

also of the Ballroom. All that remains is some of the floor tiling.

4. *If the walk is to be extended to visit the pike, follow the sign on the path second to the right at the top of the steps, marked to the Pike and Toilet Block. At the top of the path is a gate and on the left the toilets, built on the site of Bolton Lodge. Beyond the toilets, cross the wide track, turn left for a few metres, and then, right up to the Pike which can be seen above. The tower was built in 1733 and stands 1,200 feet above sea level. From the tower return, by the same route, back to the site of The Bungalow and Ballroom.*

Turn left from the steps and walk diagonally across the space. At the far corner, go down the steps on the left to see the site of the old croquet lawn. Back up the steps, turn left along the wide path, passing through the site of the old Belmont Lodge. Through a gate arrive at a junction of wide paths, with Pigeon Tower on the left. Lady Leverhulme used the top floor, with its panoramic views, as her sewing room.

5. *Do not follow the wide track downhill, but go through the gate in front of the tower, along the front of the building and then to the left. Do not go on to the terraces on the left, but follow the gravel path downhill. As this veers to the right, continue down on the grass path. At the bottom, turn left along the wide track. In front of you will be seen the seven arch Levers Bridge.*

Just before the bridge, turn right. Follow this path, with others joining it from both sides all the way, straight downhill. It eventually arrives at the meeting of six paths mentioned earlier in the way. If you try to go straight on you will find yourself going down some steep steps. Instead turn right and follow the opening part of the walk back to the car park.

From: West Lancashire Walks
by Michael Smougs.
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Walk 23

Skelmersdale (1)

This walk travels from the comparative heights of Ashurst to the valley of Dean Wood.

Route: Beacon Park – Upholland College – Dean Wood – Ayrefield House – Beacon Park.

Start: Beacon Country Park. Grid Ref: 506 067.

Distance: 4½ miles.

Duration: 2 hours.

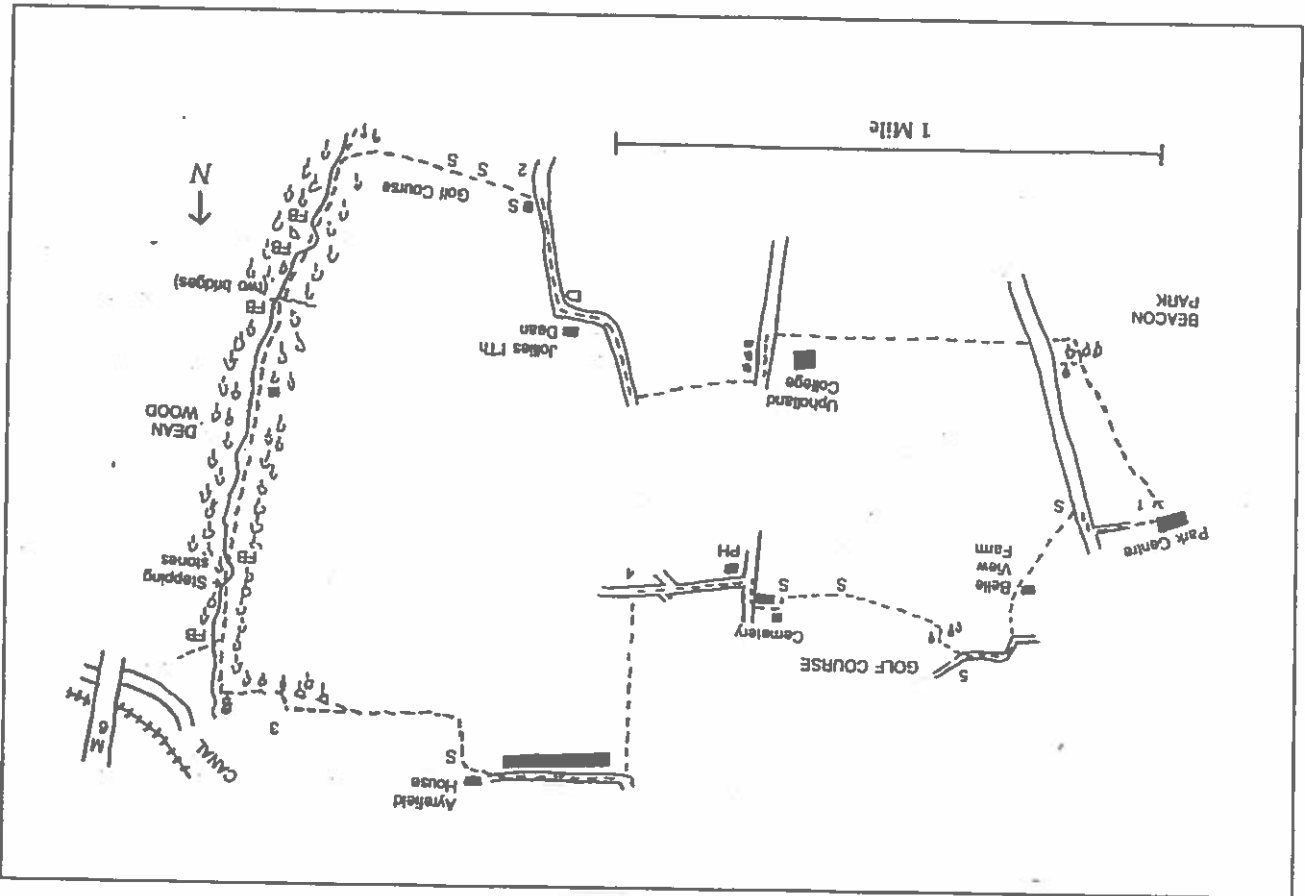
Map: SD40/50

By train: None.

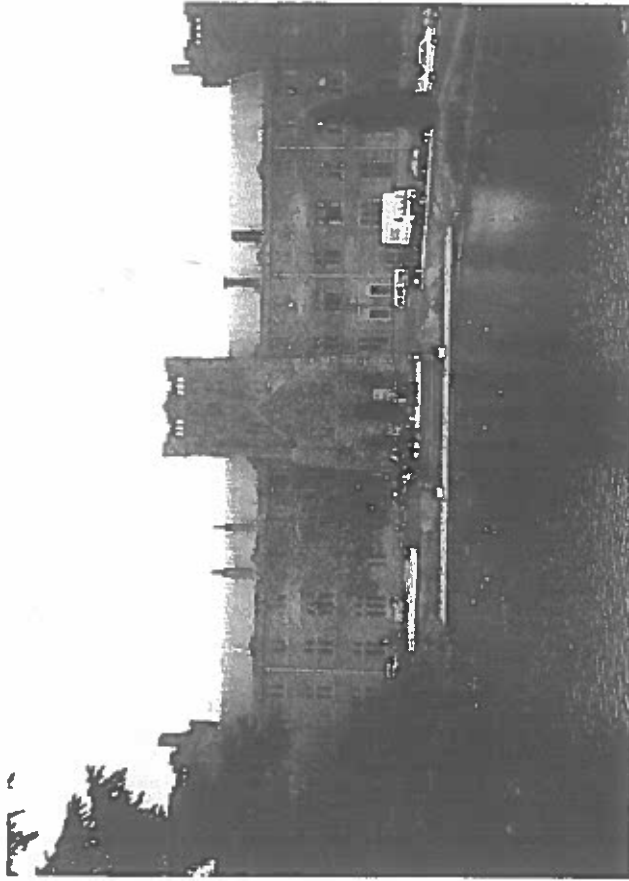
By car: Follow the sign to the right off the A5209 Burscough to Parbold road, just east of the village of Newburgh. The park is 1½ miles further on.

Refreshments: Beacon Park Centre and The Fox, Roby Mill.

1. *Walk up the hill, away from the car-park and club house. Aim for the left corner of the woods ahead. Do not go on the path to the left, towards the road, but on the one that goes through the short stretch of woods ahead to a car park. From here, go right along the road, until reaching a signposted turning to the left. This is a wide track, which descends downhill.*



At the bottom of the descent, carry straight on following the path that leads through the centre of the farm. This soon joins a metal road, which comes in from the left from Upholland College. Go straight down the road, with the College on the left and fields to the right. St Joseph's Roman Catholic College was opened in 1883. It has been a seminary for young people training for the priesthood. With the fall in such vocations, it is now used as a conference and training centre for the church.



Upholland College

On arriving at the main road. Turn left past the entrance to the college. After the bungalows on the right-hand side, there is a sign to the right. Follow the track down hill to the left of the fence and then across the field, following the line of poles, to come out on Lafford Lane. Turn right along the lane, passing on the left the quaintly named Jollies i' the Dean Farm. The road bends to the left and then sharply to the right, with a pond on the corner. Starting to go uphill, pass the house with

the wide drive on the left and, a little further up the incline, turn left at a signpost. This is by the gate with a red box on it.

2. *The path goes to the left behind the hedge for a short distance.* Then go right over the stile and walk along the edge of the field, passing over two more stiles. After the final one, there is a choice of ways. Ignore all tracks to the right and left. Go ahead slightly to the right of the bushes, between two white posts onto the path that leads into the trees. Do not take the footbridge to the left, but follow the signpost ahead. As the main path goes to the right, go on the narrower path ahead that descends quickly to the valley below. It swings to the right to a junction. This is Dean Wood, where much work has been done over the past few years by the Friends of Dean Wood to improve the footpaths.

Go sharp left, keeping to the edge of the stream. This is a particularly beautiful part of the walk, but can be muddy most of the year round. Continue, with the stream to the right, crossing a bridge across a small tributary. Sections of the path here are lined by a log border. The path crosses a loop in the stream by means of a bridge and, after a few metres, returns to the left of the stream by means of another bridge. There is a short board walk and an incline of log steps, before arriving at a double footbridge. Cross the first one over a tributary to the main stream, but not the second. Continue, with the stream still on the right.

After crossing another tributary bridge, arrive at some steps going up to the left. Although this would seem to be the main path, keep to the less obvious one by the side of the stream. Pass some more steps coming down from the left and go over the log fallen across the path. This has had a piece cut out of it for the convenience of walkers. Go past the remains of an old building on the left. The path then rises a little above the stream, by means of steps. A few metres on, ignore the path to the left and take the one back to the side of the stream. Some

steps again take the path upwards. As it rises, look out for steps going steeply back down to the stream. They are easy to miss. At the foot of the steps, cross the bridge to the other side of the stream. Soon, the path returns to the left side of the stream over stepping stones.

Follow the path until reaching a footbridge across the stream. A one minute detour across the bridge will reveal three means of transport, the M6 viaduct, the railway and the canal, in close proximity. Come back across the bridge and turn right, with the stream on the right. Soon you will see the River Douglas to the right. The path then goes to the left, alongside a fence, continuing round to the right. The path then rises away from the fence, through the gorse.

3. *At the stile on the left, go onto the sunken farm track, which soon rises and continues on a long steady curve to the right.* Staying with the ditch and a straggle of trees to the right, pass a pond. The track at length swings more sharply to the right towards Ayrefield House. There are good views from this point, with Winter Hill away to the right and Up Holland College on the skyline to the left. Just before Ayrefield House, go through the wicket gate and bear left round the pond. After following the short track between low stone walls, arrive at the lane through the gap by the gate.

Turn left along the lane. The stone track eventually becomes a metal one, with a long row of houses on the left side. As the road goes sharply to the right, a signpost on the left leads the way to a path between wooden fences. It comes out into a field. Descend, keeping to the left of the hedge. At the bottom of the field, the path continues ahead through the middle of another field and then there is a short uphill section which will bring you on to the road, alongside a bungalow.

4. *Turn right, passing St Gabriel's Close on the right and Lafford Lane on the left.* Passing Roby Mill CE School on the right,

come to a T-junction, with the Fox Inn on the corner. Turn right and almost immediately, on the left, is a footpath sign. As you go forward a few metres by the side of the house, the cemetery car park is on the right. Then follow the path another few metres to the left and go right through the gate. Keep the hedge to the left, gradually going uphill. After the stile, there is a hedge running up the hill. Keep to the left of this until the clump of trees on the right. Follow round to the right. Then soon go to the left, aiming for a stile in the hedge, to the right of the house on the opposite side of the golf course.

5. *Go left up the narrow road, passing the Dalton sign. Do not turn along the signed track to the right, but follow the road round the bend. After Crisp Cottage, there is a track to the left, as the road bears to the right. Go through the gap by the gate, and follow the track uphill. Pass through the centres of the deserted and dilapidated Belle View Farm.*

Beyond the farm, bear right by the gate. Follow the path through moorland, with the boundary to the right. After the moorland, the way is along the left edge of the adjacent field. At the end of the field, go over the stile onto the road. Turn right and then left into Beacon Park.

Walk 24

Skelmersdale (2)

An undulating walk around the higher ground above Skelmersdale with good views of the surrounding countryside.

Route: Beacon Park – Ashurst's Beacon – Stonehall – Beacon Park.

Start: Beacon Country Park: Grid reference: 506 067

Distance: 4 or 2½ miles.

Duration: 1½ or 1 hour.

Map: SD40/50

By train: None

By car: Reach the car park by following the sign off the A5209 just east of Newburgh.

Refreshments: Beacon Park Centre; Beacon Inn, Dalton.

1. *From the car park, walk towards the entrance to the first tee on the golf course. The path is to the left of the hedge and then to the right of the next short section of hedge. Aim for the left corner of the copse ahead. Walk to the right along the front edge of the trees. Take the path on the left that goes through the wood. Keep ahead at the crossroad of paths to emerge on the golf course.*

Turn right through the avenue of trees. After the second cross