

Roots and Routes Walk 4 – Cousin Lane to Illingworth via Keighley Road (extended walk)

As you leave OSCA turn right on to Cousin Lane and when you reach St Malachy's Church on the left, walk down Nursery Lane and 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. 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. Keep walking and you will pass the site of the Ovenden Police Station and Ovenden Hall on your left. The present Hall was built by Joseph Fourness in 1662 on the site of an earlier house. In 1713 his Grandson, Captain John Furness, an army Captain and fought with the Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim owned the Hall. That year he married Frances Oates. Captain Furness died at Ovenden Hall in November 1717 and was buried in Halifax Parish Church, now the Minster. At 28 Frances became a widow but the use of Ovenden Hall for life and beyond as Frances is said to haunt the Hall. In 1944, it became a home for the elderly and in 1954 Ovenden Hall was made a Grade II listed building. It was later used by Halifax Social Services, Fostering Service.

Continue on Ovenden Road and you will see the Noah's Ark Centre on the right. This was originally opened as a Beer House, a Pub that was only allowed to sell beer and not wines or spirits. In the 1830s, with the Beer Houses Act, they were intended to divert the poor from gin. Noah's Ark was the last one to be opened in Halifax and later turned into a coaching inn before becoming a Webster's pub in 1860. This business was started by Samuel Webster in 1838 at Fountain Head, Ovenden Wood. Their first public house was the Lane Ends, Wheatley. In 1999, Noah's Ark closed as a pub and re-opened as a voluntary-sector provider of therapeutic services.

As the road bends to the left Shay Lane is on your right. On the corner where Ron Lee Motors now stands was Bethel Methodist Church built in 1859. On the opposite corner, to your left, is The Ovenden Private Day Nursery, formerly The Ovenden Cross, another Samuel Webster's Pub. In 1846 Branwell Bronte stayed here and became friendly with the landlord's daughter, Mary Walton. He copied poems and sketched for her. This sketchbook is now in the possession of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, Texas. Continue walking up Keighley Road and another Pub you will pass on the left is The Railway Hotel at the bottom of Nursery Lane. This was also originally a Beer House, owned by another Halifax Brewery, Whitaker's.

Continue up Keighley Road, on your right is Ovenden Park, home to the Ovenden Rugby Union Football Club. The club currently runs three senior men's teams along with 2 women's teams and a

Mixed Ability team. The railway line ran at the side of Ovenden Park, under what was Keighley Road Bridge.

Continue to Cousin Lane with Morrison's Supermarket in front of you on the corner. Carry on up the hill, on the left is the site of the Commercial Inn that was at 70 Keighley Road and originally owned by Fielding's White Castle Brewery, Bradshaw and later bought out by Websters. Ownership transferred from Fielding's to Webster's on the 14th of June 1961 and the pub was demolished in 2000. On the same site are remnants of a Blacksmith's.

At the curve stood the Talbot Pub. It had previously been a vicarage, parts of which were ancient, possibly 14th century. This pub was partially rebuilt in 1840 and remained open until 2008. It was demolished in February 2009. The church of St Mary the Virgin, situated behind The Talbot, closed in 2010. The church dated back to 1525, when Henry Savile, Lord of the Manor of Ovenden, gave 1 acre of waste land for a free chapel to be built in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary; in return, he and his heirs were to receive annually one red rose. By the mid-18th century, the church had fallen into a state of disrepair and was supported by props. In 1774, a petition was sent to the Archbishop of York seeking to demolish and rebuild the church. This was granted with the understanding that the new building would be shorter and broader than its predecessor. In 1777 the church was rebuilt at a cost of £1,400. On 22nd March 1873, 2 stained glass windows were installed in the Church, presented by the Holdsworth family. Colonel Edward Akroyd gave a font and baptistry window to the church. There is a small plaque to the outside wall in memory of Private Ernest Atkinson and Private John Willie Drake who lost their lives in World War I.

Continuing the climb, there is a row of shops which, in the 1970's was home to a local deejaying set up, Spin-A-Disc. Past this is are the stocks and Gaol The gaol, or jail, and stocks are dated 'G.K. 1697'. The initials are those of George Kitchenman, constable of Ovenden in that year. Over the main door is the inscription "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Eph IV, 28. The stocks are also dated 'G.K. 1679', which is inscribed on one of the stones. On the other are written 'A. H.' and 'G. R.' above a crown with the motto "Know thy Self" below.

Carefully cross the road because you will be turning right at the bend. On the bend was a Fish and Chip Shop. This road leads on to the school base but at Whitehill Road take a right. This eventually leads you to the Ivy House Pub. This was originally a house called Little Moor, built by John Brearcliffe in 1704 before becoming a Public House. It was originally a Stocks pub, Stocks being part of the Shibden Head Brewery which was bought out by Samuel Webster's in 1932.

Turn right and follow the road, which is Shay Lane. On your left you will see Station Road which would have taken you to Holmfield Railway Station. The station was opened on 14th October 1878 as the terminus of the line from Queensbury and closed to passengers 23rd May 1955 with goods facilities remaining via Queensbury until 28 May 1956 and via Halifax until 27 June 1960.

On the right you will see Drakes Industrial Estate where Sir George Dyson's father, John William Dyson, worked for Drakes Limited, a large engineering company. Drakes was an internationally respected firm and Dyson Senior was employed as a foreman blacksmith. Drakes principally worked for the gas industry with coal carbonisation and steel structural work. Later it also became a brickworks. Sir George Dyson was born on 28th of May 1883 and began to play music at the age of 5 and to compose at 7. In 1900, at the age of 17, he left Halifax to take up an open scholarship in organ and composition at the Royal College of Music in London. He was director of the College [1938-1952], and a governor of Sadler's Wells. In 1914, he served as a Brigade Grenadier Officer with the Royal Fusiliers. He wrote a training pamphlet on the use of the hand grenade. He was

invalided out of the army in 1916, suffering from shell-shock. His short choral work *The Blacksmiths*, based on a fourteenth-century Middle English poem, was dedicated to the memory of his father. Continuing towards the end of Shay Lane, on the corner where Ron Lee Motors now stands was Bethel Methodist Church built in 1859. Across from you is The Ovenden Private Day Nursery, formerly The Ovenden Cross, another Samuel Webster's Pub. In 1846 Branwell Bronte stayed here and became friendly with the landlord's daughter, Mary Walton. He copied poems and sketched for her. This sketchbook is now in the possession of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, Texas. Continue walking up Keighley Road and another Pub you will pass on the left is The Railway Hotel at the bottom of Nursery Lane. This was also originally a Beer House, owned by another Halifax Brewery, Whitaker's.

Turn right up Keighley Road and then left onto Club Lane. About halfway up, on the left, is a business park. This is now home to Pennine Magpie and an indoor skate park, Mags On Ramps. However, it was also the site of a major employer, Meredith & Drew Biscuits, one of the largest biscuit manufacturers in Britain. Meredith & Drew, with four percent of the British biscuit market, was acquired by United Biscuits for £2 million in a cash and share offer in 1967. The Meredith & Drew biscuit factory in Halifax employed hundreds of workers in 1968. The Halifax site was closed with the loss of 990 jobs in 1989 and production was relocated to Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Further up on the right is Laurel Crescent another housing development built by Laura Annie Willson. Continue to the top of Club Lane and turn right. You are now heading back to OSCA.