

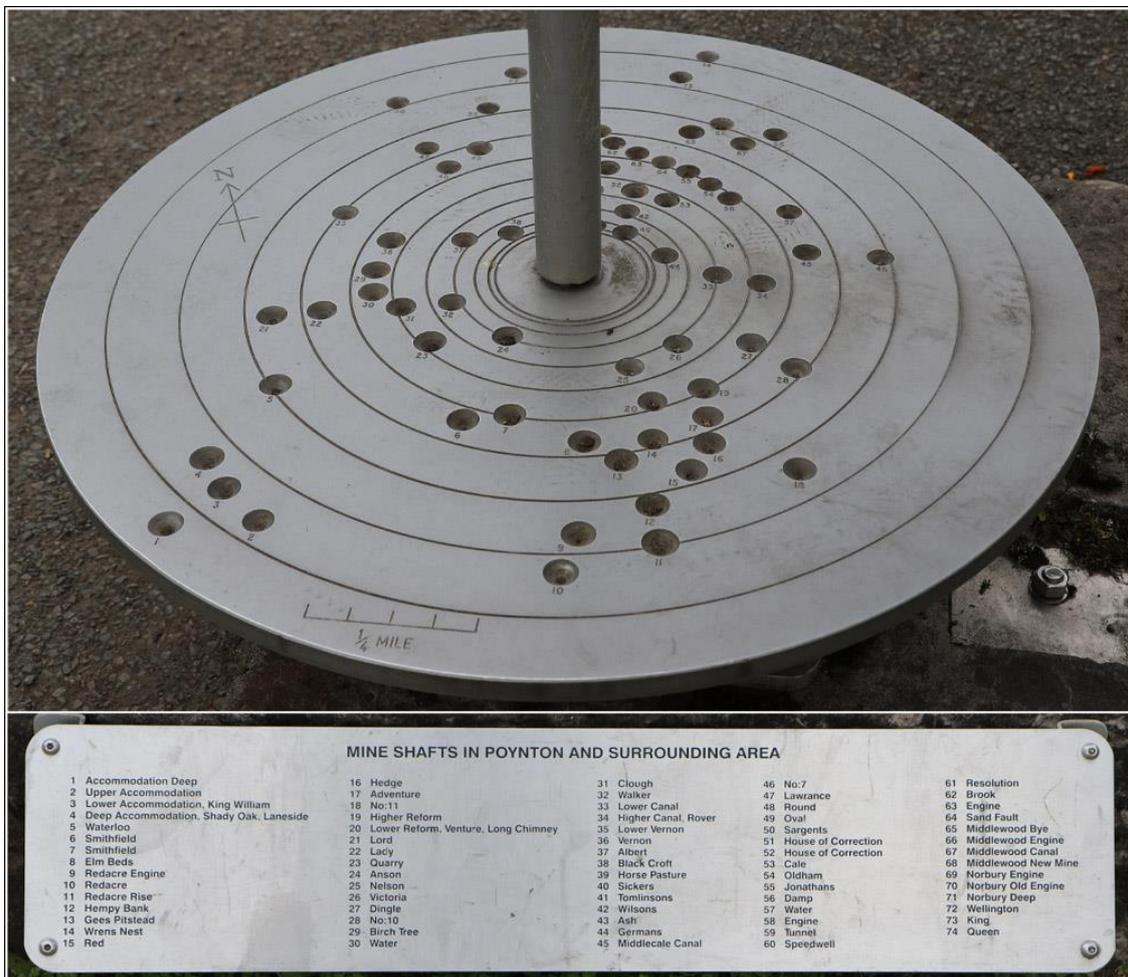
Poynton Metalwork

The summer stroll exploring Poynton has roused a lot of interest so it is perhaps worth looking at two of the features which makes the town centre distinctive – the stainless steel tiles set into the pavement in Park Lane and the four street signs on the main roads into the town centre symbolising the historic development of the area.

There are 50 stainless steel tiles set into the pavement on both sides of Park Lane, the main shopping street. They are all the same size with a stylised pattern suggesting layers of sedimentary rock with the name of each mine at the top. Short names such as 'Ash' are in large type; long names such as 'House of Correction' are in small type.



These names are only some of the Poynton mines; the more enthusiastic members who accompanied Neil to Lord Vernon's Wharf after the walk around the town centre saw more than 70 mines remembered on a memorial at the Nelson Pit Visitor Centre. However, they are a daily reminder to the people of Poynton of how their town developed.



The four street signs serve a very different purpose. They act as a welcome to the town on each of the four main roads leading into the centre but, more precisely, the mark the point where the “Shared Space” begins. Poynton is the site of a national experiment in traffic management by innovative road layout. Within the “shared space” zone all road users – motorists, cyclists and pedestrians – have an equal priority and respect each other’s usage. (Though a subversive rumour says that BMW drivers are exempt.)

The four signs are similar in appearance and each bears the message

Poynton
Shared Space Village.
Give Way To All

But each sign shows a different aspect of its history.



(Click on each picture for a better view of the design)

Starting with the road coming in from the East (High Lane and Higher Poynton) this sign shows a colliery winding gear. Very appropriate since this is the road out to the site of the major coal mines.

The sign on the road from Macclesfield in the South shows two stylised ears of corn, an acknowledgement of Poynton’s agricultural base.

The road from Woodford in the West has an aircraft propellor, marking the town’s links with the aircraft factory at Woodford where Lancaster bombers were assembled.

Finally the road from the North (Hazel Grove) has a sculpture rather similar to the colliery winding gear. Similar but not the same. What is it? Local residents didn’t know. We asked at the council offices but they didn’t know either (though they were rather ashamed to admit this.) They promised to find out but it took so long we could not wait anymore.

Instead we looked at the history and came to the conclusion that it represented the stationary engines produced by Mirrlees. The wheel was a cog wheel and the long chain was the drive chain. We could be wrong and it is a bit of a stretch to claim Mirrlees as part of Poynton’s history but it does have a link through the Anson Museum. Does anyone have any better ideas?

But shame on the town council for endorsing it in the first place when Poynton has two other claims to fame – the origin of Pickfords and the Bukta sportswear factory. Regrettably neither are still in Poynton but then nor is Woodford Aerodrome or any remaining coal mines.