

Walk 9 GREENMOUNT TO WALSHAW

Distance: **2 to 3 miles**

About: **2 to 3 hours**

Terrain: **Easy > moderate**

Parking: **Plenty on street' available.**

Public transport:

481 - from Ramsbottom to Bury via Walshaw.

480 - from Bury to Bolton via Hawkshaw & Affetside.

478 - Ramsbottom to Bury via Vernon Rd.

Refreshments:

Toby Carvery (Previously the Bull's Head)
Greenmount.

Queen Victoria & White Horse, Walshaw.

Greenmount Church stands in the centre of the village. This building was instigated by Samuel Knowles, owner of Tottington Mill. The Lancashire Congregational Union donated £500 towards the cost of £3856. The church was opened in February 1867 and originally had seats for 580 persons. The spire of this gothic style building is 105' high.

The building of the church enabled the day school, which opened in 1863 in a whitewashed room within Tottington mill to be transferred to the Sunday school building. It was called Greenmount British School and opened on 1st July 1867.

❶ Start outside Greenmount Old School and go down past the Medical Centre next door.

The stone wall of its car park is the only remaining evidence that you are standing on a bridge. The Bury to Holcombe Brook electric railway line went under the bridge. During the 1960's, the deep cutting was filled in before the houses could be built.

Cross the road to enter the Kirklees Valley Local Nature Trail at the 'Greenmount Sidings' sign, follow the slope down to what was originally Greenmount Station and goods yard.

The Bury and Tottington Railway's single track line opened for passenger and freight, pulled by steam engines, on November 6, 1882, although only 3.5 miles long it took four years to build because of the many engineering works required, like the wonderful 9-arch viaduct over Island Lodge along with the many bridges needed. There were stops at Woodhill, Brandlesholme, Woolfold, Sunnywood, Tottington, Greenmount and Holcombe Brook. Many of these halts had no platforms, so rather clever retractable steps were fitted to the carriages to allow passengers to comfortably board and alight.

In 1913 Dick, Kerr & Co of Preston were tendering for an electric railway contract in Brazil and saw that the gradient curves of the existing Bury to Holcombe Brook line were ideal to prove the viability of their design. This resulted in ground-breaking technology that saw the line being the first in the world to be converted from steam to high voltage electricity. The experiment was a great success but the overhead system had only a short life and was converted to a 3rd rail system in 1918, the service remained electrified until 1951. When cost-savings had to be made, all the electrification equipment was removed. The line, which was once the only line of its sort in the world, ended its life as a poor relation of the Bury to Manchester electric train service. Steam trains were re-introduced and the last passenger train left Bury for Holcombe Brook at 10.26 pm on May 4, 1952. Freight continued until 1963 running as far as Tottington.

❷ Continue following the path and then turn first left down Shepherd St. to Tower Farm,

Joshua Knowles built Tower Farm in 1840, with a wonderful, fifty square-foot crenellated

water tower with a row of small corbelled arches around the top to replicate the projecting gallery at the top of medieval castle walls years ago, with openings in the floor through which stones and boiling liquids could be dropped on attackers. Immediately above the imposing archway entrance to the courtyard is the inscription J.K. 1840. The construction is modelled on Nuttall Hall Farm, Ramsbottom, an earlier building with 14th century origins, now demolished. Tower Farm was built to stable the many heavy horses required to bring coal from the Mountain Mine in Affetside and transport raw goods to and finished goods from Tottington Mill to Bury and elsewhere. Twelve years later both Knowles and one of the Grants were on the committee of four who raised the funds and organised the building of Peel Tower on Holcombe Hill using exactly the same architectural style.

Turn right at Tower Farm down the lane and just beyond the steel barrier, bear left down the cobbled track and enter the ruins and remains of Tottington Mill. Some think this was the view of the mill that inspired L S Lowry's drawing of 'The Mill' in 1921.

A corn mill stood on the brook here in 1295 and was replaced in 1792. By 1796 there was a cotton mill producing muslin which may well have occupied the corn mill. This was owned by John Gorton and his family who contributed to the prosperity and expansion of Tottington between 1790 and 1820.

The mill was then acquired by Joshua Knowles in 1821, a man in his early twenties, who had formerly worked at the Grant Brothers' mill in Ramsbottom. He greatly developed and extended the site into an industrial complex and became by far the largest employer of labour in the area. In 1823 about 300 people were employed and by 1841 this had risen to

393, with over a third being boys and girls aged 7 to 13.

Tottington mill was the first to use an eight colour printing machine and exhibited at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and played an important part in the history and development of the trade. His step brother Samuel Knowles took over the business on the death of Joshua in 1853, and retired when the company was taken over by the Calico Printers Association in 1899. Sadly the mill closed in 1928 apart from an engraving shop that remained open until 1940 when it was demolished. The site is now overgrown but many remains survive, including walls, vats, settling tanks, engine beds, a flywheel pit and chimney bases.

Go over the bridge across the stream and follow the cobbled lane going left at the single stone gate post.

❸ Continue on past several long abandoned mill lodges on either side of the path as far as the 'T' junction with the stone cobbled Kirklees Street.

There is an abundance of wildlife in the area with the mill ponds attracting various species of water fowl including mallard, tufted duck, coots, moorhens and Canada Geese. Kingfishers also thrive around the brooks and ponds and the viaduct is home to Daubenton's and Pipistrelle bats.



Turn left down the Kirklees Street bearing right at the bottom.

Do not cross the bridge over Kirklees Brook on the left but proceed along the well-made track to the top of the hill.

(As an alternative, try the 'riverside walk.' Take the steps going off to the left at the base of the hill and follow the path by the river bearing right all the way eventually re-joining the main route just before it again joins the Nature Trail).

Proceed straight ahead at the top of the hill onto the open old, and somewhat overgrown, recreation land.

Turn left approximately half way across the open field onto a partially visible disused cart track.

Continue walking towards the trees in the distance and, after passing the first couple of trees, bear right at 45 degrees along the footpath through the woods that eventually drops down on to a well-made track 'Sunnywood'.

4 Turn right and within 30 yards turn left again onto the Kirklees Nature Trail.

(This is where the 'riverside' walk and the main route re-join)

Follow the Nature Trail for at least half a mile, passing one iron barrier across the trail and two flights of steps going off to the right.

Turn next right to emerge on to a modern housing estate at the junction of Pickering Close and Stockton Drive.

A short distance further along the trail is the newly built bridge (opened 2012) that replaced the Old Woolfold Viaduct, demolished in 1974. This completes the missing link in the Kirkless Trail, providing a 4.5km traffic-free route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders from Greenmount and Tottington to Bury town centre. It provides the main route through the Kirklees Valley Local Nature Reserve as well as a route for commuters and shoppers.

Turn right up Pickering Close to the end of the close and turn right by No 40.

Follow the path around the front of 3 old cottages on the right and down Greenhalgh Moss Lane to Tottington Road.

Cross the road to the right and take the first left, into Wash Brow.

5 Follow the path around the meadow until it emerges onto an asphalt road and turning circle between modern houses.

Turn right, after 100 metres the path narrows, running between a wire fence and a hawthorn hedge.

(Please note, after heavy rain the first 100 metres of the path between the hedge and the fence can become a quagmire. To avoid this section, do not turn right at the turning circle but carry straight on down Walshaw Road, turn right and re-join the main route once more at Owlbarrow Farm 1/4 mile up the road.)

Go through the kissing gate and just beyond where another path goes off to the right, keep to the left.

6 Arriving at the 'T' (by a stream) take the path to the left.

300 yards down the path cross the wooden bridge and take the path by the hedge on the right.

Go through the gate in the right hand corner of the field behind Owlbarrow Farmhouse and down the drive to Walshaw Road.

Go straight across and up Owlbarrow Road and look out for the bridleway, the first turning on the left.

Go down the bridleway turning right at the bottom and as the bridleway veers to the left, continue straight ahead over the stile.

Follow the path by the hedge on the right, over the stile and then uphill across the meadow heading for the large gap in the hedge to the left of the large and solitary sycamore tree.

Continue up the next field by keeping to the hedge on the right

If possible go up the final field using the narrow path between the pair of hawthorn hedges. Should this path also be overgrown in summer go up the field to the left of the hedges and back on to the footpath through a gap just before the top of the field.

Go through the 'kissing gate' to emerge on to Sudren Street.

(Just across the road to the left is Slaidburn Drive, the start of Walk No 9 to Ainsworth).

7 Turn right up High St to the War Memorial in the centre of Walshaw.

Public transport:

481 - Ramsbottom to Bury via Walshaw.

480 - Bolton via Hawkshaw & Affetside

510 - Bolton via Ainsworth & Walshaw to Bury.

Refreshments:

Queen Victoria and the White Horse, Walshaw.



WALK 9 - GREENMOUNT TO WALSHAW

Walks

Walk No.9 - Greenmount to Walshaw

Walk No.10 - Walshaw to Greenmount



Greenmount

Affetside

