

Rainford Heritage Walking Tour

Take a walk into Rainford's past, following this walking tour around the village. Start at the Church, and read about a few of the interesting places around the village which reveal something of its history.

Rainford as a settlement was probably established in the 11th or 12th centuries. It's not mentioned directly in Domesday, but is mentioned as 'Rainford' by 1190. It became a centre for ceramic and clay tobacco pipe production in the post medieval period.



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**Merseyside
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start at the Church in the centre of the village

1. Church of All Saints

Until the mid 16th century the nearest serving chapel to Rainford was in Prescott. Eventually a chapel was built in the village, around the time of the Reformation, built sometime between 1535 and 1541. Rainford became a parish in 1869 and needed a larger church. The present All Saints was completed in 1887, and the old chapel was demolished.

turn left out of the churchyard



2. Rainford School

at the roundabout is the old school – turn here onto Cross Pit Lane

The first school in Rainford was built in 1668, funded by money left in Thomas Lyon’s will. We don’t know where this original school was, but his wish that a school be maintained in the centre of the village continued when it school was rebuilt here.

proceed along Higher Lane past the High School. Turn right at the mini roundabout and up the hill; Hydes Brow Farm is on left



3. Hyde’s Brow (seen up driveway to left)

Hyde’s Brow Farm is one of a number of early farms built on edge of the newly-drained landscape of the mosslands in 17th century. Finds in this area suggest a potter may have worked in this area in the 17th century.

at the top of the rise, turn right along Reeds Brow



4. Reeds Brow

Placename evidence and finds indicate that there was pipe-making here in small ‘pipehouses’ between farms. The lost ‘Drownpitcher Lane’ in the field to the left seems to have provided access to pipehouses.



5. Landscape

The landscape and geology around Rainford made its industries possible through availability of raw materials. However, it was only following the draining of the mosslands in the 18th century that large areas of the high wetlands became suitable for farming.

after quarter of a mile turn right towards Pear Tree House, following the ‘footpath’ signpost. At fork in path turn right, towards Ivy House. At Higher Lane, turn left onto the road

at the roundabout turn right and turn left onto the footpath when you see the ‘Linear Park’ sign

6. Railway

The St Helens to Ormskirk railway line opened in 1858. The line originally had 5 stations to serve the village and industries. when the Linear Park reaches Rookery Lane turn right onto the road



7. Rookery Farm (seen to the left)

The area around Rookery Farm has been occupied for several centuries, belonging to the ancient local Parr family. Like many local landowners, John Parr leased land for industrial use, here rented by James Birch, a pipe maker in 1780.

When the road forks take the right onto Church Road



8. Library/Saddle Inn

Rainford Library is built on the site of pipe shop built in the mid 19th century when Peter Smith moved from his previous workshop near the chapel. Pipes were made on this site until the 20th century. The site had previously been occupied by a pub, the Golden Bell, and before that an earlier pipe shop.



9. Church Road

Settlement along the main road was still quite dispersed in the mid 19th century, with a cluster of houses around the church. Excavations in gardens on Church Road 2011-13 revealed a dump of discarded potters’ waste: mis-fired pottery, as well as waste from a pottery kiln. These investigations tell us that the pottery industry started in Rainford in the 16th century or earlier.



10. Tennis Courts (behind the church)

During the different phases of the development of the tennis courts excavations have revealed large quantity of 17th and 18th century pottery, as well as clay tobacco pipes and evidence for a kiln.

return to the church to complete your walk

This walk will take around one and a half hours, and covers about 3.5miles or 5.5km. Walking this route will burn around 250kcal.