

Walk No. 1 Oaklands Walk

A Circular Walk Through Cuddington Vale

A pleasant ramble around the villages of Cuddington and Sandiway taking in most of the places of interest and passing through the old village of Bryn and the former centre of Cuddington village.

4 miles, say 1½ to 2 hours.

Start at Norley Road Playing Fields car park, grid ref. SJ 602715.

The Playing Fields were created in the late 1950s, although there had been plans on the table long before the 2nd World War.

On leaving the car park turn left down Norley Road, soon passing an old house on your right called Portobello and dating from 1777. Reaching the cross roads, Sandiway Primary School is on your left. You will also see Bryn Chapel on the right-hand corner, and St John's Parish Church is ahead of you.

Sandiway CP School was opened in 1948 to replace the former Church of England village school (now private residences at the junction of Weaverham Road and School Lane). Construction of the council housing estate led to the opening of a second school, Cuddington CP School, Ash Road, in 1952.

Bryn Chapel, one of the founding chapels of the Primitive Methodist Movement, was opened in 1819.

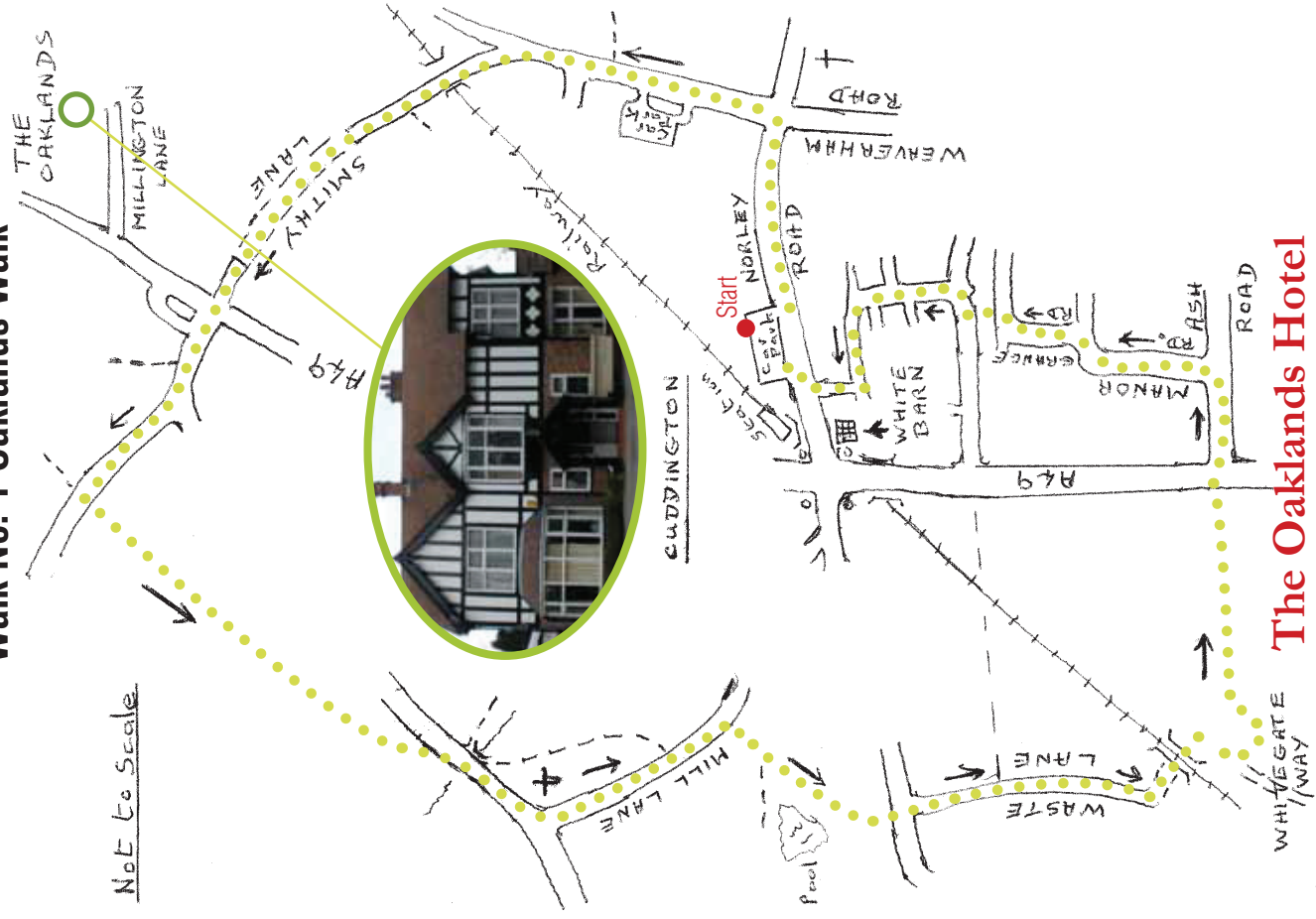
The foundation stone of St John's Parish Church was laid in 1902, on land donated by the famous Cheshire architect John Douglas, a Sandiway man. The church is said to be one of his finest works.

Turn left at Sandiway Primary School to proceed down Weaverham Road, crossing Greenfield Way and then fork left down Smithy Lane. Cross the railway bridge and continue through a gate down the old lane, now free of traffic. To your right there are good views over the Weaver valley.

Smithy Lane is an ancient road to Bryn Smithy. The smithy served the district for centuries, maybe back to the time of the monks of Vale Royal. A wheelwright's shop was attached to the cottages at the Warrington Road end of Smithy Lane.

Smithy Lane meets the A49 at the old village of Bryn, until recently dominated by a yoghurt factory. This was originally Horner's Creamery, bought out by Express Dairies in 1964, later owned by Nestlé. It has now been demolished and is to be replaced by a new housing development.

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To the right before crossing the A49, the Oaklands Hotel & Country Club can be seen through the trees; it can be accessed following the signs along Millington Lane.

Cross over the A49 to enter Cuddington Lane and soon bear right onto Bag Lane. In about 150 yards, take a stile on your left and follow the path over stiles and through a gate to meet Cuddington Lane again at Pinfold Hollows.

Pinfold Hollows name derives from a cattle pinfold, where stray cattle were kept and released on payment of a fine. The cottages were built for workers at Horner's Creamery.

Turn right onto the road, keeping a watch out for traffic, and follow Cuddington Lane, passing Mill House and Milcot Lower Mill on your left, up to the Methodist Chapel part way up the hill. This area is the site of the original Cuddington Village. At the chapel, turn left into Mill Lane.

Mill House/Lower Mill has possibly stood here since Norman times. The mill was powered by Cuddington Brook upon which, later, there were two other mills – Higher Mill, in Mill Lane, and the Water Mill (or Paper Mill) at Ravensclough Waste.

The Methodist Chapel dates from 1849; the initials of twelve of the original members are inscribed on the external wall.

(Alternatively, if you prefer to avoid the traffic along busy Cuddington Lane, there is another route which crosses the fields missing the Methodist Chapel. This is only recommended when it is fairly dry underfoot).

After joining Cuddington Lane and crossing over Cuddington Brook, take the stile on your left before climbing the hill. Cross the field keeping about 4 yards from the hedge on your right, then bear round to the left on about the same contour. Towards the end of the field the path climbs steeply to the right, taking you up to a gate onto Mill Lane where you turn left to rejoin the main route.

Follow Mill Lane to the bottom of the hill and a little way past the Mill House turn right onto a footpath. Go through a kissing gate and keep left at the fork passing Merlewood Pool on your right to arrive at Norley Road. Just before reaching Norley Road take the unofficial path to the left for about 20 yards through the trees, emerging opposite Waste Lane. Cross carefully, as this is a particularly dangerous stretch of Norley Road, and enter Waste Lane. Proceed to the end of Waste Lane, also known as Ravensclough Waste.

Ravensclough Waste is the major waste land allotted to the control of the Lord of the Manor under the Cuddington Enclosure Act of 1769.

At the end of Waste Lane go under the railway bridge towards a large house called Ravensclough Manor and then follow the narrow path to the right until it widens as the feeder path to the Whitegate Way. Immediately turn left through the gap by the side of the gate and follow the path round the garden of Ravensclough Manor, over a bridge

and a stile. Climb the hill between gorse bushes and then up the steps of “Granny’s Hump”. Towards the top of the hill, turn round and enjoy the view behind you, then continue to the main road (A49).

Granny’s Hump: The old name was “Brunt Browns” but it became “Granny’s Hump” after old Granny Birtwistle who lived in the Waste Cottage, now replaced by Ravensclough Manor.

Cross the A49 carefully into Ash Road opposite, and take the first left into Manor Road and then first left again into Grange Road. Where Grange Road turns right find the footpath on the left through to Nixon Road. At the end of the path, turn right to Poplar Close and immediately left into Moss Lane. Go down the hill and follow the road round left to then turn right up Trickett Lane to return to Norley Road and your starting point.

Trickett Lane was named from the Trickett family who lived for almost two centuries at Ashbank, opposite to Sandiway CP School. The Tricketts, major landowners, were great benefactors to the village. The Ashbank estate was sold in 1948 and was developed as three major housing estates.

The council houses on Nixon Road were the first to be built in the village, circa 1930. The road is part of an old green lane and was named after a local businessman, Hughie Nixon, who was also the district surveyor.