



Lancashire's Hidden Gem

Heritage Trail

Barrowford

For over five centuries, Barrowford was an agricultural community with its roots in the early settlement of the Forest of Pendle. By 1260, much of the land had been turned over to vaccaries, or cattle farms, and settlement encouraged. Through the introduction of copyhold tenure in 1507 and the practice of efficient husbandry, these farmers flourished.

Our trail takes in a group of houses built during the period 1580 to 1700. These are large and well-appointed, displaying clear evidence of the prosperity achieved by the descendants of the Bannister, Hargreaves, Hartley and Robinson families.

The nineteenth century held mixed fortunes for Barrowford. In particular, 1819 was a year of great poverty and unrest in Lancashire, weavers from Colne and Barrowford marched to Nelson to protest against a reduction of wages and it was also the year of the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester. Hard times were to come again to Barrowford in 1826, 1840 and in the 1860s during the Cotton Famine.

The scattered terraces of early industrial housing along the main road were eventually linked by terraces of solid Victorian houses in the 1890s to present a continuous housing development all along Gisburn Road. These terraces bear such names as "Forest View" 1898, "Gladstone Terrace", and "Cromwell Terrace", 1899. Building also continued behind these terraces with roads such as Wilton Street.

Barrowford has lost little of its character built up over four centuries of changing fortunes. It is a town of surprises and well worth exploring.

Park Hill, now the Pendle Heritage Centre

At first glance, Park Hill is not a building of great architectural interest. Compared even with other local buildings, such as the White Bear and Bank Hall (now the Lamb Club), it is a plain building. Its importance lies in that it illustrates all the main phases of building which can be found in Pendle. The Museum at the Pendle Heritage Centre gives greater detail on the complex history of Park Hill.

The first glimpse of Park Hill is of the 17th century front elevation with the two-storey porch dated 1661. It has always been assumed that this was the oldest part of the building, but behind this facade are concealed parts of at least three earlier houses.

Park Hill was built by the Bannisters, who were living here certainly from the early 15th century. Presumably this house would have been a timber structure. The earliest surviving part is a rectangular block of two storeys at the back of the present house, probably built around 1590.

The best position to view the other main architectural features at Park Hill is from the bridge. The two contrasting styles of building to be found in Barrowford - the 17th century vernacular style and the later Georgian style, can be easily spotted.

Park Hill is built from warm, pink and yellow sandstone. In the 17th century portion, the stone is coarse grained, and the corner stones are of varying sizes, whereas the 18th century part is dressed stone, and the corner stones are of a more regular size.

The Windows

In the 17th century section, Park Hill's windows are small horizontal shapes, divided by plain stone mullions recessed into the walls. In the 18th century, joinery and glazing techniques improved and the windows are consequently larger sashes. A notable feature of this part of the house is the fine staircase window built as a link between the old and the newer part of the house.

Doorways

The entrance to the old part is through a two-storey porch, which has a jettied upper storey. The oak plank door is hung on hinges set into the wall. The jambs of the 18th century doorway consist of single pieces of stone and are supported on a small stone plinth. The lintel is one piece of stone with a false keystone and above that is a triangular pediment on two stone carved brackets. This door is panelled and is set in a frame, showing the improvement in door technology.

Park Hill was a farm until the 1920s, and the Barn is an important part of this complex. It was rebuilt circa 1780-1800, and altered in the 1820s to 30s when the circular ventilation openings and the arched 'pitching' hole in the rear wall were inserted. The low arched doorway at the end of this wall served the cartshed. The pigeon holes in this wall and elsewhere in the barn are notable for their number. Pigeons featured in the farming economy of the late eighteenth century, providing fresh meat in winter and a supply of rich fertiliser. The front of the Barn reveals more pigeon holes and an extension on the right which probably housed a forge.

Pendle Heritage Centre is open daily and includes a Garden Tearoom which specialises in home-cooked, traditional Lancastrian dishes and overlooks an 18th Century walled garden. The Heritage Centre also houses a well-stocked Book & Gift Shop. Its two beautiful barns can be hired for parties, events and weddings.

The Malt Kilns

These buildings were used for the process of converting barley into malt, for use in brewing and distilling process. The two buildings are joined by an underground 'barrel-roofed' passage from the days when the two buildings were owned and operated by the Grimshaw family who were in business as maltsters.

Old Malt Kiln was probably in existence by 1802 and later acquired by the Grimshaws by 1818. The building has been put to many uses. It was rated as a Malt Kiln in 1845, but later in the century it was used as a confectionery works, known locally as the 'spice shop'. The doorway added to the Old Kiln is dated 1867.

The New Malt Kiln is on the opposite side of the road. It was built before 1838 when it was included in the will of Grace Grimshaw. It has an unusually steeply pitched roof and round arched classical windows with keystones. This malt kiln was powered by a horse which, by going round in a circle, drove a vertical shaft. This horse gin was still in use at the end of the last century.

Packhorse Bridge

The striking Crowtrees Cottage, together with Crowtrees House, lead to the foot of the Packhorse Bridge, locally known as the Roman Bridge or Th' Owd Brig'. It was built around 1580 and was on the main route from Barrowford to Gisburn until the present Gisburn Road Bridge was built in

1807. The bridge is built on solid rock with a high span over the river. Originally, the bridge had no parapet walls. These were added by the Grimshaw family during the 19th century.

Before the advent of metalled roads goods of all kinds were carried by teams of packhorses. In N.E. Lancashire, where rivers were not fordable, they were spanned by single arch, narrow, steeply rising bridges. Over it passed packhorses carrying coal from Coal Pit Lane, near Gisburn and the Lothersdale Lime Gals - teams of 15-20 horses all muzzled, except the leader. It was from the apex of this bridge that John Wesley preached to the inhabitants of Barrowford in the 1770s.

Holt Square and The Fold

Holt Square inhabited as four separate dwellings for some considerable time, was originally a large house consisting of: a hall part entered via a through passage, with a large parlour to the left and a service wing to the right. The long range of arched mullioned lights in each window suggests a date in the 1580s, (identical windows can be seen at Roughlee Hall, dated 1584, two miles west of Barrowford). The style of the doorcases which were inserted into two of the windows suggests a conversion date in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Fold is continuous with the line of the east gable of Holt Square consisting of three late eighteenth century cottages. These make up part of the Fold, together with the row of four cottages fronting Gisburn Road. The Fold and Holt Square present a microcosm of the development of an industrial community in East Lancashire: as a late sixteenth century farmhouse was converted to a group of handloom weavers' cottages.

Crowtrees (239, Gisburn Road)

Crowtrees was the home of Thomas Grimshaw. There was a house here c. 1700 and it was through the then occupants, two brothers named Bulcock, that the house descended by marriage to the Grimshaws. Thomas Grimshaw altered the house c. 1800, giving it a new Georgian front.

Crowtrees Cottage is a handsome late eighteenth century building. The upper windows, each of six lights divided by a large mullion known as a "king" mullion, suggest a loom-shop on this floor. Adjoining Crowtrees Cottage stands an eighteenth century barn within arched central hay door and byre doors on each side.

Size House (129, Gisburn Road)

Size House with its distinctive stepped three light windows, suggests a date c. 1790. These dwellings, originally back-to-back at first and second floor level, now form one house. By 1803, Ormerod Baldwin, who was a cotton manufacturer, was living here and employing out-workers. The term Size House relates to the use of size on cotton warps to protect them from friction in their passage through the hand loom.

To the right of the Size House is the former Conservative Club. The front was rebuilt and extended c. 1840 hiding Baldwin's original warehouse, which is still visible at the back. A ground floor side window overlooking the Size House was included in the rebuilding, so that old Mrs Baldwin could chat to her 'handloomer' friends as they brought their finished pieces into the Size House.

On the left of the Size House nos. 125-127, Gisburn Road face the Turnpike. Built c. 1840 by John Barraclough who lived in what was the Conservative Club, these houses share the gable of the Size House.

Higherford Mill

Continue past Paradise Street to Higherford Mill, built by Christopher Grimshaw around 1824. The original mill was water powered, but by 1832 it also had a steam engine.

The mill chimney is sited 200 metres up the hill to the rear of the building with the flue running down the hillside to the boiler room. The Mill is currently used to house a range of small art studios.

Originally a four-storey spinning mill with weaving carried out on the second and third floors, the mill was rebuilt after a fire in 1870.

Within nine years of the building of the mill, one of the many 19th century depressions hit the area. John Fielden, MP for Todmorden, reported to Parliament that "local handloom weavers employed by Thomas Grimshaw of Barrowford earned 26/ (£ 1 30) a week in 1814, but only 4/8d (23p) in 1829, in 1833 his four hundred weavers were starving".

To the left of Higherford Bridge is Foreside parallel with the river. This is the old packhorse route, before the Turnpike Road was built. Nos. 3, 5, 7 & 9 Foreside were formerly a 17th century farmhouse.

Barrowford Bridge

The river below Barrowford Bridge is Pendle Water on its way to join the Calder beyond Brierfield. The stony beds of the river, called the 'Stanncry', yielded road making materials in the early days of the Turnpike when roads were repairable by the property owners. Local boys earned pocket money, to spend on the delights of the annual Rushbearing Fair, by breaking up the stones on the roadside beside their houses. A document from 1763 refers to "Bridge End Houses", the present George and Dragon, on the other side of the Turnpike. This suggests the existence of a bridge at this date. "Dragon Bridge" has twice been swept away and was formerly only half its present width.

At the waterfall on the opposite side of the river you will see the fishpass that has been built to allow salmon and sea trout to swim up river to spawn.

The George and Dragon and Alma Cottages

By 1802, the George and Dragon was established, then called the 'Bridge End', to take advantage of the increased trade from the Turnpike. The public bar still retains interesting features, an eighteenth century fireplace and a substantial Victorian bar.

Close to the George & Dragon are the Alma Cottages which were built in 1856 by William England, a master joiner, to house his and his children's families. The cottages were named after the famous Crimean War Battle of Alma of 1854.

Toll House

Barrowford's Toll House is of typical design, having a bay front of three sides with a central door. Two generous double-light mullioned windows overlook the Turnpike in each direction. The toll board was above the door. The site of the toll house was decided in 1804 and a contract to build a 'Barr' house for £60 was made in 1805. By 1807, the road was open and the tolls at the two Barrs at Barrowford and Reedyford were let for £286. The Turnpike Road takes a direct route from Higherford to Reedyford Bridge, leading the early road which took a winding route by the river to be abandoned. The toll house at Reedyford is now incorporated into other buildings.

Successive toll-keepers found it necessary to carry on another trade to make ends meet, and they were in turn: a postmaster, a tailor and a shoemaker, until the toll bars were dispensed with in 1872. The Toll House was acquired by the Pendle Heritage Centre in 1982.

Fountain Square

Fountain Square was the site of the old Gaumless Trough and the village meeting place. The Trough was set up in 1847 after a number of villagers agreed to share the cost. It was replaced by a more elaborate structure to commemorate the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary in

1911. This later Trough can now be seen at the corner of the cemetery above the Park. It is officially the Royal Memorial Water Fountain.

Lamb Club, Formerly Bank Hall

The Bank Hall we see today was built by Thomas and Grace Sutcliffe in 1696, possibly using materials from an earlier part of the building. The house is built on an elevated position above the flood plain. The facade is punctuated by two bold features: the porch and the cross wing. The porch has the upper floor jettied out on all three sides, a characteristic shared by the White Bear and Park Hill. The cross wing contained the best rooms, whose importance is made clear by its size and by the unusual ogee window fitted neatly into the gable. The gable kneelers support bold finials. Take a closer look at the kneelers on the cross wing – they have carved faces on them. These are reminders that in the 1690s fear of witchcraft still lingered in Pendle.

In 1904, John Strickland sold the house for the sum of £587.10s to the Working Men's Institute. It has been known as the Lamb Club ever since.

The attractive shops at 99-103, Gisburn Road are Listed weavers' cottages. Tucked behind them is Hill Top, a fascinating group of early 19th century cottages in a lane that retains its stone setts and flags.

White Bear

The White Bear Inn is the largest seventeenth century building in Barrowford and was the home of the Hargreaves family. In use as an inn certainly as early as 1775, it is supposed to owe its name to the bear baiting which took place here.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was forced to retreat to the building in 1748, after being carried by an angry mob from Roughlee. The instigator of the trouble, Rev George White, Vicar of Colne, asked Wesley to promise he would not come to Roughlee again. Wesley refused, saying he would sooner cut off his hand! Eventually, he was allowed to leave via the back door.

Unfortunately, some of his friends were set upon and one was so badly injured that he died shortly afterwards. Another friend had to leap into the river to make good his escape.

Holmefield House and Clock Cottages

Holmefield House was built around 1865 by the Berry family and later occupied by the Holdens, whose Holmefield Mills stretched along the riverbank. Thomas Berry was an early social reformer, being instrumental in setting up the provision of free education for the village. He was also an Overseer of the Poor for the Barrowford township from 1879.

Clock Cottages: A tailor named John Steel built the cottages around 1840. The clock was installed for the benefit of the workers at Reedyford Mill. The tenant of the Clock Cottage was paid one shilling (5p) per week to wind up the clock. The cottages were known as 'Cabbage Row' because it was said that the tailor 'cabbaged' cloth when making suits, that is, charged for pieces of cloth that weren't used.

Barrowford Corn Mill

Near the children's playground are the remains of the Old Mill. There may have been a mill on the site as early as 1311 and there was a corn mill by 1541. This may be one of the oldest mill sites in North East Lancashire. In 1781, it was described as a cloth or fulling mill. By 1800, it was used for twist spinning and in 1824 a steam engine was installed. The mill continued in production until 1924 and was still standing in the 1930s.

Barrowford Park and War Memorial

Barrowford Park was awarded the prestigious Green Flag award in 2010 - the national standard for parks and green spaces.

The Park has children's playgrounds, which cater to different age groups, as well as a nine-hole putting green, bowling green and a war memorial.

The land for the park was bought in 1922 as Barrowford's memorial to those who died in the First World War. Those parts of the Park Hill Estate known as Bull Holme and Mill Holme were given by two local businessmen, Mr Samuel Holden and Mr John Dixon, and the remaining 17 acres were subscribed for by the public. The opening ceremony took place on 25th March 1924.

The heart of the Park boasts a lake and a wetland area. The lake was once the original mill pond. The pond is populated with moorhen, ducks and coots. Also situated at the back of the Park is Barrowford Cemetery which incorporates the Woodland Cemetery.

At the annual Barrowford Rushbearing held in the Park boasted fairground rides, bazaars, shows and much more besides. In early times bull baiting took place during the Rushbearing. This was replaced by horse racing, then foot racing, and then in the 1870s by cycle racing.

The footpath around the curve of the lake and along the foot of the high ground may be the origin of 'barrow' in Barrowford. The curving retaining wall is worth notice; this is a "crinkle-crankle".

Leeds and Liverpool Canal

About Leeds Liverpool Canal Leave behind the built environment of Barrowford and enjoy the views of the glorious Pendle countryside while "gongoozling" at Barrowford locks.

The Leeds and Liverpool Canal is over 200 years old, and, at 127 miles long, is the single longest canal in the country. It is home to 91 locks seven of which are in Barrowford!