

## Roots and Routes Walk 6 – Cousin Lane to Fountain Head

When you leave OSCA, turn right towards the top of Ovenden Way and cross over to the top of Wharfedale Mount. Continue down Wharfedale Mount until you come to Lane Ends at Wheatley. Cross over to the other side of the road and at the top of Boy Lane you can see the magnificent Wheatley Viaduct. Wheatley Viaduct is an imposing addition to the landscape, reaching a height of 100 feet and extends for almost 200 yards, curving to the east. It was conceived as part of a grander scheme in 1883. The Halifax High Level and North & South Junction Railway abbreviated in 1892 to the Halifax High Level Railway extended for a little over three miles, leaving the Halifax-Queensbury line at Holmfield and terminating at St Pauls Station near King Cross. Construction got underway late in 1887, requiring a workforce of around 1,200 men.

At the top of Boy Lane, 13 Wheatley Lane and Boy Lane was the site of 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. It was the first Public House opened by Samuel Webster's Fountain Head Brewery in 1845. Samuel Webster was born in Ovenden in 1813, and was the eldest of seven brothers. He acquired the small Fountain Head Brewery in Ovenden Wood in 1838 when he was 25. The Old Cock Inn, Halifax, dating from 1580, was the flagship Webster's public house and is most famous for being the building where the Halifax Building Society was conceived. Lane Ends pub closed in February 1966 when the license was transferred to the new Sporting Life.

Turn left towards Long Lane on the left is the site of the Sporting Life Pub. It was named after "This Sporting Life" a 1963 film and one of the few to use Rugby League as its theme. It was partly filmed at Thrum Hall, the then home of Halifax Rugby League Club and starred Richard Harris. The pub was renamed MacMillan's in 1983 and has since been demolished.

Continue down Long Lane and then look for a junction sign on the right hand side, make a sharp right down Wood Lane and you will eventually start climbing up the lane and walk under a railway bridge which served the Halifax High Level Railway. In 1890 Webster's Brewery was linked to the Halifax High Level Railway network, which facilitated the brewery's distribution.

At the top of the hill turn right on to Ovenden Wood Road and on the left you will see The Long Can Pub. There was a late 14<sup>th</sup> Century timber framed house here bearing the name of Dearden House Farm. Later a stone cased house was built and then rebuilt by James Murgatroyd circa 1637. Later on the property was divided into 5 cottages and then became part of Webster's Brewery who restored it in 1985 making it into a museum and hospitality centre which is how it remained until the brewery closed in 1996 with the loss of 400 jobs. There were rumours of the ghost of an old lady wearing a long dress seen and heard walking in the upper part of the building. After Webster's Brewery closed down Long Can was disused until September 2008 when it became The Maltings Independent School for children up to 11 years of age. A year later there were proposals for it to become a pub, serving the new Fountain Head Village which you will come to as you continue down

Ovenden Wood Lane. Central to the village is The Maltings College sixth form opened in 2013. In 1990, the Old Maltings had been categorised as a Grade II listed building and had been the site of Webster's Brewery. Webster's Green Label was a light mild and Yorkshire Bitter gained national distribution after the company was taken over by Watney Mann in 1972. Throughout the 1970s it was known for the advertising slogan: "Drives out the northern thirst".

If you follow the directions back towards Wood Lane but instead continue forward, Ovenden Wood Lane now becomes Doctor Hill and then Church Lane as you reach Christ Church, on the left. Here is the prominent grave of Samuel Webster. Behind the church there is access to the remnants of the Halifax High Level Railway where the track bed survives for a quarter mile, along a high embankment with fine views of the valley and various communities scattered across the landscape, coming to a stop on top of a handsome stone bridge.

Leave the church yard and continue left until you reach Brackenbed Lane and then turn left. The corner building was formerly The Wheatsheaf Public House, another Webster's Pub. As you begin your descent look at number 5 on your left. This is a Grade II listed 17<sup>th</sup> Century house. Once again, you will walk under a magnificent railway bridge. To the right is the area once known as Shroggs Tip which had been a Council landfill area.

At the bottom of Brackenbed Lane look over the low bridge and you will see Hebble Brook flowing beneath you.

Cross over and walk up City Lane at the top turn left and follow Wheatley Road to Wharfedale Mount and turn right. This will bring you back to the top of Ovenden Way