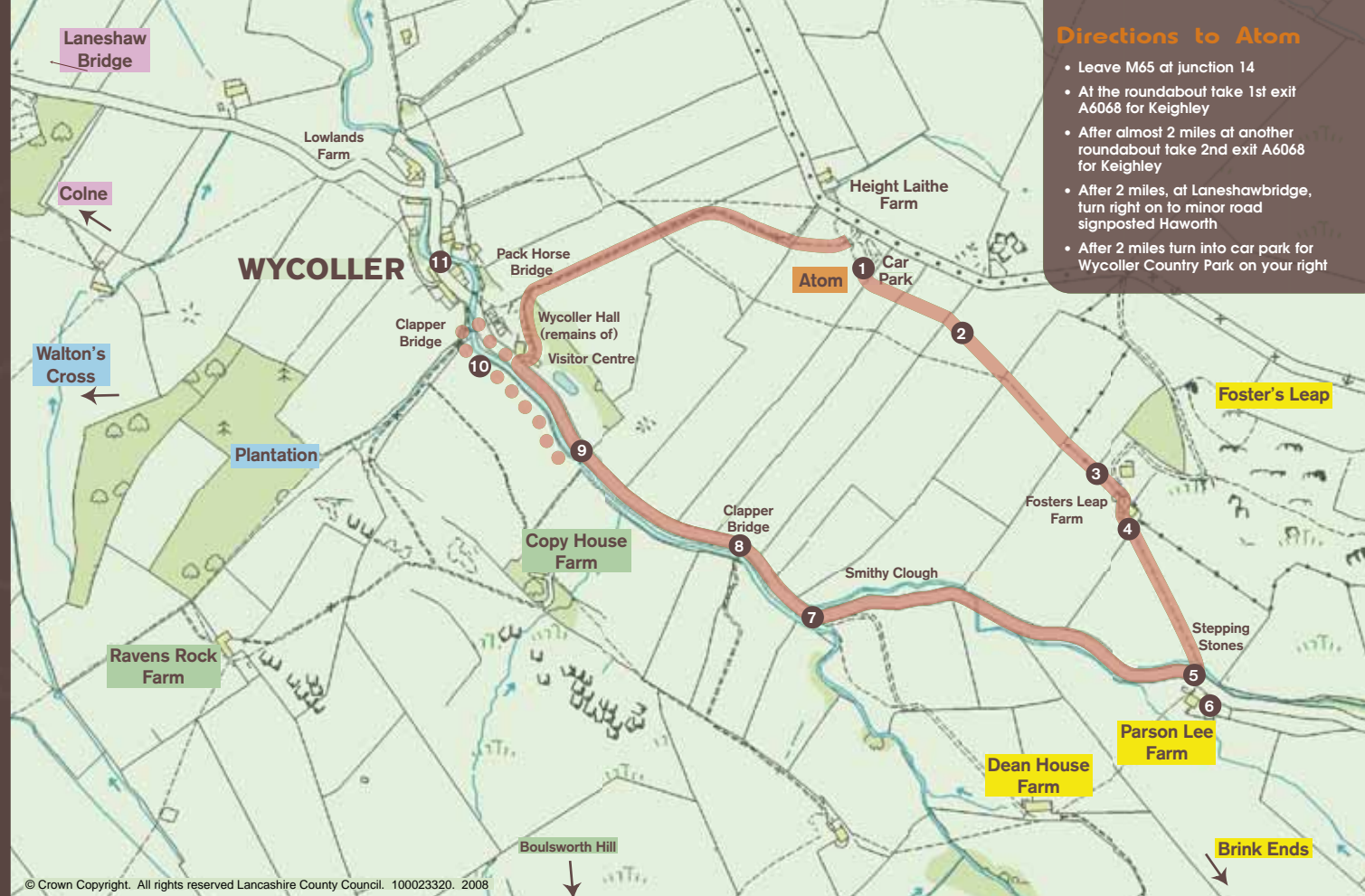


The Wycoller Panopticon Walk



The walk begins from a waymarked post between the car park and Atom where a **footpath** takes off along the side of the valley towards Foster's Leap ①. The walk can easily be completed in about an hour and offers some attractive views of Pendle's Panopticon from various points within Wycoller Country Park.

The path is very narrow and soon divides into two ②. Take the right hand path to descend towards the farmhouse and former barn of Foster's Leap Farm. From the second kissing-gate there is a good view of Foster's Leap Rock poking its nose out above the stand of sycamore trees next to the barn. This outcrop is referred to in Colne church records of 1714 and is believed to be named after Foster Cunliffe, a relative of the Cunliffes of Wycoller Hall who claimed King Charles II as his godfather. He made a daring (some would call it insane) jump across the gap from the cliff behind on to the top of the rock.

On entering the garden of Foster's Leap Barn, you can see an attractive pond ③ boasting some unusual creatures, such as a pink hippopotamus. However, this is private property and walkers are expected to cross the lawn, on the route indicated by the yellow waymarking arrow, to join the metalled road linking the barn with the farmhouse further down the valley side. Next to the latter is a gate. On entering the field here, follow the wall to the left ④ and cross into the next field by means of a ladder stile. The gateway next to it is usually open.

Two more posts show the right of way downhill to a footbridge ⑤ over the stream next to the eighteenth-century farmhouse of Parson Lee Farm. This is the only bed and breakfast establishment in the valley at the present time. Close by a stile at the end of the barn there is a great view of the Panopticon. ⑥ It really does seem as if it is about to roll down the hillside at any moment and – when people stand next to it – looks not unlike a massive boulder abandoned by the retreating glacier which formed this valley. The bronze finish of the Panopticon's metal-based paint blends in perfectly with the colour of its surroundings and it is easy to imagine that this object has long been part of the landscape.

Attractive waterfalls and some superb specimens of European Larch and Common Beech are highlights of the walk down the farm track to 'Water Meetings'. ⑦ Here, two unnamed tributaries unite to form Wycoller Beck which, a short distance further downstream, is crossed by the prehistoric Clam Bridge. ⑧

Beyond the Clam Bridge ⑨ is Copy House Bridge, rebuilt in 1992, where there is the choice of walking through the live willow tunnel in the Conservation Area, or heading through the picnic area with its duck pond to the Old Coach Road behind the Aisled Barn Visitor Centre. The willow tunnel is worth a detour as it is one of a set of willow structures, including a life-size horse and rider, ⑩ constructed by local people working with professional artists to enhance the wider Panopticon site.

Either way, the old road should be followed uphill to the Haworth Road Car Park, where this walk began. But if you are in need of refreshment before the final stretch, you may want to call in at the Wycoller Craft Centre and Tea Rooms, ⑪ which serves a range of snacks and delicious home-made cakes. (Open daily except Monday, 11am – 5pm. T 01282 868395, W www.wycollercraftcentre.co.uk)

The walk is 2.5 km, or just over 1.5 miles, long and should take about an hour.





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The third viewing window offers a view of the U-shaped plantation which takes its name from Raven's Rock close by. On a clear day you can make out the upright line of **Walton's Cross** at the summit of the small rounded hill on the skyline behind. The cross is similar to the one in Colne Market. The spire on top of the cross was put there in 1835 by the Reverend Walton, who obviously appreciated the fantastic panoramic views to be obtained from that particular spot.

Looking through the first aperture on the left, you will see a view eastwards towards **Foster's Leap Rock** and the farm dwellings of **Parson Lee**, **Dene House** and distant **Brink Ends**, while in the foreground ancient vaccary walling still clings tenaciously to the steep valley side as it has done for centuries.

From the next opening, the isolated farmhouse of **Raven's Rock** can be seen perched on the highest point on the opposite side of the valley, with **Copy House Farm** hugging the slope below it. To the left of Copy House there is a plantation with the ruin of Bank House Farm at the east end and the massive bulk of **Boulsworth Hill** beyond.

It may be said that the best panorama has been saved till last, for from the final window can be seen Pendle Hill in all its glory. The town of **Colne** lies spread out in the middle distance, leading on to **Laneshaw Bridge** to the extreme right in the view.

If the sun is shining from the south, there is just a chance that you will catch a glint of reflected light from one of the four round openings in the sides of the Panopticon. This may be the first hint a visitor gets that there is more to this artwork than first meets the eye. Closer inspection reveals a large stainless steel sphere in the centre of what proves to be an otherwise empty room. This represents the last remaining atom in this particular molecule. One has only to look out from any of the openings – or view them in miniature on the surface of the steel ball – to appreciate the panoptical qualities of Peter Meacock's design. As the word 'panoptical' implies, you really do see everything!

Nestling on the edge of a grassy knoll close to the Haworth Road Car Park, high above the valley floor, this modernistic structure – representing a molecule – bears some resemblance to a sea-worn pebble, but with the strange inclusion of rounded apertures, from which atoms have supposedly tumbled to their fate in the peaty waters of Wycoller Beck far below.

You can see Pendle's Panopticon **Atom** from a long way off, whether you are approaching Wycoller Country Park from Colne, or walking over the hill from Trawden.

The Wycoller Panopticon Walk



Atom

A Panopticon for Pendle

Designed by Peter Meacock with Katarina Novomestska and Architecture Central Workshop, Atom is constructed in ferro-cement with a surface coating of metal-based paint. It is intended as both viewing-point and shelter, and also as an intriguing and beautiful object in the landscape.

From inside, its circular viewing spaces frame unrivalled views of the surrounding countryside and an initially hidden, polished steel ball reflects back those views to the visitor.

Through Land, the education and creative arts project linked to Panopticons, local people worked with professional artists to create a striking series of willow sculptures which can be seen in nearby Wycoller village, a conservation area since 1973.

Wycoller also has several unusual architectural features, including seven small bridges that cross Wycoller Beck, and an 18th-century five-aisled barn, now converted into a visitor centre.

Panopticons and Land were projects of the East Lancashire Environmental Arts Network (ELEAN), which aims to demonstrate the positive role of the arts and cultural activity in the social, economic and physical regeneration of Pennine Lancashire.

About Panopticons

Panopticon n. structure, space or device providing a comprehensive or panoramic view

Pennine Lancashire's Panopticons are a unique series of twenty-first century landmarks, designed to attract visitors into the countryside to enjoy the stunning landscapes and wealth of attractions that this delightful area has to offer.

In addition to Atom, nestling on the hillside above Wycoller village, there are three more Panopticons to discover, each commanding spectacular views.

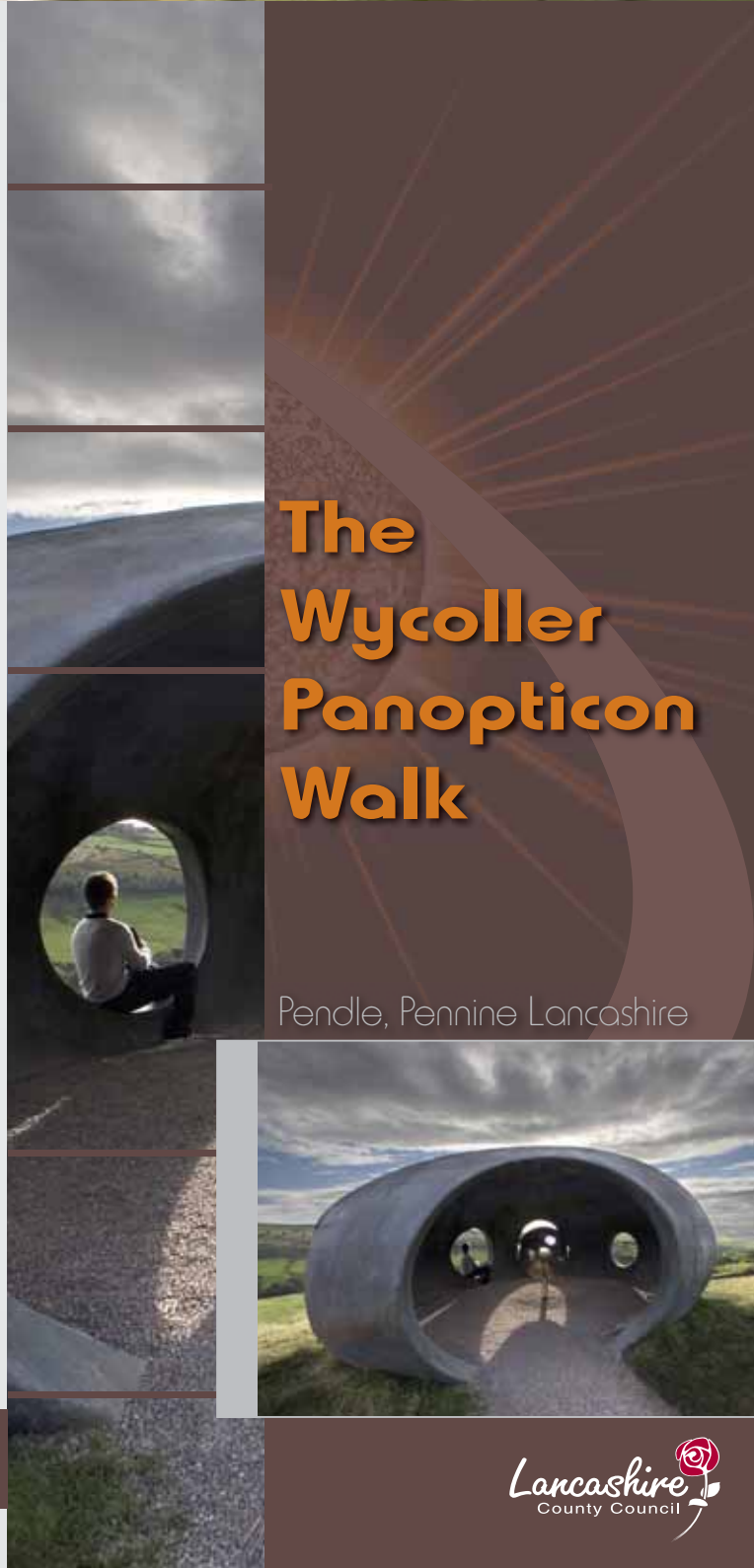
From Colourfields, in Blackburn's Corporation Park, you can enjoy a widespread panorama of the Park below, with the town beyond and distant views out towards Lytham, Southport and Fleetwood.

From Singing Ringing Tree, on Crown Point above Burnley, there is a superb view of Pendle Hill to the north and you can glimpse the Cliviger wind turbines on the Yorkshire border to the east. In between there is a panoramic overview of the town of Burnley, with the famous Turf Moor football stadium at its centre. On a clear day you can see the Bowland Fells, Pendle, Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent and Great Whernside.

From Halo, the centrepiece of a former landfill site on Top o' Slate, now re-landscaped and returned to public use, visitors can enjoy wonderful views of the Rossendale valley, Greater Manchester and parts of Pennine Lancashire, which were formerly inaccessible.

Visit a Panopticon soon – and discover Pennine Lancashire! www.panopticons.uk/net

For information about other things to see and do in Pendle, contact: Pendle Tourist Information Centre; T: 01282 661701 E: tourism@pendle.gov.uk W: www.pendle.com



The Wycoller Panopticon Walk

Pendle, Pennine Lancashire

