

Low Moor Walks – Number 4



A view of Hill Top in the early 1900s from the field above the dam

Moor Top and Royds Hall

Revised edition 2016

Flywheel – Abb Scott Lane – Cemetery Road – Moor Top Road – Woodside – Royds Hall Lane – Royds Hall dam – Park Bottom – St Mark's Church

Starting point: Fly wheel New Works Rd BD12 0UD

Buses: 363, 686, 687 and 688

Parking : New Works Road.

Distance : 2 miles. Allow around 1 and quarter hours

Surface : Muddy in places Stiles : Two gap stiles on the Royds Hall dam stretch

Walk up New Works Road and look at the flywheel near the top on the right.

It is a 30.5 ton, 16 inch flywheel which was once part of the Rolling Mill at the Low Moor Iron Works.

Walk to the top and turn right. Cross Huddersfield Road by the pelican crossing.

The Health Centre in front of you opened at the end of 2005. For many years the disused concrete-built coal staites were a familiar sight in this area with the phrase "Low Moor Coal Co, industrial and domestic". They held coal brought up by locomotive from the various pits in the area. A steam locomotive used to cross Huddersfield

Road near this point. There was a group of houses called Mather's Buildings in this area which was also known as the Puncheon Lump. (Puncheons were short wooden pit props)

Turn left and then right into Abb Scott Lane and look at the buildings on the other side. They once formed an important part of the Low Moor Company's activities. They housed the wood yard and the wright's "shop" where repairs were done to the Company's equipment.

Cross over Abb Scott Lane. (The origin of the name is unknown but there was an old farm at the other end of the lane near Halifax Road called Abb Scott Farm.)

The three cottages which stand back from the road (the first one now a kennels) were known as Carter Fold. They took their name from a family who once lived here, two brothers and their father, who were managers of the wood yard.

Delf Hill Middle School, now demolished, was situated on the opposite side of the road. (The spelling is correct – both "Delph" and "Delf" have been used over the years.) This area was formerly part of the extensive Common and John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, preached here in 1747. He "regularised" the small group of local worshippers into a formal society. However, it would be over sixty years before the first purpose-built Methodist Church was erected in Low Moor off Cleckheaton Road.

The large 1950s building on your left is the telephone exchange. A mineral line which came through the fields from Royds Hall dam to the coal staites created the angle of the wall on the left hand perimeter of the telephone exchange yard.

The next block of buildings contains Moorside Farm (although no longer a farm), Mineral Cottage and Mineral House, the latter being built by the Low Moor Company for their Mining Engineers.

Continue up the road. Until recently a low cottage called School Fold, stood behind the shrubbery on the

left. In the late 1700s it served as a day school run by the Low Moor Company.

Look across the road to the junction with Common Road. The large house was built for Mr Rendell, the founder of Victoria Mills, and later occupied by Alfred E Briggs (see below) and is divided into two dwellings; West House and the modestly named West Cottage!

Continue up the road. The group of stone-built bungalows on your left are the Alfred E Briggs almshouses which were built in 1956. The houses are managed by a locally- run trust.

Cross over Abb Scott Lane and walk up Cemetery Road for a short way until you reach the gates of Harold Park on your right. For a guide to the park see walk no 3. Ahead on your left is the bottom entrance to North Bierley Cemetery which was opened in 1903.

Turn left into Moor Top Road and have a look at some of the attractive single-storey cottages which date back to the early 1800s.

The next section of the walk involves a slight climb, two walk-through stiles and possibly muddy footpaths. If you are running out of time or energy just retrace your steps down Abb Scott Lane. However, if you do, you may still like to wander through St Mark's graveyard. See the instructions near the end of this leaflet.

Cross Abb Scott Lane and turn left and then right by the bollards along the back lane marked "Except for access". You are now at the bottom end of Woodside Estate, one of the large council housing developments of the 1950s. There are still many people around who remember the various farms and fields swallowed up by the project. In recent years several blocks of flats have been demolished.

When the back lane meets the surfaced road turn left with fencing on your left and houses on your right. Follow the road round ignoring a gap stile to the left and in about a quarter of a mile (opposite nos. 102 and 104) turn left up the surfaced track to

Royds Hall. (Royds Hall Lane is a private road, but a public footpath) Keep a watch out for vehicles.

At the top, pause to look at the buildings at the far side of the (private) farm yard. At the extreme right the small, two storied building with steps up to a small door on the first floor was formerly used at the Court Leet. The Lord of the Manor would adjudicate on petitions brought to him by tenants. Later the Chapel House Inn on Park House Road was used as the courthouse. (See walk No 2)

Turn left. This is Royds Hall Farm. Before the Low Moor Company became Lords of the Manor in 1789 the Home Farm was down at Horse Close Cottages (see later). This house was built in the late 1800's. The long low building on your right is the rear of the stables for the hall itself. When Edward Rookes Leedes became bankrupt in 1781 he had to sell a stud of race horses. He also owned North Milford Hall near Tadcaster where his stud was located, but of some of them may have been stabled here.

There has been a house on this site since at least the 1300s and for many years it was the home of the Rookes family. The present stone-built hall dates from the mid 1600s but inside there is evidence of a wooden structure. After the death of Edward Rookes Leedes in 1785 it became the home of the Rev Joseph Dawson, one of the partners of the newly formed Low Moor Company. Until recently the hall was occupied for about thirty years by Sir Ernest Hall, a notable concert pianist and owner of Dean Clough Mills in Halifax. However, it is now in new ownership. Unfortunately, Royds Hall cannot be viewed at close quarters as it is surrounded by walls and trees.

Please respect the privacy of the owners.

Note the two cottages on your left **and continue along Royds Hall Lane for a short distance.** There is a splendid panorama stretching from Buttershaw on your left and round to East Bierley and the M606 and beyond on your right. **When you reach the area with a gate at both sides of the track** have a look at the view from

the right-hand gateway. From here you can see the moors beyond Huddersfield and the Derbyshire Hills

We go back into Low Moor now, but if you were to follow Royds Hall Lane from here you would arrive in the woods near Judy Bridge in about a half a mile or so. On the right you would pass the lane to Horse Close Cottages, once the Home Farm of the Royds Hall Estate. In the late 1890s the local poetess Charlotte Oates named the cottage where she lived Daisy Cottage and some local people still call them Daisy Cottages. To find out more about walks in the woods look at the Friends of Judy Woods website www.judywoods.org.uk.

Go through the walk-through stile on the opposite side of the lane and follow the track down the field past Royds Hall Dam. (Park Dam on OS Maps) It was built in 1804 as a reservoir for the Low Moor Iron Works. This area was called the Holling Park and there was formerly a building used as a kennels for the Rookes' hunting dogs near the wall on your left. Look out for a variety of water birds: swans, Canada geese, herring gulls, grebes, coots and herons. The photograph at the front of this leaflet was taken from near here.

Follow the track down to the gate and walk through the gap stile. This area is known as Park Bottom. Notice the dates(1908) as you pass through the gateposts. The small house on your right served as the gatehouse for the Royds Hall estate. The house behind it was built for one of the Low Moor Company managers and is called Park Nook. The houses on your left were built on the site of the old St Mark's vicarage whilst the new houses on your right replaced a more modern vicarage.

Cross Woodside Road and then Huddersfield Road and walk along the frontage of the now closed St Mark's church. There is no Right of Way through the graveyard, but you may wish to have a look at the monuments. The grave of William North (also known as "Lord" or Bill North) is here. To find it locate the row of large trees in the middle of the graveyard to your right. Count four trees up from the wall at the bottom and the

grave is about three graves in towards the church. Please be careful if the graves are overgrown. Bill North was the step son of Judy North after whom Judy Woods are named. He was a character in his own right. He was a gardener and lived down Storr Hill and was famous for his tame "shepsters" (starlings) and his support of the Chartist movement. Details of the church are on the www.sblha.com website.

Leave the graveyard by the same gate and turn right passing the Harold Club. It was built in 1883 and was named after Harold Gathorne Hardy, a son of Lord Cranbrook, and a descendant of one of the original partners of the Low Moor Company. This organisation is a private club which welcomes new members. The club has its own war memorial in the car park.

Turn right into New Works Road to complete the walk.

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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