

**The
Whitworth
and
Wardle
Moorland**

A Gazetteer Of Sites

Rob Bond

INTRODUCTION

Some time ago I had the pleasure of sketching (with words) those curious features that occur upon the moorland between the historic villages of Whitworth and Wardle.

This was my childhood playground. I lived in Syke, on the very edge of the moors and every evening and holiday would be spent on the rocks of Brow Edge and Rushy Hill, the brooks of Nab, the high table-top of Brown Wardle, the delights of Watergrove valley or as a special treat, a day long hike to the dark mysterious waterfalls of Healey Dell.

Years later I moved to Whitworth and whilst the Eastern Moorland was always my favourite, I began to explore the Western Hills. The vacant quarries and bleak ruins spoke a different language to the pastoral plains of the east yet they fascinated too.

Thus it has come to pass that now I must complete my chronicle and catalogue as many features of interest of the hills and valleys that surround the village of Whitworth: from Stoney Heys and Healey in the south, to Cowm and Knowsley in the north, from Bagden in the west to Watergrove and Crook Moor in the east.

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Gazetteer of Sites

AB TOP

North West of COWM RESERVOIR is a hidden delight to lovers of weird, lonely (and potentially very dangerous) places. Ab Top is a former quarry, named after Abraham Sanderson. The Sanderson family owned several quarries and when business became big indeed, they formed a limited company and Ab became a director. This place then was once the home of most of Whitworth's pre-industrial income.

Originally, seventeenth century Whitworth was the area known as Whitworth Square, a few crofts and a scattering of hill farms.

The industrial revolution came first to Manchester and then Rochdale. The mills were built in double quick time and they quickly grew hungry, hungry for the hard anthracite coal that the colliers extracted from open cast and drift mines on BROWN WARDLE and TONACLIFFE. Then, as stone was needed to build roads and bridges, the delphers came and soon the valley grew prosperous to the sound of pickaxe and chisel.

By 1870 the Whitworth Valley had undergone a complete and utter transformation. The village had its own mill culture and more stone was needed to build housing for the mill workers and cobbles for the streets. Ab top was quarried for the hard, granite-like stone that was crucial to road building. Whilst this area was only one of many Whitworth quarries, I believe that this has the best features of interest. I have to advise that if you only want to visit one of Whitworth's quarries, let it be this one.

The quarry is reached by taking one of the COWM RESERVOIR paths and then heading for the line of trees to the west of COWM BROOK. There is a footbridge over Walstead Brook and the high exposed rocks are the hiker's destination.

There are clear paths and visitors are well advised to keep to them. There is much to see but this area is very dangerous and it gets more so. I strongly discourage first timers from coming here alone. Pets, children and elderly people need to be closely observed.

It is also very beautiful here, in all seasons, and one of my favourite places.

ADAM GREEN STONE SD 89173 17502

A legendary though uninspiring rectangular stone at the moorland junction near LOBDEN where LIMERS GATE, WHITWORTH RAKE, HODGE HILL NOOK and SLACK GATE meet.

The stone has an 'H' on the eastern side. This stands for the ancient parish of Hundersford. The western side has an 'S' which stands for the equally ancient parish of Spotland. The east face also has the letters 'WW' which refer to Whitworth and Wardle. The west face has the date 1844, this is difficult to read as the stone has sunk below ground level.

It is of course, a boundary stone, there are many in a line from MANSTONE EDGE towards and over BROWN WARDLE as far as HADES HILL but as far as I know, only this one was dated.

The question remains: who was Adam Green?

BACK COWM FARM (RUIN) SD 87675 19759

Located north of COWM RESERVOIR and a little off the path that runs from Dules Mouth. It is difficult to explain an easy route so follow the path to the ruins of the old mill but instead of crossing Dules Mouth Brook, head east and up a track lined with paving stones. Another identical track cuts south at a right angle and this leads to the ruined farm.

Plenty of scope for investigation here. The first astonishing sight is the large sink, carved from a single block of stone. The remaining masonry shows that this was a good solid property. The cellar has partly collapsed but it is possible to enter and marvel at the massive stone meat table.

When the Parker family built this farm in 1870 they meant it to last. Oh dear. Unfortunately, the creation of COWM RESERVOIR put paid to that idea.

A very peculiar feature of this and surrounding farms are the upright stones that have large holes bored through them. Evidence of Vaccary Farming, the holes were to accommodate wooden beams enabling the farmers to quickly construct or remove fencing to control cattle movements. Indeed, the whole of the history of the upper Cowm valley suggests cattle farming, as opposed to the sheep farming which exists now. Again, this practice, along with all the farms was swept aside in the 1930's when the authorities tightened the reservoir water quality standards.

BACK FIELDS (RUIN) SD 87226 17509

A tiny ruin, south of ROBIN BANK and over the wall (or north of HIGHER HORSENDALE if you prefer). This was very probably a shepherd's bothy. Of more interest than the building is the field itself which has been scored with shallow channels (this can be seen very clearly from the Tonacliffe area on the other side of the valley).

This is of course an early drainage system, implemented when the fields were first cultivated from the moorland.

BACK LANE

An unimaginative name, this is the road that leads to WHITWORTH QUARRY from Tong Lane; when the quarry is in operation, it is frequented by high speed stone trucks and at weekends by two and four wheel off-roaders. A hike to the top is recommended on a clear day as the view is incredible.

BAGDEN QUARRY: SD 86484 18014

A dismal, dreary, disused delph. Situated on the Rossendale Way west of FERN WOOD and neither easy to get to nor worth a special trip. There is a pleasant waterfall but otherwise the site is bleak and depressing, especially when you consider what it must have been like for the quarry men of the 1850's, toiling with hand tools for ten hours a day, six days a week, in all weathers, heaving huge blocks of stone on wooden sledges down unforgiving hillsides. The only chance of a day off would be if and when you got your arm broken and even then you'd be lucky if you got the whole day off.

BROAD ING (RUIN): SD 90304 18544

This former farmhouse is one of many featured in this guide that fell victim to Rochdale's need for water. Ironically, these moorland farms were each sited next to a good, flowing water supply. Unfortunately the needs of Rochdale were considered to be more important and the great embankment of WATERGROVE RESERVOIR dammed HIGHER SLACK BROOK; this not only destroyed the lovely hamlet of Watergrove, but also doomed the farms in the water catchment area. Out of fear of pollution in the watercourses, the residents of the moorland homes were told to leave, and their houses were dynamited. Even the animals were evicted. The slopes of the hill which were once alive with the sound of the shouts of workers, the calls of animals and the laughter of children: all fell suddenly silent.

Broad Ing is situated east of BROWN WARDLE HILL as the moor slopes down to Watergrove and is easily reached by the new Pennine bridleway. The ruin is a jumbled heap of stone and leaves few clues to its original appearance. Roughly rectangular in shape and possibly comprising of two buildings (a house and a barn?) and well sited next to a fast flowing stream. Most of the original stonework is still here (in a pile) including roofslates and beams. Only the stone casements appear to be missing. When the deserted farms were pulled down, any stonework of value would be taken away as salvage, especially if the farms were next to a road (for example at LITTLE TOWN and HIGHER SLACK FARM). Sometimes the salvaging would be done *before* the actual demolition. (As an example of this, see STONEY HEYS).

A fascinating collection of old datestones, mullions and even an old sink have been set into the wall near the cattlegrid at WATERGROVE RESERVOIR.

BROW EDGE: SD 88941 16250

Also known as Healey Stones (not to be confused with HEALEY STONES HAMLET), this is the southernmost flank of RUSHY HILL and is famed for its vast abundance of gritstone rocks.

Long, long ago a great glacier sat upon the whole of Northern Britain. It was 800ft thick and as can be imagined, pretty damn cold. So cold in fact that it actually adhered to the rock of the land beneath.

Well, time went on and after a while it got warmer. The great glacier started to melt and before long there was a huge lake to the south of the Pennine Hills (the area where the lake stood is now called Cheshire). Now, bumping around in this great lake were icebergs, floating mini-glaciers containing rocks from far and wide.

Now, a fascinating feature of this part of the Whitworth Moorland is that it is studded with rocks that simply do not belong here. MANSTONE is a prime example. RUSHY HILL is made of shale yet here at Brow edge we see fascinating stones and boulders, some of which display folds and warps which suggest volcanic origin.

Many of these stones are huge, yet the largest have gone, purloined by the farmers who owned the land and sold them on to masons, who in turn cut them into setts or cobbles for the streets of Rochdale.

Beside the large boulders are several of what geologists call *felsenmeer*, (sea of rock): level or sloping areas of loose stone, calling cards from the glacier that sat here going through a periglacial stage of freeze and thaw. The upper

slope of the brow is trenched by a drain that catches water and dutifully (yet, nowadays pointlessly) carries it to the reservoirs to the south east.

On a clear day, the view from the stones is utterly breathtaking. On a not so clear day the view is good, but on a real rare one expect to see Kinder Edge (Derbyshire), Shutlingsloe (Staffordshire), Helsby Tor (Cheshire) and Snowdonia easily.

Natural drainage on the brow is very good; it rarely gets boggy here even after prolonged rain. Heather struggles to grow and the occasional whimberry bush is visible. The hill to the south is WHITE HILL with its peculiar gritstone outcrop.

A fantastic place, especially on a clear day or evening.

BROWN HILL: SD 89565 17961

A slight bump on the landscape immediately south west of BROWN WARDLE HILL. The grass is actually cut short by men with lawnmowers; you see this area is used by model aircraft enthusiasts. Of more interest to historians is a peculiar white washed small stone, about two feet wide and about ten inches high. It features what would appear to be a bench mark (the Awen symbol: it looks a bit like an arrow). This symbol was usually used by surveyors (there is one on the left hand churchyard gate post off WHITWORTH RAKE). There are also a lot of boundary stones here so it may have something to do with that; unless *you* know different.

BROWN HOUSE (SITE OF): SD 89394 16408

Situated near the north western shore of WHAM RESERVOIR, just off the track that runs from FROGGY WELLS to NAR.

This was once a colliers dwelling and associated buildings. The colliery itself is evident some fifty yards to the east. It is of opencast type and of typical size for this area. Brown House itself was owned by one Robert Shore and in 1836 was the scene of the fabled 'Turnip Fiasco'. Briefly, Mr Shore and his cohorts were fond of a spot of late night imbibing and adding to this their passion for card games (for money) the local neighbours were in fear of their (Shore & Co) immortal souls. So they decided to play God and put the wicked colliers in mortal fear. This they accomplished quite easily.

One night as the thirsty miners were deep in their cups and equally deep in blackjack, the neighbours dropped a sackful of turnips and chains down the chimney of Brown House. The noise and choking stench of soot sent the occupants running in fear- all the way to Syke, if the story is to be believed. On arrival at this village, Shore and his croneys were adamant that the devil himself had paid them a visit and they vowed to foreswear such nocturnal activity, even though the cold light of day displayed a different tale, namely half a dozen sooty turnips and a few bits of chain.

There is nothing left of Brown House now apart from a few grass covered piles of rubble.

BROWN WARDLE FARM (RUIN): SD 90071 17814

Close to a grove of sycamores and on the SLACK GATE track, this triple ruin is set either side of a huge puddle that never seems to dry up. Be careful here, there is an open cellar in the southerly ruin.

This farm was built in 1709 and owned by the Stott-Milne family, whose gated and pillared tomb (which was repaired in 1999) can be seen in ST BARTHOLOMEW'S graveyard. John Stott-Milne sold the farm to the Lord of the Manor (James Griffith Dearden) in or around 1900; John died March 12th 1913 aged 86.

Close by are HARD LANE and HIGH WARDLE LANE; odd trench-like tracks set just below the level of the fields.

In the field leading to STID FOLD is a line of curious upright stones with angled notches. A similar arrangement can be seen at THIMBLE HALL.

Inspection of the small ruin nearest the trees will reveal a small opening, just wide enough for a (slim) person to enter. This is the entrance to a short tunnel that runs under the nearby track and leads to a large vaulted cellar, complete with a stone cold table and stone cupboards. A torch is useful to see details but there is light enough to see by from the cellar vent. These vents are always present in underground cellars as they provide a draught that evaporates moisture from the cellar walls and thus chills the air. Natural refrigeration if you like.

Around 1800, one John Stott lived in this farm. He was 'the Brown Wardle Doctor', a herbalist and cunning man who concocted potions and philtres and tonics from the rich plant life that existed here at that time. He couldn't cure himself though and died in 1837.

BROWN WARDLE HILL 1300' (400m)

Noble, majestic and imposing; Brown Wardle deserves better than the word "hill". It is isolated from its fellows, occupies a prominent position and when viewed from the low ground of Wardle village, it is truly arresting. Admittedly, it makes less of an impression when seen from the Lobden area because this is already high ground. Even so, it is in a class of its own when compared to its neighbours.

'Brown Wardle' means 'Ward Hill' or Defence Hill and was of strategic significance during the dark Anglo Saxon ages (see also HADES HILL). Today, adults and children can wander up its Southern or Northern slopes (the eastern face is steeper).

Brown Wardle is a mixture of iron bearing shale, coal bearing shale, gritstone and peat. Geological studies suggest that the hill rose from the sea bed when this area was marine, about 400,000,000 years ago. That's a lot of noughts. The hill was formed, initially, by subterranean pressure, then shaped during the last ice-age. Actually, the hill is still being shaped; the soft shale is being gradually eroded, especially on the steeper eastern slopes. There used to be a track wide enough to drive a Land-Rover along the base of the eastern flank- now it is just a narrow path; landslides have swallowed the track. These landslips occur after every heavy rainfall; the eastern side of the hill is slowly moving eastwards!

The southeast corner of Brown Wardle is very wet and huge black spoil heaps butt out of the hillside; no vegetation grows on these vile shaly humps. These are the remains of Mountain Mine, once a valuable source of coal; the black heaps are the waste, useless deposits found in all coal mining activities.

A watercourse can be followed a little way up the hill and this leads to a gated tunnel; a mine drift (drifts go along, shafts go down). Water pours out of the drift and a taste confirms the appearance of the orange rocks in the water. Iron! This water flows into a mile long winding feeder channel and flows into the now redundant WHAM RESERVOIR.

Curiously, there is a spring around the corner, just off the old path to GREY PASTURE and the water that springs forth is totally iron free.

The northern face of Brown Wardle slopes down the site of an old firing range. The block houses are still here (and so are the spent bullets- if you know where to look).

The western side of the hill slopes gently and is less dramatic than the east. In a field to the south is the unmistakable ruin of HOPWOOD BARN and further along the petite square foundations of SLED HALL sit close to the hillside. A good path runs alongside a moor drain to HODGE HILL.

The southern face is well known for the numerous bell-pits that are scattered at the base and the south summit of the hill, and are best seen from the top, which is attained quite easily by following a well trodden/ridden path. (See also BROWN HILL)

The summit is uninteresting yet oddly worth visiting. Ascending from the south, the path goes straight past bell-pits and other earthworks and leads to a wide flat circle of stubbly grass and small stones. Uninteresting yes, but eerily still and quiet (unless you're up here in a thunderstorm, in which case things could get *extremely* interesting and far from still). The actual summit is marked by a cairn (the remains of a trig column).

CALF CLOUGH: SD 90480 19489

A steep ravine starting between MIDDLE HILL and HADES. The upper part is very steep, unclimbable (I've tried-ouch) shale. The water comes from springs in this shale and flows into HIGHER SLACK BROOK. The brook can be followed from the bottom of the shale ravine, past a waterfall and down to a crocodile infested swamp; here lies the remains of FLAG ALLEY. Tread carefully and continue to where the brook crosses the path from HADES FARM to HIGHER SLACK LANE by means of a ford with stepping stones. Now, continue to descend on the north (left hand side as you descend). The reason will soon become clear; trust me.

The water flows through a little water testing dam and once again, disappears under the rushes for a while. The north bank is flat, mossy and grassy but a couple of drainage ditches need to be negotiated. The south bank is very steep.

You will hear before you see rushing down, in a straight man made channel, the water that has come out of the tunnel under HADES HILL. After heavy rain or melting snow, this water (which has come from LANDGATE, nearly a mile away on the other side of Hades Hill) gushes with a frenzy down this trench. At these times you will need to think carefully about how you cross, or if you should go round. Normally it is easy to cross (with care).

This water combines with the water from Calf Clough in a boiling cauldron of fury near the thorn tree and thus united they blast their way eastwards. Step carefully as the mosses can grow over the brook, hiding it from view; one false step and Aaarrgghhh!

You can always *hear* the water though, especially after heavy rain but that is the time when this brook is most dangerous. The water is also always very cold. A series of small but wonderful waterfalls enable the brook to drop down steeply and dramatically towards Higher Slack Clough.

The going gets tough just before the end as the right hand (south) bank is marshy and the left bank is a tad steep. Try to traverse rather than climb up. Diligence pays through and the triumphant explorer stands, arms akimbo and chin thrust forth, as Calf Brook, with a final flourish, plunges at last into Higher Slack Brook.

Follow the stream down to the fence (there is a path to the right of the water) then follow the path to a gate and so on to WATERGROVE RESERVOIR.

CAPTAIN PASTURE: SD 89990 16492

Fields to the east of WHAM RESERVOIR that are used for hay production. Up to the late 1970s a strange 'house on stilts' stood here but is now gone.

CLAY CLOUGH FARM: SD 89848 16549

A lovely old farm, still worked, located north east of FROGGY WELLS. Its name is quite literal; the soil here contains much excellent quality clay and the farm is situated next to a clough. What more logical explanation could you ask for?

COCK HALL: SD 87934 18320

Twin farmhouses stand sentinel on the east facing slope near the south western corner of COWM RESERVOIR. The southernmost building bears the date 1847 whilst the northern building is much older, 17th century no doubt. Until very recently the older building was in a very sorry state. Derelict and fast becoming yet another moorland ruin.

Happily, this old house has been rebuilt.

Cock Hall is reached by a lane which runs from HALL FOLD. This track is known locally as 'The Cockle' which surely is a corruption of the words 'Cock Hall Lane' and not some bizarre shell-fish reference...

COPY CLOUGH: SD 90992 19734

A gully carved out of the soft shale of upper HADES by a brook that springs from the top of this hill. The brook runs under HIGHER SLACK GATE by a culvert and flows into HIGHER SLACK BROOK.

COW CLOUGH HAMLET: SD 87661 18756

I urge all readers of this book to visit Cow Clough. Whilst now picked clean of archaeological finds (apart from the broken remains of the odd Cod's bottle) it is an utterly magnificent place, unrivalled in Whitworth and equal to any of the Watergrove ruins.

The best approach is to climb HALL FOLD to the top, past FOLD HEAD and along HIGH BARN LANE to Shore Head, then descend Cow Clough Rake which is a treasure itself. This rake was overgrown and prone to flood until

lottery money was allocated in 1999 to clean it up and fit a drainage system to cope with the run off from the high hills.

The paved track clearly shows the wear from the iron clad wheels of the stone trucks and the central random cobbles which provided purchase for the hooves of the labouring ponies.

In the 1850's, at the peak of active production in the quarries above, Cow Clough was home to some fifty people. This was not some isolated farm but a thriving community. Some of the dwellings were used as lodgings, indeed, a group of Nuns once enjoyed accommodation here (although Cow Clough was never a Nunnery as some assert). The Nuns eventually relocated to permanent residence in Mount Pleasant at Facit.

Close inspection of the Cow Clough buildings yields much about the size and shapes of the various farmhouses. Perhaps it is misleading to describe these properties as farms, it would be better to refer to them as crofts since, while they certainly grew produce and raised animals for food, wool, milk, butter, cheese etc; this was out of self sufficiency rather than for profit. The main source of income for these people came out of the hillside. I recall visiting this place, for the first time, with my Father in 1978 and seeing stacks of cut and finished flagstones ready to be despatched. It was like the Marie Celeste. The delph was closed by force in the 1930's by order of the local water authority.

The residents of Cow Clough also supplemented their income by the popular and age old art of brewing beer. Even in the 1850's, this was illegal but I doubt if there were many policemen on this harsh hillside! Not that the law, when invoked, would turn a blind eye to unlicensed brewing or its consumption.. One famous amateur beer-maker, Matty "Morning" Lord was fined by magistrates for this practice. A delphman by the name of Ned "Simeon" Clegg was fined for 'bawdy language whilst drunk'. Of course, Whitworth's most notorious boozer was Dick "Drunk-as-a-Skunk" Tattersall of Stid Fold who was so sloshed on home made beer he tried to get into the wrong house. This particular event earned Dick a visit to the Whitworth Stocks.

The beer must have been good if the quality of the water is anything to go by. Look for this; go to the northernmost ruin and on the right of the track, follow a line of upright stones, down some steps to a well. Flowing into the well is crystal clear water. Go on, taste it. It is sweet and refreshing.

Cow Clough Rake continues northward to the farms at WALSTEAD CLOUGH.

COWM BROOK

Halcowm to Tong End.

Now, Cowm Brook actually rises in a puddle of mud high on the moorland known as Old Laurence Top. It is best to follow it from the small (and according to legend; bottomless) tarn between AbTop and the spoils of Whitworth Quarry; map reference SD871198.

The brook flows eastwards from this tarn (with alacrity) and heads towards the remains of the ancient farming community of Cowm. The remains are scant indeed and very little is visible of the cotes, crofts and cottages that once worked this pasture.

The brook disappears from time to time under overgrowth or rubble. Look out for the stone slabs that bridge the brook; more remnants of the farming community. Also, clearly visible are the upright flagstones. Walling that now looks like crooked teeth. These are vaccary walls; a vaccary was a small-scale commercial cattle farm with a dairy and cow pasture. The word is usually linked to grazing land in the moors and valleys of the Pennines in Yorkshire and Lancashire and vaccaries often feature these slabstone walls which predate the commoner dry-stone walls by centuries. Vaccary is an old English word which actually comes from the Latin 'Vacca' (cattle) and is the same root as our word 'vaccinate' as the original vaccinations were to prevent the spread of 'Cow Pox' (smallpox). One lives and learns.

Moving on then, we follow the path round and southwards. Care needs to be taken here as there are hidden trips and traps and as the rounded east flank of Ab Top is rounded, the valley floor becomes a muddy swamp. If in doubt, keep left of the brook as much as possible.

Soon, ahead you will see a small copse of trees and Cowm Brook becomes even more enthusiastic. Cowm Reservoir is now ahead but the way becomes complicated as the path approaches a bizarre jumble of ruins.

Welcome to Dules Mouth Mill.

Now, Dules Mouth refers to the wooded glen to the east, 'dule' of course means 'devil'; so here we have the Devils Mouth. I only mention this because curiously, in Derbyshire, just outside the village of Castleton there is a deep ravine which goes by the picturesque name of the 'Devils Arse'. Nearly eighty miles away too. That is a very long digestive tract.

The mill ruins are of interest to industrial archaeologists; the main part of the mill was a large engine, water powered of course, which was capable of a number of tasks; crushing, rolling, squeezing; all facilitated by interchangeable gear. Of particular note is the basin stone, still showing the scratches and rust left from the hand tools that were sharpened there.

We continue toward Cowm Reservoir by hopping over Dules Mouth Brook which flows down from the east but keep the larger Cowm Brook to the right. Notice the vaccary stones that lead up to Back Cowm Farm ruins (an interesting detour) and cross the bridge that was built to accommodate the emergency services during the terrible fire of 1975 (see Cowm Reservoir). Cowm Brook is now on the left and in spate is a fierce beast indeed. After a few yards, the brook surges into an underground channel and vanishes. Bye Bye Cowm Brook.

But wait, in true reservoir fashion, the brook emerges at t' other end so let us rush past the walled track, past Cowm Brook House (the former water-ski centre) and down Tong Lane to the base of the embankment. There was once a farm here called Syke but no trace remains as the mighty embankment was built on it's land. Head towards the sign that says 'No Admittance' and wrestle with your conscience. It's only a little trespass... to the gated tunnel on the right with a sluice control valve before it. The water that pours forth is the newly resurrected Cowm Brook. It is joined by any water which has overflowed from the reservoir and flows south (now called Tong End Brook) to join the River Spodden at the former Orama Mill (now called Healey Walk).

COWM RESERVOIR

It would probably be grossly unfair to suggest that a jinx hangs over Cowm Reservoir, especially since so many people are so fond of its many attractions. It is a point of fact however that the reservoir was born out of crisis, its construction was a farce and the end of its serviceable career was nothing short of a scandal.

In the 1820's the population of Whitworth was around 120 people. By 1850 this figure had soared to around 7,500 (slightly more than the current population) and the water supply situation was desperate.

So, on the 26th of December 1868, the first spade dug the first sod from the turf of Cowm Valley and construction began.

Seven and a half years of back-breaking toil by the armies of navvies and labourers resulted in Whitworth's first public water reservoir and the proud engineers stood on and waited for the great Sykeside Embankment to hold back the flowing waters of Cowclough and Cowm Brook. They waited for the water level to rise, for the valley to flood and their marvellous construction to fill. They waited for the splendid sight of the sun shimmering on the surface of this lake-to-be and they waited for the thunderous applause of the happy, the grateful, the no longer thirsty folk of Whitworth.

They waited.

They waited and waited and waited.

In actual fact they waited for 18 months on account of the fact that the bedrock of the reservoir leaked so badly it simply would not fill. This rock had to be excavated and the gaps filled with cement before the reservoir would hold water.

At last, in 1877 the 'dam thing' worked and the parched throats of Whitworth were refreshed at a total (Victorian) cost of £46,000.

98 years later the disaster occurred that is still etched on the minds of many Whitworth people. The day the noonday sky was blackened by post apocalyptic smoke is remembered by many with horror.

It had been the scandalous practice to allow the dumping of tyres in the craters of the disused quarry workings above Dules Mouth Wood. On the 18th of July 1975 these tyres were set alight and their molten poison leached into the feeder brooks. Within hours the reservoir, Tong End Brook, River Spodden and River Roch were utterly polluted. Whilst the rivers were able to flush themselves clean the reservoir never will. It is poisoned forever.

Today though, Cowm lives on although no longer a reservoir. In summer this is Whitworth's Riviera. Many come to sunbathe by the still waters and are totally unaware of the community that thrived here before the need for water took their homes and land. Sadly, most reservoirs are destructive in that they drown the communities that sheltered in the valleys that are flooded, possibly the most famous example being Derwent in Derbyshire. Closer to home and later in this book you will soon read the story of Watergrove, another sad example. The occupancy of Cowm was not on the same scale as Watergrove. When Cowm Reservoir was built, around 80 lived in the doomed valley whereas some 250 people were evicted from the Watergrove area.

The name Cowm is Celtic and a similar word is often used in geology, a Cwm is a high valley or basin like depression in the land.

CREY FARM look under LANDGATE

CREY PASTURE FARM see GREY PASTURE FARM

CROOK FARM (RUIN) SD 91578 18917

On the slopes above RAMSDEN ROAD and recognised by the two trees, this former farmstead is located close to a good watercourse which, having escaped its drainage, has flooded the whole area creating a kind of aquatic environment, especially after substantial rainfall. Wellies are recommended to potential visitors. Seriously, the site is certainly worth the effort to get to. The best way is to go to THIMBLE HALL and carry on through the fields towards CROOK HILL. You should be aiming for the two trees but keep an eye on where you are putting your feet because this entire moor is criss-crossed with boggy streaks.

The triple ruin has a paved track. Look at the wall near the left hand tree (as you face Crook Hill). The water would have poured into the stone pot. If you stand under the other tree and look at the field (again facing Crook Hill), you will see the top of the arched cellar. Steps take you down into the large vaulted chamber. The floor of the cellar is strewn with an alarming number of bones!

Without doubt, worth visiting.

CROOK HILL 1335' (408m)

Recognised by the squat, round sheep shelter upon its summit. Affording excellent views of RUSHY HILL and the Cheshire plain to the southwest and views of Cranberry Dam, Walsden and Calderdale from its eastern side.

The western side of Crook Hill consists of old levels, stone pits and quarries. The eastern side is hummocky and boggy. It is quite possible to sink knee deep in peat bogs during wet weather so stick to the paths!

There is a wooden cross on the top of Crook Hill, by a shallow clough. The cross marks the spot where a little lad died. He was playing with friends at a farm near Shore during snowy weather. The farmer shouted at them to go home but this lad lost his bearings and ended up on the moor. He was hidden by snow and found a few days later.

The lad's name was Mark Jenkinson.

DIRTY LEACH; SD 89698 16579

A *very* well named swamp between WHAM RESERVOIR and CAPTAIN PASTURE. It was so named by the straight talking packhorse drivers who used to camp overnight here, leaving the following morning for Rochdale.

DRY BANK FARM (RUIN)

The remains of this farm are situated in a field on the southern upper slope of HADES, directly above HADES HILL FARM. The field is walled and enclosed by barbed wire. There is a gate at the bottom of the field but it isn't really worth the trouble.

ENDING; SD 88456 16118

Long associated with the homes of the well to do folks (Mount Healey and Mount Ending) and rich vegetation (bell heather, ling and whimberry), Ending also has super views for those who can't/won't climb nearby RUSHY HILL. Two deep, water filled quarries display previous resourcefulness. No doubt some would find them ugly but the rocks and spoil heaps have been 'softened by nature's hand' and now they look quite pleasant.

ENDING RAKE; SD 88392 15985

This track begins (or ends) at Market Street (A671) near Healey Corner. It climbs a steep slope, under a delightful arched bridge and onto moorland. The track continues through HEALEY STONES VALLEY to NAR where one can go forward to FROGGY WELLS or right to HEALEY STONES HAMLET.

FAFFLETY BROW; SD 89368 17193

With a name like a character from a Jane Austen novel, one would have high hopes for Fafflety Brow. In actual fact, it is just a steep slope between LIMERS GATE near MANSTONE. At the bottom of the slope is the feeder channel that runs from the old mine at BROWN WARDLE. It is also the final resting place of golf balls that have strayed from the nearby golf course. On a fine summers day it is a splendid place for a stroll. The view is magnificent; it really is like being on top of the world. Many years ago, families would come here and eat picnics on the slopes of RUSHY HILL and MOORSIDE FARM served teas.

FAFFLETY FARM (SITE OF) SD 89531 17127

Charmingly named but disappeared, almost without trace. The foundations can be found in the corner of a field below FAFFLETY BROW.

FERN ISLE WOOD (Doctors Wood) SD 87174 17796

Located north of Spring Mill reservoir, Fern Isle was nicknamed 'Doctors Wood' as it was the practice of the World Famous Whitworth Doctors to come here to pick herbs and roots for their philtres and potions. The doctors are long gone but the herbs are still here if you know where and when to look. Elderflowers, Dandelions, Shepherds Purse, Oak bark, Nettle, Yarrow, Plantain, Ground Ivy and more are here in abundance.

This is a lovely place, the old ford, the line of trees called Danes Wood, the arched packhorse bridge, the babbling Prickshaw Brook, no wonder that so many have such fond memories of this hidden corner of Whitworth.

It is strange that I often spend whole days on Ab Top or Hades or Rushy Hill and see not one person, yet whenever I come here (which is always in summer) I see a single person pottering around in the wood.

Perhaps they live here...

FLAG ALLEY FARM (RUIN) SD 90564 19235

With possibly the most peculiar name in the area, it is a disappointment to record that access to this site is virtually impossible as it is located in the middle of a vile swamp! It can be reached by following the path that traverses the eastern face of MIDDLE HILL to the row of seven trees, then descend keeping the brook that emerges from the hillside to the left. Look among the

reeds of the marsh and there you will see the ruin. Don't forget your waders. These marshes were channelled into drains during farm occupancy but years of neglect have resulted in blockage of the drainage system and the water floods causing impassable mires.

FOLD HEAD; SD 87835 17883

Located at the summit of Hall Fold, this old house has undergone considerable restoration and was once (in the 1890's) home to the celebrated athlete James 'Treacle' Sanderson.

Next to Fold Head is the old delphers track to Shore Head and COWCLOUGH and above this, the lane to Limed Farm. Due west is a path that leads to Prickshaw Brook. This path is called Millers Gutter.

In the late seventeenth century, the original Fold Head was used by a persecuted religious sect called Presbyterians. Now, I don't know what they got up to here, high on the hillside but it must have been good because records show a congregation at that time of 284 people!

FROGGY WELLS; SD 89587 16618

Four natural drainage channels carry trickling brooks from the summit of RUSHY HILL to the southeast corner of the hill where they terminate as two small waterfalls which pour into natural, square pots. The early packhorse drivers who camped here called this place Froggy Wells. The waters flow underground (joining water from the feeder which has finally arrived from BROWN WARDLE) into WHAM RESERVOIR.

HALFWAY HOUSE

This well known Whitworth Pub on Market Street was originally called The Bay Horse. However, as it was the 'Half Way' rest point for the horse drawn Rochdale to Bacup Tram service, the name stuck even though it is geographically speaking not the halfway point at all.

The horses would be fed and watered and stabled here (the stable is now a motor repair garage) and the drivers would be fed from the kitchen, parts of which date back to the 14th century.

The pub is actually a converted farmhouse so old that no-one seems to know when it was first built. It appears on the 1843 ordnance survey map as a pub (with both names!) but before that is a mystery.

Of great interest is the stone trough in the wall across the road from the pub. A public watering place for horses, fed by a nearby spring that eventually found use with a later technology: when steam trams replaced horse drawn ones, the trams took on water here.

GREEN ROADS FARM (RUIN): SD 90334 18184

Situated close to HIGH WARDLE FARM and near to ROADS FARM, this ruin is fenced off from the sheep so that it is quite overgrown with weeds and bushes and wild flowers, especially in summer when flies, bees and wasps can hinder exploration. The rubble is loose and piled high so proceed with caution. The cellar is blocked though so no worries there. Drainage is good, the nearby watercourse is fast flowing and channelled eastwards to the reservoir.

GREY PASTURE (RUIN): SD 90321 18711

So says the little wooden plaque in front of this jumble of stones, situated on the lower east slopes of BROWN WARDLE, north of BROAD ING. This is a misprint; the Farm here was called *Crey* Pasture. Now, *crey* is an old Lancashire word for crow and usually denotes a wooded area. There is a beautiful single sycamore tree here, three trees at nearby MIDDLE HILL FARM and four at HADES FARM further north. Not exactly a wooded area but this explanation makes more sense than, well, a grey pasture. The building is completely ruined but three rooms can be vaguely identified. There is no barn but there is a nearby watercourse. The farm was built in 1784.

HADES FARMS: there are five farms, all ruined, that are named after HADES HILL. I have listed them in the order that they would be visited, travelling from Whitworth or Wardle.

HADES FARM (RUIN): SD 90440 18940

200 yards north of MIDDLE HILL FARM, at the base of MIDDLE HILL (which prompts the question: why is it called *Hades* Farm?), this was quite a large group of buildings with some exterior walling evident.

The farm was protected from the elements (but not the demolition team) by four sycamore trees and sited next to a good watercourse; so good it never fails to test the vocabulary of hikers who prefer their boots dry. Even the new bridleway floods after rain.

One of the above mentioned sycamore trees has, at some point in its chequered history, had the misfortune to receive a lightning strike resulting in a massive split in the trunk.

There is much scope for archaeology here but a great deal of masonry shifting is needed. Myself and my children have unearthed many interesting relics: old china, bottles, tools, all broken but nonetheless a fascinating clue to the lifestyles of the residents of the farm.

In the Watergrove Visitor centre there is a fascinating photograph of this farm before, during and after it was blown up by the Home Guard.

LOWER HADES FARM (RUIN) SD 90763 19408

Sited just off the HIGHER SLACK LANE. Utterly ruined with very little wall left and overgrown with weeds, it leaves a feeling of mild depression. This farm was built in 1728.

HIGHER HADES FARM (RUIN) SD 90485 19609

Situated below the quarry on MIDDLE HILL, close by the ravine of CALF CLOUGH, it must be supposed that the name of the farm was given before the farms above (and therefore *higher*) were built.

The farm was quite large, six separate buildings can be identified and some of the masonry has either been taken away, or piled together, offering scope for archaeology.

The farm was built in 1742.

HADES HILL END FARM (RUIN) SD 90432 19826

This farm is almost devoid of interest (apart from the cellar which, in summer, is home to hundreds of harts tongue ferns) but what a fantastic view! Middle Hill, Brown Wardle peeping behind, Hunger Hill to the west then Rooley Moor with the cheeky usurper Knowl Hill trying to get in on the act. Hades summit behind and then to the east, Crook Moor, with Blackstone Edge in the background and to the south; wow! The Whole World.

This site is easily reached by traversing the east side of MIDDLE HILL, past the seven trees, up the edge of the quarry then following the top path that curves to the right rather than going straight forward over HADES HILL. Look for the rubble (this *is* the highest farm).

Come on up!

HADES HILL FARM (RUIN) SD 90688 19637

Situated on the slopes of HADES HILL, just above the tunnel and worryingly close to a fenced and capped disused mineshaft. The doorposts are intact and four ground floor rooms are clearly discernible from the heaps of rubble. There are two outhouses, a dangerously unstable cellar and a marvellous view.

This farm was built in 1694 by the Milne family who may have become joined with the Stotts of BROWN WARDLE FARM as the last resident of that farm was John Stott-Milne.

HADES HILL 1419' (423m)

Hades Hill has a lovely, romantic (if somewhat sinister) Old Norse name yet is a disappointment to mountain lovers. It lacks the shapeliness of BROWN WARDLE and MIDDLE HILL; it is higher, true, but that height is flat, dreary and featureless. In fact it is difficult to establish exactly where the summit of Hades Hill is. There is a cairn on what could well be the summit but I cruelly suspect that the cairn is here because there was some stone here (a ruined sheep shelter).

The view is good but the view from ROUGH HILL is better.

The hill is not rounded like the upper head of Rough Hill; in actual fact, it is not really a hill at all, it is the continuation of the ridge that begins as Middle Hill and continues northward as Trough Edge, leading in turn to Freeholds Top, and Clough Head near the summit of the A681 Bacup to Gauxholme road.

The north east side of the hill is barren and hummocky. Ramsden Brook rises halfway down and flows eastwards to Ramsden Clough Reservoir.

The west side is also rather featureless apart from the terrifying shale ravine above Knowsley Farm and the spoil heaps on the slopes above LANDGATE. The summit, as I have said, is very large and very flat. The most fun one can have up here is practising the old orienteering skills with map and compass in a good winter fog.

Hades Hill's claim to fame can be found in the museums of Rochdale and Bacup: arrow heads, axes and other flint implements.

There was a Neolithic settlement here and it was a defensive one right up to the dark ages. The Saxon period was one of perpetual war. There was no 'United' Kingdom; there wasn't even a nation ruler. You owned what you took and held on to it until it was taken by force.

The natural 'horseshoe' of hills would have been a massive defensive barrier against invaders from the south. Brow(n) Wardle means 'Guard Hill' (Ward= Guard) and a troop of armed fighters would be stationed on these hills; ready for trouble.

Why the fuss? Well the path that runs over Hades Hill was once of vital importance since it was a channel of communication, trade and travel and was to be defended vigorously.

This same path has been of vital national importance right up to the twentieth century.

This was LIMERS GATE, the track that ran from Rochdale (Bull Brow to be precise).

The southern slope of Hades Hill is called, confusingly, Hades. This side is of great interest and here is more history, albeit comparatively recent history. This was a large colliery in the early nineteenth century. The steam revolution placed huge demands for coal and the hard anthracite-like coal of this area was ideal. When seen from the pavey stones of LONG CAUSEWAY, the black spoil heaps, old levels and naturally eroded shale banks give the shattered slopes a satanic appearance.

There are some interesting hikes though, especially around the upper rim of the Rough Hill/Hades edge.

At the very base of Hades is a good track. This is HIGHER SLACK GATE and the track terminates near a large spoil heap. Twenty yards to the north of the track is a tunnel, out of which pours water. This tunnel, built in 1935, runs under Hades Hill and emerges near Crey Farm at LANDGATE (accessed via a rough road that runs from the A671 at the former Red Lion, Shawforth). This tunnel was built to divert water from Landgate, under the hills for 911 yards and thence down to WATERGROVE RESERVOIR. A lot of trouble one may think, tunnelling under a huge hill like Hades for a bit of water, but wait: stand by this tunnel and watch the water flow out (even after a long dry spell). Stand there for five minutes. How much water has poured by? Now estimate how much water pours out of the tunnel each day. A lot. This is one of the prime feeders for Watergrove and after heavy rain, the water blasts out. Notice too the orange ochre: iron. The rocks at the site of ROADS MILL

behind Watergrove are also coloured with this very water, despite the fact that it has by then been diluted with water from other streams.

I have walked through this tunnel twice and without a torch it is a terrifying experience. Halfway through the tunnel, the walker is surrounded by the deafening sound of rushing water, but it is too dark in there to see the source of this noise. It is obviously an adjacent sluice, but it sets the heart thumping. So much so that the ever energetic North West Water have gated and padlocked both entrances to the tunnel to prevent subterranean coronaries (and also because of the presence of underground gases).

HALLFOLD; SD 87963 17813

Now, picture if you will, the Whitworth Valley of 1820. The township as we know it was high moorland countryside apart from six very small and independent settlements: Healey (the bottom of Ending Rake), Whitworth (the area around Whitworth Square), Tong End, (what you see is what there was!) Cowm (from Cow Clough to Halcowm) and Hall Fold.

At the bottom of Hallfold is a little church with a quaint belfry. This is the United Reform Church and was built in 1872. The building itself is not actually a church, it was a school. The church itself was demolished and replaced by a new building behind the old one. The URC held a congregation of over 600 people and was built to replace the overburdened Hallfold Chapel which stood by the open ground which was once the graveyard, across the road. This chapel in turn was built in 1718 to relieve the overburdened house of worship at Fold Head.

And so to ascend Hallfold. On the right is Bankside, a datestone records the year 1618 but sadly the house to which it pertains has gone. To the right of Bankside is the aptly named Water Street (especially after heavy rain) and the water in question comes from Miller's Gutter, also at Fold Head.

To continue upwards is a delight in summer as wild flowers grow aplenty on the shale crags.

The summit of Hallfold is of course Fold Head and High Barn Lane offers a high altitude trip the Cow Clough and Cowm.

HAMER PASTURE RESERVOIR SD 89565 16180

The lower of the twin reservoirs at the southeast base of RUSHY HILL (the other one is WHAM RESERVOIR). Constructed in 1846, 36ft deep and with a capacity of 72,000,000 gallons of water this once fine lake now stands empty and forlorn, an empty crater which nature is rapidly returning to her bosom. Bushes, trees and an abundance of plant life grows in plenty. The reservoir was formed by damming the valley and was led by waters from BROW EDGE and the springs at NAR. This water, no longer held back, flows past LOUSY HILLOCK and on to Buckley before joining the River Roch at Smallbridge.

HARD LANE SD 90350 17677

An old farm track running from Wardle village and through the fields, north to BROWN WARDLE FARM, past the copse of trees, where it becomes HIGH WARDLE LANE and runs to the farm of that name. The track is unusual in that, for most of its length it runs *below* the level of the fields, the way secured by stone walling.

HEALEY DELL

Whilst my attention has mostly been drawn to the hills, moors and ancient settlements of Whitworth, I don't really think I can get away with ignoring our most famous beauty spot. So let's go for a walk in the woods.

The best place to begin is at the gate on Dell Road opposite Bee House; SD 88044 15907. After passing under the railway bridge and glancing down and to the left you are treated to a scene of breathtaking beauty, whatever the season. The immense grace and splendour of the viaduct is amplified when viewed at such close quarters.

This viaduct was built in 1870, has eight arches and from the river bed is 105 feet high. The first two arches (from the southern side of the valley) are straight spans but arches three, four and five are skewed. This is to accommodate the change of angle of the piers in the valley below which had to be aligned with the flow of the river.

At the tops of the piers, under the arches, can be seen the blocks which would have supported the wooden arch formers during construction. Each arch measures 30 feet across.

Turning away from the viaduct and taking a few steps down the cobbled lane brings us to a fence beyond which lie mysterious ruins. This place had the incredible name of 'Th' Owd Mill At Botham O' t' Thrutch' and after it's construction in 1675 it became many things; a corn mill, a fulling mill, a ruin and now sadly, a vacant reminder of times gone by. There are tantalising clues to the work that took place here, most tantalising of all are the twin arches that span the river. A wooden fence keeps enthusiastic visitors away from the arches lest it be assumed that they are foot bridges. A very large person could do great damage here.

Continue along the cobbled track a little way to marvel at the waterfalls and the charming brook that chuckles down the hill from Ending.

Up the steps and up the hill, turning sharp left and goggle at the rocks and moss above and the large weir below. The weir was built to check the flow of water and slow it down before it hammered into, what is in effect (for the river) a sharp right turn. The power of the water is indicated by the fantastically shaped rocks. The moss of the hillside perpetually drips as the sponge-like peat of the hillside yields its burden of moisture.

The massive beech trees are very vulnerable here. They cling to the ravine by drilling their roots into the rock but each winter storm results in fresh casualties.

And so, after a short ascent, a flight of stone steps drops down to the left.

Clumsy pedestrians should take particular care here as these steps are always slippery. On reaching the water, first time visitors will be treated to a jaw dropping experience. Millions of gallons of water perform a display that words can never describe. This is The Fairy Chapel, the famous and iconic view of Healey Dell. Ahead, to the north is The Other Viaduct. This one carries a road, Station Road, not a railway.

The climb back up the steps to the path is a bit of a pull but mercifully brief.

The main path continues north to another short flight of steps to Station Road.

Despite its amazing geological and historic attractions, Healey Dell is never over-run with visitors. Indeed, it is quite usual to never see another person

down there, save on a Sunday afternoon or when the walking club decides to pay a visit. The point I am trying to make is this: very few people come to visit Healey Dell. Even Whitworth people seem to steer clear. I would go further...I know of very few people who have an enthusiastic liking for the Dell. I know of several who strongly dislike it (yet without having a sound reason). The conclusion that I have come to is that isn't important if Healey Dell is liked or disliked. What is important is that is respected.

I think the fairies of Healey Dell are Eldritch indeed and they dance the Widdershins dance of Circe in their watery abode. Healey Dell may never win a way to your heart and if so, be grateful; for Healey Dell has a heart too and it is a heart of darkness.

HEALEY STONES HAMLET; SD 89017 16015

Just two minutes walk from the busy A671 is a little time-slice of the nineteenth century. The hamlet takes its name from the nearby delphs and boulders. Several independent cottages and a row of neat houses were once the homes of the colliers and quarrymen who worked here and close by. In 1822 a chapel was constructed but has disappeared.

The centre of this forgotten village has a strange group of ruins, a solid reminder of a time that did not quite make it; yet it is good to see an echo of history left alone. Time will no doubt come when the ruins are cleared away, though I hope not.

To the left of the ruins runs Road Lane, the link with the A671.

To the right is Moor Edge, a large renovated property and before it the track that passes White Hill farm to become Wham Bottom Lane which joins the A671 at Mount Healey.

Healey Stones hamlet is a beautiful little place, utterly worth visiting. Do it now!

HEALEY STONES VALLEY; SD 88804 16223

A strange landscape that extends from NAR to ENDING. The road running through the valley is ENDING RAKE. Starting from Nar, the single storey building is SNIG HALL, the next is Croft House with its three triangular roofs. The road here is good and well drained, easily passable by car.

The most remarkable feature is on the right; the rock and boulder strewn height of BROW EDGE.

The flat valley floor used to be graced by a stream, only its rocky bed remains. Also, recently there was a horrible illegal tip in the valley: a dumping ground for furniture, household waste, fridges and other detritus. At this time many of the buildings at Nar were derelict. Now people have returned to the valley, the rubbish has been buried and the fly-tippers hopefully strung up from a nearby tree. Healey Stones Valley has never looked so good.

On the left is an embankment crowned by a wall. The wall has been built to incorporate the large exposed boulders. This is WHITE HILL.

HEY WOOD; SD 89481 15958

A not inconsiderable copse of old oak, ash and sycamore on steep sloping ground immediately south of HAMER PASTURE RESERVOIR. At the top of the wood is an old quarry, evident by the spoil heaps and the large boulders that are scattered throughout the wood. The legendary "Cuckoo stone" used to be here but has long gone. There was also a colliery at the western edge of the wood; a drift entrance used to be visible in a field but it too seems to have vanished.

Drainage is good and vegetation flourishes, with berry bushes and bracken enjoying this peaceful spot.

HIGH BARN LANE; SD 87813 18170

This track runs from FOLD HEAD to Shore Head and was used for transporting stone from the quarries of THURNS HEAD and Goats Hill and was a vital route between Old Whitworth, HALLFOLD and COWCLOUGH. Walking north towards Cowm, the effort spent in creating this track was clearly immense. The exposed rock of the cutting was chiselled by hand. Part way along is a small building that looks like a platelayers hut and this makes sense because there was an actual railway line running along here and I can remember there used to be an abandoned stone truck at the northern end. High Barn Lane terminates at Cow Clough Rake but another path may be followed to the east (past a tall triangular gate post) and this enters a field that offers a good aerial view of Cock Hall Farm and a good path leads down, or to continue north leads past a quarryman's bothy to the basin of Shore Head.

HIGH WARDLE FARM (RUINS) SD 90228 18234

Located a little to the east of mountain mine at the southeastern foot of BROWN WARDLE HILL and clearly visible from the trans-pennine bridleway. Built in 1726, this was a large settlement, some five or six buildings can be recognised from the near total ruination; some walling remains to show rooms, doorways etc. A single sycamore provides shade in summer, shelter in winter.

The central building has a buttress supporting a wall that was leaning alarmingly: a feeling of irony is generated by the fact that the demolition team left this standing and little else!

In the 1840s High Wardle was owned by Samuel and Edmund Lord, brothers who ran a kind of pre-diesel haulage business. They owned sixteen Galloway donkeys ('gals') and transported lime from Clitheroe to Rochdale.

A wonderful ruin with much scope for investigation but drainage is very poor; it is very boggy hereabouts so choose a dry time to come.

DANGER! There is a deep, open cellar in the southernmost ruin (nearest to Watergrove)

HIGH WARDLE LANE

Runs from the trees near BROWN WARDLE FARM, past HIGH WARDLE FARM and eastward past ROADS FARM to Watergrove. This is the longer of the quite remarkable trench-like lanes that cross the moor only in this area.

HIGHER CROFT HOLES FARM (RUIN) SD 86965 17115

Eagle eyed readers will note the word 'high' crops up a lot in Whitworth! This site is certainly high, certainly a croft (no barn) but I'm not sure about the holes. The location is on the border of Whitworth and Rochdale, west of Spring Mill Reservoir.

The house was built in 1670 and is now totally ruined. Some interesting masonry remains, notably stone windowsills, doorposts etc. (Interesting masonry usually gets stolen to be used as garden features but this site is just too far away from civilisation for any of that nonsense).

From this airy vantage point, the old hamlets of Healey, Tonacliffe and Whitworth can be seen as distinct and separate colonies.

Heading north from the ruin is a very rough stone track that goes over a stone bridge. The brook which flows under this bridge can be followed along its southern bank to OAK. This is a steep hike but is really worth while as the waterfalls are delightful.

HIGHER HORSEDALE (RUIN) SD 87226 17315

Located on an unnamed hillside to the west of Spring Mill Reservoir, this ruin is oddly named as there is no Lower Horsendale, unless it's among the fishes in the reservoir. The building is a jumble of rubble although corner stones and other features are visible. The ruin is guarded by a gnarled and twisted ancient hawthorn.

A remarkable feature is the stone water trough, carved from a single block of masonry.

HIGHER SLACK BROOK

Following the course of this brook is very difficult and recalls lurid memories of the last few yards of the descent of CALF CLOUGH.

Begin at the very top of the south edge of Rough Hill, at its junction with Ramsden Hill and Crook Hill, map reference SD914200. The brook actually begins on Rough Hill, trickles down to where the wall forms a corner and then continues down; often there is no water here at all.

When the brook is dry you can climb (carefully) down for several yards; as the ravine opens out, look to the right. In the rock is a large letterbox shaped opening. A disused mine drift. In summer, the inside of the narrow tunnel glows with luminous moss. Weird.

The upper fifty yards or so of the brook are nearly always dry but the water course can be traced and followed down by the unmistakable rocky bed. Soon water joins the party and tumbles down the clough with the remains of the opencast collieries on either side. Near the largest spoil heap (on the right) can be seen a strange stone construction; this is the terminus of the colliery tramway.

The scattered ruins are passed and the water flows faster downwards (not unlike the perspiring hiker at its side).

At HIGHER SLACK LANE the brook is culverted and then tumbles (winter) or trickles (summer) over a delightful slate waterfall before continuing southwards into the basin of Higher Slack Quarry.

Continuing south, the water from COPY CLOUGH arrives via a splendid waterfall and the clough deepens. At this point the journey becomes severe hard work.

The sides of the gully are now almost sheer (well they certainly feel it if you try to climb them) and the rock is graced by rich, green ferns. In summer, on a hot day, the temperature feels tropical down here. The large mouth of CALF CLOUGH approaches on the right- notice the orange rocks in the waterfall; this is the water that comes out of the tunnel under HADES HILL. The brooks combine, twist and rumble onward and the water now bears the orange ochre of iron. The path on the right of the brook will take you to a fenced area. This is Higher Slack Brook Nature Reserve. Follow the path to the right. If you go up the side of the hill a little way (with the brook behind you) you will see the causeway stones of the old road that climbs up onto the moor. Go back to the fence but do not go over the stile, follow the new bridleway south, over LONG SHOOT CLOUGH brook and enter the nature reserve by the gate. The stone and concrete bridge over the now substantial Higher Slack Brook was built in the summer of 2000 as part of the Pennine Bridleway project. Due to erosion, the paths in the nature reserve are subject to change, but a route will be indicated that will take you to your, and the brook's, destination: Watergrove.

HIGHER SLACK FARM (PRESERVED RUIN) SD 91159 19535

Situated on HIGHER SLACK LANE near the waterfall and a good stop off point for the above 'walk'. This impressive old farmhouse is a preserved ruin; the excess masonry has been taken away, leaving all the rooms clear. Although mostly only just above ground level, there is none of the confused rubble of many of the other ruins (compare this farm to BROAD ING). It always reminds me of those excavated Roman Villas; one can walk from room to room and imagine the recent past, and here's the thing: a Roman Villa is *ancient history*, this is *recent history*. Prior to the nineteen thirties, there was real life here; the Richardson family lived, ate, slept, celebrated Christmas and Easter, holidays and birthdays and life in general. It is difficult to imagine what it must have been like to live here in this wonderful place, to live an established way of life and then suddenly be told to leave. Definitely worth visiting.

HIGHER SLACK LANE; SD 91289 19375

Runs from RAMSDEN ROAD to a dead end at CALF CLOUGH. It was constructed to serve the quarries and collieries in the vicinity and is now used by the Water Authority Land-Rovers which come up here, park for half an hour, then leave; the Water Authority Person much improved in mind and spirit. At the eastern end of the lane, a short track leads to the famous paved rake called LONG CAUSEWAY which climbs CROOK HILL into Yorkshire. At the western end, a track climbs the hillside to HIGHER HADES FARM. Also at this end is a curious rectangle of concrete with a sawn-off telegraph pole beside it. The keen eye will detect further truncated poles at intervals leading towards WATERGROVE RESERVOIR. What is this then? A telegraph office on the moors? Well, sort of. The telegraph poles, apart from a communication wire, would have carried a power line to this spot which was a substation for the engineers who constructed the tunnel under HADES HILL. There are also telegraph poles over at the saddle between Dobbin Hill/East Hill and these would have been used in the same way for the Blue Pots tunnel (see WATERGROVE RESERVOIR).

HODGE HILL NOOK; SD 88943 18003

Situated on a ridge of the same name, southwest of BROWN WARDLE and enjoying a comprehensive view of the Vale of Whitworth, this building is now divided into two cottages. The land was owned by James Taylor (the Whitworth doctor) and leased to one James Grime who built the house in 1788. A Hodge is an old English word for an agricultural labourer.

HOPWOOD BARN FARM (RUIN) SD 89410 18809

There is a right of way to the ruin from the path at the bottom of Brown Wardle. Go through the stone stile and you will notice the quite remarkable stone paved track. On the right are the mortal remains of Up Wood Barn. Go toward the ruin and through the gate, go left then right. The farmer requests that visitors stay on the track which can now be followed down through the field, past the trees to LONGACRES.

HOPWOOD HALL; SD 88694 16256

In 1990 I visited this cottage, overlooking ENDING RAKE, when it was derelict and seemed doomed to join the many moorland ruins.

It consisted of two very shabby rooms; a sitting room and a 'bedroom'.

Cooking was done in a sort of outhouse/scullery. Washing took place in an outside trough.

Goodness knows where the toilet was. A large coal/log shed was to the side of the cottage but there was no gas, electricity or running water.

Two elderly gentlemen lived in these conditions until their departure in 1989.

Fortunately in 1991 someone with vision and foresight (and money) renovated the cottage, extended it, and Hopwood Hall is now a smart and handsome residence.

HORSEFIELD FARM; SD 88640 16650

A well known sight from Rochdale is this long white farmhouse perched high on the west flank of RUSHY HILL; the unerring attention to whitewash ensures that Horsefield is visible for miles.

I would argue that the lucky owners of this farm have the best view (north, south and west) in Lancashire.

HUD CLOUGH; SD 89416 19181

A very old but solid looking farm dating from the early 1600s stands at the head of a steep wooded ravine. Both share the name Hud Clough and are a quarter of a mile west of MIDDLE HILL.

INCLINE; SD 88485 19501

Old lags and Whitworth Historians will know exactly what I mean by that one word...Incline.

For the uninitiated, let me explain.

When you drive or walk from Whitworth towards Bacup, look to the left just as you pass Facit Church and you will see a tall chimney and some old quarries. If you look closely you will see a track climbing the hill in a straight line. This is Incline and was a very steep railway spur that linked the quarries above with the main railway below.

To visit, walk up BACK LANE but don't go all the way to the quarry, take the lane to the right that leads to Cowm Top Farm and follow the Public Footpath to the small quarry. Go right and head for the tall chimney. Now you can descend the Incline.

As you do so, remember if you will that fateful day in 1891 when a passenger train chugged along the main line that passed below. On the Incline itself stood a train of 24 fully laden stone trucks. As the passenger train cleared the points and rattled on towards Rochdale, the cable system holding back the train of stone trucks failed. With horrific speed they hurtled down the Incline and smashed into the passenger train; killing three and injuring all the other passengers.

Despite this grim history, Incline is oddly worth visiting, even if it's just so that you can point and say 'I've been there'.

INTACK (SITE OF) SD 89112 17737

This former two storey cottage, situated in a field beside the track that leads to Hodge Hill Nook, was my favourite place in Whitworth. It was built in 1680. Its barn was demolished in 1917 and the house was demolished in the late 1970s (for safety reasons) which was a terrible shame because Intack was probably Whitworth's Most Haunted House. I inspected the derelict interior just before it was demolished, it was a strange experience. The house was roofless, windowless and the interior was gutted and yet the atmosphere was oddly... alive. I felt a presence in each room.

I wrote of my experiences in the book 'The Whitworth and Wardle Moorland' and following publication, I was contacted by a Mr Rigg of Rochdale who actually lived at the house in the 1950's. Mr Rigg relates that he actually encountered a ghost in the house which was seen by both himself and his Mother.

The haunter was said to be the shade of one Gilbert Holden, executed in 1809 for dealing in forged banknotes. He was innocent. His crime was staged by a greedy and wicked bounty hunter, one James Whitehead. He was paid to track down and report forgers. Poor Gilbert was hauled off to jail. The clumsy legal proceedings took three agonising months (probably due to lack of any real evidence) but the Georgian Judges were believers in the 'No Smoke Without Fire' theory and so Gilbert was sentenced to death and on the 25th of November 1809, Gilbert was taken at daybreak to the scaffold at Lancaster Gaol and hanged. His still warm corpse was dropped into a cheap coffin and his father brought his 27 year old body back to Whitworth, arriving just after midnight and he was buried in Hallfold graveyard with the hangmans rope still around his neck.

The strange name...Intack is, like so many in this area, Old Norse. The word means an enclosure.

Visitors today look in vain for any features of interest, a weed covered pile of rubble is all that remains of one of the oddest houses in Britain.

LANDGATE; SD 89806 19954

The area immediately to the west of the juncture of Middle Hill and Hades. I was very cruel to Landgate in the 1999 edition of this book but it is now mostly cleaned up, tidied and landscaped.

The area is best accessed by the road that leaves Market Street at the former Red Lion Shawforth.

Backed up against the hill side is Crey Farm. This farm is of about the same age as Hud Clough Farm and nearby is the dated and gated western entrance to the Hades Aqueduct Tunnel.

LEE FARM (RUIN); SD 90580 18680

Sited directly below MIDDLE HILL FARM, close to a good, channelled watercourse (the water has come from LONG SHOOT CLOUGH) and by a path. In the 1990s yours truly built a little stone igloo shelter here that still survives. A medium sized farm with scope for exploration.

LIMERS GATE; SD 89325 17245

The ancient road that ran from Rochdale northwards. Its most recent (commercial) use was in the 18th-19th century whereby coal was hauled from the moorland collieries.

To follow its path from Rochdale to Whitworth would no longer be possible (at the Rochdale end) but a rough guide to the route would be:

Beginning at Bull Brow (to the left of the Royal Bank of Scotland), the road climbed Toad Lane then Heights Lane, turned right and followed what is now Cronkeyshaw Common then turning north, past Syke Chapel (built in 1817) and then onto the moors passing LOUSY HILLOCK, FROGGY WELLS and MANSTONE EDGE to the junction at LOBDEN (see also references under SLACK GATE). From here the route has changed very little; the original packhorse road can be seen to the left of the golf tee, heading for the hills but not ascending, instead skirting the base of BROWN WARDLE, passing behind it (by now the road has been lost to erosion), climbing the side of MIDDLE HILL (by the seven trees) then going straight over HADES HILL to destinations northwards.

LITTLE MIDDLE HILL; SD 89999 19079

I only mention this out of completeness and to compliment the Ordnance Survey on their sense of humour. The area marked Little Middle Hill on their map (it is not on earlier maps) is a *very little* bump, cheekily devoid of interest. (It is between BROWN WARDLE HILL and MIDDLE HILL if you feel the urge to go dashing off there).

LITTLE TOWN (PRESERVED RUINS) SD 91077 18296

The most well known and loved of the Watergrove ruins, reached by following the cobbled RAMSDEN ROAD from the sailing club/visitor centre for about 150 yards. This is a charming place and the preservation of the walls enables the visitor to recognise the different cottages and rooms. The name Little Town is a recent one; the farm was originally called Higher Marled Earth and was built in 1778.

LOBDEN; SD 89161 17612

It is difficult to believe that the area to the east of St Bartholomew's Church was once centre of major activity.

The still present junction of roads served as a transfer point for coal brought down the moor in railway trucks from Brown Wardle mine, the curious embankment near the 9th/18th golf tee is the remains of a tramline that ran down the face of Brown Wardle Hill (you can just see the line of this track running diagonally from left up to right on the hillside). The (empty) coal train would be pulled up the hillside by an 'intelligent horse', it would then be filled and the collier would guide the truck down by skilful breaking and utilisation of gravity; the horse meanwhile would enjoy a free ride down, standing on a platform on the back.

The truck would halt on a bridge, where the gap in the embankment is now and would empty its load into a cart waiting beneath. The cart would then be driven to deliver the coal to destinations as far away as Burnley and Manchester.

Near the Adam Green Stone is a reservoir feeder that runs from the base of Middle Hill, skirts the western flank of Brown Wardle Hill and past the site of Intack farm. This aqueduct would have joined the other which still has water which flows from the old Mine Drift at the base of the east of Brown Wardle. The drain is no longer used as it served the now redundant reservoirs above Syke but it is useful in times of spate.

The track west goes to Hodge Hill and POT OVEN FARM and the track east is called Slack Gate and goes to the Stid Farms at Wardle.

The packhorse paved track is the end of Whitworth Rake and on the other side of the golf tee is Limers Gate which ran from Clitheroe to Bull Brow in Rochdale. When the turnpike (now Market Street) was introduced in 1741, common folk would use this route which was rougher and of course free from toll charges.

Near the point where the golfers cross the road to the isolated tee once stood Lobden Farm. This was once the home of the Lancashire poet Edwin Waugh. It was also the home of the Manor Gamekeeper (not at the same time of course).

In the 18th and 19th century, races were held here on Sundays and Holidays and also early morning nude kicking contests would be held together with wrestling and fist fighting, all fuelled by copious amounts of local ale supplied by victuallers in tents.

One of the competitors of the races was James 'Treacle' Sanderson. Born in 1837 at COWCLOUGH, he came from quarryman stock but turned to smithing as a trade until his prowess as a sportsman led him to become a professional runner, living off the prize money he won all over the country.

Sadly, all that remains at Lobden now is a windswept and boggy landscape. And golf.

LONGACRES; SD 89098 18540

Recorded as far back as 1626, this area at the base of the western slopes of BROWN WARDLE HILL had four 'farms': Longacres and Lower Longacres (now domestic dwellings) and Middle Longacres and Slacks (both still in the trade as it were). There was up to the 1920s another farm called Long Acre. It fell down and some of its stone was used for the construction of the War Memorial on Market Street. Over the porch of Middle Longacres is a curious carving of a man with a pick and the date of construction; 1673. All the farms in this area are of about the same date.

LONG CAUSEWAY; SD 91416 19455

A steep, paved packhorse route which climbs CROOK HILL from RAMSDEN ROAD. The flagstones (causey stones) were placed here to prevent the packhorse from sinking into the somewhat moist earth. The area is far from picturesque as the hillside is scarred by the spoil heaps of the former Wall Nook Colliery but the view becomes more fantastic with each step. Topping out on CROOK HILL the causeway then strikes out over Ramsden Hill, passing into Yorkshire as it goes through the gap in the wall (the wall is the boundary). The route either descends into Ramsden over Langfield Common (where there are more causey stones) to Lumbutts and eventually to Halifax or crosses Ramsden Clough over Rugby Bridge (worth a visit in itself) over Inchfield Pasture and down a twisting drop called Dulesgate (literally 'devils road') clearly visible from the main road at Gauxholme. The route then continued into Todmorden or climbed the moor again to destinations north. Residents of Whitworth regularly walked this route to Todmorden (it's a three hour walk for a strider) and of course, it was a vital trade route.

LONG SHOOT CLOUGH; SD 90139 18967

Home to the stream that rises between MIDDLE HILL and BROWN WARDLE HILL.

When viewed from the northeast corner of Brown Wardle Hill, the clough is a deep, wide ravine with a boggy watercourse at the bottom. On no account try to cross here, you will never be seen again. Across the ravine can be seen the remains of MIDDLE HILL BARN, looking downhill, to the right can be seen the three trees of MIDDLE HILL FARM and the ruined farm a little to the left of them. Long Shoot brook can be followed quite easily to its final destination behind WATERGROVE RESERVOIR; the way is a little awkward at times, especially after wet weather, but is a doddle compared to the trek down CALF CLOUGH or HIGHER SLACK BROOK.

Stay on the south (Brown Wardle) bank and carefully descend towards the trees at Middle Hill farm. Three quarters of the way down you will see on the opposite bank a collapsed sheep shelter and looking back, coal deposits in the side of the clough.

The ravine ends abruptly at the new Pennine Bridleway which crosses Long Shoot brook by a culvert bridge.

The brook flows down to LEE FARM through a boggy watercourse. You can only detect its course by keeping to the right of the water reeds.

The clough is little more than a ditch at this point but on reaching Lee Farm it widens out into a stone dotted farm and the brook flows down a stone channel.

Continuing eastwards and downwards as the clough deepens again and the brook now flows through a deep trench at the mossy bottom of the ravine; past two hawthorn trees (one living, one dead), and here Long Shoot brook again passes under the Pennine Bridleway (by means of another culvert) before reaching its final destination: a bulrush adorned pond which in turn drains into Higher Slack Brook near the weir.

LOUSY HILLOCK; SD 89786 16195

Despite the awful name, this is a delightful little hill directly to the east of HAMER PASTURE RESERVOIR. The scar on the north side shows the shale of which the hill is formed.

Lousy Hillock has been a landmark for centuries (and is always named on maps), but goodness knows where that name came from.

At its base is the water that is channelled away from the reservoir; this forms a charming little brook that chuckles down through the shale landscape to Buckley. This stream is called Fanny Brook.

Don't say you haven't learned anything from me.

MANSTONE or Monstone; SD 89413 17003

A large legendary block of gritstone, close to the LIMERS GATE east of Lobden golf course.

On the top of the stone is a large natural depression that looks like a man's hand.

The legend asserts that Robin Hood threw this stone from the rocky outcrop on Blackstone Edge; some six miles away and clearly visible as a dark landscape to the east. This outcrop is called 'Robin Hood's Bed' and here's a strange thing. Manstone is not like any of the other rocks in the Whitworth moor area *but it is identical to the rocks at Robin Hood's Bed*. This anomaly is difficult to explain except by glaciation.

Unless Robin Hood really did throw it here.

MANSTONE EDGE; SD 89417 17023

A low rocky cliff that skirts LOBDEN and runs adjacent to LIMERS GATE. Not high enough for rock climbing and often graced with the detritus of fly tippers, most pedestrians pass by without pause.

MEADOWHEAD FARM; SD 88818 16775

The most northerly of the two 'white' farms on the western slope of RUSHY HILL.

From here, the ground slopes steeply down to the narrow band of TONACLIFFE. Beware! This ground can be boggy in places.

A small, artificial pond is situated on the slope below Meadowhead Farm; now popular with fishermen who do not like much of a challenge, this pond was probably in the past used for washing sheep.

MEADOW NOOK FARM (RUIN) SD 90560 19237

Situated in the corner of a boggy field about 200 yards south of FLAG ALLEY. This ruin can be seen clearly from the path from HADES FARM to HIGHER SLACK LANE.

MIDDLE HILL 1300' (400m)

A shapely hill (especially when seen from Wardle) that really deserves a better name. It is not isolated, like its neighbour BROWN WARDLE, but is in fact a tongue or extension of HADES HILL. A few yards north of the summit is a vast quarry which is operated by a small company based in Shawforth. The quarry is quite safe and the weird atmosphere of the place is actually worth visiting.

The views are disappointing as hills of same or greater height are all around; Brown Wardle to the south, Rooley Moor to the west, Hades Hill to the north and Crook Hill to the east. The moor at the western base of Middle Hill used to be used for artillery practice and in April 1999 an unexploded shell was discovered by workmen constructing a drain.

Ascent of the hill is usually made by one of the two heavily eroded paths on the south face, or by the gentler traverse on the eastern side. There is also a rough road from LANDGATE to the top, used by the quarrymen.

MIDDLE HILL BARN (RUIN) SD 90213 19011

Situated on the southern slope of the hill, this building was probably a shepherd's hut. A wall nearby ascends almost to the very top of the hill and then down the eastern face.

MIDDLE HILL FARM (RUIN) SD 90401 18815

On the bridleway that runs past GREY PASTURE and HADES FARM and between these two. An excellent ruin with easily identifiable rooms, an arched cellar and good remaining walls. Not restored like HIGHER SLACK FARM or ROADS FARM but more fun for it. A good watercourse runs nearby (from LONG SHOOT CLOUGH) and three sycamores provide shade or shelter. The farm was built in 1727 by the Bryom family and is a lovely spot whatever the season.

MOORSIDE FARM (Broadley) (RUIN); SD 87193 16741

A large derelict farmhouse southwest of Spring Mill reservoir. This is a very dangerous structure as the walls are still standing and are probably unstable. People with bad coughs should stay clear.

There is another ruin (razed to the ground) north of here, this is Low Moorside Farm.

MOORSIDE FARM (Wardle); SD 89618 16994

A large farmhouse east of MANSTONE below FAFFLETY BROW. There used to be a fishery here and the ponds can still be seen to the north of the house. Within living memory, tea, cakes and other refreshments were served here to passing families who would, after having been served at the farm, sit upon the grass bank and partake of their purchases. This facility was advertised by the word *TEAS* spelled out in huge capital letters on the wall in front of the farm. Sadly both advert and service are no longer available.

NAB ROAD FARM; SD 89533 17306

Located some 500 yards north of MOORSIDE, this large farm has been extensively renovated and is now a holiday home for children.

NAR; SD 89164 16163

A charming hamlet at the southern base of RUSHY HILL and to the immediate west of HAMER PASTURE RESERVOIR. I remember not so long ago when some of these houses were derelict and partly ruined but now they are smart and cared for, restored tastefully and tactfully.

The curious name Nar is apparently an Olde English word, the root of our modern "narrow".

POT OVEN FARM; SD 89322 18389

Situated on the western slopes of BROWN WARDLE HILL this was once the home of the famous Ailse o' Fussers. Apart from the main farm building there is a large barn and two buildings in ruins. There is a small dam to the west and the remains of a small quarry nearby.

POTTERY; SD 89921 16352

The richness of the clay in the soil in the area east of WHAM RESERVOIR gave the Walmsey family the bright idea of making earthenware. This was in the 1830s and at that time any manufacturing process was labour intensive and thus it came about that a small community was formed. They had their own chapel and unlike HEALEY STONES HAMLET, the Pottery Chapel is still here, now a private house.

PRICKSHAW BROOK (Guided Walk)

An afternoon in a forgotten valley.

Here is a little stroll that takes in fascinating scenery, two interesting ruins and the career of a charming little stream.

It is not a difficult walk, save for the chronically clumsy or very old ladies. Start at the gate near the eastern point of Doctors Wood where Fern Isle Brook flows down from the west and meets Prickshaw Brook as it flows from the north. SD 87259 17797. Take the northerly path past the line of trees (Danes Wood) and soon the track climbs the hillside, leaving the water to meander through the valley floor.

When the trees end, look across to the eastern hillside and you will see evidence of mining; a diverted watercourse.

Meanwhile, the track continues to climb gently until, without warning, it switches back on itself with a hazardous hairpin bend. Now heading south (but still climbing) a gatepost will soon be spied ahead then a jumble of rubble comes into view. Welcome to Withins Farm.

This farm was built in 1821 by the Hultons Trust, an educational charity which presumably invested in farming to reap the dividends. They built the Houses on the Hill farms too.

This ruin is large, clearly a self sufficient farm rather than the smaller croft houses that were so common in these parts.

The ruin is very much worth exploring. An interesting feature is an outbuilding lined with brick from Shawforth Brickworks about a hundred years after the original construction date.

The view to the south is tremendous by the way.

Having explored Withins then, it is time to turn back to the north but stay up on top keeping the remains of a stone wall on the left.

Looking down you will see Prickshaw Brook still marching along the valley bottom and to the east of the brook a peculiar stone wall with flat slabs sticking out of it.

A couple of ditches will need to be negotiated then, still keeping the wall to the left, continue upwards. The wall will suddenly angle away towards Rooley Moor but you carry on northwards heading towards an enormous stone water trough, Nearby is a collapsed gatepost. Through the gate then and over a ditch. The next bit is tricky because there are no clear landmarks, just continue north to a fence and a step style and here you are greeted by Prickshaw brook once again.

Go down to the water and you will find a narrow point at which you can cross. Climb up the other side and follow Prickshaw Brook (now on your left) to a stile in a fence ahead near to a waterfall.

After the stile, go north west but keep the brook close to your left even as it bends before you. Continue until you come to a narrow ditch like track heading roughly north west. This path takes you to a gate where the brook is crossed by three stone slabs.

Go through the gate and walk along the rough paved track towards the buildings ahead of you. To the right is a large stone barn, to the left a ruined farmhouse.

Welcome to Meadows Farm.

At first glance both farm and barn appear very old but in fact, the farmhouse was built in 1723, whilst the barn was built in the 1990's on the site of a previous ruin.

Continue to approach the ruin (ask permission if the farmer is there) because there is more to see.

The cobbled courtyard is, I believe, the original and the ruin is small because the main farm building was engulfed by the new barn. Of particular interest is a spring situated behind the ruin; the water pours into a large stone pot.

To the north of the barn can be seen Prickshaw Brook running down from the west, from it's source on Rooley Moor but we are going to follow it eastwards, back to the gate and the three slabs. Retrace your steps to the point where the stile goes over the wall (at the muddy area near the waterfall) but this time take the higher ground. On a clear day you will see Lobden Golf Club in the distance ahead of you. Turn a tad to the south and head down into a clough: you will see the path ahead rising out of this clough.

This is now exciting terrain indeed but the next part requires concentration.

Cross the little stream and go along the rough path. Look down and see the brook in the ravine below. Keep the brook to your right side- don't be tempted to wander off to the eastern slopes. If you see sheep, give them plenty of time to react to you. Human visitors are quite rare here so the sheep have a tendency to panic and run and the cliffs here can be deadly.

The land drops away in front of you like a bull's nose so bear left and negotiate the narrow watercourse and head towards the wall.

Look towards the top of the slope for a stile, hop over and then go immediately right, following a path down towards Prickshaw Brook.

You will see a track that heads down to the valley bottom. If the way is unclear, continue carefully downwards.

The remains of a colliery can be seen on the hillside opposite and as the path nears the valley bottom, look carefully and you will see the remains of a clapper bridge and a flight of little stone steps coming down from Withins Farm which we visited earlier. The brook would have been the farm's water supply.

Down at last on the valley floor and Prickshaw Brook flows sedately over flat slabs of stone. Here is an excellent place for a rest.

A peculiar feature of this idyllic little glen is the acoustics. They play tricks with your head. On certain days (depending on the airflow) it is possible to hear clearly and without distortion the chimes of Rochdale Town Hall clock, trains on the Manchester to Leeds railway line, traffic noise and sirens. So much so that you would think that these sounds were coming from sources quite close. This anomaly is explained by the lie of the land. The arrangement of the hills funnels the sounds, channelling them like a giant ear trumpet.

After a well earned break it is time to depart for the last leg of the journey.

The step stile downstream indicates the direction to take but first the brook needs to be crossed. The best bet is to make a mighty leap rather than risking the slippery flat stones.

Over the step stile then and head south through the trees as Prickshaw Brook ambles along the flat riverbed.

The valley floor widens out and the flat bed of the brook ends abruptly. The water descends, tumbling and churning over boulders and small rocks down to Danes Wood.

This is a lovely place and ends too soon as a path takes us up to the main track and as we approach the arched bridge we wave goodbye to Prickshaw Brook as it completes its short journey to flow into Spring Mill Reservoir.

* * * * *

Epilogue

Prickshaw brook doesn't end at Spring Mill Res, it re-emerges as the outflow and enjoys two minutes of freedom, chuckling gently as it flows down the fascinating man made water channel and into a tunnel. The brook reappears and runs through a wooded valley before once more flowing underground and finally flows out of an arched tunnel into the River Spodden.

PRICKSHAW HAMLET; SD 87596 16574

This charming little hamlet, really high up on the moors a little southwest of Spring Mill Reservoir has been honoured with awards and testimonials to the developers who actually did their jobs properly and restored, what were not long ago ruins, to lovely little cottages.

RAMSDEN ROAD

Originally this road ran from the turnpike (now the A58) up through Wardle village and through Watergrove village; well actually it *does still* run through Watergrove but since it is covered by 87 feet of water it is invisible to all but the fish. The emergence of the road can be seen easily next to the Visitor Centre and from here it can be followed north along a beautifully restored stretch past LITTLE TOWN and out into open country. At STEWARD BARN HALL the road bears right past the gateposts of THIMBLE HALL and as it climbs higher the surface deteriorates to loose gravel that is always being eroded by torrents of run off from the moor.

On the left was Lower Slack farm (identified by the sloping track parallel to the road), built in 1727 it is certainly not an identical twin to HIGHER SLACK FARM; there is next to nothing left of it.

As the road passes through a wall, LONG CAUSEWAY splits off to the right and begins the steep climb skywards. Since Long Causeway is actually the road to Ramsden, it must be assumed that the straight road forward is now HIGHER SLACK LANE.

ROADS FARM (PRESERVED RUIN) SD 90564 18341

also known as Rhodes Farm

Situated on slopes near WATERGROVE RESERVOIR, this site is probably one of the best known of the ruined farmhouses. The enclosure means that sheep are kept away and so vegetation has gone (literally) wild. Hundreds of willow trees give the place the feel of a Peruvian temple, lost in the jungle. Be very careful though, there is an open cellar and the nettles are vicious.

The farm was established by the Byrom family of MIDDLE HILL FARM in 1760 and there was a deep pond here for the purpose of washing sheep (you can see where it was; it's on the watercourse near waymarker W5 on the path past just south of the farm).

ROADS MILL (REMAINS OF) SD 90822 18446

There are strange things at the very back of the WATERGROVE RESERVOIR. Where the path crosses the brook, pipes jut out of the ground, partially submerged remains peer out of the water, birds swim on small lodges and there are piles of brick and stone in the water. This is the site of Roads Mill. Originally water powered, the mill was steam powered prior to its closure when reservoir construction began in 1930. When the water is low, it is possible to examine closely some of the remains from the western bank. The two posts side by side are all that remains of the millowner's house (which, by looking at old photographs, was almost as big as the mill!)

Roads Mill treated cotton thread or fabric with caustic alkali under tension to give greater strength and lustre to the finished article; this process was known as *mercerising*, from the patentee, J. Mercer.

ROBIN BANK and Neck O' Th' Bank; SD 87169 17645

If you stand outside Tonacliffe School and look west over the Spodden Valley and beyond the Houses On The Hill, you may be able to see the ruins of two very old houses. Their names are Robin Bank and Neck O' Th' Bank.

ROUGH HILL 1428' (435m) SD 91192 20261

Located between HADES HILL and Ramsden Hill and is joined to CROOK HILL.

The summit is the place to be (on a clear day, not a windy one) as the view is *comprehensive* and far better than the view from Hades.

There is nothing to mark the highest point but there is a strange little rocky outcrop.

Visitors during misty weather will benefit from a compass as whiteouts are common up here and on all heights over 1400'.

RUSHY HILL 1025' (315m) SD 88930 16645

Although not a very high hill, the unique position of Rushy Hill means that the view is tremendous. Looking south over seven counties: Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, Clwyd and Gwynedd; the prospect is indescribable. This fantastic view is possible because the hill is the last in its particular Pennine chain and all to the south is lowland. This alone makes Rushy Hill very special indeed (see also BROW EDGE).

Unlike cousin BROWN WARDLE, Rushy Hill is rarely busy, even on a sunny Sunday. The only visitors are the golfers on the northern table; playing golf among the gods. This northern side of the hill is rough terrain (see LOBDEN) and there is the inherent risk of being hit by small, hard, white balls.

Equally rough is the eastern side, and featureless part from the occasional shallow bog.

The western (see TONACLIFFE) side is steeper and, near Highgate, downright dangerous!

The summit is flat, very boggy and yes... rushy. From the pylon to the east of the trig point, heading south, the explorer soon comes upon large great boulders, some shaped by the weather. It is this southern half of the hill that has most of interest.

SCOTCH COTE (RUIN) SD 91549 19160

An uninspiring jumble of stones and rubble next to a boggy brook on the lower slopes of CROOK HILL, north of CROOK FARM. Very difficult to get to from the north or west, the visitor is best advised to ascend Crook Hill a little, then drop down to it (not literally!)

SLACK GATE; SD 89529 17707

A good track that runs from WHITWORTH RAKE past STID FOLD and past the ruins of BROWN WARDLE FARM. The track then turns north and runs between walls and below the level of the fields to SLACK GATE FARM and on to join HIGH WARDLE LANE.

SLACK GATE FARM (RUIN); SD 90089 17908

A small site amid much bogginess. To find it, go to BROWN WARDLE FARM and enter the field to the right of the Track that is heading for BROWN WARDLE HILL, head toward Brown Wardle and keep your eyes open... it's around here... somewhere.

St BARTHOLOMEWS CHURCH

The first Whitworth Chapel was built in 1529 on the flat ground below today's church. It was totally rebuilt in 1775 and again in 1813. The present church was built in 1847-50 and cost just over £4,500. In order to raise funds for the new church, some bright spark hit upon the idea of selling the old stone chapel on a take-away basis. This was done and the old chapel was dismantled and transported to a new location on Market Street near the Toll Bar in order to begin a new lease of life; first as a public house called The Whitworth Arms and the old chapel still stands there today; now a restaurant. People think I'm joking when I tell them it was the original stone Whitworth Chapel but when you know this and look on it afresh...you can see it used to be a chapel because it looks like one!

St Bartholomews is a splendid building, standing as it does upon its platform on the edge of the moors. It used to be even more ornate but a terrible fire in 1984 destroyed most of the church apart from some walling and the great bell tower. The people of Whitworth pulled together and funds were raised to rebuild the church in a simpler style.

The gargoyles are the churches most famous feature and no visit would be complete without an examination of each one.

Entombment within the church itself is not permitted and so the wealthy built their mausoleums in the churchyard. Unfortunately this churchyard is steep and unstable and several tombs started to collapse, notably the large, pillared tomb of the Scott Milne family of BROWN WARDLE FARM. The tomb was falling in on itself but in 1999 a huge repair task was undertaken, funded by a grant and all is now well. The Taylor family tomb was also repaired, this site is marked by a tall obelisk near the Red Lion and the tomb itself is below. Another feature of the churchyard is the village stocks. They have been there since 1683 but the last person to be stocked, as it were, was the infamous Dick Tattersall for being drunk.

STEWARD BARN (Site Of) SD 91078 18759

A scattered heap of stones is all that remains of this once impressive building on the RAMSDEN ROAD above WATERGROVE RESERVOIR.

It stood at the intersection of two lanes; Ramsden Road climbed from Watergrove Village up and over the northern moors; and Lee Mill Lane which went down to a water mill which straddles HIGHER SLACK BROOK. There is a flight of steps from this lane which leads to a path which crosses the water via a wooden bridge. The remains of the original bridge can also be seen here, stone piers and metal girders. This bridge allowed for the passage of packhorses, people, coal wagons and carts to and from the communities that existed on the slopes of the hills above. Indeed, this bridge was their only link with the outside world by way of Watergrove and Wardle village.

The track from Lee Mill Bridge climbs up to HADES FARM and the paved packhorse stones can still be seen in the turf.

STID FOLD; SD 89843 17486

A group of old farm buildings about a mile due south of BROWN WARDLE. Nearby is Stid Farm, recently renovated and the one time home of 'Drunken' Dick Tattersall whose great grandmother, incidentally, lived in a farm called Higher Lay Slack which was where HAMER PASTURE RESERVOIR is now. She was born and died in this house, and never spent a night anywhere else in all her life. She was 92 when she died.

I digress.

The Stid area is dreadfully muddy in winter or after heavy rain. A track goes east to Wardle village but mud and flooding make access difficult. The farmers now use SLACK GATE to get away.

STONEY HEYS FARM; SD 89423 15796

Some 500 yards south of HEY WOOD. I remember this farm well in the 1970s and our garden overlooked this farm, which was a hive of activity from dawn 'til dusk.

In the 1990's this farm was derelict and rapidly destined to become a ruin but fortunately was renovated and is now cottages. The mock Neolithic stone circle nearby is called Rueben's rocks, named after the owner of the farm and was built to commemorate Rueben's 50th birthday

TAB ROAD FARM; SD 89451 17424

Situated east of LOBDEN on the slopes leading to Wardle village. A charming old farm, a reminder of what history has taken away from the Watergrove valley.

THIMBLE HALL (SITE OF) SD 91304 18757

A 'picked clean' site in a very boggy field. It does have one feature of immense interest however. Just before the site itself, within an area protected by a fence is an avenue of large upright stones: the remains of a massive wool drying and stretching apparatus. The wool would be treated here before being fixed on a loom.

The site is reached by going through the gate posts on the right, shortly after passing STEWARD BARN on the RAMSDEN ROAD (look for a wooden post with a W over a 4 on the side of the road). Follow the track from Ramsden Road and you will see the avenue of stones (enclosed by the fence) before you see the remains of Thimble Hall.

There is also a semi underground shelter roofed by three enormous stone slabs. A useful thing to note if ever one is caught in a rainstorm (and not choosy).

THURNS HEAD QUARRY

Located west of COWM RESERVOIR, this is a large, hill top disused quarry with good views but little else of interest. It was made into a half-hearted history trail in order to exploit a legal loophole to prevent it being used as a tip or land fill which is highly commendable, the whole area is fenced to keep the sheep off but the fence is topped with barbed wire which is incredibly stupid. Thus, if a hiker is caught up here in foul weather they run the risk of being cut to shreds or spend ages in the freezing cold looking in vain for a stile. There is never any reason for barbed wire in the countryside. AVOID THIS AREA!

TONACLIFFE

At the bottom of the northern end of Tonacliffe Road, near the junction with Market Street, there is an old cobbled road which bends and climbs up the hillside to the old Tonacliffe Quarries. You can still see the old quarry workings here, above Bar Terrace and near Highgate Farm. The stone was cut into massive chunks and dragged across the moor on sleds. It was then broken and placed on carts and brought down the cobbled track to the stone mason's workshop (now Bar Garage) where it was finished into stone building blocks.

WAINGAP HILL

A flat, soggy, scratty 'pasture land' south of WHITWORTH RAKE. There used to be some large greenhouses here. There were plans to build but the area is riddled with old mine workings (no longer visible) so those plans were axed.

WALL NOOK (RUIN) SD 91151 19940

It must have been marvellous to wake and gaze out of the windows of this farm, 1225ft high on the south slope of ROUGH HILL but it must have been a beast in winter, especially since access is only by a steep climb up the hillside.

On the slopes of Rough Hill, by the fledgling Higher Slack Brook is a large black spoil heap and some ruined stonework. There are more spoil heaps in an arc on the slopes of Crook Hill. these are the remains of Wall Nook Colliery, an open cast mine that was in production primarily to provide hard, anthracite coal to feed the ever hungry steam engines of the cotton mills of Rochdale and Heywood.

One of the spoil heaps stands out; it is red whereas all the others are black. Here's why.

A very elderly man whom I met sitting behind Watergrove Reservoir told me that in about 1910, when he was a bit of a naughty child, he wanted to know if the coal in the spoil heap would burn. He lit a fire at the bottom of the heap but it only smouldered slightly so he went back to his home in Wardle. A day or so later, the sky to the north was punctuated by a tall, thin, black cloud, he ran onto the moor and sure enough the spoil heap was ablaze! It would have been too much effort to put the fire out and so it burned for months! The lad was so frightened that he told nobody what he had done, indeed, he assured me that I was the only person he ever told.

Now, if you look closely, you can see that the red spoil heap is made up of ash and clinker, it was indeed burned and the old man's story would appear to be true.

WALSTEAD CLOUGH: SD 87451 19549

One of the most beautiful places in Whitworth, secluded and utterly peaceful. To get here hike to the back of COWM RESERVOIR and head for the line of trees in front of the cliffs of AB TOP.

Go past the trees, through the gate and turn left (west). Gird up the loins as it gets a little tough. Keep Walstead Brook to your left and take your time. Old ladies should turn back now.

After a little panting and struggling the rewards are evident; this canyon has certainly been affected by the work of mankind yet the natural beauty seems only enhanced by it.

Progress up the valley needs continued care; there are boulders and choc stones and other obstacles to trap the unwary. If you fall foul here your body may not be found for months.

The canyon terminates leaving three choices; up and north to Ab Top , up and south to Cow Clough or back the way you came.

WARDLE BROOK; SD 91438 18481

Begins on the lower slope of CROOK HILL and chuckles south westward to WATERGROVE RESERVOIR where, one would reasonably suppose, its short life ends for the greater good.

But no!

Not all the water enters the reservoir. Granted, most does but some of the water from the brook is diverted into the long, deep (very deep in point of fact) pond to the east of the reservoir. This is a compensation lagoon and water is channelled to a sluice just below the embankment. By law, 0.57 megalitres of water must be released daily.

Here, Wardle Brook is resurrected and continues southward to Wardle Village.

WATERGROVE RESERVOIR

On Wednesday the 6th of April 1938, Alderman Elvyn Kershaw opened the door of the filter house with a gold key, walked inside and to the cheers of all present, released a valve that allowed the water to rush forth, through the filters (that kept the mud but precious little else out of the water supply) and so unto the thirsty throats of the good folk of Rochdale and thus he officially opened Rochdale Corporation Waterworks' masterpiece in civil engineering: Watergrove Reservoir.

It had taken eight years of construction and cost nearly £750,000 (that's nearly four hundred million pounds in today's money).

But now that it was finished it was something to be proud of: it holds 720 million gallons of water (that would keep a single tap running for fifty years), it covers 96 acres, it is 87 feet deep and its construction had kept 500 men in work for five million hours.

Oh yes, and it had cost two hundred and fifty men, women and children their homes and their livelihoods. It had drowned an entire, thriving community. Not only were two mills, two pubs, forty houses, a chapel and a smithy wiped out of existence but every farm, croft and cottage on the surrounding moors was dynamited and the animals on the moorland were moved or destroyed.

No person or animals was permitted to remain in the water catchment area for fear of pollution of the drinking water.

Can you imagine the outcry today if it were suggested that a reservoir be constructed at the expense of an entire seventeenth century village? Thank goodness that nowadays we care about more than the absolute basics. Technology helps too. The new water treatment plant at Watergrove is light years ahead of the original 'filters' (this plant cost six times the 1930s cost of the reservoir), so that the animals have returned, sailboarders enjoy the water and pedestrians may walk a circular concessionary route (the right of way only exists on the eastern side of the reservoir).

Watergrove reservoir is now a beautiful place and our eternal thanks must go to North West Water (an organisation who, in the past, have not had the reputation of being a welcoming landowner) who have bent over backwards to create a lovely place for families, nature lovers, fitness enthusiasts, historians, artists and lovers of the outdoors.

The reservoir is fed primarily by HIGHER SLACK BROOK (which includes water from COPY CLOUGH, CALF CLOUGH and LONG SHOOT CLOUGH brooks, plus the water that has been conveyed through the tunnel under HADES HILL). Also feeding the reservoir are three small brooks on the western bank (from springs at the foot of BROWN WARDLE HILL), and of course WARDLE BROOK. There is also an inlet near the gate at the southeastern corner of the reservoir (recognised by a huge pile of limestones). This can be followed back (although you're not supposed to) to the base of East Hill where another tunnel carries water 550 yards from a valve behind a small reservoir near Shore Hall. This is Blue Pots Tunnel. The water emerges a little more sedately and its tunnel entrance is far grander than the tunnel under HADES HILL; even the water channel is grand. I am always impressed by Waterworks architecture. Really. I'm not being at all facetious: I mean, visit any reservoir built between 1900 and 1950 and just look at the stonework. It is almost as though our grandparents *worshipped* water, so much so that their drinking supplies were enshrined in cathedrals of magnificent masonry.

But I digress- also near the gate is the famous Wall Of History which really needs to be seen.

Across the track and a little to the north is the compensation lagoon mentioned earlier.

At the other end of the *massive* embankment (which is just a tad over 950 yards from end to end, in case you're taking notes) is the water tower, the overflow and further westwards, the quarry whence came much of the stone for the reservoir.

A scramble up the embankment to the left of the path on the west side of the reservoir will reveal... well, absolutely nothing actually but there was a farm here called Alder Bank. It has totally disappeared apart from the odd grass covered knoll of rubble.

The eastern shore has a shale beach but paddlers beware, the water gets very deep very quickly. There are also treacherous mud flats at the rear of the reservoir.

It is at the rear of the reservoir that the best of Watergrove may be found. This is the Higher Slack Brook Nature Reserve and it is delightful. I could spend a whole day here, just sitting and looking.

There are wooded areas, a pond dipping area, the old mill ponds are home to water lilies and a heron can often be seen stepping out across the mud. In my opinion, Watergrove Reservoir's finest hour is early in the morning on a sunny August day: the bracken, the rowan berries, the trees of the nature reserve; you could be on one of the trails in the lower Himalayas. So do we forgive Rochdale Corporation for the slaughter of an innocent village?
Oh, go on then.

WHAM BOTTOM LANE

Located to the side of Mount Healey and climbing quickly to give super views to the south. The lane ascends WHITE HILL, passing the farm of that name, where it becomes a track, then a path, passing Moor Edge and entering HEALEY STONES HAMLET.

WHAM RESERVOIR: SD 89633 16453

(also known as Brown House Wham)

The northern of the twin reservoirs north of Syke village. Built in 1847 and unusual as it is not of typical reservoir construction, that is: (1) find a deepish valley with a brook flowing through, (2) build a big dam and (3) wait for it to fill with water.

This reservoir was *dug* out of boggy moorland.

When I lived in Syke it was full to the brim and in service; now it has the appearance of being abandoned (except for the pedestrians and their dogs who stroll around its breezy perimeter, cheerfully ignoring North West Water's "No Admittance" signs).

Wham is fed by the waters from RUSHY HILL and the long feeder that runs from BROWN WARDLE.

At the south western end of the reservoir is a stone bridge over the overflow channel, the run off flowed through a steep sloping tunnel into HAMER PASTURE RESERVOIR below. It used to be possible to crawl through this tunnel and emerge, blinking, half way through the northern stonework of Hamer Pasture. Needless to say, the thought of such high jinx nowadays is too much for the ubiquitous North West Water who have diligently fenced this tunnel off.

The farmhouse to the northeast of Wham is CLAY CLOUGH; the name refers to the abundance of clay in the area (no kidding) and this material was utilised at a POTTERY due east of Wham.

WHITE HILL; SD 88865 16128

A flat rocky ridge between RUSHY HILL and Healey. The very top field has a strange gritstone 'pavement', best seen from BROW EDGE. There are also many boulders and butts that have been incorporated into the drystone walls.

WHITWORTH RAKE

As Taylor Street enters WHITWORTH SQUARE, a lane to the right climbs steadily toward the moors. This is Whitworth Rake. As the lane passes the churchyard, a steep embankment to the right is topped by a large tree with a curiously twisted trunk. The shale embedding the roots has washed away, leaving the roots seriously exposed and sadly, this tree's days are numbered.

It is not wise to linger here, especially on a windy day.

Rake Farm on the left has the appearance of a well cared for venerable old structure. It is certainly very well cared for, but it was built in the early 1990s on the site of the original ruin.

After the cattle grid, the road is smooth tarmac, another benefit of the investments made by the local authority in 1999. I walked up this road one March morning, dodging potholes as I went, and five hours later, when I returned, the road had been surfaced!

The Rake terminates at the junction with SLACK GATE and LIMERS GATE.

WHITWORTH SQUARE

The Red Lion is a grand old pub. As English as you can possibly get and a summer evening here is heaven. Built as an inn in 1674 and early in the twentieth century, the Lion used to 'home brew' beer using water from a spring behind the premises. Now supplied by a brewery, the Lion is still going strong.

The splendid building next to the Lion is Whitworth House and its neighbour, Whitworth House II (which always reminds me of the sequel to a film) and this was once the home of the World Famous Whitworth Doctors (although the house has been considerably tinkered with since their day).

The large house opposite Whitworth Cottage is The Briars. Built in 1763 it was at one time the home of the vicar of St Barts. Wait a minute, so was the Old Parsonage, a venerable structure behind the church, and what about the Old Vicarage, that large detached premises?

Did the Vicar of Whitworth have three houses?

There used to be more cottages in Whitworth Square, opposite the Red Lion; these had to go when the WHITWORTH RAKE was widened.

The steps between the pub and Whitworth Cottage were repaired as part of the restoration process that took place in the square in 1999. The path to the left at the top of the steps goes over a bridge that crosses the entrance to the Taylor tomb. The path to the right passes behind Whitworth Cottage, before joining WHITWORTH RAKE and the beginning of a new adventure.....

Dates of Construction of Notable Buildings in Whitworth according to their date stones.

Albert Mill 1862
Back Cowm Farm 1870*
The Briars 1763
Cemetary Chapel 1880
Cock Hall Farm 1724
Cock Hall House 1847
Crowshaw Farm 1764
Croft House, Taylor Street 1726
Dog and Partridge (Originally) 1778 Rebuilt 1863
Hallfold Chapel (Originally) 1718 Rebuilt 1850
Healey Co-Op (AKA The Bike Shop) 1860
Houses on the Hill C1850-1880
Meadows Farm 1723*
Middle Longacres Farm 1673
Millgate Baptist Chapel 1867
Robin Bank & Neck O th Bank 1820*
Police Station Houses 1873
Red Lion (Whitworth Square) 1674
Shawforth Wesleyan Chapel 1875
St Bartholomews 1847 (partly rebuilt in 1988)
St Michaels Facit 1869
Thowd Mill In Thrutch 1675*
Tong End Farm (Stables) 1721
United MF Church 1878
Waingap Farm 1744
Whitworth Chapel (Originally) 1529*
Withins Farm 1821*

Sites marked * are now ruined or gone altogether.

Words Used in Place Names and their Meanings.

Clough = A narrow ravine.

Cwm (Cowm) = A high, rounded valley.

Gate = A path or way.

Grove = A small wooded area.

Lob = Mining waste.

Ley = A clearing in a wood.

Rake = An inclined track.

Wain = A horse drawn farm cart.

Wham = A windy place.

Worth = an enclosure, homestead.