

Why fossils?

Imagine what Barrow was like 180 million years ago: it was under a sea teeming with amazing creatures including ammonites and marine reptiles. When these life forms died they were covered with layers of mud or sand and became fossilised. In the last century, museums all over Britain bought up many splendid fossils discovered in the village lime workings, including one which is world famous because it contained very rare soft tissue. Barrow's past has inspired the students of Loughborough College of Art & Design to produce a series of sculptures celebrating its important position in the world of palaeontology.

Sculptures

	Trilobite	resin bronze plaque	Nick Bartrum
	Shell forms	bronze forms in cement	Emma Evans
	Skeletal relief	bronze plaque	Jamie Frost
	Three ammonites	bronze plaque	Conal McCabe
	Jurassic Amber	bronze in clear resin	Sara Spencer
	Broken arc	Ancaster weatherbed stone	Michael Thacker
	Fossil	Cadeby stone on plinth	Conal McCabe
	Trilobite II	bronzed resin	Sara Spencer
	Kuehneisaurus	bronze	Lorna Grossner
	Organic forms	cement and resin	Glenn Webb

How to get to Barrow

Bus - The No.2 Leicester - Loughborough bus service runs regularly through the village.

Train - Barrow is on the Ivanhoe line with trains calling at Leicester, Syston, Sileby, Barrow and Loughborough, Monday to Saturday. Main line connections at Leicester and Loughborough.

Car - The village lies 3 miles SE of Loughborough.

Boat - Barrow is on the Grand Union Canal.

An additional trail leaflet for children is available from the Paper Shop, the Post Office and the Library.



This guide has been created with the help and sponsorship of

The people of Barrow-upon-Soar
&
Barrow Community Association




Project Supported by
rural action
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT


Sculptures created by students of
Loughborough College of Art & Design.



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Illustrations by Chris Bates
Produced by mulberry square ltd




Welcome to the Barrow-upon-Soar Fossil Trail. Start at the Three Crowns corner and go along North Street.  On the opposite side of the road, the Hammer and Pincers pub is easy to date - 1753, but then it was the Blacksmith's Arms and a village market was held on the common land outside the pub.

Go on to the Library, which houses a large Parish map of 1883. 

Trilobites - look like large woodlice with their upper surface made of strong, chitinous armour separated into many segments. It is this hard case which is usually found as a fossil. Their closest living relative is the Horseshoe crab and like it the trilobites seem to have been bottom-dwellers, crawling, swimming or lying half-buried on the beds of shallow seas. They lived, mainly, between about 260 and 570 million years ago. There are no trilobites found in the Barrow rocks.


Cross North Street at the Methodist Church.  Opposite Thirlmere Road, the handsome building faced with honey-coloured stone dates from 1825 and was originally **The Old Women's Hospital**. Notice the symmetrical design with a central gabled feature, buttressed end gables and the octagonal chimneys. Built as almshouses with spare money from Humphrey Babington's charity (see Old Men's Hospital), they are now flats run by Charnwood Borough Council.

Turn right down the side of the Trap public house into Breadcroft Lane. 

Ammonites - look like tightly-coiled, flattened, snail-shells, but in fact, were relatives of squids, cuttlefish and octupi. Their thin bodies were coiled inside the shell with the head and tentacles trailing outside as they swam backwards in shallow, warm seas. Ammonite fossils are common in the Barrow limestone and lived about 180 to 200 million years ago.



The original meaning of the "Trap" was a snare to part working men from their wages. Also called at one time the Limekiln, it was a popular pub with employees of Barrow's lime works. In the last century this was the major local industry and at its peak 1,800 tons of lime per week were despatched by rail.

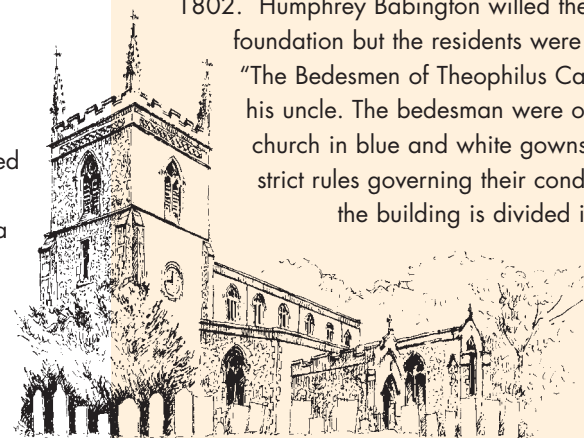
Pass Bryan Close and turn first right down the footpath. At the end of the path (known locally as a jitty) the building on your right, now a private house, was until recently St Albans Catholic Church. Irish Navvies working on the railway helped to build it in 1839. 

Jurassic amber - There are two fossils represented here - the dragonfly and the amber. Dragonflies evolved about 300 million years ago. The largest insect ever found is a dragonfly with a wingspan of 70cms (about 28 ins). It was found in a layer of coal showing that it lived when the coal was formed.

Straight on at the end of the jitty into Church Street.


Holy Trinity Church was built at the highest point of the village. Although there is a record of a church on this site as early as the 12th century, much of its exterior is relatively modern - the tower was completely rebuilt in the 19th century when it fell down during restoration work.

The churchyard is also of interest, particularly in spring and early summer. The grounds surrounding churches are some of the very few remaining areas of long-established, largely undisturbed grassland. Here two designated nature conservation sites are left unmown until the end of June to emulate a traditional haymaking regime. Celandines start the flowering season in March and later meadow saxifrage, an increasing rarity in the countryside, is a spectacular sight. A large colony of mining bees, which emerge in April making small molehills an inch or two high, thrive in the sandy soil.



Across from the church your eye will be caught by a small octagonal building, known as **the Roundhouse**. Originally the village lock up, its date is above the door. Subsequently it was used to house the village funeral bier and at another time served as Barrow's fire station. In 1996 Barrow Community Association renovated the building. It houses a Village Map made by members of the community to celebrate life in the village and has occasional displays in the summer season. Admission if free.

Immediately to the left of the Roundhouse is the **Old Forge**. Jack Turlington was the last smith, retiring in the 1950s. Through the large double doors was the shoeing parlour.

On the other side of Beveridge Street the imposing building was the **Old Men's Hospital**,  originally a single story granite building established as an almshouse in 1694. A second storey was added in 1802. Humphrey Babington willed the money for the foundation but the residents were known as "The Bedesmen of Theophilus Cave". Cave was his uncle. The bedesmen were obliged to attend church in blue and white gowns and there were strict rules governing their conduct. Nowadays the building is divided into flats and houses both men and women.

FOSSIL TRAIL

Turn into Beveridge Street.

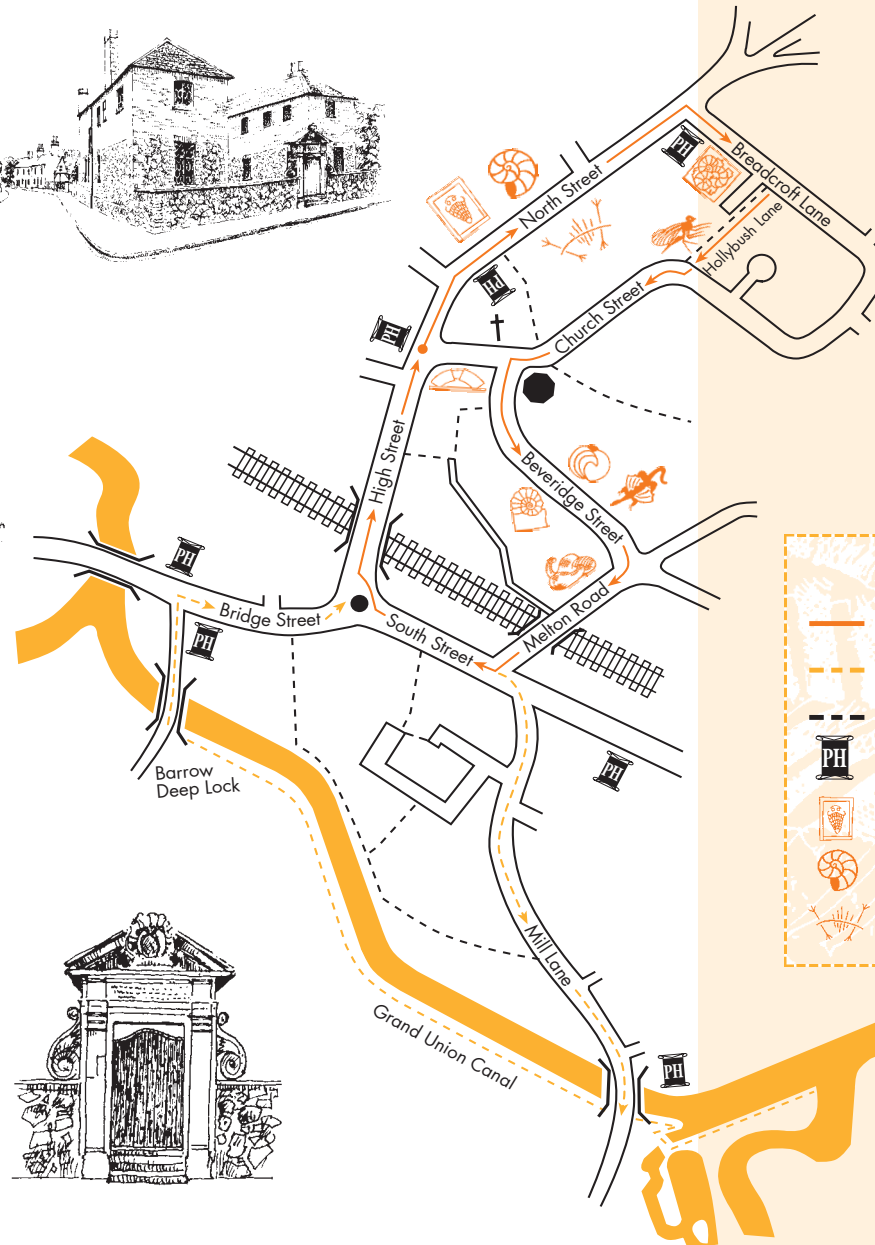
Historically this is the most important street in the village. It has a fascinating mix of cottages, grander houses and more modern buildings. It is worth taking your time here and reliving a bit of history. The brick lean-to on the large granite house at Number 35/37 housed the first Barrow Co-op store and in the early part of the century it was one of the largest shops in the village!



Further down on the other side of the road is a large residence called **Bishop Beveridge House**.





Its construction is a unique blend of building materials - look out for Mountsorrel granite, Barrow limestone and mortar, Swithland slate, red clay bricks and oak timber. Sixteenth century in origin, it has since undergone various changes and additions. Legend has it that there is a tunnel from the house to Holy Trinity Church but no trace of it has been found. William Beveridge is one of Barrow's most famous sons. Reputedly born in this house into a family of clergymen, he lived through the turbulent times of Cromwell and the English Civil War, rising to the position of bishop in 1704. On the left is Number 47, The Chestnuts, a late 17th century building which was later extended and modified. Originally named Home Farm and owned by the church, it was for many years the village surgery.



TRAIL KEY

	Main route		Three ammonites
	River route		Jurassic amber
	Jitty		Broken arc
	Public House		Fossil
	Trilobite		Trilobite II
	Shell forms		Kuehneusaurus
	Skeletal relief		Organic forms

Beveridge Street was Industry Street until the 1920s. This may have been on account of the many framework knitters who lived and worked here but could also have been named after the **House of Industry**, Barrow's Workhouse. Numbers 49 - 51 are all that is left of the more extensive complex of buildings where paupers were housed and employed until 1837.  The street opens out into Industry Square which was the site of the old village pond where horses were brought from the fields to be washed down at the end of the day.

Turn right past the War Memorial () into Melton Road and over the railway bridge. If you are continuing on the river walk, cross South Street and turn right down Mill Lane. ***



This part of the walk is unsuitable for wheelchairs.

River walk

*** Continue down Mill Lane, past the play area, as far as the Navigation Inn.

The name of the road is a clue to the existence of a mill on this site in past times. The mill owner's house and the workers' cottages remain. The Navigation Inn was built shortly after the opening of the canal in 1794, providing refreshment for the bargees and stabling for their horses.

It is worth detouring here for a few minutes, crossing the river bridge and taking the path to the left between the railings, to look at the sluices and the weir.

The River Soar extends its influence into the surrounding floodplain and ragged robin and lady's smock can still be seen growing in old meadows in May. July is the best time for riverside flowers, although there are few on the canalised sections of the Soar. Elsewhere yellow water lily, arrowhead and purple loosestrife can be seen.

Return to the bridge at the Navigation Inn and go down the steps to the towpath.

This pleasant walk brings you to Barrow Deep Lock (one of the deepest on the canal). Go over the canal bridge and down into the grassed area with seats. You will have a fine view of Barrow Bridge.

Cross Bridge Street and walk up the hill towards the roundabout. This is **Jerusalem Island**. *



If you wish to take the shorter route, turn right into South Street and you will come to the roundabout known as **Jerusalem Island**. *

The name Jerusalem is a mystery, but the origins of the Barrow sign are well documented. It shows a plesiosaur fossil, a famous discovery in a Barrow lime quarry in 1851. You can see the original in New Walk Museum, Leicester. It is affectionately known as the Barrow "kipper". The roundabout is planted and maintained by Barrow-upon- Soar Gardening Club to give all year round interest.

Plesiosaur - An extinct reptile that possibly lived rather like a seal in the warm seas that covered Barrow about 180 to 200 million years ago. It had a short body, a long neck and four strong flippers used to 'row' itself through the water. The legendary Loch Ness monster is usually shown as a plesiosaur. The Barrow limestone is famous for plesiosaur and ichthyosaur (a marine reptile that looked like a fish) fossils. Examples can be seen in Leicester New Walk Museum.

Turn right into High Street which will lead you back to the starting point. If you have enjoyed the trail, please come again or pass the guide on to a friend.

