

Walk 14 - HAWKSHAW, AFFETSID TO AINSWORTH

Distance: **3.8 miles**

About: **3 hours**

Terrain: **Ascent 551ft descent 492ft**

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

Public transport:

273 - Bolton to Rawtenstall to Bolton
(via Ramsbottom).

480 - via Greenmount, Walshaw to Bury.

480 - via Affetside to Bolton.

Refreshments:

Red Lion & Waggon and Horses, Hawkshaw.
The Duke of William and Old White Horse,
Ainsworth.

No public toilets. All paths fully waymarked.

Hawkshaw is an attractive village of stone built cottages, church and two warm and inviting pubs that coalesced around the junction of Hawkshaw Lane and the newly built Bolton to Edenfield turnpike in 1803. Prior to this it consisted of a loose knit collection of scattered farms. The area was first recorded in writing in 1205 as being on the edge of Holcombe Forest.

From the Wagon and Horses pub turn right towards Bolton.

Turn first left down Two Brooks Lane, the gateway to the Two Brooks Valley.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the valley sustained a community in itself, with a number of mills, works, farms and several groups of cottages. The remains of many of these can still be seen within the valley, and a network of footpaths, once busy links for horses, carts and workers, now provide access to woods, brooks, lodges and fields and a variety of wildlife habitats including grasslands, heath, open water and marsh. Species-rich ancient oak woodland occurs on some slopes,

with thriving populations of bluebells, violets and golden saxifrage. Woodlands with these characteristics are ideal habitats for a variety of birds including the great spotted woodpecker and tawny owl. Certain parts of the valley have been officially recognised and protected as Sites of Biological Importance (SBI). These are Hawkshaw Brook (containing the former Two Brooks Mill area) and Bottoms Wood.

Proceed down the lane past the tennis courts and over the river to Two Brooks Farm.

This is the site of Two Brooks bleaching mill in 1850, and calico printing companies chosen due to the soft water and damp conditions. A stroll through the remains of Two Brooks Mill no longer gives the impression of the scale of the former enterprise, where up to 200 people were employed at its peak. Closer investigation of the many overgrown remains which are still visible on site in the form of stone walls, slabs, channels and lodges will, however, give some clues as to the extent of the works. The mill chimney still stands on the hill side at some distance from the works itself, and served as a flue which ran underground from the boiler house in the valley bottom. The chimney is the only visual reminder of the working history of the locality. A Royal Commission of 1855 gave a poor report of the working conditions in the mill at Two Brooks. Mary Greenhalgh, one of the women working there, and a William Johnson gave evidence of the long working hours starting at 6am and finishing at 11pm with the Saturday shift ending at midnight. Mary Greenhalgh reported how little ones fell asleep at their work "my heart is so sore for them - I cannot speak to them....." she said.

Turn right into a wide opening on a left hand bend just before Two Brooks Farm, below the old mill chimney on the hillside above. Go over the stile and turn left following the path uphill (a).

Please note. In summer, it's virtually impossible to see the chimney due to the heavy foliage on the trees above the lane, if in doubt the alternative is as follows.

Go to the very end of the track through Two Brooks Farm and through the gap in the middle of the farm's car park boundary wall.

Turn right at the wooden post just ahead and follow the track around behind the buildings until it joins a broader path going uphill to the left (path (a) above) which eventually passes at the top of the hill between the two fishing lodges each surrounded by trees.

Go over the wooden stile and cross the field alongside the line of trees up to the stile left of the three cottages and onto Turton Road.

Dog-leg right, then first left into Black Lane signposted '700yds to Affetside' continue passing Tom Nook Farm on the right.

Black Lane is an old pack horse route to the Pilgrim's Cross on Holcombe moor, and then on to Whalley Abbey, The lane cuts across Affetside from Bradshaw via Slack lane on the other side of the hill.

Proceed up to Watling Street, Affetside .

3 Affetside

Public transport

480 - bus to Bury or Bolton

Affetside is a small linear attractive village at 900ft above sea level, on top of the West Pennine Moors at a crossroads of an ancient packhorse route where Watling Street cuts through it North South, and Slack Lane and Black Lane (old pack horse routes) cuts through it East West with panoramic views out across the surrounding moorland. In the centre of the village near the Millennium village green, beside the road is a Scheduled Ancient Monument known as Affetside Cross. Its origins are unknown and theories vary from being of Roman origin perhaps to being a way marker on the Pilgrim's route to Whalley Abbey via Pilgrims Cross on Holcombe Moor or just to mark a late 17th century market place or even that its simply because its half way point between London and Edinburgh. he millennium village green makes an excellent spot for a picnic or simply an opportunity to put your feet up and browse the information board attached to a boulder.

At the Pack Horse turn left down Watling Street with fantastic views all around.

During the Roman occupation of Britain, around AD78, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, the Roman Governor of Britain, founded a fort at Manchester and from it built a series of radial roads. One of these to Ribchester ran north through Affetside. Part of the line of the Roman Road is still visible along Watling Street as it approaches Affetside. The impact of the Romans in Bury area appears to have been fairly short-lived, with only this Roman Road surviving as a significant landscape feature. Like most of the Roman road network, the Roman paving fell into disrepair when the Romans left Britain, although the routes continued to be used for centuries afterwards. The road became the boundary between the Tottington Lower End and Bradshaw Manors in the Medieval period a Roman mile was 1,000 paces and a milestone was set up to mark each mile, roads were built at the rate of 1 kilometre every day. Look out for lapwings, skylarks, curlew, and kestrels in the fields (and bats in the late evening) as you walk along Watling Street.



Kestrel



③ At end of Watling Street turn right past Isherwood's Farm and then left up Bowstone Hill Road.

Continue past Bowstone cottages and onto the path down the side of Hey Head cottages as far as a rectangular lodge and farmhouse on the right, The Height.

Turn left down the field alongside the bushes on the left.

Just before the wooden stables, go over the stile on your left into the field.

Head for a large sycamore tree in the distance and take the stile alongside.

Go straight ahead over the large meadow heading for the roof of Old Holts Farm.

Exit onto Harwood Road, turn left then right, into Bentley Hall Road.

50 yds past Bentley Hall Farm go over the wooden stile on the right.

Head initially for the white water tower in the far distance and then as you crest the hill spot the upper Lowercroft Reservoir.

Look for the stile in the fence below, cross that and the next stile directly below it on the far side of the field.

From there, cross over at 45 degrees to the footbridge over the upper reservoir, turn left uphill following way-markers up the path by the line of trees.

Cross the field and follow the hedge on the left passing 'Broomfield' Ainsworth Nursing Home on the right in the trees.

Still following the hedge, go over the stile and the next field and through a small dell uphill to a stile and a 'T' junction with a path on 'Walk No 12 Ainsworth to Walshaw'.

Turn right, and follow the path between trees and bushes to Knowles cottages where it turns into a track and the junction with Knowsley Road.

② Straight ahead is Barrack Fold Farm

In 1642 Lord Strange (a royalist and the 7th Earl of Derby) mustered more than thousand men on Cockey Moor in preparation for the attack on Bolton. They probably assembled in the neighbourhood of Barrack Fold Farm, which could well be how the farm received its name. There is also a local tradition that a number of soldiers lay buried by a clump of trees near the footpath leading down to the bridge over Whitehead's reservoirs. Another suggestion is that Knowsley, which is the name of the Stanleys in Lancashire, received its name because Lord Strange's soldiers mustered there or that Lord Strange himself had his headquarters around there. The Holcombe Hunt point-to-point races were also held here from 1921 to 1971 known as the 'Mill Workers Derby' attracting crowds of thousands. The mills of Bury and Bolton closed for the day and crowds of up to 100,000 were reported as attending the early meetings.

Turn left down Knowsley Road past George's Wood on the right.

This wood was planted in 1974 by the "Men of the Trees" and is now maintained for the community by the Woodland Trust.

Continue down the lane past modern houses and turn first right past Hooks Cottage, with a date-stone 1773 which indicates that it was built by Nathan Brooks (who is buried in the graveyard opposite).

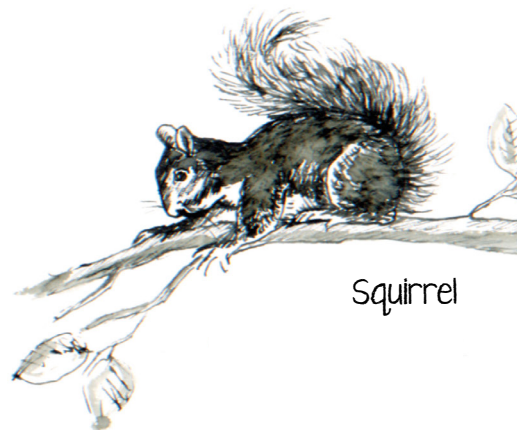
Pass on the left the handsome Presbyterian (Unitarian) Chapel and the Reform Club on the right with the original horse mounting steps and block still in place outside it.

Both buildings are Grade-II listed, both built in the 18th century. The chapel was first built in 1715, and enlarged in 1773. In the graveyard are many interesting 18 & 19th century graves. The Reform Club (now the Old Stables) was built in 1768 to provide accommodation and stabling for worshippers who lived miles away from the village.

Turn left around the back of the Chapel following the cobbled yard to the left and through the covered archway, attached to The Duke William Inn.

The Duke William Inn dates back to 1737. Reputedly haunted, it was one of the two coaching inns on the old main road through the village which then crossed Arthur Lane. It was probably at the crossroads where the local gibbet was sited and where hangings took place.

① Go down the wide road opposite the pub, to emerge on to Church St in the centre of Ainsworth almost opposite the lych gate of the Parish Church (just inside the gate are a pair of slotted stones thought to be the remains of the village stocks date 1724)



Squirrel

Ainsworth has a long history of human habitation; Bronze Age burial sites and artefacts, dating back at least six thousand years, have been found on the surrounding moors. It was first mentioned in the early 13th century, when land there was given by Roger de Middleton to Cockersand Abbey. Later the village was part of the estates of the Earls of Wilton at Heaton Park. Religion has played a large part in its history. The Church of England had a chapel of ease built in Tudor times but subsequently there was a long history of religious dissent.

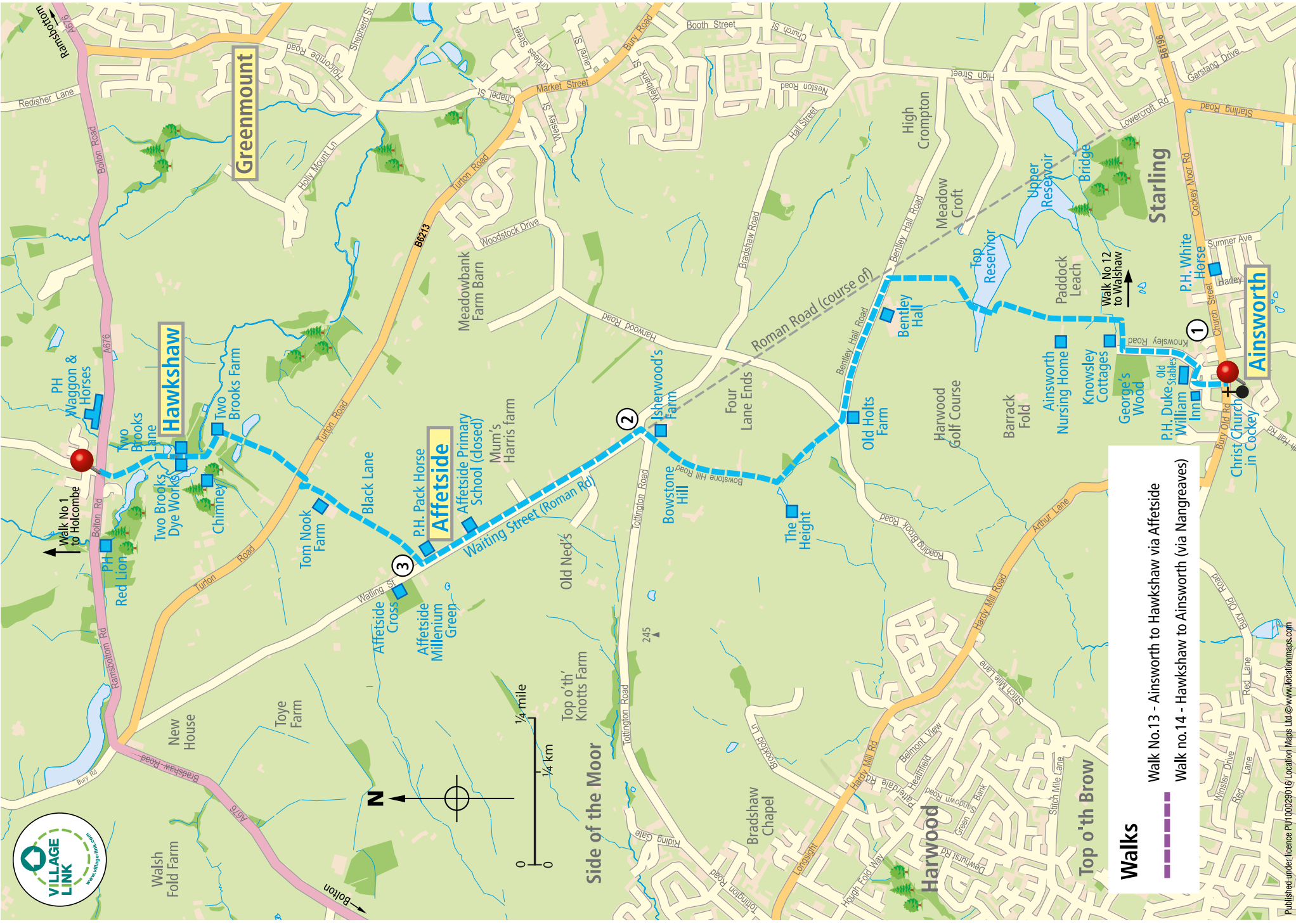
The area was initially dispersed farms with a medieval hall at Dearden farm and extensive ridge and furrow crop marks delineating a medieval field system north of Barrack Fold. Much of the surrounding area was common land but was gradually enclosed. Coal mining was extensive on Cockey Moor from the earliest times with evidence of early bell pits visible from Cockey Moor Road. The whole township was finally enclosed in the early nineteenth century. In 1853 the vicar recorded that 1700 people lived in Ainsworth, mostly handloom weavers and small farmers.

Public transport:
486 - Radcliffe to Bury via Ainsworth.

510 - Bury to Bolton via Ainsworth & Walshaw.

Refreshments:
The Old White Horse & The Duke William, Ainsworth.

WALK 14 - HAWKSHAW, AFFETSIDE TO AINSWORTH



- Walks**
- Walk No.13 - Ainsworth to Hawkshaw via Affetside
 - Walk no.14 - Hawkshaw to Ainsworth (via Nangreaves)