



The Dingle is an attractive wooded area in the valley of the Lumb Brook. It is managed by the Woodland Trust, like several nearby woodlands (including Grappenhall Heys and Grappenhall Wood) as part of the Mersey Forest initiative. Woodland flora includes Lords and Ladies (Wild Arum), Wood Anemone and pockets of Bluebells.



Grappenhall Heys is built on the former estate of the Parr family, founded around 1830 by an heir of a Lancashire family with banking interests in Warrington. The house and gardens were sold in 1951 to the British Transport Commission and later passed to the Warrington-Runcorn Development Corporation. The main house was demolished in the 1970s but the walled garden survives. The numerous ponds around the estate are the remains of pits from which marl – a lime-rich silty clay used as a soil conditioner and neutraliser – was dug.



The **Penny Ferry** at Thelwall has been in operation since the Ship Canal opened in 1894 and is the last hand ferry on its entire length. It replaced a pontoon system that was used to ferry livestock as well as passengers. The quaint ferryman's shed and carefully maintained lawns are worth seeing even when the ferry is not operating.



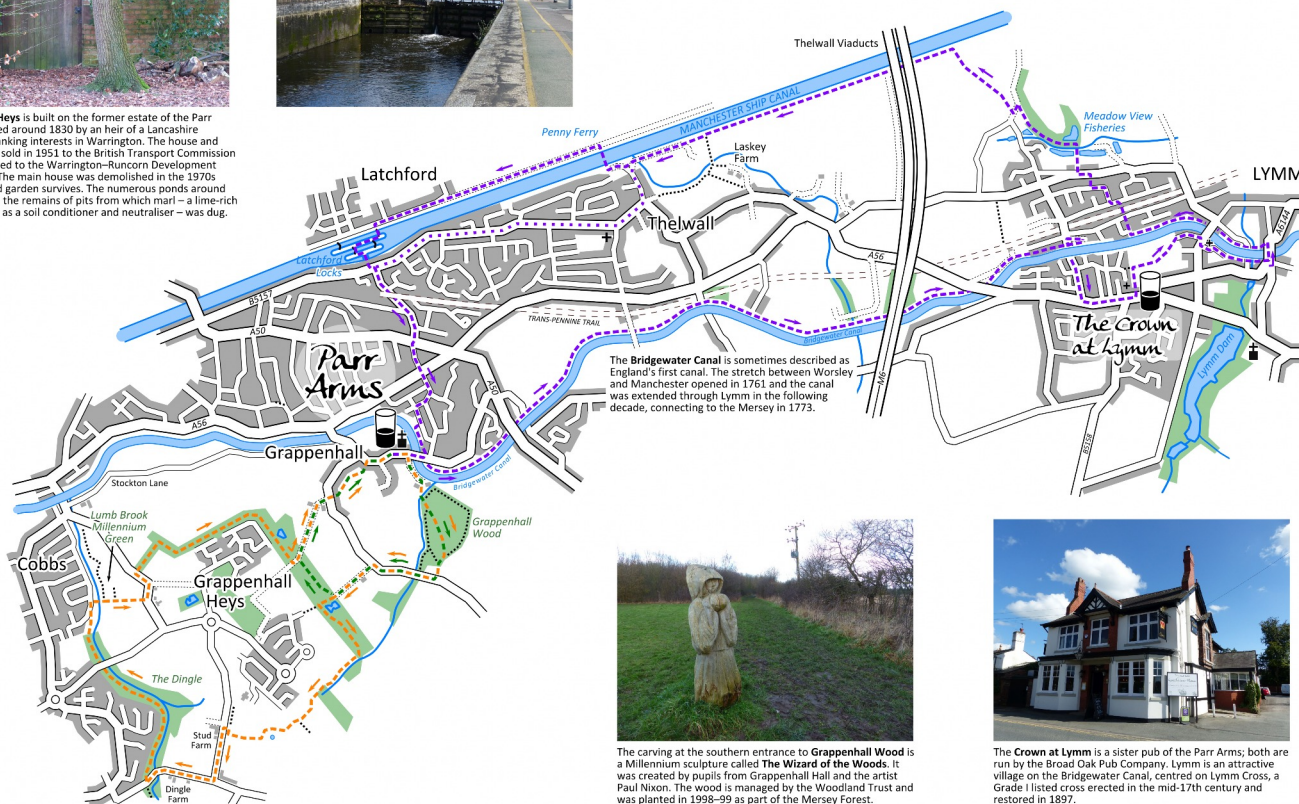
In stark contrast to their quirky and peaceful neighbour a mile to the west, the **Thelwall Viaducts** carry thousands of M6 motorists noisily across the Ship Canal every day. The north-bound bridge (left) was built in 1963 and was the longest motorway bridge in England at the time. The southbound bridge (right) was added in 1995.

www.broadoakpubcompany.co.uk



0 200m 400m 600m 800m 1km
1/4 mile 1/2 mile

The **Manchester Ship Canal** is 36 miles long and opened in 1894. The advent of container ships has caused a reduction in traffic, but big ships can still occasionally be seen negotiating the huge locks between Salford and the Mersey estuary, such as those at Latchford. The larger northern lock is for ocean-going vessels whereas the smaller southern lock was for coasters, tugs and barges. To the south of both is a sluice-gate used to control the flow of water and maintain a constant level.



The carving at the southern entrance to **Grappenhall Wood** is a Millennium sculpture called **The Wizard of the Woods**. It was created by pupils from Grappenhall Hall and the artist Paul Nixon. The wood is managed by the Woodland Trust and was planted in 1998-99 as part of the Mersey Forest.



The Crown at Lymm is a sister pub of the Parr Arms; both are run by the Broad Oak Pub Company. Lymm is an attractive village on the Bridgewater Canal, centred on Lymm Cross, a Grade I listed cross erected in the mid-17th century and restored in 1897.

Three circular walks from the Parr Arms

Grappenhall, Cheshire



Grappenhall stroll

1½ miles: Easy

An easy stroll around the pretty village of Grappenhall, including woodland walks.

Grappenhall Heys & The Dingle

4½ miles: Fairly easy

Easy walking through woodland and former parkland, with the picturesque valley of Lumb Brook as a highlight.

Lymm & the Penny Ferry

7½ miles: Moderate

Much of interest, including a visit to historic Lymm and an (optional) crossing of the eccentric Penny Ferry.

THE PARR ARMS
Church Lane, Grappenhall, Cheshire WA4 3EP
tel 01925 212120
website www.theparrarms.co.uk
email info@theparrarms.co.uk

OPEN: Mon to Sat 12 noon-11pm
Sun 12 noon-10.30pm
FOOD SERVED: Mon to Sat 12 noon-9pm
Sun 12 noon-8.30pm
Crown at Lymm tel 01925 752485

Grappenhall stroll

1½ miles: Easy

Allow 1 hour. A few muddy spots possible, but mostly level and well surfaced.

1 From the front door of the Parr Arms, turn left and walk down the cobbled village street past the church. **2** Just before the canal bridge, turn right into Canal Side. **3** After the first house, but before the second, turn right along a fenced path between gardens. **4** After a footbridge, go through a kissing gate into Grappenhall Wood. **5** Follow the obvious path ahead, following the electricity wires. **6** At the end of the wood, bear right to the Wizard of the Woods statue. **7** Go through the wooden kissing gate into the road and turn right. **8** After 400 yards, having crossed a stream, turn left into a driveway with a public footpath sign. **9** Pass a house on the left and continue along the green lane beyond to a gate. (*For the Grappenhall Heys & The Dingle walk, jump to step 10 below.*) **10** Beyond the gate, turn right and follow the path through the trees until you meet a surfaced path. **11** Turn right and walk back to Grappenhall village, passing the cricket pitch on your left. **12** When you meet the road, cross over into the tarmac path opposite. **13** When you emerge on the main village street again, turn right to return to the Parr Arms.

Grappenhall Heys & The Dingle

4¼ miles: Fairly easy

Allow 2–2½ hours. Generally level; some paths may be muddy after rain.

Follow steps **1** to **9** of the **Grappenhall stroll**, above.

10 Beyond the gate, walk past a pond on your left, then turn left along a well-surfaced path within a belt of trees. **11** Bear right at the end of the trees and follow the fieldside path ahead, with a small stream on your left. **12** Cross the stream at a footbridge and turn right, with the buildings of Grappenhall Heys away to your right. **13** Follow the path to the right and left around a pond, and along the right-hand edge of a further couple of fields. **14** Just before you reach the road, bear right, then turn left over a footbridge to emerge opposite the entrance to Stud Farm. **15** Cross the road and turn left along the pavement, past a brick barn and then past Brantwood Cottage. **16** At a T-junction, turn right into Dingle Lane. **17** Follow the lane past Dingle Farm (on your left) and down into the valley. **18** Cross the bridge over the stream in the valley bottom, then turn right through a metal barrier. **19** Pass the wooded sign for The Dingle, and a sandstone outcrop on the left, and follow the obvious path down the valley, crossing the stream twice at one point and ignoring any paths off to the left. **20** After half a mile, pass under a road bridge dated 1997. **21** Shortly afterwards, follow the paved path to the right of some houses to meet Dale Lane. **22** Follow the road for a short

distance, then turn right (signposted to Lumb Brook Lane) over the stream into Lumb Brook Millennium Green. **23** Follow the path ahead along a hedge and then across a field to a road opposite Witherwin Farm. **24** Cross and turn left, passing a lodge-house on your right, then turn right at a kissing gate along a footpath following a belt of trees (with a Woodland Trust sign). **25** Follow the path along the belt of trees as it bends right then left to pass in front of the mock-Georgian houses of Grappenhall Heys. **26** By an exit to the road, keep right, within the woods; cross a footbridge and take the right-hand path along a short boardwalk past a pond and up some steps. **27** When you reach a kissing gate into a surfaced path, turn left (signposted “Grappenhall village ½m”). **28** Follow the path back to Grappenhall village, passing the cricket pitch on your left. **29** When you meet the road, cross over into the tarmac path opposite. **30** When you emerge on the main village street again, turn right to return to the Parr Arms.

Lymm & the Penny Ferry

7½ miles: Moderate

Allow 4–5 hours. Several suburban interludes with some road walking. The Penny Ferry (11p per head as of summer 2017) operates 7 days a week from 7–9am, 12–2pm and 4–6pm, but may not run in even quite moderate winds. An alternative route avoiding the ferry is described below. Some short sections may be muddy after rain or slightly overgrown in summer.

1 From the front door of the Parr Arms, turn left and walk down the cobbled village street past the church. **2** Cross the canal bridge, and turn right to join the canal towpath in front of a white-painted house. **3** Continue along the towpath to pass under the A50. **4** An aqueduct carries you discreetly over Cliff Lane, and the next landmark, after a further half-mile, is Pickering’s Bridge. **5** Continue over another aqueduct after a further 400 yards, then after another three-quarters of a mile pass under the M6. **6** 600 yards further on you pass under the A56 and the towpath briefly follows a driveway. **7** You finally leave the canal after passing over Barsbank Lane Aqueduct: double-back left down a track, then turn left under the canal. **8** Climb Barsbank Lane to the A56, and turn left to the Crown at Lymm. **9** Opposite the Crown, follow the tarmac path to the right of St Winefride’s Catholic Church. **10** Walk down the side of a football pitch then follow the path to the right between pitches beyond a litter bin. **11** Follow the path through a play area and exit the park into Maltmans Road. **12** At the end of the road, opposite the United Reformed Church, turn right then left into Davies Way. **13** Pass the library and walk through a car park, keeping left to follow the canal. **14** Cross the Bridgewater Street aqueduct and proceed along the canalside to the A6144. Head right if visiting Lymm Cross and the village centre. **15** Otherwise, turn left over the bridge, then at the end of Dane Bank Road double-back on yourself past some canalside cottages (“Lymm Bridge nos 1–7”) to return to the canal. **16** Turn right and follow the towpath. **17** Cross the Bridgewater Street aqueduct again and continue, to pass under a

road bridge. **18** 450 yards beyond the bridge, turn right onto a narrow signposted path between gardens. **19** Cross Statham Avenue and follow the path opposite. **20** Cross the Trans-Pennine Trail (here following a disused railway) and again follow the path opposite. **21** On reaching Albany Road, turn left past a parade of shops and then right into Whitesands Road. **22** Pass The Farthings on the right, and follow Whitesands Road round to the left. **23** Fifty yards beyond the bend, turn right down another narrow path between houses. **24** Cross and turn left along Whitbarrow Road. **25** After 140 yards, turn right down another narrow path blocked by a bollard. **26** After a gate, pass between fishing lakes and cross a broad ditch, beyond which the path bends left by another overgrown pool. **27** Follow the winding path through trees until it emerges in the corner of the field, where you bear right and follow the field edge to a gate into a track. **28** Turn left then immediately right, into a hedged green lane that leads to the Ship Canal. **29** A permitted bridleway to the left follows the canal and passes under the two Thelwall Viaducts. **30** Continue in similar vein along the canal, passing through a waymarked gate, and then a further gate a little way on. **31** Follow the path as it leaves the canalside and climbs slightly before returning close to the water’s edge. **32** Continue along the canal until you join a metalled track, which leads to the bottom of Ferry Lane, Thelwall. **33** Turn right to reach the Penny Ferry. (*If the ferry is not running, turn left along Ferry Lane, then turn right by the Pickering Arms and follow Thelwall New Road for a mile to Latchford Locks; turn left into Bradshaw Lane and jump to step 38, below.*) **34** If the ferry is operating, use it to cross the Ship Canal then turn left along a broad track that runs parallel to the canal. **35** Pass an industrial estate on your right, then continue along the potholed entrance road before turning left in front of a house to cross the enormous lock gates at Latchford Locks (take care: deep water). **36** Walk between the locks to the second lock-gate crossing, then wind your way as directed to the other side of the canal. **37** On reaching the road, turn left then immediately right into Bradshaw Lane. **38** Pass under the disused railway and continue along the road until you meet the A50 Knutsford Road. **39** Cross at the crossing and follow East View, opposite. **40** Cross the A56 Chester Road into Lindi Drive opposite. **41** Follow the road round to the right by the end of Portola Close, to St Wilfrid’s Drive. **42** Cross the road and turn left, looking out for a path on your right after 50 yards that leads to the Bridgewater Canal. **43** Turn left along the towpath. **44** Leave the towpath as you approach the next canal bridge, and turn right over the bridge to return to the Parr Arms.



Text, mapping and photography
© David Dunford 2018. All rights reserved.

www.walksfromthedoors.co.uk