

## Holcombe Moor Natural Environment

On the eastern boundary of the Training Area lies Saplin Wood, one of Bury's largest areas of ancient semi-natural woodland. Woodland has been recorded on this site for at least 400 years and in addition to its historical value, Saplin Wood provides a valuable natural habitat for Ring Ouzel, Golden Plover, Skylark and Song Thrush, along with a carpet of bluebells during Spring. A walk along Moor Bottom Road reveals more ornithological delights, with Little Owl, Skylark, Wheatear and Meadow Pipit for company. A hovering Kestrel may also demonstrate its hunting skills. Deer can also be seen on the moor. A sighting of these beautiful serene creatures transforms a walk into something very special.

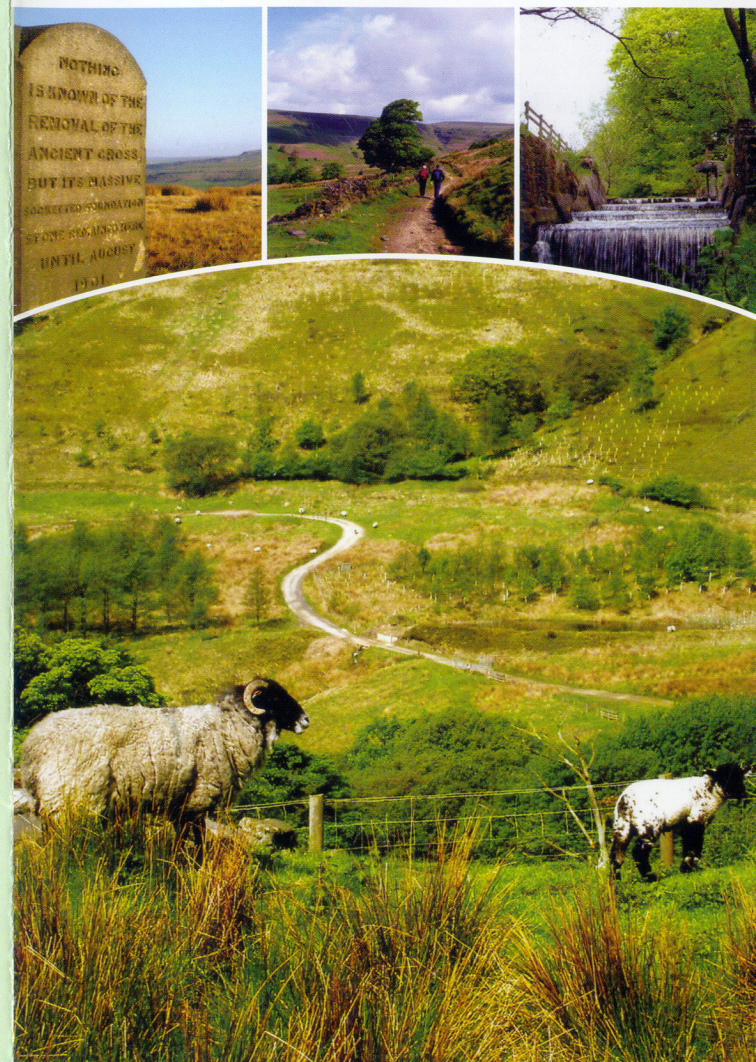


The Holcombe Moor Heritage Group is currently researching the agricultural and industrial remains on the Training Area. A series of proposed Information Points will refer to the historic hotspots unearthed by the group.



Whilst the military use this land for training, public access is permitted on the public rights of way which cross the Training Area. Some routes to the north of the site are closed for safety reasons when the range is 'live' and in use. Routes which are affected by live firing are open and safe to use when the red flags are not flying. Firing times are published in advance and the Training Area guard room can be contacted for information on a 24 hour telephone service **01204 882 991**.

## Holcombe Moor





# Holcombe Moor Training Area

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Holcombe Moor Heritage Group was established in 2005 to investigate the Archaeology and Historic Environment of Holcombe Moor Training Area. Group membership includes local residents, members of local civic and historical societies, the Scouts, MOD employees and local authority staff. The Heritage Group is associated with the Conservation Group of the Holcombe Moor Training Area.

Holcombe Moor Training area is located in the Red Brook and Holcombe Brook Valley. It occupies a broad horseshoe shape of moorland which flanks the head of the valley. It is made up of a series of slopes: Quarlton Heights in the west, Harcles and White Hill in the east and Bull Hill in the north. Alden Ratchers is an incised valley on the north west of the moor. Beyond that is a higher wet plateau known as Wet Moss. The moorland is open and bleak, dominated by treeless expanses of acid grassland, wet plateau and flushes. The higher areas provide good views of the surrounding valleys. In the winter the acid grassland gives the moor a variety of rust colours with dark green areas in the wet flushes, rises and blanket bogs.

The area has a long tradition of being used for military training. During the Crimean War, cavalry men were trained here and in the 1860's a small rifle range was constructed for the use of the Lancashire Volunteers. In 1912, just before the Great War, the war Office

acquired 303 hectares (748 acres) of land including a number of farms in the valley. Several of these farm buildings may have been built in the 16th century and continued to be occupied into the 20th century. Once they were abandoned they quickly fell into disrepair. Fortunately much of the landscape around the farms has remained unspoiled.

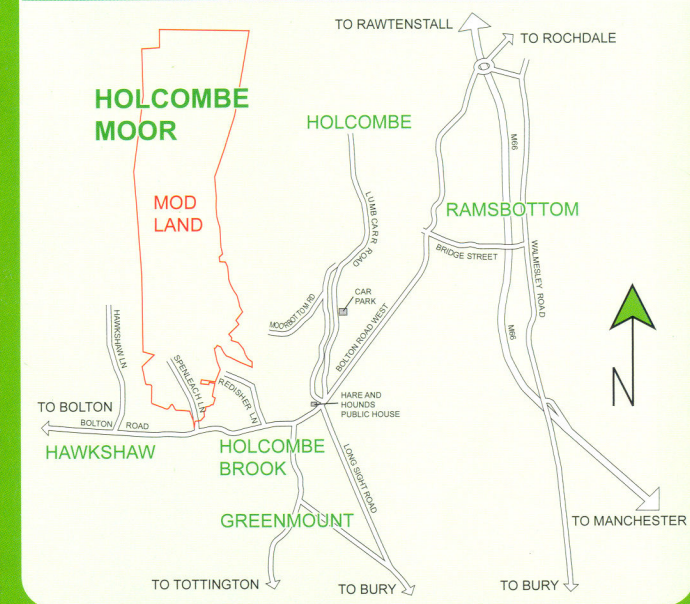
Recently the MOD commissioned an archaeological survey of the Training Area. This survey has revealed signs of an early farming landscape. In the Medieval Period ridge and furrow strips were created by the repeated use of ox drawn ploughs across large open fields. Later, field boundaries were constructed by erecting earth banks, dry stone walls and flagstone walls. This distinctive type of walling is thought to be ancient as there are mature trees growing through some of the upright flags. It is possible that the slabs were waste offcuts taken from the quarries close to the training area.

Cinder Hill, in the centre of the training area, may have originally been an early metal working site, although little evidence has been found. However records provide accounts of a former textile mill complex complete with mill ponds, leats and engine houses. The mill was situated some way from the road network and was abandoned in the late 19th century. However surviving earthworks are a vivid reminder of the intense activity there was in this now peaceful location.

# Holcombe Moor

Holcombe Moor includes both cultivated and wild moorland which supports a large species of birds and wildlife. There is an area of oak woodland which is at least 400 years old, and interesting examples of geological formations.

## HOW TO GET THERE



You can access the moorland from the Moor Bottom Road, Redisher Lane via Redisher Wood, Spenleach Lane and Hawkshaw Lane. If travelling by car, parking is only permitted on the car park off Lumb Carr Road and use the footpath opposite towards Peel Monument.

Buses 273, 472, 474, 480, 481 and others stop outside the Hare and Hounds Public House on Bolton Road West.