

## Roots and Routes Walk 2 - Ovenden Way to Lee Mount via Old Lane

As you leave OSCA turn right on to Cousin Lane and cross the road. At the roundabout, turn left by St Malachy's Church down Nursery Lane. Turn right on Vegal Crescent designed and built by Laura Annie Willson. Laura Annie Willson was an English engineer and the first female member of the Federation of House Builders. After the war she was a founder member of the Women's Engineering Society and decided something needed to be done about the poor housing that was available for working people, so she designed and built her own houses. Laurel Crescent and Vegal Avenue being 2 of her housing projects. When you reach the end, turn left and continue walking down Ovenden Way.

One of Ovenden Way's most famous residents was Champion Jack Dupree. William Thomas "Champion Jack" Dupree was a New Orleans Blues and Boogie-woogie pianist and singer whose nickname was derived from his early career as a boxer. He began a life of travelling, living in Chicago and Indianapolis and Detroit where he worked as a cook. The boxer Joe Louis encouraged him to become a boxer and he fought 107 bouts, winning Golden Gloves and earning the nickname Champion Jack. He moved to Europe in 1960, living in Switzerland, Denmark, Germany and Sweden before coming to England. In the 1970s, he lived at Ovenden Way.

At the bottom of Ovenden Way, turn left and you are at Bank Top. Continue walking and cross the road and walk towards the start of Old Lane. Keep your look out as it is a sharp right turn just before a row of shops. As you walk down Old Lane and go over the railway bridge, heading towards the crossroads further on, you need to look down to your right and try to imagine that there once stood Ovenden Railway Station.

Ovenden railway station was on the Halifax and Ovenden Junction Railway and closed in 1955. Because of the local area at Ovenden the rail companies didn't think it was important to have a nice station, so it was built of timber although there is still the station house there.

Just along the line from Ovenden Station was Lee Bank Tunnel. Lee Bank Tunnel was a railway tunnel on the Halifax to Queensbury section of the Queensbury lines south of Ovenden. It was 267 yards (244 m) long and was very close to Woodside Viaduct. Woodside Viaduct was a railway bridge that had six arches and was situated between Woodside (Old Lane) Tunnel and Lee Bank Tunnel. The bridge carried the Queensbury to Halifax section of the Queensbury lines. The viaduct was demolished to make room for the dual carriageway on the A629 road, the main road between Halifax and Keighley. Woodside (Old Lane) Tunnel, the southern portal of Lee Bank tunnel was infilled when the main Keighley road was doubled to a dual carriageway, the northern portal was bricked up.

When you come to the crossroads, turn right over the railway bridge up Broad Tree Road and when you reach the main road, turn left and you are at the bottom of Ovenden Way. At the bottom, to the left, the row of shops was built close to the site of the Pioneer Cinema (later the Ritz), which closed in 1963 after a fire. Follow the road as it curves to the right on Wheatley Lane. At the top of Wheatley Lane, turn right on to Wheatley Road and continue forward to Shroggs Park.

On 22nd November 1872, Colonel Edward Akroyd, promised to build Shrogg's Park in Halifax. The site was a rough, irregular piece of waste land, entirely barren at one end and at the other, thickly covered with dwarf oak scrub, from which the Park gained its name and pieces of rock. His plans almost didn't happen when the Midland Railway planned to build a line through part of what is now the Park. Colonel Akroyd raised the issue in the House of Commons, explaining his intention to make a place for cricket, bowls, croquet, archery and other games; the railway scheme was turned down.

Leave the park at the Shroggs Road side and walk down the path. There are a set of steps to the left as you leave the park. Go down these steps and turn left. This will take you past 'Shroggs Tip' on your right.

You will eventually come to the roundabout with B&Q to your right. Now you have two choices to finish the walk

- a) Turn right and go under the flyover towards Dean Clough
- b) Turn left and go up the hill towards the bottom of Ovenden Way