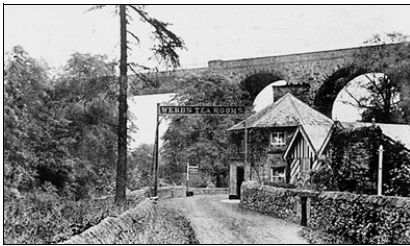


rowing boats available for a small charge there were tearooms and a dance floor.

A little further on, the river runs alongside the track and under the viaduct. The weir is where Oldknow redirected the river to form the pools that would provide waterpower for his mill. On the right is Flood Gates Cottage which many years ago was a popular place for refreshments for the many visitors to the area.



6) The track moves away from the river and we turn right just by the “Roman Lodge” (following the sign to Strines) to reach the Roman Bridge. The “Roman” tag was coined in Victorian times to add a little romanticism to this packhorse bridge dating back to the 17th century.



Crossing the bridge we follow the path beside the river, ignoring the steps on the right. The path joins a narrow road near two cottages and then makes its way up the hill to Strines Road. Cross over and up Plucksbridge Road. As the canal is reached, turn right to enter the towpath just before the bridge.

7) This is the Peak Forest Canal and Oldknow was a major sponsor for this waterway. The canal runs 6½ miles to Whaley Bridge and Buxworth and it was here that limestone was brought down from the Peak District by tramway.

As we make our way along the towpath there are extensive views across the valley to Cobden Edge and Mellor Church.

8) Some 200 yards short of Brickbridge the canal on the far side is a little wider, and marshy ground leads into a woody section. This was the site of one of Oldknow’s coalmines used for the burning of the lime in the kilns.

Brickbridge is a roving bridge where the towpath changes sides and you will notice that we pass under the bridge before circling round to cross it. This was to enable the rope of the horse drawn narrowboats to remain attached.

As you cross the bridge you will notice a doorway set in the wall ahead. This leads to another Oldknow coal mine and also a footpath leading up to All Saints’ Church which was used by the apprentices on their way to Sunday worship.

9) Turning right to follow the towpath, ahead we can see a number of boats moored in a pool off the main canal. This was adjacent to the top of the lime kilns where the lime and coal were dropped into the kilns. Such was Oldknow’s concern that the

Lime Kilns did not present an eyesore, that he built them in a gothic style that led later visitors to the area to assume that it was a ruined abbey.

Top Lock House was the site of James Jinks boat building yard. Cross the bridge at the Macclesfield Canal junction. [If you would like to see what remains of the Lime Kilns, cross the bridge at the end of the top lock and on past the bungalows]



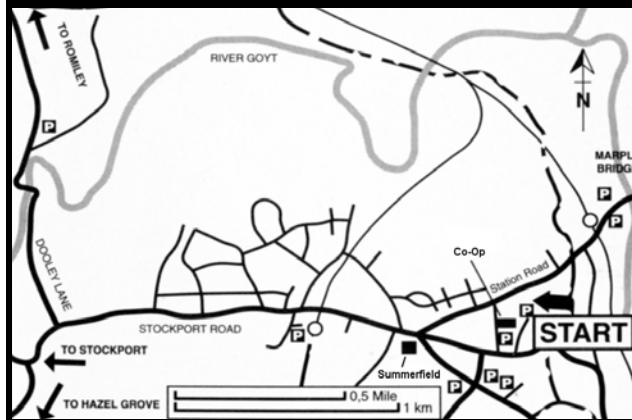
*The Lime Kilns*

Make your way past the top four locks of this flight of sixteen. Pass under Posset Bridge using the short horse tunnel and make your way back to the car park.

#### ALTERNATIVE ROUTE B

If time permits, take the path down the centre of the park with the bowling green to your left. This offers magnificent views towards Mellor Church on your right. After about 150 yards, the path forks to the right and down to the canal by Lock 10. Turn right here to follow the towpath and rejoin the main route.

#### LOCATION MAP



#### ALSO IN THIS SERIES

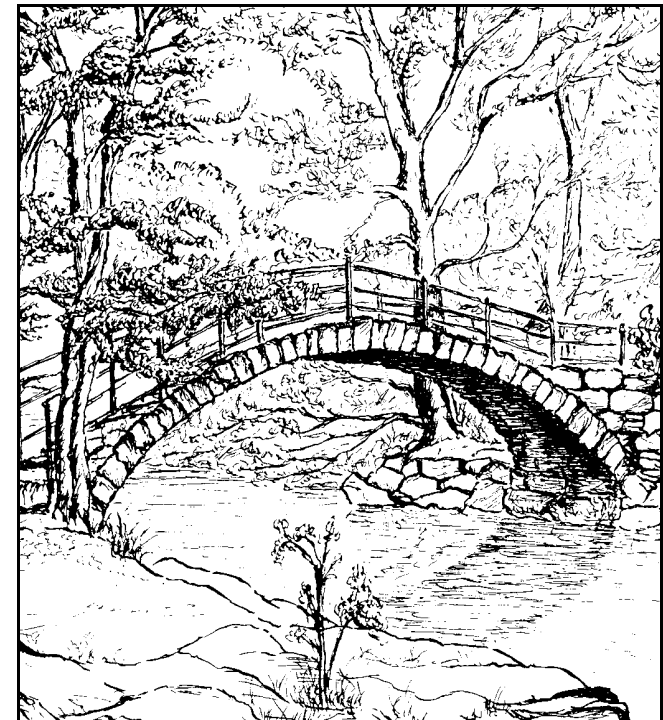
- 1 Marple Dale
- 2 The Roman Bridge & Lakes
- 3 Marple Locks and Brabyns Park
- 4 Chadkirk
- 5 Middlewood Way & Macclesfield Canal
- 6 Donkey Wood

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# The Roman Bridge and Lakes

50p

3 miles  
1½ Hrs



*Fred Winterbottom*

## Walks Around Marple

2

Updated and republished in May 2010 by The Marple Website  
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in memory of Gordon Mills 1935—2006.

**One myth can be dispelled immediately: neither the lakes nor the bridge have any connection with the Romans. This walk passes many of the sites of one of Marple's 18th century benefactors, Samuel Oldknow. Before Oldknow's time Marple was mainly a collection of isolated homesteads involved in the cottage industries of the time.**

*[The photographs used in this leaflet are 80 - 100 years old]*

**1)** We start in the Memorial Park in the centre of Marple, home of Thomas Carver, one of the owners of Hollins Mill and another of Marple's benefactors in a later period.

From the front of Hollins House, now council offices and Citizens Advice Bureau, head towards the war memorial. You now have a choice of routes, turn to the back page for Alternative Route B.

Take the path passing to the right of the skateboard area, down to the canal towpath near Lock 12. Turn right and make your way towards Posset Bridge where Oldknow supplied ale posset to the workers to ensure the bridge was completed on time. Notice that there are two arches at the bridge; the blocked-off one on the left led to an arm of the canal running towards the Lime Kilns.

Climb up the steps at the bridge and turn left. As you cross the bridge look to your right; this is how the scene would have looked in the 1920s. Proceed down Oldknow Road.



*The canal arm running alongside Strines Road to the loading house below the lime kilns.*



*Stone Row*

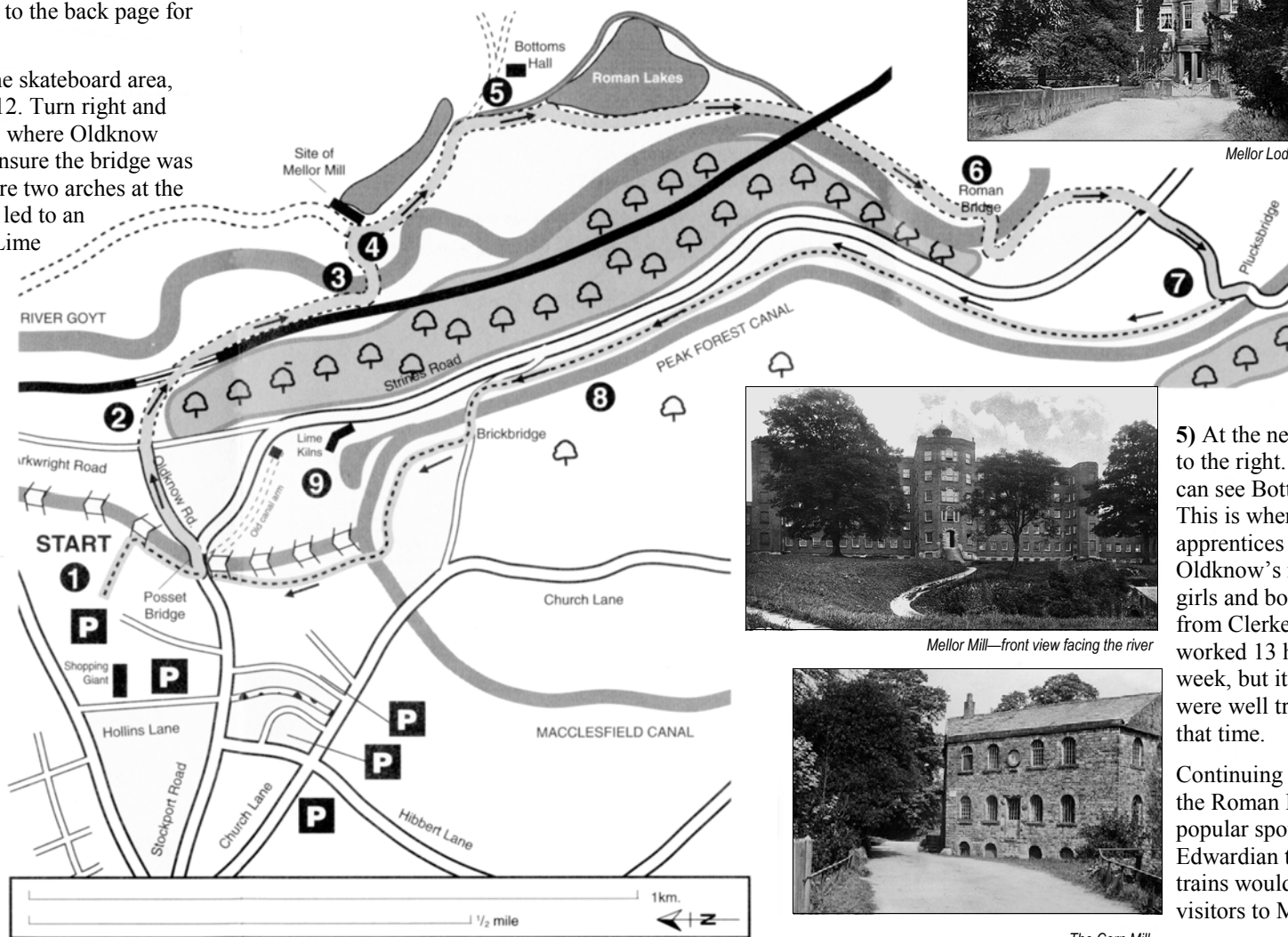
**2)** At the junction with Arkwright Road cross over and down Lakes Road. On the left where there is now a group of bungalows stood the cottages of Stone Row.

The 35 cottages were built by Oldknow to house the workers from his nearby mill and their families.

Carry on ahead past Beechwood Manor, formerly a house belonging to the railway but now private flats.

As we descend the hill we can appreciate the difficulties the railway engineers must have experienced when carving the line along the hillside.

**3)** At the bridge over the river Goyt stood, on the far side, Mellor Lodge, Samuel Oldknow's house and on this side Marple Lodge, the mill manager's house.



In the 1930s Oldknow's fine house became a girls' school but later it was vandalised when it stood empty and was demolished in 1949.

**4)** Cross the bridge and bear right at the fork. You will need a powerful imagination to picture the scene here over 100 years ago. On the left was Oldknow's Mellor Mill or Bottoms Mill, as it was also known. The brick-built building was over 400 feet long and was powered by 3 massive water wheels, the largest of which was 22 feet in diameter by 17½ feet wide.



*Mellor Lodge*

In 1892 a disastrous fire destroyed the mill but the Corn Mill, which was a little apart from the main mill, escaped damage and survived until the 1930s.

The Corn Mill stood close to this junction of the two paths.

Looking to the left as we make our way along Lakes Road we can see the mill pool, which was adjacent to the back of the mill.



*Mellor Mill—front view facing the river*

**5)** At the next junction take the path to the right. Through the trees you can see Bottoms Hall built in 1800. This is where some of the 100 apprentices lived who worked in Oldknow's mill. The children, both girls and boys, were mostly paupers from Clerkenwell in London. They worked 13 hours a day for 4/- (20p) a week, but it is understood that they were well treated by the standards of that time.

Continuing along the track we pass the Roman Lake. This was a very popular spot in Victorian and Edwardian times when excursion trains would bring hundreds of visitors to Marple Station. Beside the



*The Corn Mill*