

HOW LONGRIDGE DEVELOPED

Longridge started life as a small settlement around **St. Lawrence's Church** about 500 years ago. By the end of the 18th century this had extended up the end of the ridge to **Market Place**, which acted as a focal point for the local farming community. Rows of cottages for handloom weavers were built in **Club Row**, **King Street** and **New Town**.



By the 1840s, there was a great demand for Longridge Fell stone in the rapidly growing towns of Lancashire and **large quarries** were developed. A gravity-powered railway was completed in 1840 to take the stone to the main railway network in Preston. In 1848 this was converted to steam power.



New Town

(below) Tootle Heights Quarry, c.1900.



TRAIL 1 Quarrying & Textiles

Approximately 2.4 km (1½ miles) – about 1½ hours

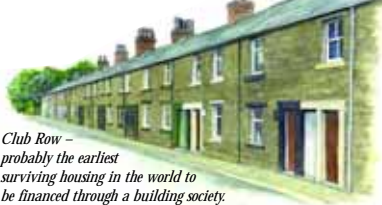
1. With the Millennium Cross on your left walk up Berry Lane to the Post Office. The Post Office was built around 1880 and replaced one in King Street. It is one of only two properties in Berry Lane conducting the same business after more than 100 years. (Number 71, newsagent and stationer is the other.)

2. Turn left up Irwell Street and admire the view of St Paul's Church before returning to turn left into Berry Lane. In the right-hand corner of Irwell street is the Guide Hut, which was opened on October 20th 1934. It was rented by the Borough Council for the 'duration of the war' and used extensively by the WVS (Women's Voluntary Service). Here, among many activities, they rolled bandages, knitted, packed parcels, and made clothes for the troops – pyjamas being a speciality.

3. Continue up Berry Lane to the next turning – Church Street. On the corner is The Manse built in 1865 by the Rev William Booth to his own design. (Now Victoria's India Restaurant) He also designed and built the Congregational Church across the road. The Anglican St Paul's Church dominates Church Street and was built to supplement St Lawrence's (see Trail 2). It was built, on land donated by Robert Smith, between 1886 and 1890, however the Tower was not added until 1937. Prior to the church being built, the street was known as Calder Street and it was intended to build houses up the hill to meet with Green Lane.

4. Continue up Berry Lane to Market Place. On your left is The Limes – a building with a varied history. It was probably built in the 1880s and the first reference to it is in 1889 when James Kay junior, a cotton trader, lived there. It remained a private house until the Longridge Urban District Council bought it for offices in 1947. So it remained until the 1974 local government reorganisation, after which it housed solicitors and accountants before the change to its current use as a nursery. The Library was built in the grounds in 1964. It replaced the original building at the junction of Berry Lane with Market Place, which was demolished to widen the road.

5. Turn left into Market Place, which runs into King Street, and walk towards the White Bull. Note the stone cottages on either side of the road – look carefully for the partially obscured basement windows. Handloom weavers and nail makers originally occupied these cottages built in the early nineteenth century. Looms would have been housed in the basement rooms. Unfortunately many on the left were demolished. The White Bull dates from at least 1776. Be sure to read the history of the White Bull on the wall by the entrance.



Club Row – probably the earliest surviving housing in the world to be financed through a building society

6. At the junction, continue straight ahead along Higher Road. This was the original main road from Preston to Clitheroe, known as High Street. We will now walk uphill noting a number of sites along the way. Immediately on your right is a row of cottages known as Club Row. These 20 cottages built between 1794 and 1804 are thought to be the world's oldest surviving building society dwellings. A group of subscribers met in the White Bull and clubbed together to build them, one at a time. You will notice that the cottages are not all the same, suggesting that they were built separately. Each cottage has a basement with room for one loom. Look for Blue Plaque. Next, on your left is Strickland House – note the datestone of 1798. On your right is Broomhill, a mill owner's house dating from the late nineteenth century and on the left is Square Fold believed to have been farm workers' cottages.



Hanging sign on the White Bull.

7. Continue along the road to the junction with Green Lane. Early in the 20th century, The Cabin was the site of Harry Clegg's Temperance Saloon, which was housed in a wooden cabin. Just beyond The Cabin is Cut Thorn believed to be eight mill workers cottages dating from the mid 1800s.

8. After passing The Cabin, walk for a further 150 metres along Higher Road. On the right is a cream coloured building just beyond a row of Edwardian villas. Look carefully at the front and you can see the words Crown Hotel through the paint.

11. Cross back over Higher Road and into Chaigley Road and then right into John Smith's Playing Field. Just on your right is the cast iron base of a crane, still in its original position. Turn sharp right towards the tunnel entrance. Steam engines could not get through the tunnel into the quarries beyond, so cranes were used to pull trucks through with rope. The legend above the tunnel entrance reads 'P & L R (Preston & Longridge Railway) - 1839 - F H P C T' (Frederick Henry Park, the engineer, Cooper & Tullis, builders). Look across the park beyond the children's play area and you can make out the quarry face. Imagine how it used to be, the original quarries here and on the other side of Higher Road extended to more than 20 times the amount of space you are looking at! The 1892 Ordnance survey map shows this area as Old Quarry. Once the railway was dismantled the area was used as a landfill before being landscaped into today's park.

12. Follow the pathway downhill; it roughly follows the line of the original railway. After about 175 metres (just after the second of two ancillary paths which join the main path) look to right and you will see a bridge. This carried a second railway line up to Lords Quarry – named after the Earl of Derby who owned the land – and the bridge provided access to Willows Farm, which can be seen beyond the trees.

13. At the end of the path turn left to rejoin Chaigley Road, turn right and then left at the bottom and right again into Wheatley Drive. On your right you will see through the fencing the Royal Mail Sorting Office, which is built entirely within the old reservoir of Victoria Mill. The mill was located beyond the reservoir where new houses now stand. It was built in 1862 by Robert Smith of Dilworth House and originally housed 360 looms. It specialised in high quality fancy cloth for the home market. An extension of the factory wall was built so close to the railway that drain pipes had to be inset in the walls. In 1925 there were almost 700 looms operating in the mill, but 10 years later, in 1935, it was closed.

14. At the end of Wheatley Drive turn right into Green Lane and almost immediately left into Mersey Street. Look straight down Mersey Street towards the Co-operative Hall, which dominates the skyline. (see Trail 2 for more about the Co-op). Mersey Street was built from either end – houses at this top end housed workers for Victoria Mill, whilst those at the lower end housed workers from Cramp Oaks Mill on Berry Lane.

- At the end of Mersey Street turn right and return to the start.

The view along Mersey Street, framing the Co-operative Hall



A MILL VILLAGE

Following the arrival of the railway, Longridge boomed. Between 1850 and 1874, four coal-powered cotton weaving mills were built along the railway line. This was accompanied by an influx of workers. Houses were built for them in the Stonebridge area, in Berry Lane and in the streets built off it. The Churches, Berry Lane School and the Co-op building were all completed by 1890. Longridge continued to grow during the first half of the 20th century.



Queens Mill on Chatburn Road (now occupied by Jones Stroud) with the railway running close by, c.1947.

A SMALL COUNTRY TOWN

By the middle of the 20th century, however, the railway had been superseded by road transport and the mills had succumbed to overseas competition. Longridge has, nevertheless, continued to grow. The population has in fact almost doubled since 1950 as people have moved into what is now a pleasant small country town. It serves as a centre for the surrounding area and offers easy access to the attractive countryside of Longridge Fell, the Ribbles Valley and the Forest of Bowland.

(below) The railway station in the early 1900s, seen from the present day site of the Millennium Cross.



HOW TO FIND LONGRIDGE

Longridge lies about 8 miles NE of Preston and 10 miles W of Clitheroe, on the B6243. Buses run regularly from Preston to Longridge and there is car parking in the centre of the town.



ABOUT LONGRIDGE HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Longridge Heritage Committee is one of several sections of The Longridge Partnership. Its aims are to promote and preserve the heritage of Longridge and in particular:

- to establish a Heritage Centre
- preserve and restore appropriate sites
- promote the heritage of Longridge to its people and visitors.

The Heritage Committee was formed in 2000 and is made up of a cross section of the people of the town, including representatives from Longridge Town Council, Ribbles Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Longridge & District Local History Society.

For further information, please contact: John Earnshaw on 01254 878543.

(cover) The Millennium Cross in Berry Lane indicates major stages of Longridge History and was unveiled in June 2000. It was sculpted by Boris Howarth from local stone and includes 'Ginger' – the cat that used to sleep near here.



The Longridge Heritage Committee has produced this trail leaflet, assisted by the Longridge & District Local History Society, and funded by Ribbles Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Longridge Town Council Bowland Tourism and Environment Fund

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TRAIL 2 Religion & Commerce

Approximately 3.2 km (2 miles) – about 2 hours

1. With the Millennium Cross on your right look across the road to your left.

Along the side of the Towneley Arms are the **Station Buildings** (built 1872) with part of the original canopy still in place. The railway opened in 1840, primarily to convey stone from the Quarries to Preston, where it was dressed and distributed. Imagine the railway line coming through the station across the war memorial, over a level crossing and up the road to Victoria Mill and then to the quarries at Tootle Heights. Look for Blue Plaque on Towneley Arms.

2. Stay on this side of the road, cross Calder Avenue and walk past the new shops, then a row of older buildings.

Next to the gardens, which were once part of Towneley Hotel grounds, is the old **Fire Station**. Now the Youth and Community Centre, it has also been a mineral water factory and the Longridge Steam Laundry. Look for Blue Plaque on Youth Centre.

3. Turn into the Spar car park and walk along the wall of the building for about 50 metres.

Look between the buildings and you will see the roofline of the remains of part of **Cramp Oaks Mill** (now Booth's Supermarket) that extended across the car park.

4. Return to Berry Lane, turn right and continue until you are just beyond the garage. Cross the road and go through the archway. This is **Sharples Court**, with another group of houses at the back. To the left was a former Provender Mill, which supplied dry feeds for animals.

5. Go back through the arch, turn left and walk to the junction with Derby Road. Turn left again and carry on for 75 metres.

Note the carved stone above the entrance to **Anderton's Butchers**. Across the road is **Gas Street**, the main entrance to the **Longridge Gasworks**, built about 1870. An explosion in 1905 killed two men and caused severe damage. Longridge was lit by gas until 1950/51.



The carved bull's head above the doorway of Anderton's Butchers

6. Carry on along Derby Road, passing St Wilfrid's R.C Church to reach the Police Station.

St Wilfrid's was built in 1886, replacing an earlier chapel. It was enlarged and the tower added in 1908. The masons' yard, where the stone was prepared for the work, was opposite the church on a site now occupied by houses. A little further along on the left is the **Police Station**, built in 1880. It replaced an earlier one near St Lawrence's Church (which we will see later).

7. Continue to the Stonebridge road junction.

The railway line passed under the bridge to Preston via Grimsargh. Looking across the junction and to your left is **Stonebridge Mill**, the first mill in the town. Diagonally across the junction on the right is a **shop** which is thought to have been owned by the Mill. Here, mill workers had to spend tokens received as part of their pay.

8. Cross over Preston Road and carry straight on for about 100 metres.

Many houses in this area are built of brick made from clay dug in the vicinity. Behind the houses on the opposite side of the road is **Jones Stroud**, which occupies **Queens Mill**, the fourth and last mill to be built, in 1874. Queens is also built of local brick, whereas the other three mills were built of stone.

9. Carry on along Preston Road for a further 200 metres, until you reach Doctors Row on your left.

Known as **New Town**, this area consists of handloom weavers' and nail makers' cottages. Mostly built between 1825 and 1835, it had its own shops, alehouses (*Grey Horse* and *Seven Stars*), and its own well. A replica of the water pump can still be seen in Southern Close. Look for Blue Plaque on side of last cottage.

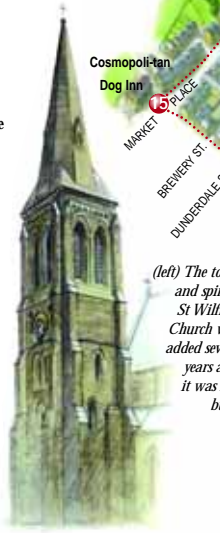
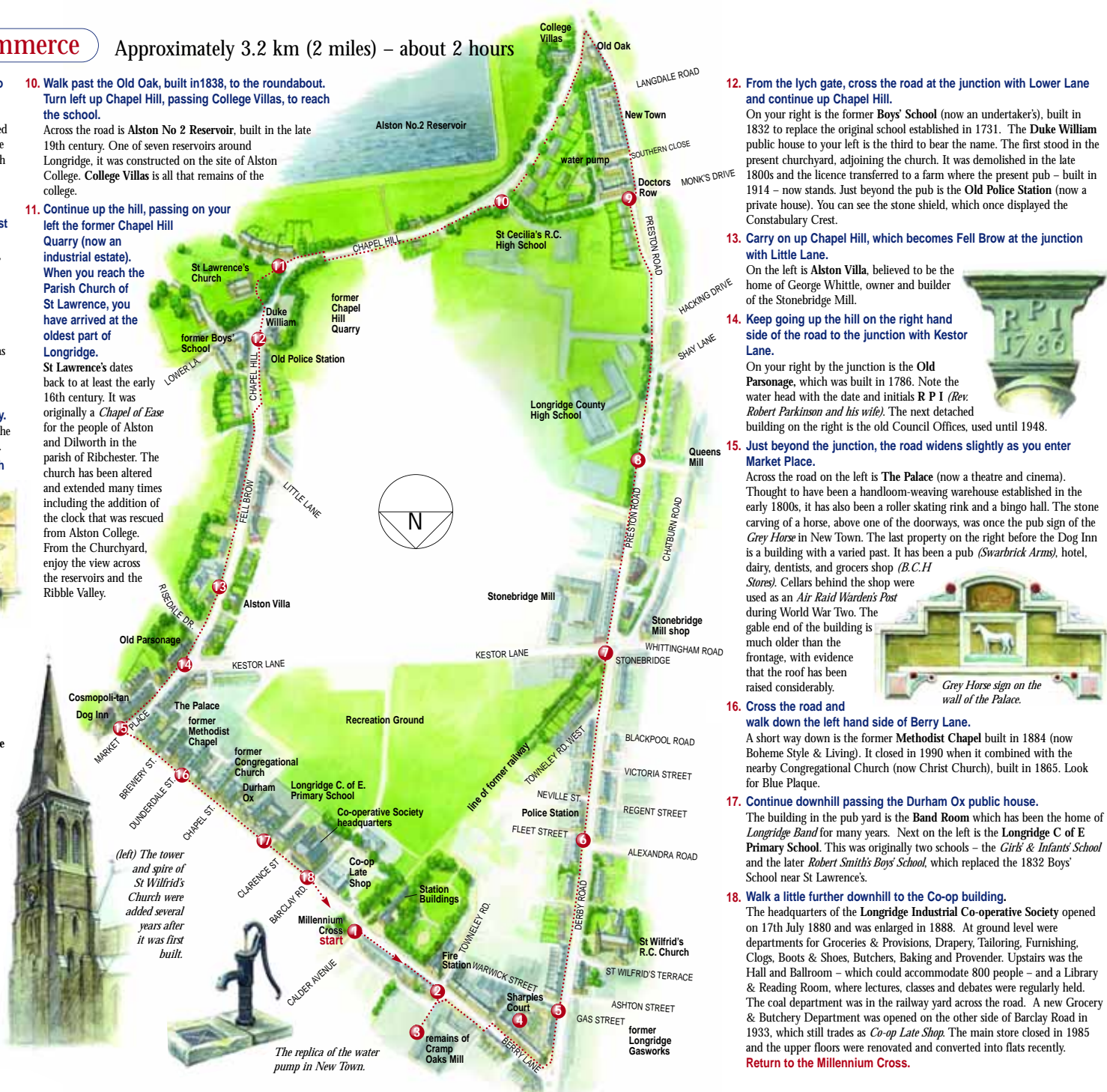
10. Walk past the Old Oak, built in 1838, to the roundabout. Turn left up Chapel Hill, passing College Villas, to reach the school.

Across the road is **Alston No 2 Reservoir**, built in the late 19th century. One of seven reservoirs around Longridge, it was constructed on the site of **Alston College**. **College Villas** is all that remains of the college.

11. Continue up the hill, passing on your left the former Chapel Hill Quarry (now an industrial estate).

When you reach the **Parish Church of St Lawrence**, you have arrived at the oldest part of Longridge. **St Lawrence's** dates back to at least the early 16th century. It was originally a *Chapel of Ease* for the people of Alston and Dilworth in the parish of Ribchester. The church has been altered and extended many times including the addition of the clock that was rescued from Alston College.

From the Churchyard, enjoy the view across the reservoirs and the Ribbles Valley.



(left) The tower and spire of St Wilfrid's Church were added several years after it was first built.



The replica of the water pump in New Town.

12. From the lych gate, cross the road at the junction with Lower Lane and continue up Chapel Hill.

On your right is the former **Boys' School** (now an undertaker's), built in 1832 to replace the original school established in 1731. The **Duke William** public house to your left is the third to bear the name. The first stood in the present churchyard, adjoining the church. It was demolished in the late 1800s and the licence transferred to a farm where the present pub – built in 1914 – now stands. Just beyond the pub is the **Old Police Station** (now a private house). You can see the stone shield, which once displayed the Constabulary Crest.

13. Carry on up Chapel Hill, which becomes Fell Brow at the junction with Little Lane.

On the left is **Alston Villa**, believed to be the home of **George Whittle**, owner and builder of the **Stonebridge Mill**.

14. Keep going up the hill on the right hand side of the road to the junction with Kestor Lane.

On your right by the junction is the **Old Parsonage**, which was built in 1786. Note the water head with the date and initials **R P I (Rev. Robert Parkinson and his wife)**. The next detached building on the right is the old Council Offices, used until 1948.

15. Just beyond the junction, the road widens slightly as you enter Market Place.

Across the road on the left is **The Palace** (now a theatre and cinema). Thought to have been a handloom-weaving warehouse established in the early 1800s, it has also been a roller skating rink and a bingo hall. The stone carving of a horse, above one of the doorways, was once the pub sign of the **Grey Horse** in New Town. The last property on the right before the **Dog Inn** is a building with a varied past. It has been a pub (*Swarbrick Arms*), hotel, dairy, dentists, and grocers shop (*B.C.H. Stores*). Cellars behind the shop were used as an *Air Raid Warden's Post* during World War Two. The gable end of the building is much older than the frontage, with evidence that the roof has been raised considerably.



Grey Horse sign on the wall of the Palace.

16. Cross the road and walk down the left hand side of Berry Lane.

A short way down is the former **Methodist Chapel** built in 1884 (now Boheme Style & Living). It closed in 1990 when it combined with the nearby **Congregational Church** (now **Christ Church**), built in 1865. Look for Blue Plaque.

17. Continue downhill passing the Durham Ox public house.

The building in the pub yard is the **Band Room** which has been the home of *Longridge Band* for many years. Next on the left is the **Longridge C of E Primary School**. This was originally two schools – the *Girls' & Infants School* and the later *Robert Smith's Boys' School*, which replaced the 1832 *Boys' School* near St Lawrence's.

18. Walk a little further downhill to the Co-op building.

The headquarters of the **Longridge Industrial Co-operative Society** opened on 17th July 1880 and was enlarged in 1888. At ground level were departments for Groceries & Provisions, Drapery, Tailoring, Furnishing, Clogs, Boots & Shoes, Butchers, Baking and Provender. Upstairs was the Hall and Ballroom – which could accommodate 800 people – and a Library & Reading Room, where lectures, classes and debates were regularly held. The coal department was in the railway yard across the road. A new Grocery & Butchery Department was opened on the other side of **Barclay Road** in 1933, which still trades as *Co-op Late Shop*. The main store closed in 1985 and the upper floors were renovated and converted into flats recently.

Return to the Millennium Cross.

LONGRIDGE heritage trails



TWO SHORT CIRCULAR WALKS
AROUND A THRIVING SMALL TOWN
ON THE EDGE OF THE
FOREST OF BOWLAND