



A walk through the history of Holcombe Moor

Pilgrim's Cross

Pilgrims Cross is large cube shaped monument, the four sides tell the story and history of the cross, its significance and destruction. It was standing in A.D. 1176 and probably much earlier. Almost certainly pilgrims to Whalley Abbey prayed and rested here. In A.D. 1176 and in A.D. 1225 the Pilgrims Cross is named in charters of gifts of land in Holcombe forest. The socket was destroyed by unknown vandals in 1901. By 1902, the present stone was put in place. Monuments on ridgeways like this would have been invaluable guide posts for medieval travellers, both as a means of knowing how far you have travelled and as a way to orientate yourself in bad weather. Navigating by landmarks would be crucial in upland and moorland environments, so crosses and large prehistoric burial mounds would all have been named.



Peel Monument

Peel Monument was built in 1851 and inaugurated in 1852. The cost, £1,000, was borne by public subscription from the residents of Ramsbottom and it was erected to Sir Robert Peel for his efforts in effecting the repeal of the Corn Laws. The tower stands 128ft high and was built from stone quarried locally. It's open to the public most Sundays and is a popular destination every Good Friday when traditionally the people of Ramsbottom and Bury walk up to the Tower.



Robin Hood's Well

Robin Hood's Well is on an ancient Pilgrim's route to Whalley Abbey. It is at the top of Stakes Lane, so called as bulls were staked for baiting. The name has nothing to do with the famous outlaw Robin Hood, but instead may be related to the rituals of the Catholic church which during the reformation were known as 'the play of Robin Hood' or with superstitions about fairies, sometimes known as Robin Goodfellow.



The Ellen Strange Stone

The traditional story of Ellen Strange, was that she lived at Ash Farm Hawkshaw, met a travelling pedlar at Haslingden Fair and on the way home he murdered her here on the moorland. A local historian, John Simpson, has researched the story and has discovered that in fact, Ellen Broadley (nee Strange) was probably murdered by her husband John Broadley in January 1761. An inquest was held, but a judge acquitted John Broadley of murder through lack of evidence. A pile of stones was raised at the place where her body was found and the marker stone was added in 1978. To read the full story please look at www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Ellen%20Strange%20booklet11-23788.pdf



The Old Grey Wall

The Old Grey Wall is shown on the 1850 first edition map as a broken line, indicating that it was already in a ruinous state by that date. Nothing more is known about it, but could it possibly date back to medieval times when Roger de Montbagon gifted the land to the monks of Monk Bretton Priory or even earlier than that.