



**Shevington & District Community
Association**



Shevington Village

HERITAGE TRAIL No. 1

To Celebrate Local Heritage Month, 2012

Shevington & District Community Association

HERITAGE TRAIL NO. 1

Welcome to Shevington & District Heritage Trail No. 1 which, it is hoped, will be the first of a number of such trails covering the whole of Shevington and its local communities.

I trust that this and future trails, will stimulate interest in the heritage of our local communities and perhaps encourage residents to explore in more detail the fascinating story of where we live today.

John O'Neill

Origins

First recorded in 1225 the name Shevington probably derives from the Welsh 'Cefyn' and the old English 'Tun' relating to our hill-slope community in the Douglas Valley. Shevington became a manor within that of Standish with Langtree and its church dedicated to St. Wilfrid from the late 12th century.

From the 1870s Shevington became an ecclesiastical parish in its own right followed by the building of St. Anne's Church in 1887, one hundred and twenty five years ago; and under the Local Government Act of 1894 became a Parish Council within the settlement's ancient boundaries of the Calico Brook, Millbrook and River Douglas.

Shevington Conservation Area

(See below area marked in **red**).

Designated in 1988 and extended to include the Plough & Harrow public house area in 2007, it includes the Memorial Garden, part of Church Lane, Broad o'th Lane and parts of Shevington Lane.

"It is an area of special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which, it is desirable to preserve and enhance."

(Planning, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, Act 1990).



SHEVINGTON & DISTRICT HERITAGE TRAIL No. 1

DISTANCE 0.8 OF ONE MILE.

Circular route via the Plough & Harrow public house, Broad o'th' Lane, Church Lane, part Wigan Road, Old Lane, part Shevington Lane and return to Broad o'th' Lane.

Broad o'th' Lane

Name given to the wide area through which routes pass to Standish, Orrell, Wigan, Appley Bridge and beyond. The pattern of these routes is clearly indicated on maps from as early as the mid 18th century. The width has been considerably reduced since the last war on its western side. The original Miles Lane route via the side of the public house now ends abruptly at the M6 Motorway and continues from New Miles Lane between the Golf Club access and that for Houghton Lane.

Broad o'th' Lane was never the hub of the settlement as its population was sparsely spread until the present distribution pattern developed from the 1950s.

The most prominent building dating from the late 18th century was the Plough & Harrow public house, its name reflecting the principal occupation of the area. The current building was erected in 1905 around, it is said, the original structure to avoid licensing restrictions.

The 1892 25" Ordnance Survey Map indicates no properties on the western side of Broad o'th' Lane and only six, including Broad o'th' Lane Cottage dated 1740 on its eastern side. That building acted as the Air Raid Precaution post during World War II and as the doctor's surgery on his visits from Standish several times a week. It was demolished together with the other old properties in the 1960s and Netherwood Court block of flats now occupies that site.

The existing properties on both sides, excluding Bewley's Hardware Store, were built in blocks of four to house workers' families of nearby industries including coal, chemicals and bricks and date from the 1890s to 1904. There is evidence that stonework removed from the old public house was used for some of their gable-ends including that on No. 20.

Like the 'new' public house they too were built of local brick with stone heads and sills together with slate roofs and additional terracotta detail made at the ceramic works in Orrell to provide some character to them.

Note the original stone outbuildings at the end of the yards to Nos. 24 and 26 which housed their original "privies".

A number of the cottages over the years have been converted to retail outlets in order to take advantage of the growing population's needs - very few remain vacant for long!

Church Lane

The handsome red-brick Victorian property at No. 1 once served as the village Post Office. Note the bricked-up area to the right of the front door that was the site of the original post box. The business transferred to its current site as part of the Newsagents on Gathurst Lane.

Opposite is the Memorial Park and Garden. Most of the land between the present day Church Lane, Old Lane and Shevington Lane had formed the grounds of Shevington New Hall. A late 18th to early 19th century property, it was demolished in 1961 after its final life as the local Labour Club at the top of what is now Fern Close.

Its last resident Theobald Dixon, a textile manufacturer, gave the lower area of the park, which later formed the Memorial Garden, to the parish to be dedicated to Shevington's war dead. The War Memorial erected there bearing the names of those service men was unveiled in 1952 and Remembrance Sunday is marked each year by the local community. A Memorial Stone marking the Prince Albert Pit disaster of 1st November, 1861 was erected nearby on Lancashire Day 2010. The Pit, part of the Shevington Colliery, was sited on the western side of Shevington Lane, across from the junction with Old Lane.

The remainder of the Hall's grounds were eventually released and made available as public parkland maintained by the Parish Council, for private housing development and St. Bernadette's R.C. Primary School in the 1960s and 1970s.

Nos. 3 to 17 cottages, known as Berry's houses were built in the late 18th century possibly by William Berry, owner of the Orrell Post House Estate Colliery, for local miners. He established a railed wagon road for his coal tubs in the 1780s to the River Douglas/canal at Gathurst for distribution. No. 3, the stone arched cottage was the village blacksmith's. He undertook repair work to local farm machinery, shod horses and made, repaired, and sharpened miners' picks and shovels. Note the anvil in the garden. The original track was referred to as Cinnamon Lane probably taking its name from the colours of the sandstone

blocks produced from local quarries to build the cottages. It became Church Lane following the building of St. Anne's Church in 1887.

The overall character of these properties was adversely affected by the part demolition and conversion of the middle dwellings to retail outlets built in brick!

The land on which St. Anne's Parish Church stands once formed part of a 6½ acre field attached to Highfield Farm (accessed off Gathurst Lane via Highfield Avenue). When that field was placed on the market by the Standish Estate in 1921 it was purchased by James Lyon, headmaster of Crooke School who in turn offered it for sale to the village for recreation purposes.

That offer led to the formation of Shevington Recreation Ground and Parish Room Committee who then raised the money from local residents and erected the Parish Room for the local community's use.

Unfortunately, the vicar at the time the Reverend George Blagden Hopkins insisted that the project be reformed as Shevington Church Recreation Grounds Committee and Parish Room to be administered by trustees appointed by the Parochial Church Council. This turn of events divided the village for many years and led to a legal challenge which was upheld in the Vicar's favour although the matter wasn't finally resolved until the Parish Room was sold to the Church in 1967.

The Trust Deed has since been amended to allow members of the Parish Council to become Trustees and over the years the building has been used for a variety of church and community uses including the local library, until the purpose-built one opened on Gathurst Lane in 1970.

Now called the Parish Centre, the building has undergone considerable improvements to its facilities, appearance and security in recent years. The adjacent area used as a car park belongs to the church and was once the site of the original Shevington Youth Club for Boys' premises in an ex-army hut brought from Aspull after the last war and demolished in 1967 when the club moved to its present site.

St. Anne's Church was completed 125 years ago in 1887 although Shevington had become a parish in its own right from the 1870s.

Prior to the new building, local Anglicans worshipped at the mother church of St. Wilfrid in Standish although some parishioners attended Crooke Mission Church from 1845 until it closed due to flooding, from the late 1880s or, alternatively at Broad o'th' Lane School, built in 1814, which was licenced for worship from 1865.

Land for the church and its churchyard was donated by Henry Rawcliffe of Chorley and the entire two thousand pounds cost of construction was raised locally

through the endeavours of the Reverend Alexander Richardson, Shevington's first vicar who resided in Shevington New Hall.

Notice the plaque on the grassed area to the left of the church entrance in memory of those killed in the Great War who had worked at the Taylor Pit and Washer and John Pit.

This is a copy of the original within the Peace Gate at St. Wilfrid's Church, Standish.

The copy was originally intended to be placed on the obelisk built by the miners from those pits, but for security reasons, because of its isolated site, was placed here in 2003. (The obelisk remains a short distance from the old entrance to those pits just over the Millbrook where Wigan Road becomes Wigan Lower Road within Standish Lower Ground.

No. 21. This property previously referred to as 'Sumner's' was part of a small farmstead established in the late 18th/early 19th century. Built of stone blocks it was situated adjacent to the more substantial Cocker's Farm possibly of the same date.

The land was sold in the 1921 auction of the Standish Estate and was eventually developed for residential dwellings together with other landholdings there from the late 1920s and 1930s. Note the attractive block of dwellings at Nos. 25-35 of that period. The remainder, now Churchfield and Woodview properties, were built in the 1960s and 1970s.

Prior to the opening of St. Bernadette's R.C. Primary School in 1971 (being extended in 2012) in response to an increase in the Roman Catholic child population from the 1960s, primary aged Catholic pupils over the years made the long trek to St. Marie's School House, then its school from 1865 on Almond Brook Road, Standish across from the Cat-i-th' Window Cottage. (Only a short stretch of the stone wall that fronted that building remains). The school moved to a modern purpose-built premises on Avondale Street in 1966.

At the end of the residential development on the western side (across from the Central Drive junction) a public footpath, now O12/07A/20, stretches across the large open field to meet the one from Crook Village to Gathurst Lane which itself becomes Vicarage Lane along its built-up stretch to the main road.

A short distance between that footpath's access and Club House Farm, a four miles long railway conveying coal in tubs from Standish Pits to the canal at Croke built by John Taylor owner of the Standish Coal Company in 1856, crossed the highway in this area until being abandoned in 1865. Part of the track's bed is still visible in Lawns Wood.

Wigan Road

Club House Farm, together with its barn, is situated at the junction of Wigan Road with Church Lane and is a listed building dating from 1660. It was originally part of the Standish Estate. The name possibly derives from the club shape of the Papal coat of arms key's of St. Peter which are no longer visible or, alternatively, the place where villagers made visits in the 19th century to make payment to various clubs to cover for sickness and burials and to receive relief during hard times.

Wigan Road was earlier known as Wigan Lower Lane.

Just a short distance from Club House Farm, is St. Bernadette's R.C. Church which was built in 1961 as a chapel of ease on land donated by the Hilton family and attached to the mother church of St. Marie in Standish built in 1884 on Almond Brook Road in response to the growing R.C. population of Shevington. Prior to that development Catholics had to make their way to St. Marie's and in earlier years across the fields via Milldam and Elnup Wood to the chapel in Standish Hall.

Old Lane

Originally a nameless track recorded on early maps. Probably referred to by locals as "th'owd Lane" that was eventually adopted as the official street name. Housing along its length consists mainly of semi-detached bungalows built in the 1960s/1970s with earlier development of the 1920s/1930s on the eastern side close to the junction with Wigan Road.

Elnup Avenue refers to the ancient woodland beyond that private housing estate of the 1970s/1980s. It is managed as a community wood by the Groundwork Trust assisted by "The Friends of Elnup Wood". The avenue also leads to Millbrook Primary School built to cater for the growing population in that general area and named after the stream flowing through the woodland which was, and to some extent still is, the boundary between Shevington and Standish.

Coach House Drive is a reference to the land once belonging to Coach House Farm which formed part of the Standish Estate. (See below).

Hall Close refers to Shevington New Hall which was situated between the end of that close and Fern Close off Shevington Lane.

Shevington Lane

Coach House Farm was situated off the north junction of Old Lane with Shevington Lane dating from the 18th century. It originally belonged to the

Standish Estate and was sold by auction in 1921. Its large barn occupied the site now filled by a bungalow at No. 38E. The original and very attractive farmhouse remains as a private dwelling.

The possible origin of its name might have referred to horse-drawn transport housed in the barn and available for hire.

Across the highway from the Old Lane junction and to the rear of the properties was the site of the Prince Albert Pit, part of Shevington Colliery and the scene of a tragic accident on 1st November, 1861 when thirteen lives were lost. (See Monument in the Memorial Garden).

Turning left into Shevington Lane note a short distance along, in the Fern Close area, a low stone wall which was probably part, but at a greater height, of the wall which surrounded the Hall.

The handsome red-brick property at No. 37, dating from the late Victorian/early Edwardian period was originally within the boundary of the Hall.

Across from the Park note Nos. 18-24 and 8-2 are blocks of four dwellings each in the style of those built in Broad o'th' Lane. One block's date stone, part hidden by a downspout says "Broad Hey" 1925 and the lower block "Parkview" 1904. Two dwellings have been added in 2008, in similar style at Nos. 14-16 in order to conform to Shevington Conservation Area Regulations operating in that vicinity (see plan of Conservation Area).

Note the original gate-posts and surrounding front garden walls to the older properties.

Enter Broad o'th' Lane to complete Heritage Trail No 1.

