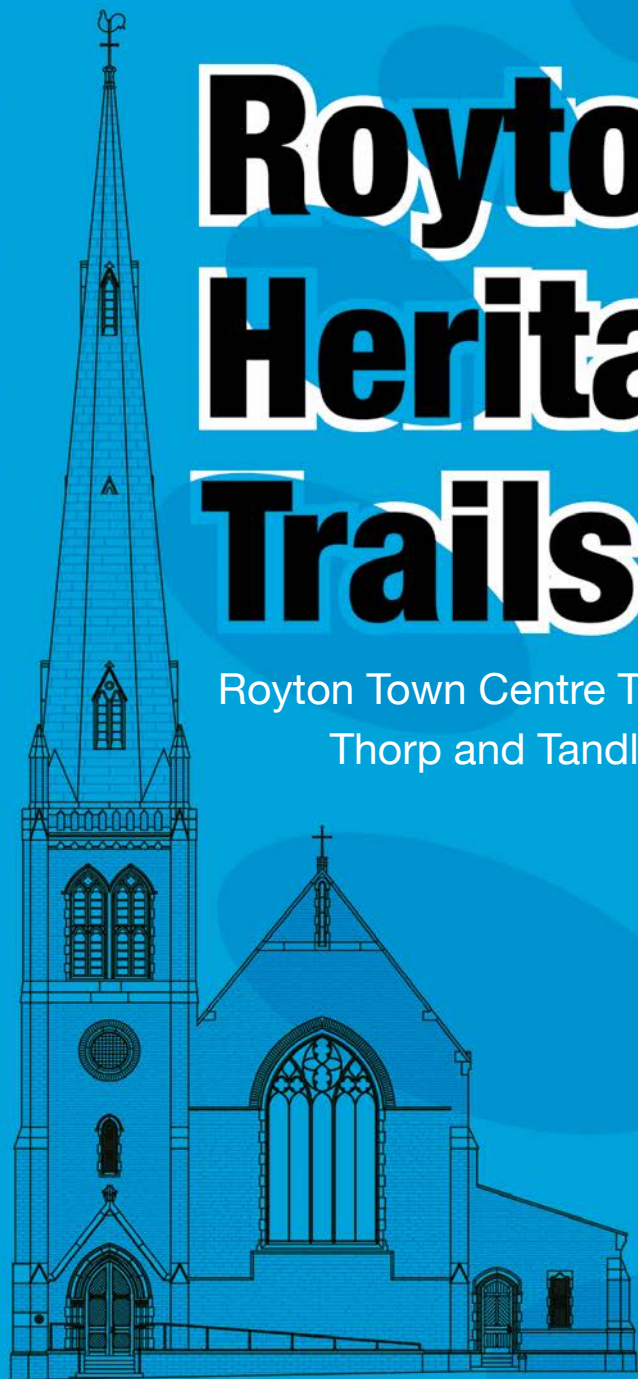


Royton Heritage Trails

Royton Town Centre Trail

Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail



Third edition 2016



Royton Town Centre Trail

Distance 1.4 miles (2.3km)

Please note: This trail is suitable for wheelchair users therefore it does not take the shortest route. Difficulties may be experienced in Market Square on Thursdays when it is market day.

1. Royton Hall



The trail starts on Hall Street which was part of the original road from Oldham to Rochdale until 19th century.

A blue plaque 1 commemorates the site of Royton Hall, the remains of which lie behind beneath the grass and were excavated in 2005-9.

The date of the hall is uncertain. Parts were built in the late 15th century, while the east wing was Elizabethan or Jacobean in origin. Royton Hall was home to the Byron family for 400 years. In 1622 they sold the hall to the Standish family who in turn sold it in 1662 to the Percival brothers.

Almost one hundred years later, in 1758, Thomas and Mary Percival constructed the west wing and rebuilt the south front. Their only child Katherine married Joseph Pickford in 1763. She died in 1765 and left the hall to her son William Percival Pickford. He moved to Edinburgh to train as a doctor but never

practised. Although married, he had no family and so bequeathed the hall to his father, who by now had changed his surname to Radcliffe in order to inherit his uncle's estate at Milnesbridge near Huddersfield.

From 1795 the hall was leased to a variety of tenants including the priests at SS Aidan and Oswald in the 20th century. During the First World War it housed Belgian refugees. In 1922 the hall was sold to Dr Thomas Godfrey who had rented it since the war. His attempts to sell the hall in 1926 failed and it was converted to tenements. In 1938 the hall was declared unfit for human habitation and demolished in 1939.

The only visible remnant of the hall is **a single gatepost 2** Originally situated at the rear entrance to the Hall, on Middleton Road, it was moved to Hall Street in 1989 in order to make way for a new shop.



2. Gate post

Make your way up Hall Street to Middleton Road and turn right.

This part of Middleton Road was originally named Pickford Street after the family who owned Royton Hall. The date stone above the **stone fronted shops on the right 3** indicates that they are called the Pickford buildings and were constructed in 1878.

Continue along Middleton Road until you reach the traffic lights. Cross the road to the Railway public house.

4 & 5. Railway Pub and Station



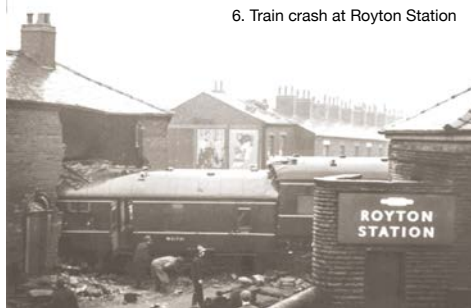
The Railway 4 was originally called the Unicorn and Park and built in the 1830s when the new turnpike road from Oldham to Rochdale was cut through the grounds of Royton Hall park.

The pub was constructed by William Ogden who owned the Unicorn pub on High Street. It was renamed after the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Co. opened Royton station on 21st March 1864 to the **rear of the pub 5**. The station was a single platform on a branch line but had an extensive goods yard and a cotton warehouse. The station closed on 16th April 1966. The council purchased the site and it is now occupied by houses and flats.

Cross Highbarn Street and turn right.

At the corner of **Highbarn Street and Park Street 6**, stood a row of terraced houses which were partly

6. Train crash at Royton Station



demolished on 8th February 1961, when at approximately 6.15am, a 130 ton 4 coach diesel train crashed through the buffers at Royton station and crossed Highbarn Street. The residents of Park Street and 11 and 13 Highbarn Street were not seriously injured, though their homes had eventually to be pulled down. The guard and single passenger on board the train were also unhurt but the driver suffered serious head injuries after leaping from his cab as it hurtled through the station.

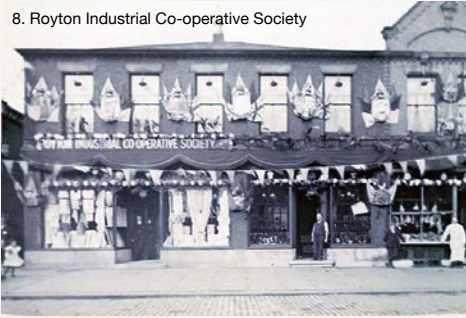
Return to the crossroad and turn right onto Rochdale Road.

The building on the corner 7 was originally built by the Union Bank of Manchester in 1905. It established a branch in Royton in 1871/2 moving to a room in the then new Town Hall in 1881. Taken over by Barclays in 1919 it retained its own name until 1940. Barclays closed the branch in Feb 2011. Note the date stone and coat of arms above the doorway.



7. Union Bank of Manchester

8. Royton Industrial Co-operative Society



Continue up Rochdale Road.

The double-fronted restaurant on the right 8 was built in 1851 as a Temperance Seminary at a cost of £400 on what was then Park Road. It was taken over by the Royton Industrial Co-operative Society in 1884 to house their news and education rooms. It was extended in 1889 to house the butcher's department and to extend the newsroom. In 1890 the Boots & Shoes department transferred here and in 1900 the Drapery department.

The following two shops 9 were originally four shops and formed the front of Royton Market; a covered market with stalls which opened in 1880. The market was demolished in January/February 1957 and the site is now a car park. Adjacent to the market is the **Town Hall 10** which was opened by James Ashworth, first Chairman of the Local Board, in September 1880. The Town Hall is built in a free style of classic architecture and includes a clock tower with a domed roof. It originally had a flagstaff on top of the green dome.

Three inscriptions are to be found on the tower: 'Tempus Fugit' (time flies), 'Sic Labitur Aetas' (so the years pass by) and 'Finem Respice' (have regard to the end). Dr Kershaw presented the clock in 1881. The clock face on the east side is only half the size of the others. The

local explanation is that when Holy Trinity Church was built in Shaw in 1869, only three clock faces were incorporated into the tower, the side facing Royton had none! When Royton built their Town Hall they retaliated but without losing their dignity, building a tower with four faces, with the one facing Shaw being smaller. In reality the roof line would have obscured the lower half of the clock face had it been the same size as the others. Royton's Coat of Arms can be found above the front door. It incorporates the crest and motto (Virtus Propter Se) of the Radcliffe family of Royton Hall. To the right of the main doorway is a plaque to remember those who died in a railway accident at Welshampton on 11th June 1897. The train carrying the United Sunday Schools excursion from Royton was returning from a day by the seaside at Barmouth. Nine people were killed in the accident, two died later in hospital and fifty were seriously injured.

9 & 10. Market and Town Hall



The next building is **Royton Library 11** the gift of Andrew Carnegie. When the Library was opened in 1907 by Lord Stanley of Alderley, the Co-operative Society presented it with their own collection of books. Note the names of four literary figures; Bacon, Carlyle, Spencer and Milton above the windows.

11. Royton Library

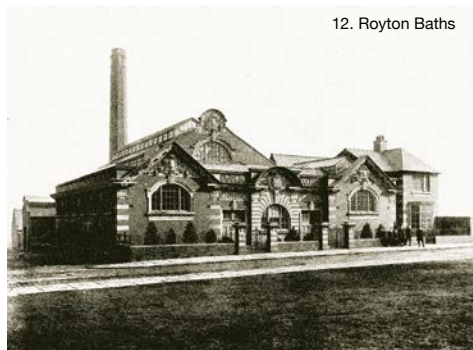


Turn to the right immediately after the library and continue. Cross over Park Street to the new Leisure Centre opened in September 2015.

The car park between the new centre and the Royton Health and Wellbeing Centre was the site of the former **Royton Baths 12** which was opened on 12th March 1910 by Cllr H Beswick, Chairman of the Baths Committee and was followed by a swimming gala. It was a fine example of Edwardian Baroque.

It was not the first public bath in Royton. That honour goes to Messrs Coopers, cotton manufacturers, who erected a

12. Royton Baths



public bath for their workers in 1850 and opened to members of the public for 1d per bather. In 1993 a sports hall, originally a Local Authority garage, was added to the complex. This, along with the council yard became the site of the new Health and Wellbeing Centre which opened in October 2010. These baths were closed on 25th September 2015 when the new Leisure Centre opened across the road. Look out for the nearby garden feature incorporating some of the ornamental stones saved when the baths were demolished.

Walk down the side of the Leisure Centre along Park Street to Radcliffe Street. Cross Radcliffe Street and turn right.

14. Royton Park



Enter the park via the gates opposite Cardigan Street. **The gates 13** were brought from Kent Mill, Chadderton when it was demolished.

Royton Park 14 was officially opened on Coronation Day, 22nd June 1911 by Cllr Z Brierley. The park contained a bandstand and a public fountain which was presented by the Cooper family but removed in 1960. In 1919 it was home to a First World War tank which had been presented to the town. The park was built on the site of Royton coal pit which closed due to flooding on 4th April 1901. The last remains of the pit disappeared in February 1902 when the chimney was demolished.

Continue into the park to the war memorial

15. This was unveiled here in April 2002. The memorial replaced the plaques which had been sited in the Remembrance Gardens at St Paul's Church. These in turn replaced the plaques on the **war memorial** **39** (see the Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail) in Tandle Hill Park.



is a **commemorative paving stone** **15a** unveiled 100 years after Sergeant John

Hogan (1884-1943) of Heyside was awarded the VC for bravery near Festubert, France on 29th October 1914. *Turn left at the memorial and head towards Rochdale Road.*

On the way you can see the smaller clock face on Royton Town Hall.



Turn left along Rochdale Road and cross Radcliffe Street. On the left just before the pedestrian crossing is the **Post Office** **16**. This was originally known as Park House and occupied by the local doctor in the late 19th century. A second memorial to John Hogan VC can be found on a plaque at the back of the **left hand post box** **16a** while a new avenue off Highbarn Street has been named in his honour.

17. Market Street circa 1950



Cross the pedestrian crossing, turn left and then first right into the shopping precinct. The streets in the centre of Royton, including Market Street were demolished in 1969 to make way for this **new shopping precinct** **17** which opened on 30th September 1971 and refurbished in 1997. St John's Methodist Church on Market Street was also demolished in 1971 and replaced by a new church, Trinity, on Radcliffe Street **51** (see Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail).

Walk through the precinct until it widens into Market Square.

On the left is Lidl, opened in 2016 on the site of the former **Royton Assembly Hall** **18**, which was built in 1974 on the area where the Congregational Church and Sunday School once stood.

Continue walking through the precinct towards St Paul's Church.

On the left is the **Duke of Edinburgh** **19** pub which is all that remains of old Market Street. It was built in 1869 when the street was new and was the starting point for the last rushcarts in Royton. From the 1920s to the 1950s it was the headquarters of the Royton Morris Dancers, a long running team, who won the Championship of England prize at the Albert Hall in 1935. Their steps and movements became known as 'The Royton Morris Dance'. The outside was modernised around the late 1970s.

Continue. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and follow the path to the church.

The houses on either side were built in the early 1970s on the site of the former **Jubilee gardens** **20** which had been presented to the town to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935.

20. Jubilee Gardens



As you approach the church bear left.

On the right hand side, in the shrubbery, are the posts inscribed JM 1777, which held the **village stocks** **21**



Continue past the stocks following the path downhill. CAUTION Wheelchairs.

On the left hand side is a plaque commemorating the site of **the village school** **22**. This was established in 1785 and continued as a school until 1833 when St Paul's National School was opened. The village school then became the Sunday School. In 1838 the village school broke away from St Paul's

22. Village School



and re-opened as a day school which closed in 1907 leaving only the Sunday school to continue. The school was demolished in 1969.

Retrace your steps, turn left and walk round the church.

As you pass the corner there is a statue of St Paul. **St Paul's Church** **23** was built in Gothic style in 1889. It replaced the original chapel built in 1754 and consecrated on 1st July 1757. In 1828 a tower with clock and weather vane was added. In 1854 the chapel was extended at both ends, incorporating the tower into the main body of the church. It was again extended in 1883 when part of the east wall was removed and a chancel built in memory of the Holden family of Launderbrook House.

Stand with your back to the church and look down Church Street.

On the right is **Downey House** **24**, home of the Cooper family, cotton manufacturers of Downey and Beech mills. In 1933 the house was used as St Paul's infant school until 1998 when it amalgamated with the junior school on Hindle Drive. The house is now St Paul's Parish Centre.

Follow the drive to the front of the house.



To the left of the house were the stables and carriage house. Note **the mounting steps** **25**. The datestone on the end is thought to have come from the tower of the old St Paul's church.



Retrace your steps to Church Street.

To the right of the church are the former **Vicarage** **26** built in 1902-3, and **St Paul's Institute** **27**, built on the site of Willow Cottage in 1910. The Institute was founded in the 1860s and was located in various venues including Royton Hall between 1905 -10. It was sold in 1997 and converted into apartments.

Walk down Church Street and turn left into Chapel Croft.

Continue down Chapel Croft. At the bollards turn left into the Remembrance Gardens, site of the original **church graveyard** **28**. The graveyard was remodelled and landscaped as part of an improvement scheme in 1969. Nineteen of the old and historic graves



were preserved including those of John Butterworth 1774 - 1845 mathematician; James Taylor 1794 - 1863 the poet; Robert Taylor, violinist died 1869; John Heap, meteorologist died 1869 and John Kay 1781 - 1824, mathematician and constable of Royton township and overseer of the poor.

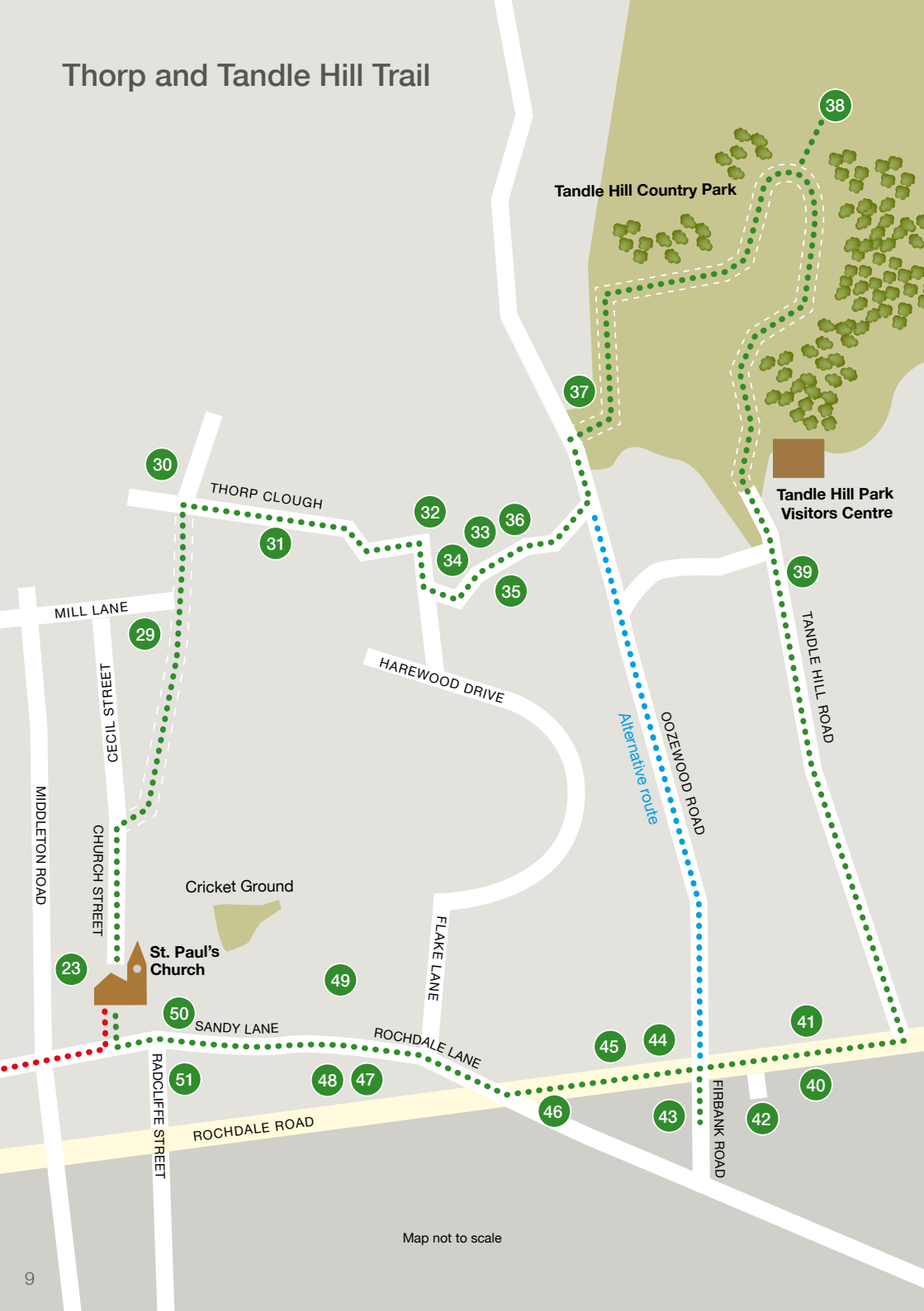


Retrace your steps to St Paul's Church by turning right at Chapel Croft and right again at Church Street.

For those who wish to follow the Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail, your walk commences here.

Those who wish to return to the start of the Town Centre Trail follow the path along the left-hand side of the church and continue towards the Town Hall. Cross the pelican crossing and turn right down High Street. Cross over Middleton Road and you will once again find yourself on Hall Street. You have now reached the end of the Royton Town Centre Trail.

Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail

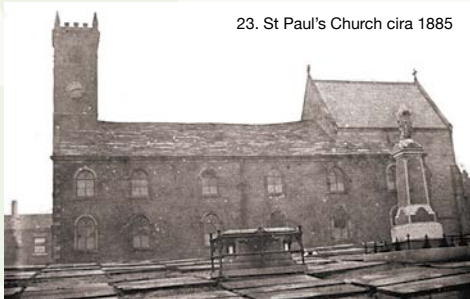


Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail

Distance 4 miles (6.4km) 2½ hours

The trail is not suitable for wheelchairs. Please wear sensible shoes and remember to take refreshments with you.

23. St Paul's Church circa 1885



The trail starts in Church Street.

With your back to St Paul's Church [23] walk down the right hand side of Church Street, cross Dunkerley Street and after the following row of three cottages turn right. Follow the path, bearing left at the end of the gardens.

The path runs parallel to the River Irk, which lies on your right, in the valley bottom.



29. Spaw Cottages

The cottages on the left, **Spaw Cottages [29]**, once housed Royton's workhouse. The workhouse dates back to 1744 as the Royton Hall Rent Book in

1764 states that the Royton Overseers leased a house in Royton Fold for 21 years, with the lease expiring in 'February next'. They also leased three houses in Edge Lane. In 1773-4 they built this workhouse at Spaw. It was reputedly rebuilt in 1828 (hence the datestone).

In 1847, the Board of Guardians' survey of workhouses in the Oldham Poor Law Union reported that 'it is better qualified than any other in the Union to accommodate the poor belonging to it. The house is clean, apparently well managed and the bedding good'.

It was sold to the Whitworth family in 1853, after the residents of Spaw were transferred to the new Oldham workhouse on Rochdale Road. The Whitworth family owned Spaw Mill which stood on the opposite side of the lane to the workhouse. It was later converted to the cottages you see today.

Walk past the cottages and continue along the lane. Join the concrete road and turn right following the road alongside the River Irk, which is now on your left.

30. Cottages



The Irk valley was flooded on 11th July 1927 after a heavy rainstorm. Many of **the cottages 30** (most of which are no longer in existence), lower down the valley were flooded to first floor level. Water poured down from Summit and Oldham Edge, while the lodge at the Holly mill burst its banks adding to the water already flowing to Streetbridge.

Follow the track past the large house on the right. Turn right up the slope, past the stables and bungalows. Continue up Thorp Clough, looking out for a blue plaque on the right 31

31. Thorp Mill



The plaque marks the site of Thorp Mill, allegedly the first cotton mill in Lancashire. Ralph Taylor established the mill in three converted cottages in 1764. The mill was water powered and used for carding cotton. The mill was advertised for sale in 1788 when James Taylor was selling the mill and its machinery. It was again advertised in 1792. The mill was eventually converted back to cottages and later demolished.

32 Thorp Cottage and Thorp Common



Continue up the lane, past the two large brick houses on the right, until you reach Thorp, probably the oldest hamlet in Royton. **The cream house 32** on the left, Thorp Cottage, is the white house in the photograph in front and to the right of which is the common known as Pingling Pit.

33. Thorp



Looking up the hill, the photograph **33** shows what Thorp looked like at the end of the 19th century. On the left, as you approach the hill is an **old well 34** believed to be the reason Thorp was established.

Walk up the hill and turn left after Brima House, following the footpath sign to Tandle Hill.

The lane takes you through the hamlet. Manor farm (now renamed Thorp Farm House) **35** on the right is the only surviving farm, which was thought to have been a pub at one time. It dates from approximately the 17th century and has wattle and daub walls inside.

The farm has been converted into two cottages. The barn **36** on the left is also thought to be 17th century and was once used as a post office.

35. Manor Farm and Thorp Farm Cottage

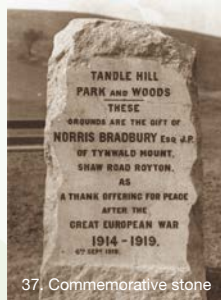


Follow the track, by the right hand side of the barn, down the hill. At Oozewood Road turn left along the lane. The following section of the walk is strenuous. If you wish to avoid this section of the walk, turn right at Oozewood Road. Continue to the end, cross Rochdale Road, turn right and left into Firbank Road and pick up the trail at Roy House **43** *Continue for approximately ¼ mile/400m, passing the first entrance on the right to Tandle Hill Country Park. Turn right into the park at the second entrance, which lies at the end of the woodland. After entering the park bear left along the untarmaced track which passes between the trees. Beware the path can be slippery.*

After passing through the trees, on the left hand side is the commemorative granite stone **37** *which records how Tandle Hill Park and woods were presented to the town by Norris Bradbury on 6th September 1919 as a thanksgiving offering for peace after the great European war 1914-1919. The park comprises 110 acres of which*

41 acres are woodland. The park had originally been a private game reserve, and in 1819 up to a thousand reformers at a time undertook military drilling on here prior to marching to the Peterloo Massacre. In 1861 Tandle Hill was purchased by the Milne family and formed part of the Thornham Estate.

Follow the path directly ahead, admiring views of Royton, Crompton, Oldham and Chadderton as you go.



At the point where various paths meet at the wooden signpost, bear right, following the Thornham Cycleway. The pathway leads up the hill and into Tandle Hill Woods.

The beech wood plantation was created around 1830, ostensibly to prevent Chartists holding large public meetings and foment political agitation.

After the path descends, turn left at the sign indicating the direction to the Countryside Centre and car park. Take the flight of steps which leads to the top of Tandle Hill (728 feet, 222 metres).

The obelisk **38** on the top of Tandle Hill was unveiled on 22nd December 1921 by the Earl of Derby 'in memory of the men of Royton who gave their lives for the freedom and honour of their country in the Great War 1914-1918'. Originally built of Portland stone it had to be replaced in granite when the original failed to withstand the Royton weather. The memorial was originally adorned with a figure symbolising Peace and ornamentations in bronze. Names of the fallen were listed on three plaques which were stolen in 1969. Replacement Rolls of Honour were erected in the redeveloped graveyard at St Paul's and a new memorial **15** (see Royton Town Centre Trail) was unveiled in Royton Park in 2002.

38. The Obelisk



Take time to admire the view from the top of the hill (the orientation sign near the obelisk will help you get your bearings), before returning via the steps to the main pathway.

Go straight ahead following the path to the Countryside Centre and car park. Walk through the car park onto Tandle Hill Road. Continue along Tandle Hill Road.

The road **39** was built in 1924 as part of an unemployment scheme. This is locally regarded as the most up-market address in Royton.



At the end of the road, turn right down Rochdale Road. On the left are rows of Victorian and Edwardian **terraced houses 40** while on the right, set above the road in the woodland was **Thornccliffe House 41** home to the Rowland family, cotton manufacturers.



At the pelican crossing near the Half Way House pub cross Rochdale Road and continue down the other side of the road. On the left are **Chapelway Gardens 42** built on the site of Roy Mill, which was demolished in 1984.



Continue down Rochdale Road, and turn left into Firbank Road.

Fifty yards (45m) along Firbank Road, on the right, is **Roy House 43**, the former Scattered Homes, erected in 1899 to provide a home for children who would normally have lived in the workhouse. The home was sold c1958 and converted into private flats.



Return to Rochdale Road and turn left. On the right, at the corner of Brooklands Street, is the Birchencroft branch of Royton Industrial **Co-operative Society 44** which opened 1897. To its left is **Birchencroft Terrace 45** a row of 23 houses also built by the Co-op. *Continue along Rochdale Road.* On the left, at the traffic lights, is Royton Bethesda (Particular) Baptist chapel **46** which was built in 1893 to replace an earlier chapel built in 1860.



45. Birchencroft Terrace



Their first chapel was founded in 1775 when William Taylor erected a small meeting house on Cotton Street. The adjacent cottages were purchased in 1911 and converted into a Sunday School.

Cross Rochdale Road into Rochdale Lane, following the lane on the left hand side.

Lower down on the left is **Park Lane House 47**. It was built in 1812 for the owner of the original mill which was

47. Park Lane House



situated to its rear. More recently it was a rest home for the elderly. The Park & Sandy Mill replaced the original mill around 1850. Adjacent to the house is **Royton Brass Band and Musical Club 48** founded in 1873. The band used to meet in the old Hare & Hounds pub across the road and moved to this new purpose built club in 1964. Between Park Lane House and the club is Park Lane which once formed part of the boundary of Royton Hall's park.

Continue down what is now Sandy Lane.

This is also part of the original road from Oldham to Rochdale prior to the construction of the turnpike road, the present Rochdale Road. On the right is **Holly Mill estate 49** so called as it was built on the site of Holly Mill. Further up the lane is the **Hope and Anchor pub 50**, already well established in 1790 and now Royton's oldest surviving pub. In that year the 'Jacobin Library' was transferred here from the Light Horseman and renamed the 'Circulating Library'. It had originally been formed by working men, shopkeepers and small manufacturers. Set back on the left is **Trinity Methodist Church 51** so called because when it was built in 1971 it replaced three other Methodist Churches; St John's on Market Street, the Primitive Methodist on Oldham Road and Haggate Methodist Church on Middleton Road.

48. Hope & Anchor Pub



If you commenced your trail at St Paul's Church, continue along Sandy Lane to the pedestrian crossing. Cross and follow the path, Church Walk, to and alongside the right hand side of the church. You are now back at the start of the Thorp and Tandle Hill Trail.

If you started the trail on Hall Street, continue along Sandy Lane and High Street to Middleton Road. Cross Middleton Road to Hall Street. You are now back at the start of the 'Town Centre Trail'

How to find us:

By Car:

There are car parks on Park Street and Cardigan Street (both maximum 3 hrs) and Radcliffe Street.

By bus:

The following GMPTE buses stop in Royton town centre:
24, 181, 182, 402, 408, 409, 412.



We hope that you will use this booklet to learn more about Royton's fascinating history. For further information why not visit Royton Library, Rochdale Road, Royton (0161 770 8000) or Oldham Local Studies and Archives, Union Street, Oldham (0161 770 4654). For more information about Tandle Hill Country Park please contact the Rangers on 0161 627 2608

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Oldham
Council