

Low Moor Walk – Number 3



The Fountain Pool in Harold Park early 1900's

Hill Top and Harold Park

Revised edition 2016

Low Moor House – Hird Road – the Dudley – Netherlands Avenue – footpath to Hill Top – Harold Park – Union Road – Park Road – Common Road – Huddersfield Road – Besham Grove – Netherlands Avenue

Starting point: War memorial at the junction of Cleckheaton Road, Common Road and Netherlands Avenue, Low Moor, Bradford. BD12 0TW

Buses: 268 goes down Cleckheaton Road. Or 363, 686, 687 and 688 and walk down Netherlands Avenue from Huddersfield Road. Parking: Common Road

Distance: Two and a half miles. Allow 1 hour 15 minutes

Surface: Muddy on some footpaths.

From the war memorial walk up Netherlands Avenue (the wide road to the left of Aldersgate Methodist Church) **for a short distance until you arrive at Low Moor House on your right.** The cottages in the yard are the oldest part, late 18th century. The house was considerably extended in 1812 by the Low Moor Company and some of the partners including Christopher Holdsworth Dawson and Henry Wickham Hird lived here. The house is now sublet. In recent years part of it has served as a doctors' surgery and a vet's.

Retrace your steps and turn first left on the road by the church car park. (This is Hird Road named for the above family).

Continue along Hird Road as far as the large stone building on your left. This is now called Dallas House, and is the headquarters of a long-established insurance group, T L Dallas. It was originally known as Carter Mill, being built by Mr Woodhouse Carter in 1912 and producing silk until 1965. This area of Low Moor is called Pye Nook. It's sometimes called Pyrah Nook after the family who lived here for many years. There was once a public well here which is now incorporated into the garden of Woodleigh, on Cleckheaton Road.

Before the mill turn left up the short wide road and at the top right continue along the narrow footpath for a short distance. Go through the opening on your left and follow this path. On your left is the substantial wall which formed the boundary between the gardens of Low Moor House and the now demolished Odsal House. The latter was situated at the far end of the playing fields and was occupied in the mid 1800's by Charles Hardy of the Low Moor Company. Later it became a private girls' school run by the Misses Sargent. Afterwards it was a school for the blind and later still a school for the deaf. This particular footpath was known as "The Dudley" and is an ancient right of way to Wibsey.

When you emerge into Huddersfield Road turn left and cross both carriageways by the pelican crossings. The road, in its original form, was constructed in 1837 and the stretch between Odsal and the Ironworks completed the Bradford to Brighouse turnpike. Previously the route had been a very circuitous one winding around Odsal and the lower parts of Low Moor before emerging at Old Storr Hill in Wyke.

Turn left and immediately turn right into the upper part of Netherlands Avenue. Cross over at the traffic island a short way up the road. Go up the slope towards Chellow Heights School but take the footpath to the right of the gateway. The next stretch may be muddy. **Follow the path through the metal stile and stop just past the clump of trees on your left where the houses end.** This is one of the best views of the area and beyond.

The panorama extends from Tong Street on your left to Shelf on your right and includes views of Emley Moor transmitter, Castle Hill at Almondbury, the Derbyshire hills and the mast at Holme Moss. On a clear day you can see the top part of the Wainhouse Tower at Halifax.

You are now in the Hill Top area of Low Moor. It was extensively redeveloped in the 1970s but many older people still fondly remember the varied streets of 19th century back-to-back houses, the low cottages, the small shops, the pubs, Oxley Place Methodist Church, the former School Street Methodist chapel and the Victoria textile mills.

Continue straight ahead on the undefined footpath parallel with Manor Row. At the end of the grass join the road and at the junction, turn left down Union Road. The bungalows on your right were built on the site of the Sargent Dam which served Victoria Mills in the area over to your left.

Turn first right into Park Terrace and at Park Road turn right. The low building at the top side of the houses just below the park gates used to be the Park Shop and sold sweets, ice creams and home-made "penny" lollies. There were boat swings in the garden to the side.

Turn left into Harold Park. (There is a separate walk around the park produced by Bradford Council: see note at the end of the walk) Notice the iron gate posts – no doubt manufactured at the iron works. Now only two gate posts remain, but there were originally three. There was a double gate and a single narrower gate.

Just inside the park turn left and then turn right to follow the short path by the side of the lake. You will often find fishermen here, or families feeding the ducks. Unlike many other park lakes it is very deep in places as it was constructed on the site of a quarry.

Re-join the main path and have a look at the memorial to Harold Gathorne Hardy, the man after whom the park is named. He was the youngest son of the Earl of Cranbrook, and grandson of John Hardy one of the original partners in the Low Moor Company. Although he was only 32 years old when he died in 1881, he was well regarded in the area as the manager of the Low Moor Company. He had been the first chairman of the Enclosure Commissioners whose tasks had included the laying out and surfacing of new roads in Low Moor and Wibsey.

Older people will remember the days of rowing boats on the lake and the boathouse and small jetty which stood just to your left.

Follow the main path to the left as far as the gates in Cemetery Road but remain inside the park and turn right to follow the path parallel with the boundary wall, to the top end of the park.

The picture on the front of this leaflet shows the Fountain Pool in this area of the park in the early 1900's, Later the bushes were removed and it was converted into a paddling pool which itself has been filled in and grassed over.

Follow the path round to the right where you will come to the present bowling green. Continue straight on until you come to the Sensory Garden. This was created in 2011 by the Friends of Harold Park who work hard to maintain it. The park has won a Green Flag Award on more than one occasion.

Leave the garden and turn left, then right to follow the path around the small lake. It is known as the Jug Dam because of its shape.

Follow the path round with the dam on your right. On your left you will see the rose garden. This was the site of the original bowling green. Have a look at the sun dial plinth, known as the Milligan memorial. This was erected to the memory of Frank W Milligan of Royds Hall, a Yorkshire county cricketer who died in active army service in the Boer War. On the back of the memorial is another inscription to other soldiers who fell in the Boer War.

Retrace your steps back uphill to the area by the Jug Dam and follow the path which will eventually take you into Park Road. Turn left up Park Road. Opposite number 102 have a look at Horsfall Playing Fields through the gateway. They were opened in 1931 and named after Alderman S Horsfall JP. Since then they have provided recreational facilities for thousands of local people as well as a venue for major athletic events. For several years it has also been the home ground for Bradford Park Avenue football team.

The area between here and Halifax Road was called Hill Stones. In the days of the Low Moor Company the working horses were driven up here on an evening to graze.

Walk back down the road but branch off left into Union Road. A handful of older houses on your left escaped the mass demolition of the 1970s and provides the area with character.

The land behind the houses, on which the St Abbs housing estate now stands, was known as the Red Hills as it was composed of red shale.

After number 44, Brunswick Cottage, look out for the stone gateway. It bears the reference JR 1698 and is believed to have been incorporated there from the long-gone Fiddler Hill Farm, built by John Rookes. Brunswick House now occupies the site. The land behind the houses was known as the Black Hills, another reference to the spoil heaps of the Low Moor Co.

Continue a little way down Union Road and turn right on Manor Row. The Wesleyan Reform chapel was on this corner, where the new houses stand. All that is left are the boundary walls. It was erected in 1928 and stood on an area of ground known as the Dolly Well. Its predecessor stood a few hundred yards away off Manor Row. It was built of corrugated metal and hence was known as "t'Tin Chapel".

Turn left down Park Road and at the bottom, left into Common Road. The opposite side of the road was part of Low Moor Common. In the 1800s the Common was much more extensive and was gradually reduced in size. Prior to the construction of Delf Hill School in 1969, (which has since been demolished) there were hen runs and animal pens here.

Continue along the road. Hill Top C E Primary School and Nursery is situated near the bottom of Common Road on your left. It was built in 1926 to replace the original school damaged by fire. Many older people remember the two Miss Hirst sisters who ran the school in the 1940s and 1950s.

Across the road, the detached stone building, with the 1891 date stone on it, was once Low Moor police station.

Turn left into Huddersfield Road. The building on the opposite side of the road was the Low Moor Picture House.

Walk up the road towards the shops. The Victoria Inn stood on the frontage until the 1970s. Oxley Place Methodist Church stood near the bottom of School Street in the area now occupied by the car park behind the Drop Kick

pub. (The replacement church is called Aldersgate Methodist Church and stands opposite the war memorial where you commenced the walk.)

Cross the road via the pelican crossing outside the shops and continue left up Huddersfield Road. The British Queen public house to your right is all that now remains of the frontage of the Old Hill Top area. Netherfield House on the opposite side of the road is now a vet's but used to be the Low Moor telephone exchange.

Watch out for a snicket on your right just after the high privet hedge and go down between the wall and hedge and follow it round to the right. Just after the bollard turn left into Hill Top Fold and at the end turn left again into Besha Avenue. These bungalows were built just after WW2 by a group of ex-servicemen. "Besha" stands for Bradford Ex-Servicemen's Housing Association .

At the top of Besha Avenue go up the snicket to the right, which brings you out into Netherlands Avenue. Turn right and you are soon back at the start of the walk.

You can download a walk around Harold Park produced by the Council from the website <http://www.bradforddistrictparks.org>

Click on "Parks" and then select "Harold Park".

You can download further copies of this leaflet from our website www.lmlhg.org.uk which also provides links to the late John Nicoll's photographs of Low Moor.

You may also be interested in our South Bradford Local History Alliance website www.sblha.com which contains parish and other local records and links to related websites.

Low Moor Local History Group meets on the first Friday of each month (except August) at 2.30pm at Aldersgate Methodist Church which is opposite the war memorial which you have passed on this walk. Visitors and new members are welcome.

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This leaflet was originally sponsored by Low Moor Urban Village. There are four other walks in this series.

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