**Trail One Astley - Tyldesley (BLACK ROUTE)**

**An approximately 2 hour\* circular walking/cycling route of 5.3 miles / 8.5km involving some off road footpaths. \*Allow extra time for sharing information at points of interest.**

**For shorter route take Option A (Blue Route) an approximately 1 hour\* circular walking/cycling route of 3 miles / 5km involving some off road footpaths. \*Allow extra time for sharing information at points of interest.**

**For shorter route take Option B (Red Route) an approximately 1 hour\* circular walking/cycling route of 3.5 miles / 6km involving some off road footpaths. \*Allow extra time for sharing information at points of interest.**

**START**

1. **Lancashire Mining Museum/Astley Green Colliery** (1908-70). The Clifton and Kearsley Coal Company sank the two new shafts off Higher Green Lane using the German Drop-shaft method, the first to do so in England, because of the water and quicksands encountered. The Drop-shaft or Sinking Drum Process involved forcing a cylinder through the heavily watered peat and loose layers to the rockhead and excavating within it.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

[https://lancashireminingmuseum.org/old-astley-green-photos/#jp-carousel-437](https://lancashireminingmuseum.org/old-astley-green-photos/%23jp-carousel-437)

The seams went under Chat Moss which meant water was continually dripping down, making work very wet hot. The standing Headgear, one of two formerly here, is the last surviving of the former South Lancashire coalfield.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

[https://lancashireminingmuseum.org/old-astley-green-photos/#jp-carousel-335](https://lancashireminingmuseum.org/old-astley-green-photos/%23jp-carousel-335)

A colliery railway moved coal from the screens to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, but some coal was transported to power stations at Trafford Park and Stretford using the Bridgewater Canal. Sadly, there was a mining accident at Astley Green on 6th June 1939 when five men, including the manager, died in an explosion of firedamp. But in 1956, 36 year old deputy, Alf Hughes received The Daily Herald Order of Industrial Heroism (or ‘Workers V.C.’) for rescuing 30 year old electrician, Brian Walker when he was being dragged into a mechanical coal cutting and conveying machine. Alf was presented with his medal at Astley and Tyldesley Miners’ Welfare Institute (Gin Pit Club) which we will visit later. Outside the Museum, on what is now a village green, once stood the pithead baths, canteen and medical centre designed for the Miners' Welfare Committee by architect C. Kemp. They were built in 1935–36 at a cost of over £24,000.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

[https://lancashireminingmuseum.org/old-astley-green-photos/#jp-carousel-475](https://lancashireminingmuseum.org/old-astley-green-photos/%23jp-carousel-475)

*Leave the museum, walk up the road and turn right onto Higher Green Lane.*

*Cross Whitehead Lane.*

*Stop at Astley Green Village Club on your right.*

2. **Astley Green Village Club (Astley Conservative and Unionist Club).** Inside, Tracey Elliott’s mural, ‘**Opening The Window Onto Our Past’** from 2019, shows Astley Green Colliery from Higher Green Lane before the 1930s.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/17338582.historic-astley-green-colliery-mural-greeted-rave-reviews-villagers/>

Note the old cottages on the opposite side of the road. At no. 71 the sign says ‘**Weaver’s Cottage’** indicating the local industry in the area before the colliery opened.

*Continue up Higher Green Lane and stop at the last building on your right.*

3.The last house on the right, no 56 is the Grade II listed **Manor House**. Built in 1730, it was once the farmhouse for Manor House Farm.

*Walk to the crossing at the traffic lights on the East Lancs Road.*

4.**The Liverpool-East Lancashire Road** or ‘East Lancs’ Road (A580) which links Walton to Salford, was opened by George V on July 18, 1934. It was designed to connect Manchester and East Lancashire to the Port of Liverpool and was the UK's first purpose-built intercity highway. Unfortunately, it cut Astley in half, isolating Astley Green and destroying some of the local farms, e.g. Horridge and Myrtle Grove farms.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/epw038568>

*Cross the East Lancs Road.*

*Once over the East Lancs, cross at the traffic lights and continue along the opposite side of Higher Green Lane then turn left onto Manchester Road and stop.*

5.**Astley** is believed to pre-date the Norman Conquest. The name is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon for ‘East Field’ and was first recorded as ‘Astleghe’ around 1200. An alternative version is that it means ‘East/Ast of Leigh/Leghe’. Like most of the surrounding area, the economy was originally agriculture based combined with small-scale domestic textile industries. Cheese and brick making were also strong industries with small scale coal mining beginning in the 17th-century. On the opposite side of the road stands 548 Manchester Road, ‘The Willoughbys’ or ‘**The Doctor’s House**’. From 1921-1944, this was the home of Dr Sydney Hamilton Ryan, Colliery Doctor for Astley Green Colliery who conducted the autopsy reports after the 1939 explosion.

*Cross* *Manchester Road via the zebra crossing and walk to the top of Coach Road.*

6. On the right hand side, behind the second tree, at no. **21 Coach Road** lived John Griffiths, who was an Under-looker at Astley Green Colliery, a daily inspector of mines. He was killed in the 1939 explosion and is buried at Tyldesley Cemetery. Coach Road was built by the owners of Damhouse so that they didn’t have to pay tolls at Astley Straits. Until the 1960s it was just a rough track. Its name comes from its coach house destination.

*Retrace your steps along* *Manchester Road and continue until you come to the footpath between no.508 and the Bulls Head pub car park.*

*Follow the footpath to Church Road the turn left and walk to the site of the former St Stephen’s Church which is on your left.*

7. The building at No. 236 opposite, is **The Old Vicarage** of St Stephen’s Church. This Tudor manor house was built around 1590 with further additions in the 18th- and 19th-centuries. It belonged to the Mort family but was used by the chapel’s curate from 1630 until 1989 when a new one was built in Blackmoor. **St Stephen’s Church** was built around 1760 by Thomas Sutton, Lord of the Manor and a descendant of Adam Mort. However, in 1961, after the annual ‘Walking Day’, the vicar was wakened by a youth knocking at the door who informed him that the church was on fire. Despite the best efforts of 50 firemen from surrounding towns, the flames rose 50 feet above the church reducing it to a burnt shell. Incredibly, it turned out that the youth, a young mill worker, who raised the alarm was actually the arsonist and was later caught.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com/2015/08/17/long-lost-histories-st-stephens-chapel-astley/>

A new church was built a few hundred yards away in 1968. The church played its part in supporting local people during the 1912 coal strike when a local committee was formed to supply free meals for 300 children each day, consisting of lentil soup and potato hash. On your left, near to the trees is the grave of **Joseph Rowson,** who was killed at Cross Hillock Colliery (we will visit the site later) on the 18th March 1873 when he was only 23. He was a Dayman who was taking out props when the roof collapsed on him. The size of his memorial tells you how important he was to his local community.

*Enter the graveyard and follow the path which bends to the right.*

*Exit the graveyard and cross the road to stop outside the entrance to Damhouse*

8. **Damhouse** **(or Astley Hall)** was built around 1595 by Adam Mort, who also established a school and chapel, St Stephen’s for the local community. The Mort family were succeeded by the Suttons and the Froggatts, the last member of which, Sarah Froggatt raised the money to restore the house by leasing mines to John Darlington of the Astley and Tyldesley Coal Company. A proviso was that the company could not have any workings within 60 yards of Damhouse, or dig underneath it. When Sarah’s grandson, George Wetherall inherited the hall he neglected it, and the estate, and ran up debts. In 1893, he sold it to Leigh Local Board who built a brick wall around the site and turned it into a sanatorium for people suffering from infectious diseases including typhoid fever, scarlet fever, polio, meningitis and puerperal fever. Although it went on to became a general hospital, it continued to treat infectious diseases and, in later years, specialised in chronic disease and care of the elderly. Many miners came here to recuperate from injuries or long-term conditions caused by working underground. It closed in 1994 and was purchased and restored by the Morts Astley Heritage Trust in 1999.

Visit for refreshments & WC.

*Continue along Church Road and turn right onto Manchester Road at the roundabout.*

*Turn right into The Ley.*

9. **The Ley** dates from about 1840 and runs from Manchester Road to Gin Pit village. The long wall on the right marks the former hospital boundary. The Ley was a 16 acre field which was donated to Tyldesley Urban District Council by coal owner, James Smith as “an open space for ever”. He also bought and donated the Bullcroft which is now the Village Green.

*Follow The Ley until you reach Parkfield Avenue/Greenland Road.*

*Turn right then left into Sunnybank Road.*

*Walk until you reach no.21 on your left.*

*Take the footpath between no. 21 & no. 23 and turn left to follow the footpath.*

*Follow it to the right, then don’t veer off to the left, but continue until you reach the track that divides Princes Avenue from Astley Street.*

*Turn right onto Astley Street and cross the road where it narrows near the bus stop. Turn left into Ley Road.*

*Continue towards Gin Pit Village.*

*Enter the bus turning area on your left.*

*Take the footpath opposite which leads to North Lane and Colliers Wood.*

*Follow the path until you reach the entrance to the woods on your right.*

*Ahead of you, at the edge of the trees, you can see a fallen gatepost.*

10. This, and the bricks and other materials scattered around, are all that remain of **Kermishaw Nook Colliery,** the second largest pit owned by Manchester Collieries, a coal mining company formed in 1929 from a group of independent companies operating on the Manchester Coalfield. Their headquarters were in Walkden. **Colliers Wood,** a 130 hectare woodland, was planted as part of the Forestry Commission's Community Forests scheme to create recreation and conservation facilities in the north-west. Trees were planted on the site of the former colliery and its ‘slag’ heaps to stabilise the surface spoil, improve the soil quality and provide habitats for wildlife. The wood has over 5km of path networks and great views across the borough to Winter Hill.

*Walk through the entrance gate and enter the trees to your left and walk in a straight line to find the concrete ‘pyramid’.*

*Warning: Take extra care as the ground is very uneven with bricks and other debris. Be very careful near the shaft as there has been some digging in the area around it.*

11. This capped off **Ventilation Shaft** is one of five‘Tyldesley Pyramids’ to be found in the woods. **Kermishaw Nook Colliery** was opened in 1866, when the Astley and Tyldesley Coal and Salt Company sunk a shaft to the Rams mine. A second shaft was sunk 1873 to reach the Arley mine, and a third to the Trencherbone mine in 1899. The colliery also incorporated a brickworks, making productive use of the clay seams in the pit. A mineral line ran behind it to the coal tipping wharf at Marsland Green on the Bridgewater Canal. In 1954 the Arley mine was ravaged by an underground fire and production stopped for two years with many miners moving to Astley Green, which became known as ‘The Last Refuge’. In 1959, the Arley mine, in collaboration with the unions, was declared ‘uneconomic' and shut but its 400 men were employed elsewhere. In 1965 there were problems with ‘pushbutton mining’ on the new automated coalface in the Pemberton mine which had been introduced for the first time in the north-west nearly a year previously. There was a month’s long dispute over pay by unhappy surface workers but the NCB was adamant that ‘button workers’ should be paid the same despite the fact that only 40 of 900 men worked on the automated face. Nook closed in August 1965 after losing up to £4000 a day. The Nook Colliery lodge was in the fields opposite and in 1950, the LUT (Lancashire United Transport) ‘pit’ bus had just dropped off 60 miners when the driver hit the kerb, lost control, and crashed through the lodge railings into the water! Some of the bus’ passengers rescued the unconscious driver whilst the quick minded conductress had managed to jump off in time.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/17593747.looking-back-bus-driver-rescued-crash-nook-colliery-tyldesley/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/brianquinlan/38516092030/>

<https://www.nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/coal-mining-in-the-british-isles/lancashire-coalfield/bolton-bury-coalfield/nook/>

<http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/n233.htm> <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/changing-shifts-nook-colliery-165185>

*Retrace your steps, leave Colliers Wood and return to the footpath.*

*Leave via the entrance gate and take the footpath to your right which leads to North Lane.*

*Stop near the building at the bottom of the lane.*

12. On a 1768 map, this was Coal Road which later became **North Coal Pit Lane** then just North Lane. The building at the end was the water tower of the **Kermishaw Nook Pit Head Baths**. The Coal Miners Act of 1911 ruled that coal owners must provide pit head baths if the workforce voted for them but, initially, many miners were sceptical and worried that the baths would be unhygienic and spread disease. One shilling out of every 20 paid for mining royalties went to the Miners’ Welfare Fund for the creation of pit head baths. Nook’s were the 189th to be completed, one of 15 provided in Lancashire. They cost £20,698, and were designed to cater for 1200 males and 60 to 70 female employees. They also contained equipment for first aid dressing, boot cleaning, filling of water bottles, drying and conditioning of clothes, etc. They were formally opened in 1937 by Miss Edith Stretch who was a ‘pit brow lass’ employed on the screens sorting coal. She made colliery history as the first woman in the country to perform such a ceremony. Miss Stretch said it was the wives and mothers who would derive the greatest benefit from the baths because ‘however careful one is when dealing with pit clothes, there is always dirt and dust flying about’. Although women, and children, had been banned from working underground from 1842, many men were still unhappy with them working at the surface. Their main concerns were bad manners and language, personal safety, neglect of their families and domestic duties and, of course, the trousers that many pit brow lasses wore. Despite this, a letter to The Times described them as ‘colliery venuses’ and they featured on many postcards! In 1886 there were 1623 women in Lancashire working on the pit brow and they, and others around the country, successfully campaigned against a bill to stop them working at the collieries. Kermishaw Nook was one of the last two pits in Lancashire to employ pit brow lasses, the other was Astley Green. In 1956, there were twenty-two women working in their ‘gaily coloured turbans’ at Kermishaw Nook. But, due to a two-year agreement between the National Union of Miners (NUM) and the National Coal Board (NCB) they were replaced by men who might end up redundant.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/highlights-from-the-wigan-museums-collection/working-life/1222558-pit-brow-lasses

<https://www.wiganlocalhistory.org/resources/pit-brow-lasses>

<https://modernisttourists.com/2017/01/01/the-pithead-baths-of-great-britain/>

<https://www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/17593747.looking-back-bus-driver-rescued-crash-nook-colliery-tyldesley/>

**SEE OPTION A (BLUE ROUTE) FOR SHORTER ROUTE**

*Return to Gin Pit Village bus turning area via the footpath.*

*Notice how you can see the Astley Green Headgear across the fields to your right. Turn left to leave the bus turning point and continue along Ley Road.*

13. The half pit wheel and coal tub on your left mark the location of**Gin Pit Colliery (1866-1958)** which was situated to your right. It was thought to be named after the original horse ‘gin’ (short for ‘engine’) used to raise coal from underground. John Darlington sank a pit, Astley Colliery, in the 1840s which subsequently became the site of Gin Pit Colliery. When Darlington died in the early 1850s, his pit eventually passed to Samuel Jackson, a salt merchant and owner of Bedford Colliery who later established the Astley and Tyldesley Coal and Salt Company in 1864. Gin Pit worked the Crombouke and Six Foot mines. When they were worked out, the Brassey mine was developed. A narrow gauge tramway worked by horses was built to transport coal from the pit. The colliery closed in 1958.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341446084_Gin_Pit_The_Archaeology_of_an_Historic_Coal-Mining_Settlement>

*Cross Ley Road and enter the field opposite.*

14. **Information boards.**

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/28709338@N04/33537319831](https://www.flickr.com/photos/28709338%40N04/33537319831)

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/28709338@N04/33510121782/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/28709338%40N04/33510121782/)

*Return to Ley Road, turn right and stop opposite to the entrance to School Street.*

15.This is one of the original **Gin Pit Village** streets built by the Astley and Tyldesley Coal and Salt Company to accommodate its workers, some of whom moved here from Staffordshire. Peace Street, Maden Street and Lord Street were named after former Company directors. The end house, next to the former school building, was a manager’s house. The Rowland family ran the colliery at the turn of the century. By 1920 there were more than 570 residents and a pie shop and chip shop but the village was nicknamed 'the Holy City' because it didn’t have a pub or a church. Following the pit’s closure, Gin Pit became isolated with poor roads and bus service and not even a phone box which made it the perfect location for Granada TV’s 1970s drama series *Sam*, about a boy growing up in a coal-mining village during the inter-war period. It also featured more recently in the 2022 BBC TV Series *Sherwood*, a murder mystery set in a former Nottinghamshire mining village. Note the pattress plates on the buildings which had to be added to protect them against vibrations and subsidence. In October 1930, the fourth Annual Ambulance Competition of the Manchester Collieries Ltd was held in Gin Pit’s Wesleyan school with Dr R.A. Dench of Tyldesley, father of Judi Dench, as one of the examiners.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://forgottentelevisiondrama.wordpress.com/2014/10/22/sam-granada-1973-5-by-lez-cooke/>

[https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155876-pc20101731?](https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155876-pc20101731)

*Ley Road now becomes Meanley Road.*

*Continue along it towards the club house.*

16. **Astley & Tyldesley Miners’ Welfare Institute (Gin Pit Club) and Recreation Ground**. During the 1926 General Strike, the miners asked their employers for a strip of land to lay a tennis court. The Strike was the largest industrial dispute in Britain's history lasting for nine days. Coal owners were increasing hours and cutting pay without improving working conditions and safety, so when they announced their intentions to reduce wages further, they were met with fury by the Miners Federation who demanded “Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day”. The Trades Union Council (TUC) announced a general strike in defence of the miners’ wages and working hours but when it was announced that the unions could face potential legal action, it was reluctantly called off. The miners had to accept lower wages and longer working hours and the 1927 Trade Disputes Act was introduced which banned sympathy strikes as well as mass picketing, which is still in force today. But the land for the tennis court was agreed and opened at the end of the strike. From this sprang the idea of an Institute which was built by the men using bricks from Nook Colliery brickworks. The Welfare Hall opened in 1927 with three billiard tables, a bar, snug, lounge/library and reading room, tennis courts, cricket and football pitches and two bowling greens. When the UK coal mining industry was taken under state ownership on Vesting Date, 1st January 1947, the Tyldesley and Atherton area celebrated with a concert at the Welfare Institute, which then came under the control of the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organization (CISWO). All of the miners paid into this which ran Miners Welfares and the Miners Convalescent Homes. The cricket, football and tennis facilities now belong to Wigan MBC. In June 1956, the Welfare Club hosted the presentation of the 'Workers VC’ to Alf Hughes.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Industrial_Heroism>

Visit for refreshments & WC.

*Turn right out of the club house and follow the footpath to the right.*

*At the crossroad take the path to the right, following the old mineral line.*

*Follow the path to the Guided Busway and cross it.*

17.The Guided busway follows the former London Northwestern Railway (LNWR) ‘Tyldesley Loop’ railway line to Manchester. On the platform are **two noticeboards**. One is a map of the area but the second, going towards Leigh, contains information about Gin Pit village.

*Turn back towards Tyldesley and follow the guided busway.*

*Turn left to walk up King William Street.*

*Turn right into St George’s Street.*

*Stop at the top of Lune Street.*

18. At the bottom of the street you can see **St George’s Park, home of Tyldesley RUFC** which was, previously, part of the site of**St George’s Colliery.** Known locally as ‘Back o’t’ Church Pit', it was started in 1866, when two shafts were sunk to the Rams mine. A third shaft, sunk in 1884, provided access to the Trencherbone mine, and was later deepened to the Arley mine. In 1903, engine winder Samuel Short was lowering a cage full of men when he had a sudden heart-attack. Incredibly, before he collapsed, he managed to apply the break to the engine and left the men suspended but died immediately afterwards. Director, Mr Peace, later unveiled a memorial to him at Leigh Cemetery (**See Trail 2)**, paying tribute to his ‘last, almost superhuman thought about the safety of others, whose lives he held in his hand.’ The Colliery worked the Seven Foot until 1929 when it became part of Manchester Collieries. St George’s Colliery and Gin Pit Colliery were connected in the late 19th-century to improve the ventilation in the underground workings and became a single colliery in both legal and working terms. During WW2 so many miners had been drafted into the armed forces that men had to be conscripted to work in the coal mines. They were selected by a National Service registration number ballot and became known as the ‘Bevin Boys’. They included Eric Morecambe, Stanley Baxter, and Nat Lofthouse who worked at Mosley Common pit for four years. St George’s ceased coal production in 1941 but was retained for ventilation purposes and as a training pit until 1964. The Tyldesley Rugby Football Union club was founded in 1881 and took part in the momentous meeting in Huddersfield in 1895 which resulted in the breakaway sport of rugby league being formed. Tyldesley competed in the first Rugby League season in history later that year, but was the first club to revert back to playing Rugby Union in 1911. The club played at Well Street before moving to St George's Park on Astley Street in November 2001.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-st-georges-pit-tyldesley-1901-1901-online>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebouipZzVl4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jp472_XXAk>

<https://www.wilson55.com/auction/lot/125-roger-hampson-lune-street-tyldesley-linocut/?lot=136405&au=285&sd=1>

*Continue along* *St George’s Street.*

*Look left into School Street.*

19. **St George’s Church** is an Anglican parish church serving Tyldesley and Shakerley. The burial register lists 14 of 23 men and boys killed in the Yew Tree Colliery explosion, on Dec 11th 1858, that were buried in the churchyard though there is no marker for the grave. We will visit the site of the colliery later. Another man died a week later due to his injuries. Some accounts state 25, but one man rather shamefacedly turned up a few days after the reports, having been ‘gallivanting’. The underground workings of the pit extended under the church which is thought to mark the seat of the explosion.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://engole.info/st-georges-church-tyldesley/>

<https://www.nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/accidents-disasters/lancashire/yew-tree-colliery-explosion-tyldesley-1858/>

*Continue along St George’s Street, crossing Lemon Street.*

*Stop where St George’s Street meets Wareing Street.*

20. The **Railway pub** is the only reminder of the ‘Tyldesley Loop’ railway line that ran between 1869 and 1969. The station stood at the bottom of Wareing Street. Coal was the primary motivation for building local railways; the Leigh-Bolton line was the first public railway in Lancashire, opening in 1828, some two years before the acclaimed Liverpool-Manchester railway (LMR). The Bolton-Leigh railway was extended to Kenyon Junction around 1831 to join the LMR, and some 30 years later a new line from Patricroft passed through Eccles, Monton, Worsley and Ellenbrook before reaching Tyldesley, with a new junction completing the ‘loop’ with the Leigh-Bolton line. Wareing street is named after Susanna Wareing, wife of Thomas Johnson who developed the local streets as part of the Banks Estate in the 18th-century.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyldesley_railway_station>

<http://www.archive-images.co.uk/gallery/Archive-Images-of-Lancashire-Railways/image/7/Tyldesley_Railway_Station>

[https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155795-pc201038?](https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155795-pc201038)

*Turn left into Wareing Street and cross the road to stand outside the second house from the corner.*

21. No 11, formerly known as Canonbury House, was built in 1845 and was the home of **Robert Isherwood**, Agent of the Leigh and District Miners’ Association from 1875-1905. Isherwood was born in Tyldesley in 1845 and worked in the coal industry from the age of nine. In 1870 he established a successful building business and later ran two grocery businesses but continued to play an active role in the mining community. He was Treasurer of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners Federation and Vice President of the Miners’ Permanent Relief Society. He was also a J.P. and a Councillor on the Tyldesley Local Board and later the Urban District Council.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://engole.info/robert-isherwood/>

[https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155804-pc2009514?](https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155804-pc2009514)

<https://ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com/2016/08/01/hidden-histories-wareing-street-tyldesley-part-one/>

https://ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com/2016/08/02/hidden-histories-wareing-street-tyldesley-part-two/

*Retrace your steps along Wareing Street and turn left into Upper George Street. Cross to the opposite side of the road and continue along Upper George Street.*

*Stop at Ingleside, on your right.*

22. *‘***Ingleside’** was, in the 1920s/1930s, the home and surgery of **Dr R.A. Dench**, father of actor, Dame Judi Dench. His two sons were born in Tyldesley but Judi was born after they moved to Heworth in York in 1934.

Walk up Chapel Street on the opposite side of the road for refreshments & WC at Mayhap Coffee & Kitchen Cafe at 1 Chapel Street.

*Continue along Upper George Street, cross Astley Street and continue along Upper George Street.*

*Stop at the large building on your right.*

23*.* The Art Nouveau **Technical School** was built in 1903 under the 1889 Technical Institutes Act. This gave County Councils and the Urban Sanitary Authorities the power to levy a penny tax to support the education of apprentices and mechanics and to provide instruction on a wide range of technical subjects. Educational courses in mining were particularly important and in 1911/12 a new ‘state of the art’ Apprentices Training Suite was constructed in the basement, to resemble a mines roadway and teach the principles of mining ventilation. It is believed to be unique in the country. It is open to the public on occasions, under the auspices of Tyldesley Historical Society.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/28709338@N04/albums/72157650788030729/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/28709338%40N04/albums/72157650788030729/)

**SEE OPTION B (RED ROUTE) FOR SHORTER ROUTE**

*Continue along Upper George Street and turn left into Johnson Street south.*

*Continue to the top of the street then cross over Elliot Street and stop on the corner. Turn and look across* *the road at the building opposite on the corner of Johnson Street South.*

24. 178 - 180 Elliot Street was originally the **Miners’ Hall**, now the *180 Dance and Fitness Centre*. It was Robert Isherwood’s idea to develop a meeting place for miners and their families and the building opened in 1894. It was home to the Tyldesley and Astley Miners Association, which was a member of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners Federation. The main hall could seat around 750 people and, from 1908, films were also screened there. Sadly, as the industry declined locally, the hall could not be maintained and was sold.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g190919-d2456533-i140176526-Museum_of_Wigan_Life-Wigan_Greater_Manchester_England.html>

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tyldesley\_miners\_outside\_the\_Miners\_Hall\_during\_the\_1926\_General\_Strike.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ATyldesley_miners_outside_the_Miners_Hall_during_the_1926_General_Strike.jpg)

Visit Cafe Elliott 193-195 Elliott Street for refreshments & WC.

*Cross Johnson Street North to continue along Elliott Street.*

*Cross Primrose Street and turn left into Milk Street.*

25. Part way down on your left, now a Social Centre, is the former**Welsh Calvinistic Chapel** built in 1878. Different nationalities flocked into the town to work in the pits, including many from Wales, so when their families followed they needed places to worship. In the early days, Welsh Methodists and Baptists prayed and sang together but a later split led to two separate chapels being built, one in Shuttle Street and the other in Milk Street. The Milk Street chapel is now home to Tyldesley Band, which can trace its origins to 1877 and has a history of involvement with local mining events. The Baptist Chapel has been demolished and a small block of apartments built on the site.

*Retrace your steps along Milk Street to return to Elliott Street and cross over to stand at the top of Well Street.*

26.Well Street runs down the **Tyldesley Banks,** locally pronounced as “Bongs”, where the foothills of the Pennines begin. The area to the east of Well Street was known as the ‘Jig Brow’, a name which comes from the self-acting inclined track used in mines to lower filled coal tubs and raise empty ones. The Jig was a collection of steeply terraced rows, running down the 45 degree slope, from Manchester Road, down to the railway line. Most of them were built to accommodate the miners.In the late 19th-century, the Tyldesley Coal Co. Ltd. leased land under the fields at the bottom of Well Street to dig for coal but their tunnels trespassed onto Ormerod’s Banks Estate land, leased by the Astley and Tyldesley Coal Co. Ltd. When the latter discovered that their coal had been mined, they started a long dispute which eventually went to the High Court. The Tyldesley Coal Co. Ltd. claimed that the trespass was unintentional but they were still ordered to pay damages of £3,000 to the Astley and Tyldesley Coal Co. Ltd. However, the company overcame its losses and continued until 1947 when it was taken over by the NCB.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/-End-of-the-Jig-Brow--Tyldesley-/4E5718D45F7ECE4B>

[https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155812-pc201037?](https://archives.wigan.gov.uk/archive/photograph-collections/tyldesley/155812-pc201037)

*Cross Well Street and continue along Elliot Street.*

27.Look up to see ‘**Tyldesley and District Industrial Co-operative Society Limited Founded AD 1885**’ above the buildings.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<http://www.peterjtyldesley.com/bongs/lunn/pages/124.html>

*Cross Norris Street, continue along what is now Manchester Road and stop at the top of New Bank Street.*

*Look across at Whewell Street.*

28.**St George’s Central CE Primary School** stands at the bottom of the street. Inside there is a memorial plaque to the 24 boys and men who lost their lives in the mining disaster at **Yew Tree Pit** in 1858. The plaque marks the 150th anniversary of their deaths. The school is successor to an earlier ‘Mission’ school that had two stained glass windows dedicated to mining families – one to Joseph Ramsden, proprietor of Shakerley Collieries who contributed financially to the building of the mission, and one to John Kay, Sunday School teacher and manager of the Nelson Pit who was killed underground on a rescue mission in October 1910. Darlington Street is named after John Darlington, an early mining pioneer in the town.

*Continue along Manchester Road.*

*Cross Maesbrook Drive then stop opposite Peel Hall Avenue.*

29. The green space in the middle of the housing estate is the former site of one of the **Yew Tree Colliery** shafts. The Colliery took its name from the farm where George Green, of Wharton Hall, Little Hulton sunk a shaft in 1845. Green, Holland and Co. (later to become Tyldesley Coal Co. Ltd. in 1860) sunk two shafts to the Six Feet mine which were later deepened to the Seven Feet mine. In 1858, a fireman failed to turn up to inspect a part of the workings in the Crombouke mine but the men were still allowed down and an explosion took place. Not much gas was fired but most of the miners died from suffocation caused by the after-damp. 24 men and boys were killed making it Tyldesley’s worst mining disaster. The youngest was 11 year old drawer, William Beswick who was found with his arms round his older brother, Michael who was 13. They both lived on Well Street. Thomas Beswick, believed to be the boys’ father, also died. Most of the dead were buried in St George’s graveyard. Yew Tree closed in 1910 but, later, the site provided access to Cleworth Colliery. In the 1950s/early 1960s, it was a distribution centre for road hauliers delivering coal to exotic places such as Radcliffe Paper Mills.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://engole.info/yew-tree-colliery/>

*Continue along Manchester Road to the top of Rowe Street.*

30.George Greenbuilt a **tramway,** worked by cable, to transport coal down the Tyldesley Banks to Astley where horse-drawn wagons took it to the Bridgewater Canal. It crossed Manchester Road just after Rowe Street. It was later replaced by Green’s Sidings mineral line, with locomotives passing under the Manchester Road bridge. This had restricted headroom so they were built to a reduced loading gauge. The first locomotive named *Tyldesley* was delivered in 1867. When Yew Tree Colliery closed, the tipping plant and sidings by the canal were sold to the Clifton and Kerseley Coal Company to be used by its colliery at Astley Green.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://engole.info/tyldesley-coal-company/>

*Enter the public footpath at the top of Rowe Street and follow the route of the mineral line down to the Guided Busway.*

*Turn left and follow the path alongside the Guided Busway, crossing where necessary, until you reach Hough Lane.*

*Cross Hough Lane and turn right to walk towards Astley.*

31. **Tyldesley Cemetery** is on your left. The Cemetery opened in 1878.

*Walk up to the circle of monuments in the middle of the cemetery to area F.*

Just behind the War Memorial, you will find a granite memorial for **Robert Isherwood**, the Tyldesley miner's agent and treasurer of The Lancashire & Cheshire Miners Federation.

*Walk back between the circle of monuments.*

*To the left of the path is the Roman Catholic area of the cemetery, area K.*

The 6th grave along on the back row belongs to **Joseph Keegan** who was killed in the Astley Green explosion in 1939 aged 38 from Henry Street, Tyldesley. He was a Fireman, a deputy who holds a certificate to fire shots. There are lots of other miners’ graves in the cemetery. Many of the more recent ones have a miner’s lamp carved into their headstones, acknowledging how much their job was a part of their lives and, sometimes, their deaths.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<http://www.mbaird.mlfhs.org.uk/cemplans/tyldesley.html>

<https://www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/17693495.service-held-80th-anniversary-mining-disaster-astley-green-colliery/>

*Return to Hough Lane and turn left to walk towards Astley.*

*It becomes Hen Fold Road just before Moss O’Lee Bridge which crosses the Eleanor brook*.

*Continue along Hen Fold Road until you reach Prosperity on your left*.

32. ‘**Prosperity’** is a small hidden street of old cottages. They appear on the 1845 OS map under the name ‘Prosperity’ but are thought to date back to the late 18th- or early 19th-centuries. They were owned by the Earl of Ellesmere who inherited the Duke of Bridgewater’s Egerton estates. It is believed they were built to house workers at Garrett Corn Mill.

*Continue along Hen Fold Road and turn left into Garrett Lane which is named after Garrett Hall.*

33. **Garrett Hall** succeeded Astley Hall (Damhouse) as the chief manor house of Tyldesley, after the original Tyldesley family split up their estates in the 14th-century. As its importance diminished, it became a farm house with a corn mill which was later steam operated. The farmhouse, a listed building, was recently subject to a major fire and its future is now uncertain. Lancashire Education Committee opened a Senior Boys’ School here in 1935, and the former Board School in Elliott Street became a girls-only school. The Tyldesley Boys' County Secondary School had a 40 year life until 1975 when the school combined with the newly built girls’ school to become Fred Longworth High School. The Senior Boys’ School became Garrett Hall Primary School soon after, to provide primary education for the children of all the new local housing. 19th-century maps show a former tannery in this area and a shallow colliery known as Hen Fold Colliery.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/grade-ii-listed-garrett-hall-23697442>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/joans_stuff/25388503049>

*Take the footpath that runs up the side of the school.*

*Follow it until you reach Tanhouse Avenue on your right.*

*Continue to the end of Tanhouse Avenue and turn left into Withington Drive.*

*Continue along Withington Drive until you reach the public footpath/bridleway on your left.*

*Follow the footpath.*

34.You are now back on the route of the **colliery** **tramway/railway**which used to transport coal across to the Bridgewater Canal at Higher Green.

*The footpath joins Kennedy Road.*

*Continue along Kennedy Road until you reach Manchester Road.*

*Turn right and continue along Manchester Road until you reach the junction with Coach Road.*

35. **Cross Hillock Colliery** stood on the site of the petrol station. It was opened in 1869 by the Astley and Tyldesley Coal and Salt Company but only had a short life until it closed in 1885 due to flooding. This is where Joseph Rowson sadly lost his life. Although some pit houses still remain every other trace has vanished. The area is probably named after a stone cross erected during Catholic times.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.facebook.com/TheRedRoseSteamSocietyLtd1/posts/the-cross-hillock-pit-at-astley-opened-in-1869-by-the-astley-and-tyldesley-coal-/1967596580048517/?locale=ar_AR&paipv=0&eav=AfZED-5r97bpmbiyKxwJxYIaBV7nbJBHKMCHfdRRVAKnWu1lIVNONlstWL1wDEgGaRA&_rdr>

*Cross Coach Road to return to Manchester Road and cross at the crossing to return to Higher Green Lane.*

*Cross the East Lancs Road to return to the* **Lancashire Mining Museum**.

**OPTION A (BLUE ROUTE)**

*Continue**up North Lane and stop at the top.*

*Look across the road.*

B1. **The Miners Arms pub** is one of many local pubs named after the mining industry.

*Turn left onto Manchester Road.*

*Cross over Princes Avenue and continue along Manchester Road.*

*Cross Manchester Road at the zebra crossing and stop outside the doctor’s surgery on the corner of Coldalhurst Lane.*

B2. This single storey building is a **former blacksmith’s forge** dating back to at least 1810. The building behind was the home of the Shaw family who were blacksmiths for many years.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com/2016/04/26/hidden-histories-the-doctors-surgery-coldalhurst-astley/>

*Cross Coldalhurst Lane and continue along Manchester Road, back towards the Lancashire Mining Museum, crossing The Straits and Duke Street.*

*Stop at the corner of Higher Green Lane.*

35. **Cross Hillock Colliery** stood on the site of the petrol station. It was opened in 1869 by the Astley and Tyldesley Coal and Salt Company but only had a short life until it closed in 1885 due to flooding. This is where Joseph Rowson sadly lost his life. Although some pit houses still remain every other trace has vanished. The area is probably named after a stone cross erected during Catholic times.

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<https://www.facebook.com/TheRedRoseSteamSocietyLtd1/posts/the-cross-hillock-pit-at-astley-opened-in-1869-by-the-astley-and-tyldesley-coal-/1967596580048517/?locale=ar_AR&paipv=0&eav=AfZED-5r97bpmbiyKxwJxYIaBV7nbJBHKMCHfdRRVAKnWu1lIVNONlstWL1wDEgGaRA&_rdr>

*Turn into Higher Green Lane and cross the East Lancs Road to return to the* **Lancashire Mining Museum**.

**OPTION B (RED ROUTE)**

*Retrace your steps back along Upper George Street and turn left into Astley Street. Walk along Astley Street and cross the guided busway.*

*Cross Standish Street and continue along Astley Street, crossing Shearwater Avenue, Thirlmere Avenue, Ennerdale Road and Ullswater Road.*

*When you get to the track that divides Princes Avenue from Astley Street, follow The Ley footpath ahead of you.*

*Continue until it turns left, then take the next right to come out between no. 21 & no. 23 Sunnybank Road.*

*Turn right and walk to the end of the road.*

*Cross Greenland Road/Parkfield Avenue and enter the footpath opposite.*

*Follow it alongside the wall of Damhouse until you reach Manchester Road.*

*Turn right and walk along Manchester Road.*

*Cross Manchester Road at the zebra crossing and stop outside the doctor’s surgery on the corner of Coldalhurst Lane.*

B2. This single storey building is a **former blacksmith’s forge** dating back to at least 1810. The building behind was the home of the Shaw family who were blacksmiths for many years.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://ifthosewallscouldtalk.wordpress.com/2016/04/26/hidden-histories-the-doctors-surgery-coldalhurst-astley/>

*Cross Coldalhurst Lane and continue along Manchester Road, back towards the Lancashire Mining Museum, crossing The Straits and Duke Street.*

*Stop at the corner of Higher Green Lane.*

35. **Cross Hillock Colliery** stood on the site of the petrol station. It was opened in 1869 by the Astley and Tyldesley Coal and Salt Company but only had a short life until it closed in 1885 due to flooding. This is where Joseph Rowson sadly lost his life. Although some pit houses still remain every other trace has vanished. The area is probably named after a stone cross erected during Catholic times.

**Images & video clips &/or further info.:**

<https://www.facebook.com/TheRedRoseSteamSocietyLtd1/posts/the-cross-hillock-pit-at-astley-opened-in-1869-by-the-astley-and-tyldesley-coal-/1967596580048517/?locale=ar_AR&paipv=0&eav=AfZED-5r97bpmbiyKxwJxYIaBV7nbJBHKMCHfdRRVAKnWu1lIVNONlstWL1wDEgGaRA&_rdr>

*Turn into Higher Green Lane and cross the East Lancs Road to return to the* **Lancashire Mining Museum**.