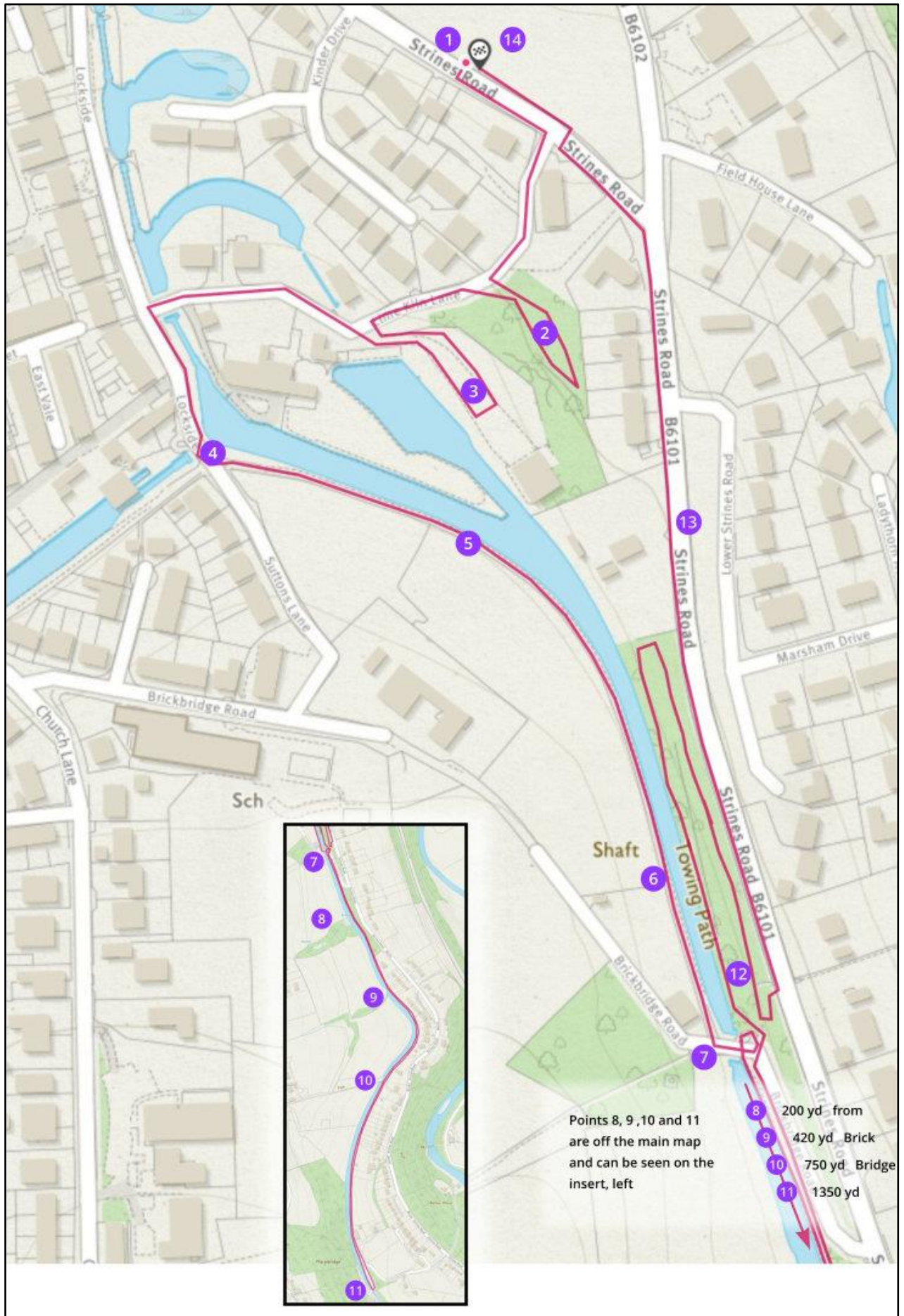


# MLHS Summer Stroll July 2020 – Tramway Wharf and locality



This month's walk has been prepared by Steve Gent who owns Tramway Wharf between the site of the old Mineral Mill and Brick Bridge.

Most of the route can be seen on the map on the previous page and has been fully explained on the [MLHS website](#) so please be sure to read that before setting out.

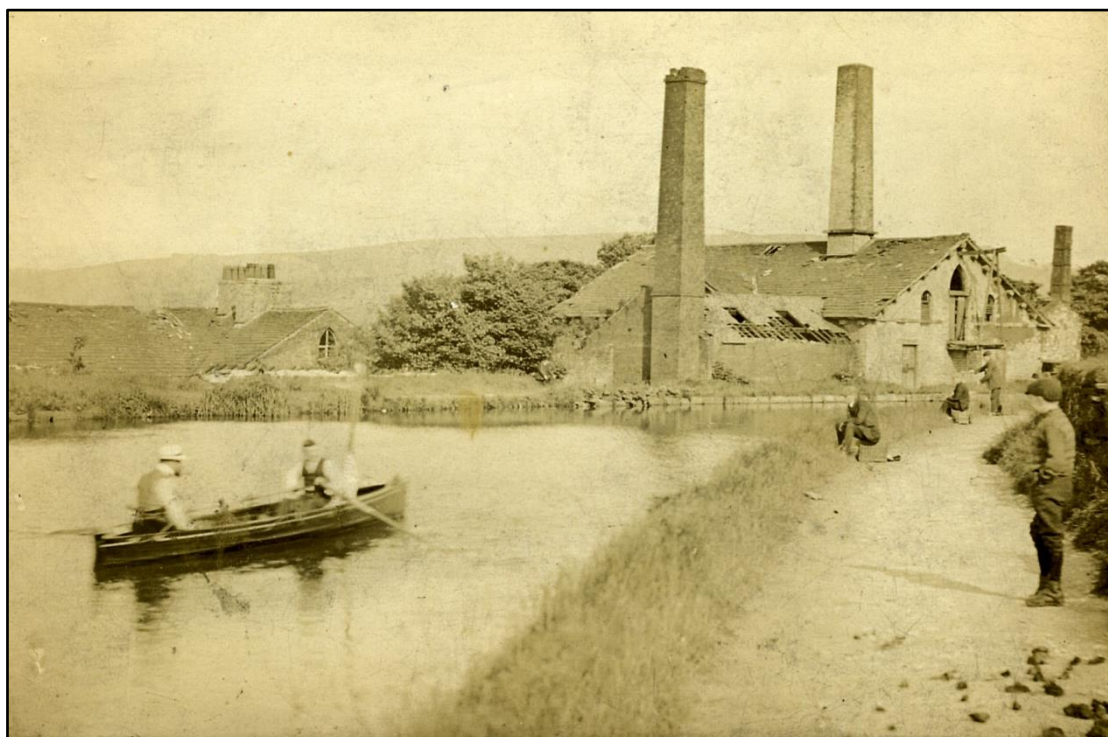
- 1) The official starting point is on Strines Road near the old recreation ground where there is plenty of space to park. (As this is a circular walk it can be joined anywhere along the route.)

Walk away from Marple and turn right into Lime Kiln Lane to explore the lime kiln area. (2)

- 3) Continue up Lime Kiln Lane and turn left into the Marple Social and Forces Club car park sited on the area at the top of the lime kilns. The start of one of the short canal arms bringing lime to the kilns still exists under a piece of decking beside the marina.

- 4) Further up Lime Kiln Lane you cross a bridge by Lock 16. Turn left up Lockside and pause on the bridge to admire the view on either side.

Take the towpath to the left on the far side of the bridge to follow the Peak Forest Canal towards New Mills, Bugsworth and Whaley Bridge. On the way you will pass the site where this photo was taken (5).

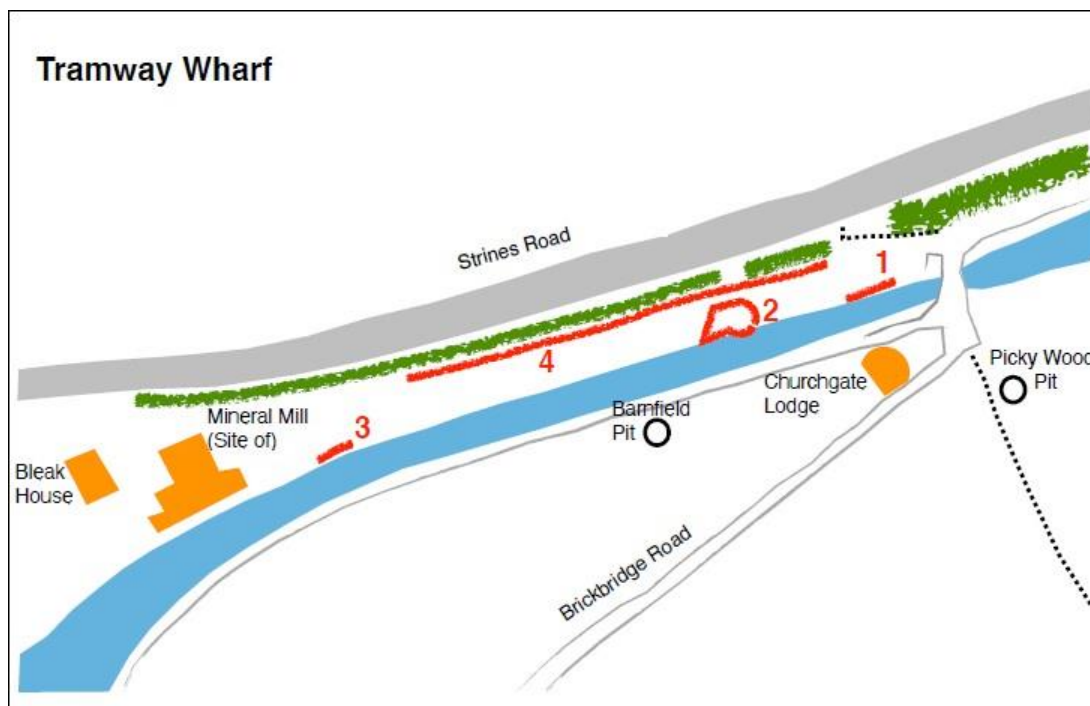


- 6) Site of Barn Field pit.
- 7) Brick Bridge. The main site of our walk is on the left after crossing the bridge but you should continue along the tow path at least as far as Arm Pit which is somewhere in the wood on the west bank of the canal at point (8).

If you have the time continue along the canal passing Ratcliffe's Stop Place (9) and Hilltop Bridge (10) to Pluck's Bridge (11). Doing so will add about 1.3 miles to the walk.



- 12) Back at Brick Bridge you should enter Tramway Wharf. The grass has been cut recently (July 11<sup>th</sup>) but do watch your step, the ground is rather uneven.



From the very first coping stones, closest to Brick Bridge, notice the bored holes which, with an oak peg and iron spike, held the beds and 'rails' for the tramway along the very edge of the canal itself. More correctly known as a plateway, this tramway used 3-foot lengths of 1 inch thick 'L' section iron for its rails, within which the carriage wheels sat. At a marked coping stone near this end we can see a chiselled in abatement to allow a fork in the track. These are marked as 'Area 1' on the plan.

You will be walking past a number of historic working boats moored at the wharf. I currently own three ('Prince', 'Yeo' and 'Ironsides') and hope that visiting historic boats will be able to stay and offer open days to show the unique history of each vessel. Negotiations with the Canal and River Trust regarding mooring at the wharf have taken a slow start but I am confident that the outcome will eventually be a good one. A guest boat in July 2020 is 'Nautilus', a conversion of a shortened old hull similar to Ironsides.

Walking along the wharf, these peg holes continue at their 3ft intervals until we reach an area of sunken coping stones with iron staples joining them together and many more holes in them, 'Area 2'. This coincides with a substantial stone block at the back of the wharf and I am investigating whether this may in fact be part of a small 30 cwt crane. This would probably have been used for loading the empty wagon bodies back into the boats once they had been returned from the lower wharf. I am unsure whether this area would have sunk from the exertions of this crane or from mining subsidence as a shaft did run in this vicinity. A larger 3 ton crane, capable of lifting loaded wagon bodies, was also installed at the wharf and I am searching for evidence of its probable location.

'Area 3' The land ends at the edge of where the old mineral mill would have stood. It is thought that the original building on this site was a 'Summit warehouse' which was built to facilitate trans-shipment from the boats onto the tramway. After the tramway was broken up it was repurposed into a steam-powered corn mill and then further developed into Marple mineral mill after Oldknow's death. We can now look down at Bleak House but this was only a minor building on the site in its heyday. The mineral mill was a large 4-storey mill reaching up from Strines Road to join

the canal at the level of its upper two levels. By 1850 a tithe map shows the whole mill and tramway wharf as one site owned by Peter Arkwright. Another marked dig here shows a slab believed to be part of the path to the mill from the wharf.

As we walk back towards the entrance to Tramway Wharf we can take a little turn down the actual slope of the tramway itself. 'Area 4'. The impressive walled embankment has suffered over the 220 years since its construction but in some areas it is intact and at full height.

Turning back now we leave the wharf and take a left turn down the footpath to Strines road. Please remember to close the gate behind you.

Walking along Strines Road back towards the start point, you will see the slope of the tramway on your left and once you pass Bleak House the tramway would have actually been running down the road itself (or probably where the pavement now is!)



13) This reconstructed picture shows what it would have looked like in the late Victorian period with Bleak House on the right and the four storey Mineral Mill on the left.

14) Back to your parking place. If you look over the wall of the recreation ground you can make out the raised mound which peels away from the Strines Road side and towards Oldknow Road. This is the route of the tramway, still visible over two centuries later.

I hope you have enjoyed your walk around the Wharf. The work to restore it and to have it open to the public is taking longer than I had hoped. Negotiating with the Canal and River Trust as well as working to fund the bits I have done so far does take time! But, keep watching and we will see the wharf up and running soon enough! I hope next year to give you a guided tour of the Wharf and the tramway terminus.

Steve Gent

Acknowledgements to OS for mapping software and Marple Virtual Tour for the photos. Bleak House picture by Noel Brindley.