runway, now in agricultural use. Eventually it meets Poynton Brook and continues alongside this until the main railway line is reached. Passing under this by a very low headroom culvert shared with the stream, we join the short Lostock Road, and the site of the old railway station.....

Poynton's first railway station, Lostock Terrace

The 1871 OS map extract (right) shows the arrangement here, with what is now Lostock Road being called Lostock Terrace then. The station was constructed in 1845 by the Manchester & Birmingham Railway, for the opening of what was then the Macclesfield branch line from Cheadle Hulme. It was replaced by the present station in 1887 and the main building is now a large and imposing private house.....



The terrace of seven houses leading up to the railway from London Road form a pleasant group, with some surviving original features. They were constructed in 1856, and the end house, nearest the main road, is thought to have functioned as a pub (The "Railway Inn") from at least 1881-91 and for some time afterwards as a grocery shop.....



Turning firstly southwards along the main London Road, the Worth Brook stream bridge marks the former boundary between three parishes; Poynton is all along the west side of the road; north of the bridge on the east side was Worth, with Adlington to its south. The next older building seen on the west side is Lyme View (right), a former private house with two cottages on its north side dating from 1843 and now used as offices. We now enter Adlington parish on the west side also.....



Ivy Cottage (below), also Hope Green House (below right) now form part of the residential nursing home complex, much-extended in recent years.....



Course of the old turnpike road before the railway was built

Just beyond the main road bridge over the railway lines, a narrow turning on the west side leads to a short stretch of the old road route prior to 1845, when it had to be diverted to cross the new tracks. The 1906 map (right) shows the layout here, and the way in which the road was rearranged is clear.....

Bridge Farm House abuts onto the old roadway (photo below left). Around the back, the old brick and stone built barns are now part-converted to residential use (below right).....





The dwelling shown on the plan immediately to the NW of the road bridge is called Hope Green Cottage in the censuses, and was originally most probably accommodation for the farm workers (below right).....



And what appears to be another small cottage or outbuilding to the south of the main farm on the plan is nowadays a substantial and attractive house (above left). This quiet little backwater still gives a good idea of the appearance of the main turnpike road in the early nineteenth century.

Cast iron mile plate on turnpike road, Hope Green

This mile marker is just off the bottom edge of the above plan, on the east side of the main road, one of three surviving on this stretch of road, and "listed structures" (the other two are 1 mile to the north, seen later in this walk, and 2 miles north, covered in walk 1). They were installed circa 1824.....



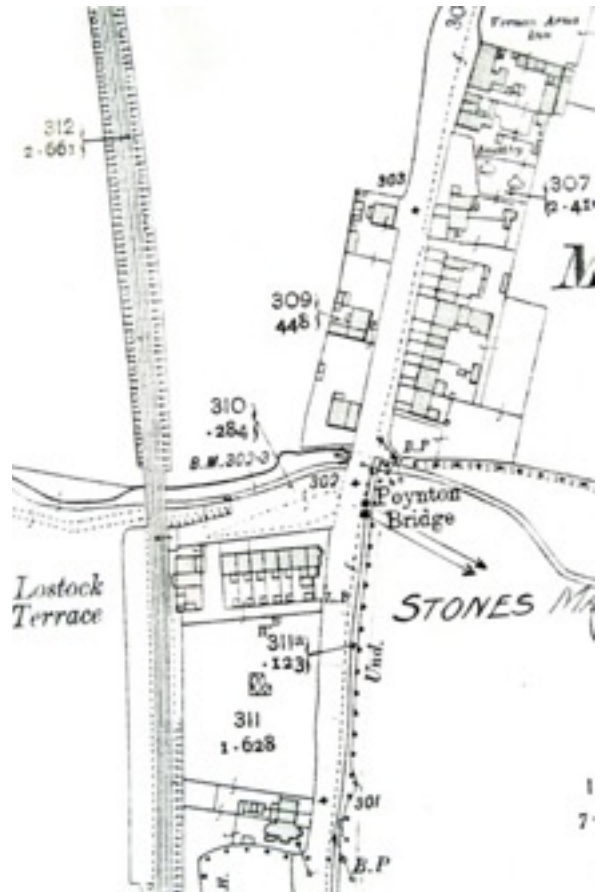
Returning northwards over the railway bridge along the east side of the road, the first building seen is Lilac Cottage, of unknown date but shown on the 1871 OS map (left). Just beyond it, a lane leads

round the back (at top right of the plan) and used to serve one of several lodges to the Starkie House estate; a modern bungalow ("Hope's End") now stands on the site. It continues off to the left as a footpath leading alongside the stream, eventually through to the Fleetbank estate off Dickens Lane. Somewhere along this stretch were nine small dwellings recorded as Worth Brook Cottages in the 1841 census but not in subsequent ones; no trace of them remains.

The large Hope Green Farm used to occupy the site of the present industrial estate, and the next group of extant older buildings is on the east side just beyond Lostock Road, where we first joined the main road above, and formerly in the parish of Worth.....

The Christy hat trimming workshops

These were established around 1873 in an existing terrace of 12 units dating from around 1817 onwards, some of which had previously been used as fustian cutter's workshops. The large building "Christie House" near the centre of the row, shown extending further backwards on the 1906 plan (right) served as the main entrance and offices for the workshop rooms. This functioned from around 1820 to 1849 as the first Methodist meeting room in the district and may indeed have been built as such. Christies closed down their Poynton operations in 1925 and the workshops are now all private houses. In the photos, note that the small cottage to the right of the taller part has an arch in the wall, now part-obsured by the later porch; this was formerly the cart entrance leading to a rear yard.



Our top picture was taken around 1990, and the lower one is more recent.

The two houses marked on the plan directly opposite the hatworks terrace were named Middleton Cottage (or variously Vernon Cottage or Brook Cottage) and The Poplars respectively in the censuses from 1851 onwards, but were demolished by 1924 to accommodate Poynton Garage, the first one in the village. There is a photo taken in that year, including an early motor bus, in "Poynton a Coalmining Village", page 43.

Regrettably this characteristic early building serving the then-growing use of the motor car was itself demolished in 2005 and replaced by new houses. These have a redeeming feature though in their decorative brickwork, another modern

interpretation of the "Poynton Diamonds" theme.....



The third, most northerly building on this side was a grocery & provisions shop from 1861, but was reconstructed as the Midway Bakery about 1910, functioning thus for many years afterwards. It was recently an antique furniture shop.....



Back to the east side of the main road, nos. 167-171 odd numbers are Midway Cottages, a group of three erected around 1845 and remaining as private houses.....



Hallworth's smithy

The present Nos 157 & 159 London Road South (picture left) comprised the Midway Forge, closed as such in the 1920s. There is a photo taken 1910 in "Poynton a Coalmining Village", page 7.

The Vernon Arms pub-restaurant next door is long established on this site (shown at top right of the above 1906 plan, and known as the Griffin Inn before 1851). It was originally adjacent to the roadway but was later resited set back a few yards and has been rebuilt and extended at least twice in recent years so as to be virtually unrecognisable.

We move onto the next plan, below, in which two fine Victorian gentleman's houses nearly opposite, Oakfield and Westfield of circa 1876, were demolished when the Woolley Avenue houses and their approach road were built.



The third, somewhat smaller one on this side, just before the junction with what is now Clifford Road was built in 1854 and is named Shrigley View from at least 1891 to 1905, when it was renamed as Summerfield (right). It was re-fronted in around 1920, but was recently demolished.

Midway Farm (often just referred to as "The Farm") dated (from before 1851 and was cleared about 1925 to make way for the present houses.



Poynton Birches, or Birches Farm ("High Stacks")

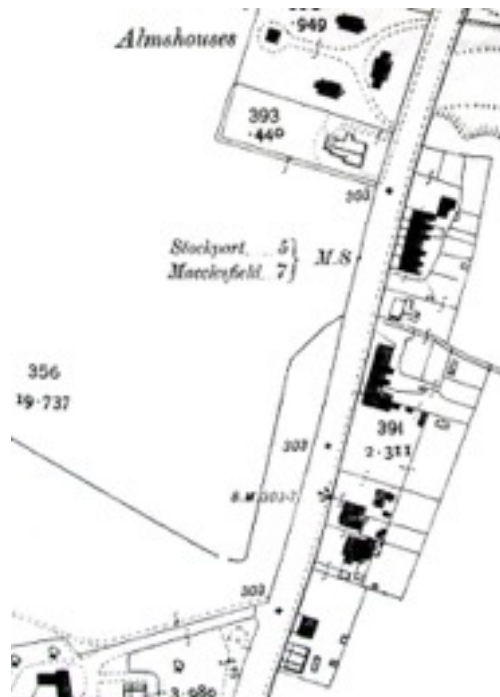
The original farmhouse on this site, adjacent to the "Finger Post" opposite the Dickens lane turning, was the headquarters of Matthew Pickford, of the famous firm of carriers, from 1741 to 1799. The house was totally rebuilt in 1874 as a gentleman's residence, very large and rambling and in an ornate style with Dutch gables.....



This property is now divided into several flats.

The adjoining 1906 plan (right) covers the last section of our walk, and shows the approach drive and top part of the Birches complex at bottom left.

Almost opposite, the group of 3 dwellings "Birch Cottages" on the east side of the main road (nos 79-83 odd) were built circa 1890.....



They have a fine dentilled terra-cotta cornice band, one of the pleasing decorative touches applied to many houses of this period in Poynton.

Next door, nos 75 and 77 are from circa 1849 but much rebuilt.

There was once a Methodist chapel, built around 1849, with schoolroom behind on the site of the next building northwards on the east side. This replaced the previous meeting room at Christie House (see above), but was itself superseded by the new facilities on Clumber Road from 1878. It had gone by 1882 when Ivy Cottages were built, originally three but combined into one as "Victoria Cottage" by 1911. This was in turn demolished in 2008 and replaced by the modern town houses..

Nos 61 "Woodford View" and 63 "Highfield" were circa 1854 houses, now shops.

Brookfield cinema

On the west side, set back a few yards south of the milestone, it was built and opened in 1938, to a design very characteristic of the period. The building was lately in use as a restaurant & wine bar (right, about 2002), but was later demolished and replaced by the current Aldi store, which has a commemorative wall artwork.



Cast iron mile plate on turnpike road, Brookfield



The middle one of the three survivors within Poynton, pictured around 2002. Since then it has been restored and slightly re-positioned, in 2004.

Almost opposite is a pair of houses with a plaque "Alderley View, W & OA, 1886", now offices, between two early-Victorian cottage terraces. That to the south was Broadhurst's Row, nos 37-47 odd, now all shops. The northerly group is Graham's Houses (or variously Cottages, or Row), which have remained throughout as private dwellings.....



On the west side, two elegant Edwardian semi-detached houses, "Ash cottage" and "Oak Hurst" from around 1904, shown on the above 1906 plan at the plot numbered 393.....

On both ends, the earliest representation of the "Poynton Diamonds" village motif we have found so far:



.....and on the very newest housing development next door, a splendid modern interpretation.....

Over on the east side again, the conservatory showroom building was put up in around 1932 for the Gas Board. The car sales lot on the opposite side of Georges Road was once another early petrol station and car-servicing workshop, Grosvenor Garage, and the former Electricity Board showroom was next door, in similar style to the Gas Board one. Finally on this side, the Cheshire BS office



(left) was built 1931 as Clayton's Newsagents, a typically elegant example of its period.



The Church Almshouses

There are six, in three blocks of two constructed 1854 in red brick around a central quadrangle containing a commemorative inscribed pillar: "Erected by Public Subscription on Land given by Lord Vernon, who continues to select the Inmates". This no longer applies of course, and present residents would no doubt resent being so described! The scalloped pattern roofing slates are unusual in this area.....

