

records show that the average farm on Charnock Moss was around 12 acres, which today would be considered more of a small holding than a farm. Today, Crook's farm holds 13 acres of land which is mostly rented out to another farmer for making silage and hay. Around the turn of the 19th/20th century there was 17 acres, so not much difference in size to today. The reason for this is complex: originally all the land was owned by one wealthy family, and at enclosure it was divided up more or less evenly between a small number of farms. Farming was very labour intensive and these small farms relied on their large families and maybe some made enough income to employ a hired worker. All the farms were involved in mixed agriculture and horticulture. The tithe map shows a mix of pasture, meadow, some arable land for crops and most farms had an orchard. A small orchard provided fruit for the family but many were large enough to be supplying local markets.



On the 1911 census the inhabitants of the house were William and Annie Sumner with their four children (one son and three daughters). William is described as a 'farmer and market gardener.' Other than the orchard we don't know what else he produced.

The present house was built in the 1880s and replaced a low cottage previously close to the site.

Almost opposite Crook's Farm you will see . . .

8 Balshaw Farm



This is one of the larger farms, in terms of land. The two houses seen today were once one large farmhouse with barns and shippons behind and to the side. Architectural features inside point to the likelihood that it was built in the mid 1700s but it could be earlier.

Building work by the residents has revealed lots of stone from the original barn and outbuildings, they also found the stone base of a cheese press, evidence that the farm had milking cows and a dairy. The earliest evidence for the farm is on the tithe map and schedule of 1841 which gives the tenant farmer as Alexander Hodgson and that his family farmed over 30 acres. All this land is either pasture or meadow apart from six acres of arable and a small orchard, probably just providing fruit for the family. The large acreage and the cheese press are evidence that the main work of the farm was in the dairy, but there may have been some vegetables grown, or grain crops such as oats or barley, on the arable land. Fields marked as 'meadow' were cut for hay, then later in the year could be grazed. 'Pasture' was permanent grazing. It is also likely that the farm had a few pigs, maybe some sheep and hens mostly for the use of the household but occasionally bartered with neighbours.

Now, turn round and go back the way you came for 100m until on the left you will see a footpath that leads over fields and back to the Community Centre where the trail started



Penwortham Heritage Trail

Bee Lane Area circular walk

Discover Penwortham's Hidden Histories!



Ploughing in Lancashire, 1908

Courtesy of Lancashire County Council's Red Rose Collections www.redrosecollections.lancashire.gov.uk



This enclave in the township of Penwortham is unusual as it has remained largely unaltered for around 400 years and is a rare example of old rural Penwortham.

Until the time of the Enclosure Acts of the 16th century, this land was open, perfectly flat common known as Charnock Moss. It would have consisted of rough grassland, with scrubby bits of woodland, and some mature trees, criss-crossed by muddy tracks created by the livestock and humans who made use of it and some watercourses crossed by flat wooden planks called 'platts'. Many of the residents of the area had the right to graze their animals on this common land, and possibly to collect firewood and dig peat for fuel. Enclosure of common lands by the landowners was a gradual process, beginning as early as the 1500s and reaching its peak in the 18th century.

Characteristic of enclosure land is the regular square or rectangular shape of the fields, unlike the jig-saw effect of old fields

from the medieval period. Hard roads were put in, again on a grid pattern, and farm houses built, spaced out evenly to give each an equal share of the land. Each farm was then tenanted on very long leases, covering at least three generations of a single family.

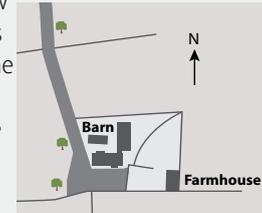
This process happened all over Penwortham, so why does the evidence survive only in this one small area? There are a number of reasons, but the main one is the position of the railway line, begun in the early reign of Queen Victoria and still a main line today. The railway cut off easy access to the land for building, leaving it to the delight of Penwortham residents, almost unchanged in character. This small parcel of land is how the whole township would have looked before the industrial revolution.

The walk will take you on a roughly circular route looking at some of the older houses and farms, mostly along the lanes, but also crossing fields on public footpaths, accessed by stiles. The whole area of the walk is known to be rich in wildlife, including owls, foxes, bats, birds and even deer.

5 Pickering's Farm

This is one of the few entries in the census of 1911 that gives the name of the farm:

so helpful to anyone researching the history! This census is the first one where the head of the household has to fill in the form on behalf of the inhabitants and it is not the job of the enumerator. Part of the form requires their 'full postal address': in those days it was sufficient to put *Mr A Farmer, Charnock Moss, Penwortham, Near Preston*. We can only imagine the postman would have known everyone by name, and which farm was theirs.



Pickering's Farm

The head of the family in 1911 was William Ward, and he lived at the farm with his three adult sons. The farm is shown clearly on the tithe map too, but is right on the border of Penwortham and Farington and so the present access road past Lord's Farm did not extend to Pickering's as it does now.

Presumably some of their fields were in Penwortham and some in Farington, the neighbouring parish.



Pickering's Farm Barn

Turn round and continue down Lord's Lane to its junction with Bee Lane. Turn right and continue along Bee Lane for 120m and on the right you will see . . .

6 Wiggan's Farm



This is another old farmhouse probably dating to early or mid Victorian times. It is present on the tithe map and it was known by this name before 1851, this time it was farmed by Richard and Ann Wiggan with their 32 year old son, Thurston. A trade directory from 1885 states Thurston as the farmer so we can assume his mother and father had died and he continued with the farm. At the end of its life as a farm, the house was purchased and converted into two dwellings. Later, as the family grew, the owner built two more cottages on the side. If you look up at the roof line you will see the slightly lower height of the newer additions. These two cottages are still lived in by the original builder's descendants, and are thought to date to the 1940s.

Turn round and continue along Bee Lane for 600m going straight across the crossroads until on the right you will see . . .

7 Crook's Farm

Most of the original farms were small by the standards of the time. To give an idea of the scale, an average farm would be 20 acres or so, 40 acres was considered large. The census



school at the age of 12 to work full time on the farm. The boys became farm labourers at home or sometimes working for neighbours, and the girls almost always became workers in the cotton industry, unless there was enough dairy work at home. Owing to the small size of these farms, this was unlikely.

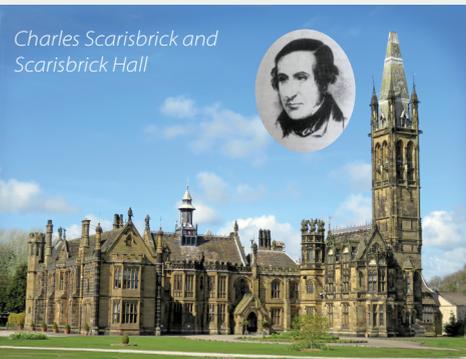
In 1911 William and Elizabeth Eaves had 10 of their children still on the farm, but the census says they had 16 children in all and two had died. So four of their offspring, presumably adult, lived elsewhere. They also had a small grandson, Norman, aged five living with them.

The last Eaves to farm, John, is still remembered today. As a boy he helped his father increase the size of the orchard (still in evidence today) kept poultry, a few sheep, grew some acres of grain on the better land and a lot of potatoes. Local people still remember the couple of weeks allowed off school to earn money potato picking on Eaves' farm. The remnants of the large apple and pear orchard have been examined and the varieties named by a local expert.

Charles Scarisbrick

At the time of the tithe map (1841) one person owned all of this land. He was Charles Scarisbrick, one of the biggest landowners in Lancashire. He was from an old Roman Catholic family, and so was not allowed to take civic

Charles Scarisbrick and Scarisbrick Hall

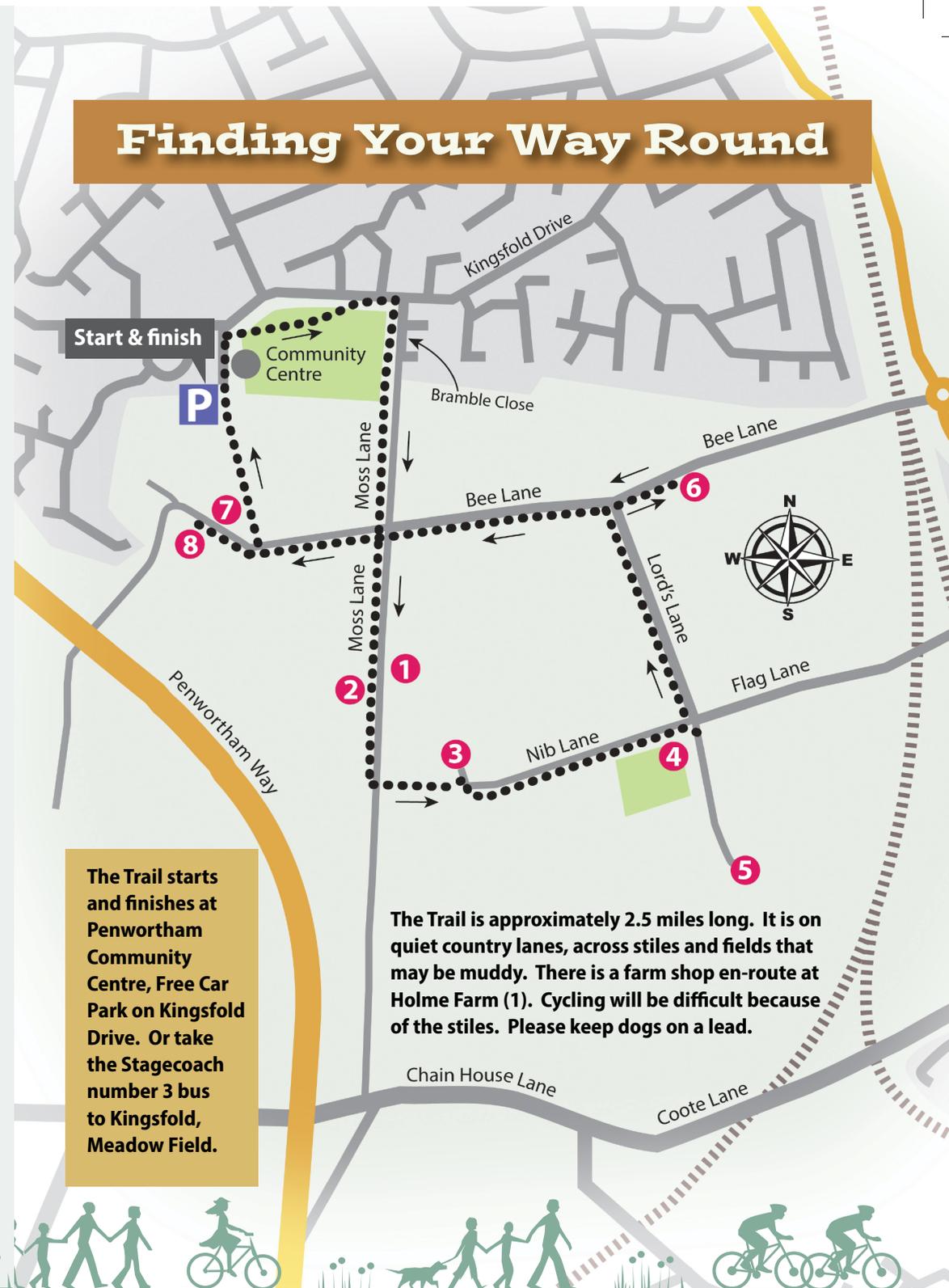


office until the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. He was said to be a very good landlord who treated his tenants well and in return they loved and respected him. He was, however, something of an eccentric. He re-designed his mansion near Bescar, Scarisbrick Hall, and employed one of Britain's finest architects, Augustus Pugin, to build it. He filled the hall with collections of works of art, woodcarvings, tapestries, suits of armour, books, textiles and all kinds of curiosities. He was known also for his unusual private life: he kept a 'wife' though they never actually married. She was Mary Anne Braithwaite from Bowness, and she bore him 3 children. They remained together for life and this arrangement appears to be well known and accepted in the area. When Charles died in 1860, he left Mary a considerable pension for life and his children inherited the collections and furniture, to the value of £45,000. They could not inherit the land as they were illegitimate; that went to his sister.

Charles' funeral was as unusual as his life. His will stated that the ceremony should be strictly private: no member of his family was to attend. His body must be taken to the small Roman Catholic church a mile away in Bescar, and must travel in a straight line. To achieve this a passage had to be created through a hedge, a wall, a ploughed field, and even a private garden! The only people in this strange procession were the coffin bearers (workers from the estate), his solicitor, his steward, and his two doctors. He was encased in three coffins, one inside the other, two made of wood from the estate and one of lead. He has a fine grave in the churchyard, with railings and a huge stone cross. Scarisbrick Hall is now an independent school.

This is a private road and it leads 250m to a farm that has now been converted into two properties ...

Finding Your Way Round



The Trail starts and finishes at Penwortham Community Centre, Free Car Park on Kingsfold Drive. Or take the Stagecoach number 3 bus to Kingsfold, Meadow Field.

The Trail is approximately 2.5 miles long. It is on quiet country lanes, across stiles and fields that may be muddy. There is a farm shop en-route at Holme Farm (1). Cycling will be difficult because of the stiles. Please keep dogs on a lead.



From the Community Centre take the path that leads through the park past the play area and eventually joins Kingsfold Drive. Turn right down Bramble Close and follow the footpath that leads into Moss Lane. After 225m and having gone straight across at the crossroads you will see on the left . . .

1 Holme Farm



Bought by the Simpson family in the 1960s, this farm is shown on the tithe map of 1841 although the original farmhouse was demolished and replaced with the two modern houses there today. It stood on the site of the present farm shop building and all that remains is a solitary stone gatepost marking the original entrance. In the 1960s the farm covered around 21 acres and the family occasionally rented more land from surrounding farms when needed. They had a herd of milking cows, about 60 in number and thousands of battery hens. This form of egg production was commonplace in Lancashire at the time. The farm delivered milk and eggs to local houses, and in the early days all the milk was bottled untreated as green top milk. This changed in the 1980s with the purchase of a pasteurising machine.

Today they collect milk from local farms and distribute it but have no cattle. They have a very nice farm shop but do check opening hours online if you wish to visit. Two wells have been discovered close to the buildings. Before piped water was brought to the area in the 1890s all the farms would have had at least one well.

Continue a little further along Moss Lane and on the right you will see . . .

2 Proctors Farm

This is another pre-Victorian farm now without land attached. In the 1880s it was farmed by the Kellett family, father James, mother Mary and adult son Richard, three adult daughters, another daughter of 15 years and a son at school aged 12. By this time some of the young men in the area had not followed their father into the farm but worked for the railway. This was the case with Richard. His three sisters were cotton weavers, as were many of the girls on Charnock Moss. By this time weaving moved from the home into factories. A later trade directory shows that William Eaves' family had moved into the farm. Whether by sale of tenancy is not known. We do know that his son, Oliver took over and was listed as 'farmer' there in 1922, and he must have done some renovations in 1930 as that date and his initials appear in the stonework on the front facade. In this year Oliver's age would be about 46 years.



Continue along Moss Lane over a stile and then to another stile on the left that takes you across a field at roughly 90 degrees and to another stile. Continue down a path between a hedge and a fence, on the left you will see . . .

3 Sibbering's Cottage

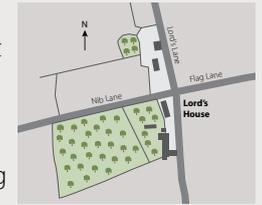


This cottage appears on the tithe map so we know it dates to at least 1838 and is likely to be much older as it is one of the typical low cottages commonplace in the Fylde and West Lancashire plains. There are examples in Ratten Lane and Townley Lane Hutton, and in the Lytham area. It is possible it was built in the 1700s or even the late 1600s. Sibbering is a surname and may refer to an original or early inhabitant. In 1841 the tithe map states that it was tenanted by Seth Cook and it comprised a house, shippon, fold and orchard and had six fields, four of meadow, one of pasture and one with an arable crop. In all the 'farm' held about five acres, which today we would call a smallholding. It probably produced enough to support the family with perhaps a small surplus in a good year. There is no mention of Seth Cook on the first full census of 1841, which is a puzzle, but perhaps between 1838 when the tithe was being surveyed, and 1841, when it was finally published, the family had moved away. As was usual in these old cottages the roof was of thatch, which was only replaced by slate about 30 years ago.

Follow the track that leads into Nib Lane and continue 350m. At the crossroads turn right to the site of . . .

4 Lord's Farm

This farm is believed to be one of the oldest on the Moss. It was vacated in the 1990s and became a target for vandalism, resulting in a fire, and so was demolished. There is evidence of foundations and some farm buildings are still present although in poor condition. This makes them a good habitat for barn owls and bats.



The farm was run by the Eaves family who had been in this part of Penwortham for many generations. They appear in the schedule of the tithe map, published in 1841, farmed by Richard Eaves and his family, and the farm is described as a mix of pasture and meadow, with a house, barn and garden, a small orchard and an acre of arable land. All together not more than a handful of acres, barely enough to support a household. By the time the last member of the family left in the late 20th century they were no longer tenants but owners and held around 70 acres.

Looking at census returns for the period 1841 to 1911 it soon becomes clear that families involved with agriculture tended to produce large families! With little mechanical help they needed a small army of children who usually left

