



## Elland - A TOWN HISTORY TRAIL

Created originally by Albert Rinder and Albert Moody

This historical guide walk is the work of the late Mr. Albert Moody and the late Mr. Albert Rinder. Much has changed in Elland within the last half-century but we hope that this guide will offer a true glimpse into our past.

Where best to begin than at the River Calder at Elland Bridge. The name Ealand (now called Elland) was derived from the Anglo-Saxon words – eameaning water and – land meaning dwelling. In the Domesday Book Elant is mentioned as having 3.5 carucates of land and geld. Gamel had held the place but William had laid it waste and Ilbert de Laci of Pontefract now owned it. This land was on the opposite side of the river. Most likely the descendants of Gamel became tenants and later owners of this land on which was built Elland Hall, a stone building superimposed on a 13th century cruck wooden building before being pulled down in 1976 to make way for the Elland Bypass. Sir John de Eland was High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1340-41. Elland was granted a Royal Charter in 1317 – to hold a weekly market and two fairs per year. Elland Park Wood was a hunting ground. In 1769 Roman coins (dated 253-293 AD) were found in Elland Hall Wood.

The Roads play an important part in the development of Elland. The Elands held land in Rochdale so one of our oldest roads went from Elland to Rochdale. From Elland an old road crossed the bridge and river, turned diagonally right and went through the wharf and up the hill to Exley then onwards to Halifax. This became a turnpike road in 1735. In 1777 the turnpike road from Halifax to Huddersfield was built by 'Blind Jack' Metcalfe of Knaresborough. The toll-bar at Elland Bridge charged 2d. per packhorse and 1d. per person. The Elland to Leeds turnpike was built in 1815. The road to Huddersfield went through the town up to South Lane and Blackley.

Between the river and the road is the Canal. This was started in 1757 by John Smeaton when a 'cut' was constructed from the river near West

Vale to the Elland weir. A wooden bridge was built over the canal for the old road to Halifax. By 1808 the 'cut' had been extended and later the whole canal was completed. A wharf was built and the bridge was extended in 1813. The moorings by the staith where barges emptied their coal for the (now defunct) Elland and Greetland Gas Works can still be seen. Wharf House was built by 1830 when the canal was at the peak of its trade. At the beginning of the 20th century Robert Carey had a fleet of six barges at the wharf; and in 1919 Thomas Carey, his son, was the first bargee to take a diesel driven barge down the canal.

The canal began to lose importance with the coming of the Railway. A railway line linking Manchester and Leeds was built in 1839 and that passed through Elland. In 1840 the local tradesmen met at the Savile Arms and following this meeting and their endeavours a railway station was built in 1842. This aided the development of local trade and helped businesses to flourish. In that same year the station was used for the despatch of Plug Rioters arrested on Skircoat Moor. Later stations were built in 1865 and 1894 but the last station closed to passengers in 1962.

There has been a bridge at Elland for a long time, references to 'Brigrode' in 1199 and William at the Bridge of Elland in 1316. The wooden bridges were often swept away by floods and then rebuilt or repaired. In 1483 Henry Savile of Hullen Edge gave 6s. 8d. for a bridge and in 1540 John Savile of New Hall bequeathed 10s. 'to the makeinge of the bridge'. A bridge was built in stone by Richard Aske of Hope, Derbyshire in 1579. Unfortunately in 1584 the foundations gave way. The West Riding then declared the crossing as a wapentake bridge and therefore the cost of repairs fell upon the parish. The Great Flood of 1615 claimed another bridge. A new construction costing £485 was completed by 1617. This was widened in 1797, 1809 and finally completed in 1813 when the bridge spanned both the river and canal. It was further widened from 22.5 ft. to 36 ft. in 1897. This bridge was a main artery for Elland until the opening of the bypass.

Facing the bridge is a very impressive building called Britannia House, also-called because of the majestic figure of Britannia atop of the structure. It was built in 1895 for the Halifax and Huddersfield Bank. The columns of Aberdeen granite have on either side the arms of Halifax and the arms of Huddersfield.

To the left is Briggate. This road was constructed in the early 19th century and ought to be considered Elland's first bypass because it eased traffic flow via the crowded town.

Up Northgate on the right is the well-established firm of Joseph Dobson's & Sons confectioners and the makers of Yorkshire Mixtures and Voice Tablets. The first part of the building was the original sweetshop and next to it a cottage; while the three-storeyed building consisted of offices and former shops. In the passage entrance the grooves set in the ground help horses to get a grip when climbing into the cobbled yard.

Next to Dobson's is an old building known as the Rose and Crown, which was built in 1689. It is now sadly boarded up but it may be possible to find pictures via the internet of the magnificent fireplace. Across the road stood Grace Ramsden's School, which was founded by Grace Ramsden in 1734 for the instruction of 40 poor boys. It became known locally as 'Back o' Church School' and by which time it had moved away from its original aims to become an independent school before its closure in 1966.

Next stands the jewel of Elland – the Parish Church of St. Mary The Virgin. The same masons who built Kirkstall Abbey in 1170 built the first church in Elland in (circa) 1180 as both have the same architectural features especially in the chancel arch. It is probable that de Laci had the church built in opposition to the Halifax church, which belonged to the de Warren family of Wakefield. A chapel of Ealand was mentioned in the register of the archiepiscopal see of York in 1205. In 1275 Archbishop Gifford of York bequeathed 3s. to the 'Anchoress of Elland'.

The Norman church occupied the space enclosed by the pillars and slightly east of the chancel arch. The pulpit is dated 1853 and the rood-screen was erected in the memory of Canon Ernest Winter who died in the vestry on 14th January 1917. The East Window was erected in 1490 and depicts the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The 14th century door in the south wall now leads to the vestry, which was built in 1879 in memory of Amy Savile of Rufford Abbey. St. Nicholas' Chapel houses a vault of the Thornhill family.

Points of interest on the outside of the church are the porch dated 1696 and tower 1490. Above the gable end of the nave roof is a Norman bell-cote (a small stone turret) which housed a Sanctus bell. The churchyard has many interesting graves, the oldest being John Hanson in 1599, Lucy Hamerton, the author of *Olde Elland*, and a Joseph Park who was killed by a railway juggernaut in 1847.

The old town of Elland was centred around The Cross. Paulinus may have preached here. The Cross has long since disappeared! This centre linked all the roads Northgate (Halifax), Eastgate (Leeds), Southgate (Wakefield and Huddersfield) and Westgate (Rochdale).

In the poll tax returns of 1379 Elland was the largest township in the area. A weaver paid 6d. in tax. Somewhere in this vicinity stood Elland's Cloth Hall.

There is much varied architecture at The Cross – Victorian for the old and current bank premises. The Savile Arms was built in 1748. Here you will see the three owls of the Savile crest.

Along Westgate is the Church of England School. At the entrance to the school there is a stone with the date 1846 carved in Roman numerals and the words 'National School'. The original school was damaged by fire in 1846 but an untouched 1871 extension was incorporated into the present school building, which was opened by Lord Savile in 1960.

On Southgate, despite later developments, can be seen Victorian and Georgian architecture. The old town streets were repaired in 1743 at 'publick' expense. Elland Library, containing our History Room, is located in the old Constitutional Club in Coronation Street. The Rex Cinema also stands proud next to old Central Hall.

The well-established Elland firm of Cooper Kitchen is along Southgate. If you look carefully you will notice that two buildings have been joined together. Cooper Kitchen had the second house built due to the rapid and perhaps unexpected rise in his business. He invented ten different types of cycles – five models of tricycles, four penny-farthings and one rear driven safety bicycle. In 1888 he added to his list a new type of tandem and the very popular Elland Anti-Vibration Safety Bicycle.

The Wellington Inn, originally a timber-built has still some internal timber structures. The rear of the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Crown Yard provides a perspective of the 'lost' old yards of Elland.

Timber Street was probably so-called because there used to be a lovely timber-structured house called Danesbury House on the top corner of the street. In the rear car park can be found a carved lintel 'G 1675 B'. These initials may belong to Georgius and Beth Smithees.

The building on the left of Southgate is still called the Council Offices. Above the door is another Savile shield on which are the dates 1317 (the charter granted) and 1895 (Elland became an urban district). On the front of South House there is an inscription on the lintel 'Whoso keepeth the law is wise'. This lintel was taken from the gaol, which was first in Church Street and then later at South End, as also were the nearby stocks. The buildings lower down Elizabeth Street formerly housed the fire engine, the ambulance carriage and a dressing room.

Along Huddersfield Road is our Swimming Baths, sadly now closed. On the wall there is a drinking fountain with a plaque to the memory of Joshua Hemingway, who volunteered for the Boer War and was killed. South End is dominated by the Town Hall, which was built in the Palladian style, and opened in 1888 by Sir John Savile. The clock was presented by Lewis Mackrell in memory of his father James and was inaugurated in 1909. The Town Hall was never a town hall because Elland never attained borough status.

Across the road once stood Christ Chapel and graveyard (bottom of Langdale Street). Southgate Methodist Church (formerly St. Paul's) occupies the bottom of both Catherine and Langdale Streets.

On an ecclesiastical theme please proceed to All Saints' Church on Savile Road. This church was founded in 1903, on land given by Lord Savile, due to the inspiration and hard work of Canon Winter. The church was built in English mediaeval style to emphasise the Anglo-Catholic Faith revived by the Oxford Movement. The church's steeple is surmounted by a copper-plated figure of the Archangel Gabriel.

At the top of John Street stands the Flower House where the outside walls are decorated in a stereo-typed design. The house was built in 1880 for Dr. Gamble in stone taken from the disused Navigation Inn at Salterhebble. Dr. Gamble was dissatisfied with the outside appearance so plasterers were called in and the floral design emerged. In time this deteriorated and was redesigned by a Mr. Peel in 1956.

On the opposite side of Victoria Road there is a small architectural feature which marks one end of New Street. In the wall there are some dated lintels, of which the oldest is 1791 and named A. Pennington, which were taken from the houses built between 1791 and 1803. Both New Street and Brooksbank Street was built on the natural curve of a plough. These were the only streets of their kind but this did not save them from demolition in 1966.

The junction of Victoria Road and Jepson Lane is dominated by the Bethesda Church. A church stood on this site in 1824 and the present church was opened in 1880.

Further up Victoria Road is Brooksbank School. In 1712 Joseph Brooksbank founded a free school in Westgate for 40 poor children. In 1911 this school amalgamated with the girls' school at Bethesda Sunday School to form Elland Secondary School and moved to its current site.

The school went comprehensive in 1959 and was renamed Brooksbank in 1969. You will see many newer buildings adjoining the original 1911 school.

The area between Victoria Road and Hullen Edge Road was known as Town Fields. A plan of Elland dated 1750 shows the strip holdings near the town centre, the Highest Town Field, the Middlemost Town Field and the Lowest Town Field, a cartway and two horseways to Stainland. In 1887 the park and recreation ground were given by Sir John Savile to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The War Memorial was unveiled in 1922. Next to the recreation ground is Elland Cricket Ground where the Australians played in 1878.

Further up the road stands Hullen Edge Hall. The present hall was rebuilt in 1890. The old maps refer to this site as Hollingegge and a deed dated 1316 records the name of Hugh de Hollingegge.

At the crossroads is the junction of Long Wall, Westgate, Jepson Lane and Hullen Edge Road. The road is so wide because local councillors wanted Elland to have a promenade to match neighbouring towns. The high wall contains the outline of a window, which was part of two houses that were pulled down when the lane was altered in 1914 for the tramway to West Vale. It is said that in previous years that children were frightened of the Long Wall Mouse, which lived there in a huge hole. The mouse was frightening because it was said that whoever saw it was sure to meet with some misfortune.

The Viewpoint atop of the catsteps presents a wonderful panoramic vista of the Calder Valley. Along the river and canal banks there used to be many mills and kilns. It is said that when General Oglethorpe came with his troops from en route to Manchester in 1745, whilst repelling Bonnie Prince Charlie, his wife insisted upon seeing the view of the 'Three Roads' – Bank Bottom, Long Wall and Overgate. While she admired the view George Readyhough served the soldiers from a tub of galker (a locally brewed ale).

Just beyond the Rising Sun is an old graveyard. This belonged to the old Primitive Methodist Church, another of Elland's demolished buildings. The Boggart Stone has been moved to this site. One side is very smooth because it has been worn down by boggarts sitting on their chair. On the opposite side of the road is The Fleece. The Fleece was originally built as a farmhouse and later became an inn. Another local legend claims that a man was chased and killed on the stairs where the blood stains remained for many years and no amount of scrubbing could

obliterate them. Unfortunately the stairs were replaced during a refurbishment. At the back of the Fleece Inn a large barn used to house the legend of 'Leathery Coit'. At night the doors slowly opened and out emerged a carriage pulled by four headless horses and driven furiously by a headless horseman. The vision, accompanied by a rush of wind however quiet the night, drove down Westgate, Church Street, Eastgate as far as Old Earth and then returned.

The house at the top of Gog Hill is the Hammer and Pincer's House. It was once owned by a blacksmith who built a hammer and pincers on the roof ledge of the house.

Gog Hill is one of the oldest roads in Elland and connects Elland Bridge to Westgate. Most of the road (no longer suitable for cars) contains setts. Houses (now demolished) were built into the side of the hill. This part of Elland was known as Gibraltar because the hillside resembled the Rock of Gibraltar.

The steep descent of Gog Hill brings us to the end of this trail and we wonder if you would echo the words of Rev. Thomas Twining after his visit in 1776. 'And so, farewell Elland; if I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning'.

**Based on the Original 'Elland – A Town History Trail'  
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