

# Discovering Old King Cross and Savile Park

A self-guided circular walk from King Cross Library to discover how the area has changed



Produced by Calderdale Libraries, in conjunction with King Cross Local History Group



# Welcome

Throughout this walk, please refer to the map on the back page.

The walk is around 1.5 miles long and may take around 1.5 hours to complete

Note that you walk at your own risk and our Tips on Safe Walking are also on the back page.

*On leaving King Cross Library, take time to explore the area ahead & to the left.*

## 1. The Feathers, the William IV and the Oddfellows Arms (The Oddys)

All started out as Beer Houses. By the 1830 Beer Act anyone could sell beer, by applying to the Excise authority and paying two guineas. The Feathers is on the site of the old Toll Bar house. The William IV started in a modest mid terrace cottage. The initials above the door of The Oddys probably relate to William and Martha Ann Gledhill, occupants in 1851.



*The William IV*



*Gledhill's Yard*

Gledhill's Yard, behind the Oddfellows Arms, is where 3 year old Laura Annie Buckley lived in 1881. Famous as Laura Annie Willson, she was imprisoned for suffragette activities before WW1. During the War, she improved conditions for female munitions workers at her husband's works in Ovenden and acted as an adviser to the government. She became one of the first women to be awarded an MBE. Post-War, she was behind several housing schemes in Halifax.

A branch of the Economic Stores on King Cross Road occupied the 4 shops next to The Feathers. The Stores were a profit-sharing organisation and by 1937, there were 71 branches across Yorkshire with 18 in Calderdale.



*Laura Anne Willson*

The large road junction was the site of the original Green of King Cross where fairs were held and there was a smithy and a set of stocks. The Old King Cross Inn, probably the oldest pub in King Cross, was a resting point for travellers on the turnpike road to Rochdale.

*Take care crossing Aachen Way at the pedestrian crossing to reach the grass bank below the Fire Station*

## 2. The view across the junction

This has changed dramatically over the last 40 years, with the demolition of the heart of old King Cross (the Old King Cross Inn, parade of shops, police station, terraced houses and courtyards) and the junction's redesign. A map in the Local History file in King Cross Library shows what was demolished of old King Cross.



## 3. The former Methodist Chapel

Situated opposite the fire station, it closed in 2007. It is one of 6 previous buildings on this site.

A simple cottage school of 1808 was later expanded to accommodate 200 pupils, taught standing for lack of space. The Anglican Christ Church, built in 1826 by Jonathan Akroyd, was purchased by the Methodists in 1840, following Akroyd's bankruptcy. Anne Lister said of his preaching, "after the first ten minutes I had the good fortune to doze" and noted that "Christian charity forbids me to say more than that he's eccentric."

A Sunday School built by subscription in 1857 and later extended, was demolished after storm damage, in 1894. A magnificent 1905 replacement was demolished in the 1970s.

The current structure was built in 1878 to replace Christ Church. The most famous occupant of its manse, in the 1930s, was the writer and broadcaster "Romany", the Rev Bramwell Evens.

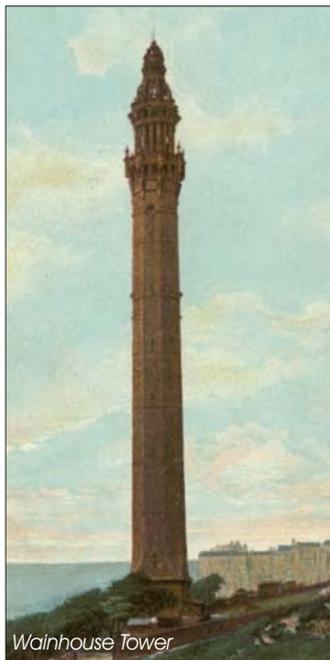
*Return to the crossing to reach the side of the road with the old Methodist chapel. This set of lights is only partially covered by a pedestrian crossing. Please take care. Turn uphill and look for an opening in the stone wall, after the church, signed for Wainhouse Tower. Note: If the weather is bad, you have a pushchair or, for another reason, need to avoid this steep, uneven section, carry straight on and stop opposite Crossley Heath School, point 6 below. Otherwise.... Turn right down the walled, cobbled path. At the end of this path, take the upper walled track, to the left, towards Tower Gardens.*



## 4. Wainhouse Tower

The 253 foot Tower was completed in 1875. Built as a chimney for Edward Wainhouse's (West Lane) dye works, it was never used as such but has had various other uses. In 1909 it supported a wireless station aerial and in WW2 was an ARP observation post. The view from the top is well worth climbing 400 steps for, during bank holiday openings.

*Continue through the small, lawned park, past Wainhouse Tower. At the end of the park, turn left up the cobbled road, Wakefield Gate*



Wainhouse Tower

## 5. Wakefield Gate

This may have been part of an ancient road from Sowerby Bridge to Halifax.

*After emerging from Wakefield Gate, turn right down Skircoat Moor Road and stand opposite The Crossley Heath School with allotments behind you.*

## 6. The Crossleys' ornate orphanage



Founded by John, Joseph and Francis Crossley, local carpet manufacturers and significant philanthropists. The orphanage had capacity for 400 boys and girls and received its first 6 boys in June 1864. The building was designed by John Hogg of Halifax and modelled on architecture of the reign of James I, with Italian influences.

The name Porter was added in 1887 when Thomas Porter made a large donation to the orphanage. It became Crossley & Porter Schools in 1919, admitting day pupils. Crossley & Porter Schools merged with the historic Heath Grammar in 1984, becoming Crossley Heath School. Today this is a selective grammar school serving the Halifax area.

Details of the two Rolls of Honour boards inside the school entrance, commemorating students who served or fell in the two world wars, can be viewed in the Local History files at King Cross Library.

*After Crossley Heath School, continue along the road until you reach the Mackintosh Homes at the corner of Skircoat Moor Road and Albert Promenade.*

## 7. Mackintosh Homes

The Mackintosh firm was founded by John and Violet Mackintosh, who first opened a confectioner's shop in King Cross in 1890. The firm later merged with Rowntrees and, in 1988, was purchased by Nestlé.

These homes, a gift of the Mackintosh family in memory of John Mackintosh JP and originally for former employees of John Mackintosh and Sons, opened in 1925. The cottages are typical of the arts and craft movement and are currently managed by the charity Waterhouse & Mackintosh Homes, providing homes for older people.

*Note the lych-gate but please do not enter the private grounds of the Homes.*

*Turn to face the large open area of grass on the other side of the road at the end of the Crossley Heath School grounds. Cross the road and join the cobbled path.*

## 8. Skircoat Moor

Skircoat Moor is an area of about 73 acres. Captain Henry Savile sold it to Halifax Borough for a nominal sum in 1866. He requested that the Council address pollution from the mill chimneys and stipulated that the area remain forever an open, unenclosed space for the use and recreation of the people of Halifax.

In 1958, this was challenged by a Halifax parliamentary bill including a clause allowing part of the Moor to be enclosed. Local opposition caused the Council to abandon the idea. Permission was, however, secured, to enclose the area for 3 days a year so agricultural shows could be held.

In the 18th century, The Moor hosted horse racing and in 1827, even a stag hunt. In the mid 1800s, many religious and Chartist meetings took place here. During WW2, soldiers trained on part of the Moor, while some ground was ploughed up for the "Dig for Victory" campaign and tended by Land Girls.

The large houses down the side of The Moor were built from around 1870 and occupied by newly rich professionals and retailers of Halifax. In 1879 it was decided to build The Lodge on the bottom side, now a fish and chip shop/restaurant.

*Follow the wall of the school grounds all the way round until you meet Free School Lane. Turn left and walk uphill to the zebra crossing. Cross the road to the fountain.*



## 9. The Prescott Fountain

This was funded by Mrs Leigh, of the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. It was formally presented to the town in 1884 and was sited at Wards End near to Summerville House. A later dedication, in March 1885, in memory of Mrs Leigh's mother, Marian Prescott, gives the fountain its name. Mrs Prescott was the daughter of William Rothwell of Summerville House which explains the original siting.

In 1898 it was moved outside The Feathers at King Cross, where people watering their horses might buy a pint as payment. Road alterations in 1932 led to a move to its present position.

*Look towards the old houses on your right. The gable end of one of the terraces still has a faint number 6 painted on it.*

## 10. The Big Six

was run by the Horsfall family for 57 years up to the death of George Horsfall, in 1928. George discouraged women from drinking there and didn't tolerate drunkenness or games. From 1894 to 1908 George and his brother, William, owned the small Tower Brewery, believed to have been on Skircoat Moor Road where there are now flats at Delph Brow. The Inn is still open to the public.

*With the children's playground to your right, walk downhill towards Tesco on Spring Edge South. Stop at the row of garages at the bottom of the hill.*



## 11. Spring Edge

The photos of Holt Street and Nichol Street, seen from Spring Edge, show the previous density of the housing in this area. Gone, now, are the rows of mainly back to back terraces, along with Ladyship Mills and Scarborough



Mills and the many courtyards and squares. Back Lane, or Haugh Shaw Road as it is now known, once housed numerous businesses and warehouses. Laura Annie Willson was born at 1 Elmwood Street, which faces the grassed area.

*Turn left and go through the arches between the houses. After the second arch, bear right, to walk diagonally across to a rising, brick-walled path. Walk up the path and take the crossing at the lights to Haugh Shaw Road West car park.*

## 12. Haugh Shaw Road West Car Park

This car park is the site of an old courtyard, Warneford Square. Originally Clog Yard, it was renamed in recognition of Captain Reginald Alexander John Warneford, awarded the Victoria Cross for bombing and destroying a German Zeppelin, on 7th June 1915. He was notified of his award the following day but tragically died in an air crash four days later.

*Walk uphill to King Cross Road and turn left, along the row of shops.*



R A J Warneford, VC

## 13. King Cross Road

You will pass several old ginnels, or alleyways, which once led to the old housing area (now the car park). The only one marked now is number 223A which led to Tasker Court. Others led to Smithies Yard, Warneford Square, Bolds Court, Sykes Yard, Gledhill Yard and others, but most of these are now blocked off.

*Turn left just before the zebra crossing and return to the library.*



## Visit King Cross Library

In King Cross Library Local Studies section, you can view a file compiled by the Local History group, containing further information and photographs relating to the area covered by this walk.

### King Cross Local History Group

meets regularly at the Library. Contact the Library to find out more.

#### King Cross Library

Tel. 01422 288028/288084

Email [king\\_cross.library@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:king_cross.library@calderdale.gov.uk)

More information is available from <https://www.calderdale.gov.uk> (search King Cross Library)

#### Acknowledgements

Sketches courtesy of Jeff Nicholson

Photos used by kind permission of: Stephen Gee; J Stoddart; Halifax Photographic Society; Imperial War Museum; John and Lesley Baldwin of the Big Six Inn.

200 Years of Sunday Schools, by E V Chapman (Halifax Antiquarian Society Transactions, 1980)

Crossley Heath School website: <https://www.crossleyheath.org.uk/school-history/>

Waterhouse & Mackintosh Homes website: <https://www.waterhousecharities.co.uk/>



## Tips on Safe Walking

### Do...

- Wear clothing & footwear suitable for the weather conditions
- Pay attention to traffic – on roads and in car parks
- Walk on the footpath whenever possible
- Beware of slippery surfaces
- Cross roads at designated crossing points if they are available.
- Look left, then, right, then left before crossing the street.
- Walk during daylight hours

### Don't...

- Forget to look out for other pedestrians and cyclists
- Listen to loud music or look at your phone while walking