



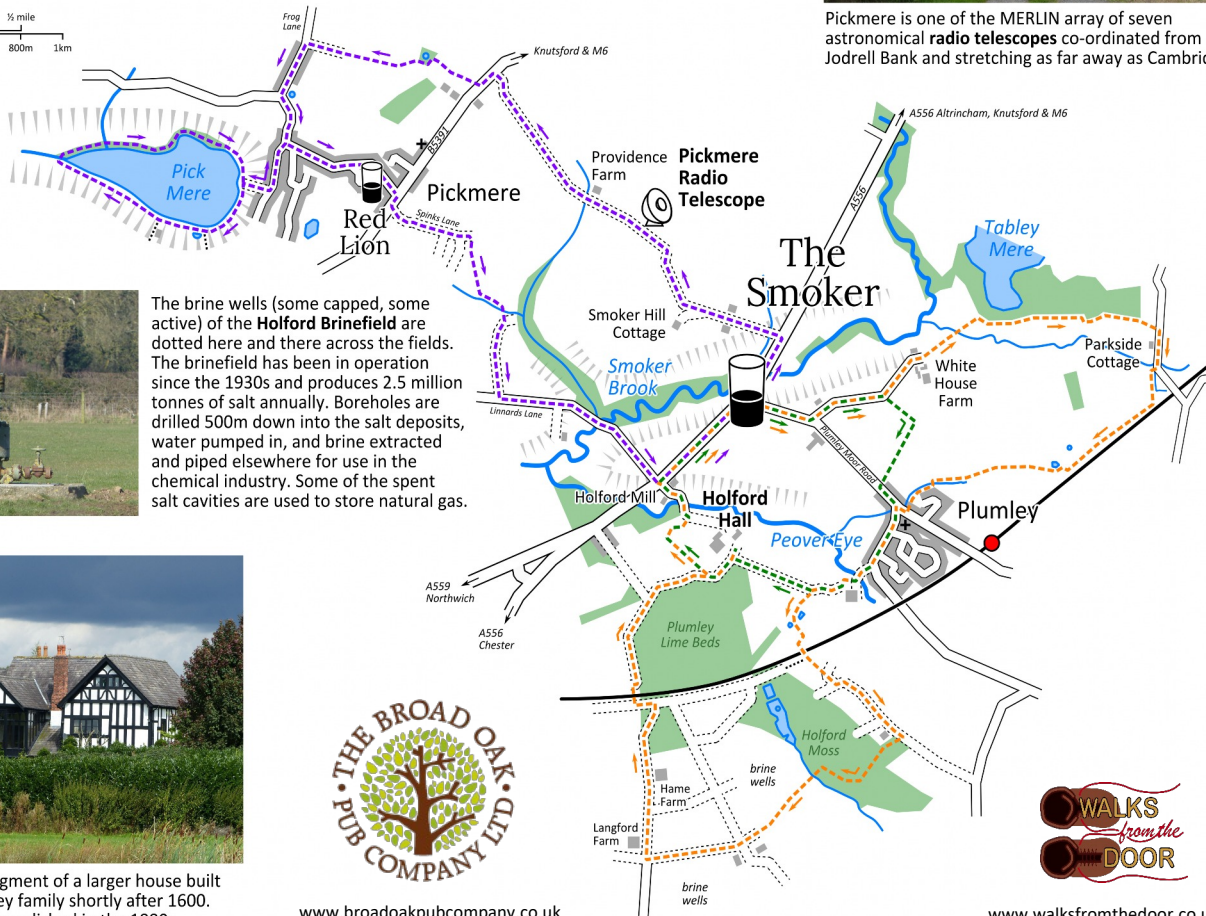
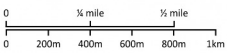
Pick Mere is a subsidence mere but – unlike others in the area formed by salt mine collapses in the last 100 years – is of some antiquity. It is quieter now than in its early 20th-century heyday, when attractions included a permanent funfair and boat trips on the lake.



The former Plumley Lime Beds are a nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest, being one of the few areas of calcareous soil in Cheshire. The lime beds were owned by the Ammonia Soda Company Ltd (ASCOL) and then by Brunner Mond. These small stalactites and stalagmites are in a bank of spoil next to the footpath near Holford Hall.



Pickmere is one of the MERLIN array of seven astronomical radio telescopes co-ordinated from Jodrell Bank and stretching as far away as Cambridge.



The brine wells (some capped, some active) of the Holford Brinefield are dotted here and there across the fields. The brinefield has been in operation since the 1930s and produces 2.5 million tonnes of salt annually. Boreholes are drilled 500m down into the salt deposits, water pumped in, and brine extracted and piped elsewhere for use in the chemical industry. Some of the spent salt cavities are used to store natural gas.



Holford Hall is a fragment of a larger house built by the Cholmondeley family shortly after 1600. Sadly, a wing was demolished in the 1880s.



www.broadoakpubcompany.co.uk



www.walksfromthedoor.co.uk

Three circular walks from The Smoker

Plumley, Cheshire



Holford Hall 2.4 miles: Easy

An easy stroll visiting a historic house and the site of a former watermill.

Tabley Estate and Holford Moss 6.2 miles: Fairly easy

Skirting Tabley Hall to the birch woodland of Holford Moss and its intriguing brine wells and lime beds.

Pickmere

4.4 or 6.3 miles: Fairly easy

An impressive radio telescope and an optional circuit of the beautiful lake at Pickmere.

THE SMOKER INN

Chester Road, Plumley, Knutsford WA16 0TY

tel 01565 722338

website <http://thesmokerplumley.co.uk>

email info@thesmokerplumley.co.uk

OPEN: Mon to Sat 12 noon–11pm

Sun 12 noon–10.30pm

FOOD SERVED

Mon to Sun 12 noon–9pm

Holford Hall (2.4 miles: Easy)

Allow 1–1½ hours. Crosses the busy A556 dual-carriageway and may be muddy in places. Several stiles.

1 From the front door of the Smoker, turn right and right again (into Plumley Moor Road). **2** After 100 yards cross (if you haven't already) and follow the pavement on the left-hand side of the road. **3** Turn left into Whitehouse Lane, a no-through road. **4** After quarter of a mile, leave the lane to cross a stile on the right. **5** Follow the field edge until you reach a stile and footbridge on your right, where you turn right. **6** Follow the hedge on your left for a couple of fields to a gate into the road in Plumley. **7** Turn left to the road junction by Plumley Methodist Church. **8** Turn right into Trouthall Lane and follow the road past the junction with Yewtree Road (on the left opposite Maltkiln Farm). Pass the end of Moorcroft then, when the road bends left, take the no-through road ahead. **9** Cross the stream (Peover Eye) and turn immediately right at the footpath sign and over a stile into a track by a Holford Hall gatepost. **10** Follow the winding, hedged track until it emerges into a field. **11** Bear right, continuing along the track past a couple of clumps of trees, and then continue through trees to a junction of tracks near Holford Hall. A brief diversion to the right allows a glimpse of the Hall and the old stone bridge over its moat. **12** Returning to the junction, follow the track to the left, signposted "Railway Line" and "Diverted Footpath". **13** After about 200 yards, go through a kissing gate on your right. **14** Follow the grassy path to a gate, where it bends right into some trees. **15** The fenced path winds through the wood to a gate into a lane below the Holford Hall gates. **16** Turn left over the stream, above the remains of a watermill. **17** When you reach the main road, wait for a gap in the traffic and cross with extreme care. **18** Turn right and walk along the pavement back to the Smoker, crossing back to the right-hand side of the A556 rather more easily at the traffic lights in front of the pub.

Pickmere

4.4 or 6.3 miles: Fairly easy

Allow 3–5 hours. A relatively undemanding walk with some road walking. May be muddy after rain or overgrown in places in summer.

1 Cross the main road at the lights in front of the pub then turn right, over another arm of the junction. **2** Follow the main road for quarter of a mile, crossing Smoker Brook partway along. **3** Turn left up the driveway for Smoker Hill Cottage. **4** Follow the track over a small stream and between some farm buildings, then take the right-hand track when it divides below the cottage. **5** Follow this track as it curves right, towards the radio telescope. **6** Cross a stile by a gate and follow the track as it winds past the telescope dish to Providence Farm. **7** Continue along the track beyond the farm for half a mile to a road. **8** Turn left then right over a stile onto a field path (signposted "Frog Lane 1/2 mile"). **9** Follow the right-hand edge of two fields, then bear

left and right within a fence round a pond surrounded by trees. **10** Cross a field to a stile then follow the hedge on your left to a track out to Frog Lane. **11** Turn left and follow the lane to a triangular junction by a pond. **12** Turn left here (signposted Lostock Gralam) and follow Park Lane, which is vergeless as far as the junction with Mere Lane. **13** *For the shorter walk, continue along the road and jump to step 28.* For the longer walk around Pick Mere, turn right down Mere Lane. **14** Pass Beaver Close on the left, then right into Jacobs Way. **15** Go through the gates ahead of you and down the slope to reach an interpretation panel by the side of the Mere. **16** Turn left along the lakeside footpath to a kissing gate into open fields. **17** Pass a jetty and go through a couple more gates into woodland, ignoring a path off to the left. **18** A boardwalk leads through reeds to a kissing gate into a field; ignore another footpath to the left here and continue along the lakeside past another jetty. **19** Another kissing gate leads to a further field, as the lake begins to narrow. **20** Just before the top end of the field, turn right onto a signposted permissive path over a footbridge. **21** This path bears right through reedy scrub before running below a field to a wooden kissing gate. **22** Continue in similar vein, with a fence on your left and the wooded lakeside to your right. At one point the path bends away from the lake then turns back towards it. **23** Eventually, turn right through another wooden kissing gate into trees and follow the path back to the waterside. **24** Cross a grassy area to the interpretation board and turn left, back up the slope to Jacobs Way. **25** Turn left and walk back towards Mere Lane. **26** Just after Beaver Close, turn right into a small triangular park; bear right to an exit into Clover Drive. **27** Take a few steps left to the T-junction with Park Road, and turn right. **28** Follow the road for a little over a quarter of a mile, until you reach the Red Lion. **29** At the T-junction beyond the pub, turn right, then cross into Spinks Lane. **30** Follow the lane to its end then follow a grassy track beyond the last entrance on the right. **31** Turn right at a footpath sign to a metal kissing gate into fields. **32** Follow the left-hand side of the field then turn left before a footbridge, ignoring a track leading straight ahead. **33** Follow a stream and hedge to a plank footbridge, where you turn right over the stream and through a metal gate. **34** Cross to a similar gate in the hedge opposite, leading into a green lane. **35** Turn right and follow the track out to a road (Linnards Lane). **36** Turn left and follow the sometimes vergeless road over the Smoker Brook and then up to the A556. **37** Turn left and walk along the pavement back to the Smoker, crossing at the pedestrian crossing in front of the pub.

Tabley Estate & Holford Moss

6.2 miles: Fairly easy

Allow 2½–3 hours. Generally level; crosses a railway, and the busy A556 dual-carriageway. Muddy in places after rain.

1 From the front door of the Smoker, turn right and right again (into Plumley Moor Road). **2** After 100 yards cross (if you haven't already) and follow the left-hand pavement. **3** Turn left into Whitehouse Lane,

a no-through road, and follow it for a little under half a mile to the farm, ignoring footpaths to right and left. **4** Walk past the farmhouse and through the gate at the end of the farmyard. **5** Descend to cross a stream, and beyond a stile walk up to a wood. **6** Turn right and follow the edge of the wood for half a mile, skirting round a couple of ponds as you encounter them. **7** At the end of the wood, continue across the field ahead to meet a lane. **8** Turn right and walk past the thatched and half-timbered Parkside Cottage. **9** Cross a stream then turn right onto a footpath; bear left immediately, to the right of a hedge and ditch. **10** When the ditch bends left, continue straight ahead to the railway, and turn right. **11** Pass two field boundaries until you reach a crossing in the corner of the third field. **12** Don't cross the line, but turn right, away from the railway. **13** Go through a gateway on the left and bear right to pass to the left of a pond. **14** Climb a stile and pass to the right of another pond to a further stile. **15** Follow the field edge, crossing yet another stile as you approach Plumley village. **16** Cross a footbridge over the ditch on your left, and follow a path between garden fences and the ditch. **17** When you meet a driveway, turn left out to the road. **18** Turn right for a short distance to Plumley Methodist Church. **19** Turn left into Trouthall Lane. **20** Follow the road past the junction with Yewtree Road (on the left opposite Maltkiln Farm). Pass the end of Moorcroft then, when the road bends left, take the no-through road ahead. **21** Cross the stream (Peover Eye) and turn immediately right at the footpath sign and over a stile into a track by a Holford Hall gatepost. **22** Follow the winding track until it emerges into a field. **23** Turn left along a path that follows the field edge. **24** Turn left between ponds and cross the field ahead. **25** Cross a railway bridge and follow the path along the field edge beyond (*a footpath down steps to the right, running alongside the railway, provides a straightforward shortcut to step 35*). **26** A track joins from the left, which you follow ahead to a junction. **27** Bear left, then right, passing along a belt of trees and over an old cattle grid. **28** Continue to a gate and pass to the left of a house. **29** At the end of the garden wall on your right, turn right at a footpath sign over a stile into birch woodland. **30** After ¼ mile, the path bends right, then after a further 200 yards heads left to a footbridge. **31** Follow the field edge to a stile, and continue along the hedge to a car park and office building associated with the Holford Brine Field (whose wells can be seen in adjacent fields). **32** Follow the metalled driveway beyond to a crossroads by Langford Farm. **33** Turn right past the farm; keep straight on at a gate, past Hame Farm on the right, and continue along the track through the trees until you reach the railway after a second gate. **34** Turn left. **35** After 60 yards, turn right through a metal gate in the railway fence and cross the lines with care. **36** Follow the lane beyond, with woodland on your right. **37** Keep straight on, sticking to the woodland edge, at a junction. **38** The black-and-white Holford Hall comes into sight and you walk below a bank of lime-rich spoil on your right. **39** At a kissing gate, turn left and leave the track.

Now follow steps **14–18** of the **Holford Hall** walk (above) to guide you back to the Smoker.