

Origin

Beating the Bounds is an ancient custom from Anglo Saxon times. During the ritual, a group of prominent elders would walk the geographical boundary of their locality, to impress a memory on future generations.

Before people could read, just about every town and parish carried out its own annual ceremony of 'Beating the Bounds'.

The elders, armed with birch twigs, would head a crowd of young people around the boundary, beating the stones with their sticks (sometimes beating the youngsters as well, to further impress their memories!).

Today, with maps and other measures, it might seem somewhat barbaric, but in prior times it was necessary to know the Parish in which you resided. It was important to know when you left your area, to know to whom to pay taxes and even to know where you would be entitled to be buried! For landowners, it was also very useful to avoid disputes.

Oldham's Shaw and Crompton Parish Council revived Beating the Bounds at the turn of the present century, albeit only on a seven-year basis.



'Keeping tradition alive'

Itinerary for the day

Approximate times of arrival	Location	Main road crossing	Checks	Time (minutes)
09:30	Leave Dunwood Park		Steward	
09:45	Jubilee	C	Marshal	15
10:45	Moorcock Fingerpost			60
12:00	King's Arms, Grains Bar – rest break	C	Marshal	75
12:15	Depart King's Arms, Grains Bar	C	Marshal	15
12:35	Besom Hill reservoir			20
13:00	Lilac Mill			25
13:30	St. Joseph's – rest break	C	Marshal	30
13:50	Depart St. Joseph's			20
14:00	Luzley Brook	C	Marshal	10
14:30	Puckersley Inn – rest break			30
15:00	Depart Puckersley Inn	C	Marshal	30
15:50	Pit Lane / Rochdale Road	C	Marshal	50
16:35	Ellenroad (Cedar Lane)	C	Marshal	45
17:30	End Dunwood Park		Steward	55

* Steward (checks people in/out) ; Marshal (checks people across roads)
C = Main road crossing