

## DISCOVER HYNDBURN

# Fairy Caves, Church Kirk Loop



The scenery along this walk changes consistently between heavy industrial use and open countryside. Around every corner is something different, one minute a derelict mill, the next minute, beautiful open countryside. This is a circular route and can be walked from St James Road or Bridge Street.

**Parking:** Street parking on Church Street and Bridge Street.

**Public Transport:** Nos 6, 6a, 7 from Blackburn and Accrington bus stations. Pilkington's Bus Nos 5, 8.

**Distance and Approximate Time:** 2.2 mile (3.52kms), 45mins to 1.25 hours with time to explore not including picnic time

**Terrain:** Multi-user track and canal towpath. Just a short flight of shallow steps with a long tread at the end and these can be checked at the start of the walk.

**Map:** OS Explorer 287 West Pennine Moors 1:25 000 scale

**Key to Facilities:** The nearest toilets are at Hyndburn Leisure Centre. There are shops on Henry Street, Church near the Kirk House bus stop.

**Please keep dogs on a lead and follow the Country Code**

To get the full version of this map and the FREE route directions you will need ViewRanger. ViewRanger is a digital guide to the outdoors with downloadable route guides, outdoor maps, and powerful GPS navigation features. Their mobile app runs on iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, and Android smartphones, tablets, and watches. <https://www.viewranger.com/en-gb>



For more information go to [www.prospectsfoundation.org.uk](http://www.prospectsfoundation.org.uk) For the gpx route use the QRCode on the right



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## Information to help you enjoy this walk

**Alternative Start:** Bridge Street, Church, Accrington BB5 4PF which is a short walk from Oswaldtwistle Mills Shopping Village & Garden Centre and Church and Oswaldtwistle railway station. Walk along the B6231 to the pedestrian crossing at the A679. There is a bus stop near Bridge Street on the A679. There is a green space area on your right on Bridge Street and this gives you access to the canal on the path by the picnic benches.

**Start:** The start is adjacent to the Thorn Inn, St James Rd, Church, Accrington BB5 4JP. From the Thorn Inn you can walk down St James Road with the church on your right OR walk down the *footpath* path via the A-frame and gate with the church on your left.

The route on this leaflet starts at Church Kirk Changeline Bridge No 112 on the Leeds Liverpool canal.

More information on [Church Kirk](#). The Parish Church of St James, Church Kirk can be dated back to 642 A.D. and is closed. The church was originally dedicated to St Oswald, but in 1536 there is a reference to its dedication to All Saints. Since this time there is no further indication of its dedication to any other than St James.

The tower dates from the late medieval period, and the nave was built in 1804–05. ... The stained glass in the south nave windows was replaced in 1918 following damage caused by an explosion in a nearby ammunition factory.

There is more information and local history at Church Kirk Regeneration Trust [Facebook page](#) and [here](#).

**SD7329** If you take the *footpath* turn left at the canal. The Donkey Bank picnic area is on your left and there is a mooring and viewing platform by the towpath.

*Donkey Back Picnic Site and mooring was made by the Church PROSPECTS Panel on the Leeds Liverpool Canal more than 17 years ago.*

**Walk** past the metal artworks.

*These artworks mark the exact halfway point on the Leeds/Liverpool Canal. Financed by the Church PROSPECTS Panel as part of the Picnic Site 100 yards away at Donkey Back, the designs were done by local schoolchildren and represent barge hull shapes and local wildlife. Over 127 miles (204 km), the canal crosses the Pennines, and includes 91 locks on the main line. Both Leeds and Liverpool are 63 5/8 miles away.*

Church Kirk Changeline Bridge No 112 area [canal history](#) by Mike Clarke. The bridge is a Grade 11 listed building c.1810. Made of coursed sandstone blocks with an elliptical arch with rusticated voussoirs, bands, parapets with ridged copings (renewed on south side). At the end on south side are sloped retaining walls (curved on east side) and steps to the towpath, which changes sides here.

From the road over the changeline bridge walk downhill ahead and go through the gate or A-frame adjacent to the farm and then follow the wide track of the Hyndburn Greenway gradually gaining height. This is a multi-user path so expect to meet cyclists and horse riders.

Follow the path from Church Kirk until you re-join the canal to the south of Rishton.

The canal follows the contour around a valley rather than crossing it on a large embankment. From this side of the valley you can look across and see the canal on the other side.

Turn left at New Barn Bridge No109 and follow the canal towpath through open countryside.

*The plant life along this stretch of the canal is varied and there is lots of wildlife attracted to this stretch of the canal.*

Pass under Railway Bridge, Aspen No 109A and Aspen Bridge No 110.

You will reach the **Fairy Caves**.

*Not homes for fairies but a battery of coke ovens that are part of Lancashire's industrial past. The coke ovens site can be entered from the towpath. You can stop and explore the area including the coke ovens, dock basin area and the remains of mine workings and engine beds. One of the coke ovens is big enough to stand in. These coke ovens converted the coal from the adjacent aspen colliery into coke for the steelworks as a smokeless fuel.*

*The Oswaldtwistle Civic Society ensured that the Aspen Colliery Coke Ovens were scheduled as an ancient monument when they had them Listed as an important industrial archaeological site in 1977. Hyndburn Borough Council did some landscaping in 1977.*

*Restoration and refurbishment works on rebuilding and repairing the 200-year-old coke ovens at the former Aspen Colliery site was completed in early 2017 by [Rosslee Construction](#). A set of interpretation boards were to be installed at the site enabling visitors to find out more about the ovens' history.*

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You can download '[Ossie Heritage 1 Fairy Caves](#)' which has a plan and details of the coke ovens.

*Just beyond the coke ovens is a short arm of the canal which served the coke ovens. It is now overgrown but you can still see the large edge stones and it would have been large enough for a barge to load and unload.*

*Look out to see if you can find any of the mooring rings.*

*The railway crosses the canal again just before Foxhill Bank Bridge No 111. Can you locate the rope marks in the bridge?*

Continue along the towpath via Foxhill Bank Bridge No 111, Simpsons Bridge No 111D by the old, now derelict, warehouse.

*At the bend the old wharf, where barges moored overnight, can still be seen at the rear of the old Commercial Hotel building. This area looks very neglected and has featured in several regeneration plans.*

**Note: Those doing the circular walk from Bridge Street join the towpath via the grassed area and bench seating.**

Continue on the towpath and up the steps at Church Kirk Changeling Bridge No 112.

The towpath changes sides here.

Make your way back to the Thorn Inn – perhaps taking the other route, on the opposite side of the church, that you did not take at the start of the walk.

Some text in this leaflet has been taken from the 'Aspen Valley Caves' leaflet by Oswaldtwistle Civic Society (OCS) published in 1993.

There are a series of Oswaldtwistle Civic Society historic walks available below but the routes have not been walked and checked by The PROSPECTS Foundation so have not been included in the Discover Hyndburn series of walk leaflets.

[Ossie Walk 1 Past Industry](#)

[Ossie Walk 2 The Jenny Jaunt](#)

[Ossie walk 3 Pothouse Promenade](#)

[Ossie Walk 4 Hall Hike](#)

[Ossie Walk 5 Belthorn](#)



**Volunteering with  
Woody**

Woody is a Community Interest Company (C.I.C.) that was set up by a group of local volunteers back in 2012.

They help to manage woodlands in the borough of Hyndburn and aim to educate Hyndburn residents about the importance of woodlands and provide training in woodland crafts for the community.

If you would like to **Volunteer with Woody** visit the [website](#).

## DISCOVER HYNDBURN



There is a full version of this walk with photographs and gpx route on ViewRanger. The link is via the QRCode on the front page or this

[LINK](#)



More walks are available at: - <https://prospectsfoundation.org.uk/walking/>

These will be available from ViewRanger as we add them.

Please follow the Countryside Code and leave only your footprints in the countryside.

### The five points of the Countryside Code are:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs. Take maps/guidebooks. ...
- Leave gates and property as you find them ...
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home. ...
- Keep dogs under close control. ...
- Consider other people.

**We Hope You Enjoyed This Walk**





## The Countryside Code

### Respect other people

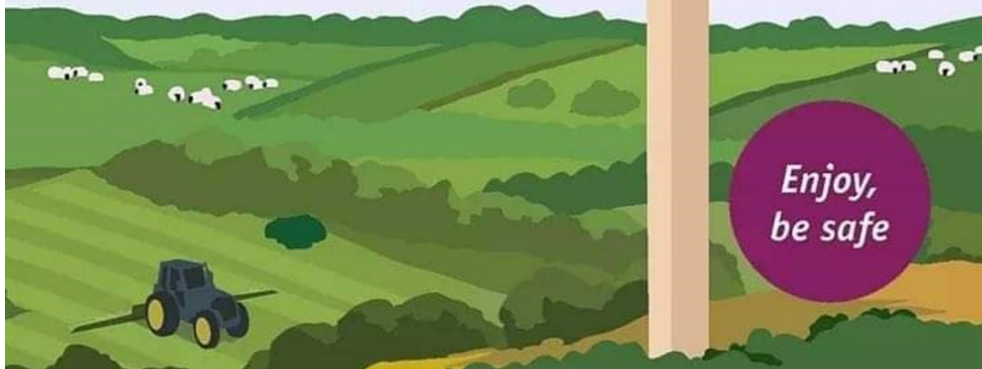
- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow

### Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep dogs under effective control
- Dog poo - bag it and bin it

### Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures



Welcome to PROSPECTS

The PROSPECTS Foundation is Hyndburn's community owned environmental charity and we are something of a unique and wonderful organisation. We were established by local residents as a company limited by guarantee in 1998 and became a registered charity in 1999.

Our aim is to improve people's quality of life through positive environmental action. By working with a diverse range of groups in Hyndburn we aim to inspire young people; improve health and wellbeing; support communities; improve the environment; and encourage sustainable living.

**All our projects fit under one of our six themes of sustainability -**

**Improving Biodiversity...**Improve biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

**Energy conservation...**Promote energy conservation and the use of renewables.

**Local Food...**Increase the production of locally grown food.

**Raising Environmental Awareness...**Raising awareness of sustainable development issues.

**Sustainable Transport...**Encourage greater use of sustainable transport

**Waste and Recycling...**Increase waste minimisation and recycling.

<https://prospectsfoundation.org.uk/>

Email: [info@prospectsfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@prospectsfoundation.org.uk)

## THE WINDFALL FUND...

Grants are available to community groups throughout Hyndburn for environmental projects which will improve the quality of life of local residents and contribute to the sustainable development of the Borough.

<https://prospectsfoundation.org.uk/the-windfall-fund/>

