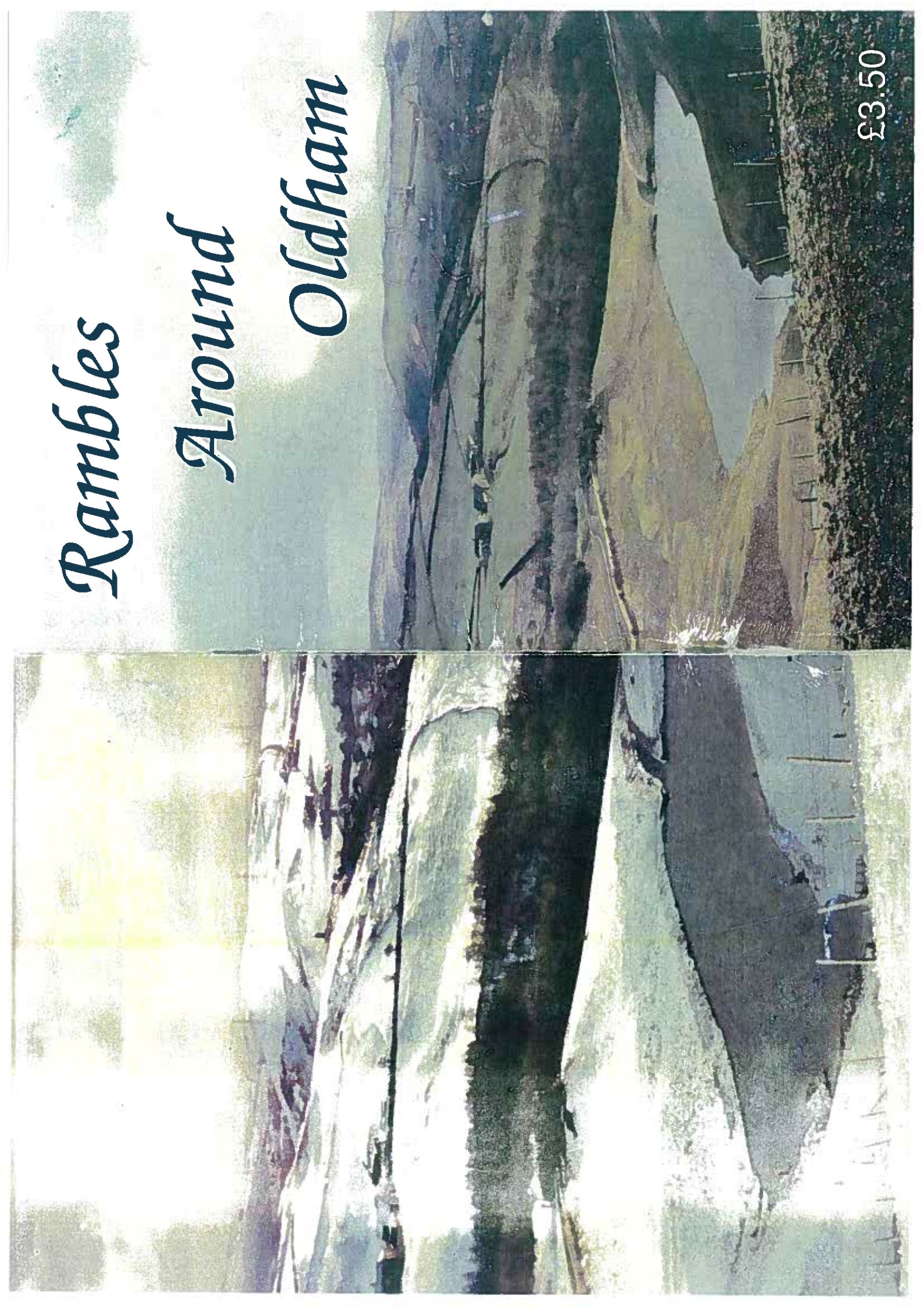


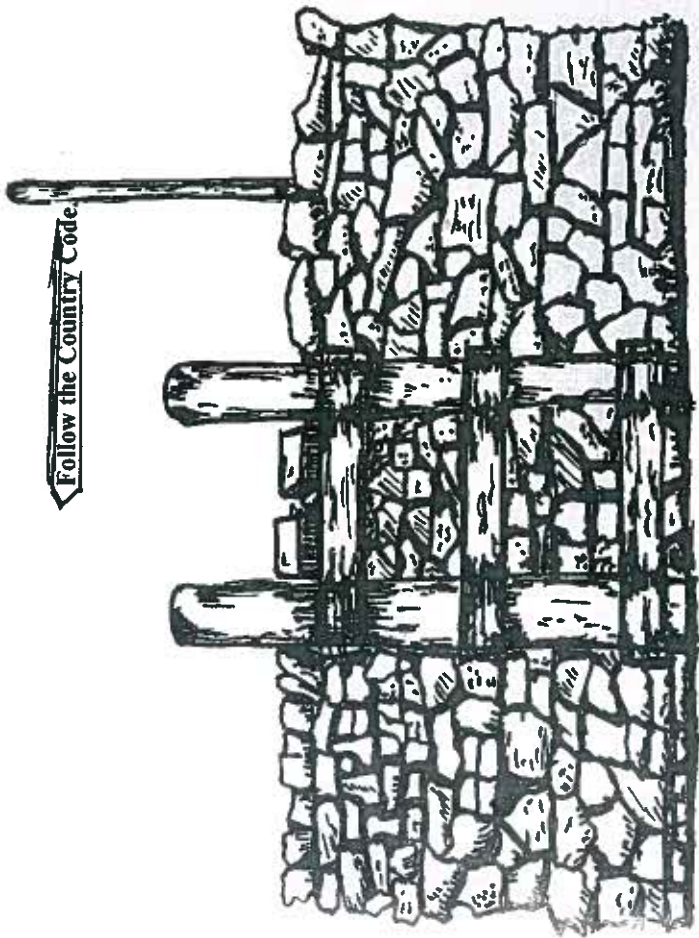
*Rambles*

*Around*

*Oldham*

£3.50





Avoid damaging fences, hedges and walls.

Fasten all gates.

Keep dogs under proper control.

Keep to paths across farmland.

Leave no litter - take it home.

Guard against all risks of fire.

Safeguard water supplies.

Protect wildlife, wild plants and trees.

Go carefully on countryside.

Take nothing away except photographs  
and memories.

HISTORICAL FACTS PROVIDED BY  
MICHAEL LAWSON, CHADDERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Walk 1 Foxdenton Hall Circular

By John Walton

This short walk was created by the Oldham Group of the Ramblers Association in 1992 as part of the Chadderton Festival organised by the Chadderton Historical Society. The history of the Industrial Revolution in this locality can be seen especially the various types of transport including pack horse trails, canals, railways and most recently the M60 motorway. Notice how developments are located adjacent to the transport system of the day.

- Distance – 5 miles (8km).
- Time – 3 hours.
- Maps - OS 1:25 000.
- Pathfinder map - 713, Oldham.
- Explorer map - 277, Manchester, Salford, Oldham and Rochdale.
- Start point – Crossley Bridge, Broadway.
- Public transport - Buses from Manchester and Rochdale.
- Parking – Car park, behind the Red Barn.
- Grid reference – SD 935 092.

1. Commence the walk at the Red Barn. Cross Broadway by the pelican crossing and go down the footpath at the corner of Milton Drive. At the bottom, bearing left through the trees, follow the brook to a small steel footbridge.

*This is the site of the first water-driven cotton mill in Chadderton. The foundations can be seen of the Bank Mill built in 1776 by Thomas Ashton.*

2. Carry on straight ahead and at the end of the fence go through the right hand stile, and then left along the edge of the old railway line.

*The original railway, from Middleton Junction to Werneth, was built in 1842 and was the steepest (1 in 27) passenger railway line in Great Britain.*

Cross the bridge named after Johnny Whitehead and turn right. After 50m bear left to a stile in the corner. Turn left and walk alongside the tall green fencing of the athletics track.

3. After around 120m look to your right past the corner of a green sports hall across the school playing field, to another Site of Biological Importance. You will be able to see this site more closely from Hunt Lane.

*Most of us are used to seeing crocus flowering in the spring, but here you can see one that flowers in September and October. The beautiful blue and white flowered autumn crocus was supposedly introduced into the Oldham area by the Knights Templar several centuries ago. This was to satisfy their craving for saffron. Until recently, it had survived in several sites in the west of Oldham, but sadly it is fast disappearing under the pressure of development and this field is now much reduced in size since the building of the athletics track in 1999.*

Carry on along the perimeter of the school to a double stile in the far corner. Go over and turn left along a second disused railway line. Carry on along this disused railway, to the access track to Ferney Field Farm on your left.

*This branch line, from Middleton Junction to the Chadderton Coal Depot on Broadway, was built in 1914 to transport coal to the many cotton mills in the area.*

5. Continue along the disused railway for another 250m where a footpath crosses from left to right. Keep on the disused railway and, reaching the end of the housing estate on your right, bear right to reach a small basin of the Rochdale Canal.

*The Rochdale Canal, a Site of Biological Importance, is an extremely important wildlife habitat for plants, insects and molluscs. There are large amounts of some nationally important rare plants in the water although these don't tend to look especially distinctive to the untrained eye. However, one very noticeable plant is the fringed water lily that flowers in July and August. It has been well established at Middleton Junction for many years.*

Turn left to reach the towpath of the Rochdale Canal. Walk along the towpath to reach Foxdenton Lane.

*A new hydraulically powered vertical lift bridge was built here in June 2001, to replace the original one that was removed in 1972. A picture of the original lift bridge can be seen over the bar in the Railway and Linnet.*

Turn right and walk down the road to the Railway and Linnet, originally built in 1746.

6. Cross Foxdenton Lane at the traffic lights and follow Broadgate through the Broadway Industrial Park. At the end of the footway on the right hand side of Broadgate cross the road and take the new path, opposite, to the Rochdale Canal. Bear right along the canal to a set of steps adjacent to the new Oldham Broadway bridge, built in 1993.

7. At the top of the steps, turn right along The Causeway for 65m and then left along Gateway Crescent. Follow this minor road through the old Chadderton Power Station site. Although a little scruffy at times, the area is to be redeveloped and the locality cleaned up. Keep straight ahead until you reach the access road from the Manchester Outer Ring Road, opened in September 2000. Turn left through a gap in the fence to the traffic lights at Broadway and then left again, over the Rochdale Canal below.

*When this book was being written, access to the canal towpath was on the other side of Broadway. However during 2001 the old Boat and Horses pub is to be demolished and a new one built which will give access to the canal towpath without crossing Broadway.*

8. After a quick pint, get back onto the towpath, turning right in the direction of Foxdenton Lane. Walk along the towpath to the Oldham Broadway 1993 bridge.

*The Rochdale Canal was opened in 1804. It took 39 years to complete and involved the construction of over 100 bridges, 2 aqueducts and 8 reservoirs. The canal was used to transport cargoes of coal, timber, grain, wood and cotton etc. The canal is currently being refurbished with over £20 million of Lottery money.*

9. Continue along the towpath, over the brook below at the rear of the Swan Mill. It is hoped that in the near future a footpath link will be constructed from here to Foxdenton Hall Park 500m away.

Carry on along the towpath past the Swan Mill, originally built in 1875, to Foxdenton Lane. Turn right and walk down Foxdenton Lane for 200m, and then turn right into Springs Road and walk to the top.

10. Turn left along a wide track with the sewage works on your right. Go through the stile at the end and cross, diagonally, the Albert Taylor Recreation Ground, to a small steel kissing gate giving access to the rear of Foxdenton Hall.

Go up a small flight of steps and walk past the bowling green on the left to the toilets ahead. Turn left to the new Foxdenton Senses Garden constructed for the Millennium. Go in between Foxdenton Hall Farm on your left and the Hall on the right.

*Foxdenton Hall, an oasis away from the hustle and bustle of modern day Chadderton, remains a vivid reminder of former times. There have been at least three manor houses known as Foxdenton Hall, the original built in 1215. This was demolished in 1620 and a half timbered stone house built by William Radcliffe. In 1698 the upper part of the house was pulled down and the present house was erected by Alexandra Radcliffe in the then popular Renaissance style.*

*In the grounds of the Hall, native trees like beech, sycamore and sweet chestnut provide a home to robins, blackbirds, warblers, magpies and wood pigeons. On the ground most wildlife can be found in and around the ponds. Here, frogs thrive and Canada geese seasonally visit the more settled families of mallard ducks.*

Perhaps time to have a small break and look around the Hall, Park and pond etc before carrying on along the driveway, past the highly decorative "1690" gates, back to Foxdenton Lane.

11. Turn right for 50m and cross, carefully, to Horseshoe Lane.

*The large building on the right of Horseshoe Lane is thought to be the site of the original Foxdenton Hall and this building, although recently rebuilt, contains three cruck trusses (pairs of curved timbers extending to the ground in the framework of the house roof).*

At the top of this short lane, bear right across a horse training area to a small gate at the right of Foxdenton Farm. (This is the true line of footpath 48, but obviously if horses are being trained, it would be prudent to take the path a