

Saltaire Brewery - Thursday 22nd December 2022

Leaving home at 7.00am, for the 30 minute walk to the brewery, on a promising day weather wise. I was intrigued to see if the title of the walk and the hint of a drink being involved would flush out some newbies to the Thursday group. When I arrived, as usual Chris was already there - interestingly it meant the first two to arrive were the non-drinkers!!!

Others quickly started arriving, generally being dropped off by partners and loved ones, with a promise of being collected later in the day. We also had half the group arriving by train. The walk seemed to attract some of the Irregulars and Mark, Helen and Phil were welcome additions to the Thursday walking scene, along with Randal. We left promptly at 8.00am, for our ten minute walk to Shipley station and we now had our full cohort for the day of sixteen walkers. Dropping down to the Leeds/Liverpool canal towpath, we were soon heading past Salts Mill and the banter interestingly wasn't about the miles in front of us this week but about all the Saltaire Blonds that awaited us at our final destination!!!

Heading through Hirst Wood, we were soon onto the banks of the river Aire and followed it all the way to Cottingley Bridge. A brief stop at the bridge café to stock up on supplies, pork pies seemed a popular choice and were quickly tucked into rucksacks. Leaving the river we quickly reached the St Ives estate in Bingley. And headed up through the woods to be greeted by the Druid – a wood carving, which is part of the sculpture trail. Taking advantage of the seats a little further on, we had our midmorning stop about 10.10am and porkpies were consumed!!!

Leaving the estate by Altar Lane, we crossed Keighley Road heading towards Harden Moor but this week took the path down to Long Lee, skirting around the village, we were soon heading out towards Marley, which offers spectacular views across the Aire Valley towards Riddlesden. After a muddy descent we reached Marley Bottom and took the Path heading east towards Ravenroyd, where we again picked up the River Aire, following it all the way into Bingley, arriving at 12.10pm, where we had lunch in the market square beside Bingley Little Theatre. Takeaway coffees from the local café warmed us from the inside as it started to get a little colder. We had already walked 11 miles and only had six left to go but as we departed this busy market town the winter light was already starting to fade and the wind was up – a biting northerly that had me reaching for my hat and gloves. We could all feel the chill as we returned to the canal towpath and headed to the famous five-rise-locks. Any thoughts of being cold were soon alleviated though on the long and steady climb from Five-Rise to Eldwick.

As members of the group reached the top in dribs and drabs, I was personally thanked as the walk leader by a number of the walkers for warming them up, but I was unsure whether this was genuine thanks or a sarcastic comment regarding the climb I had put them through straight after lunch!!! But as the saying goes, 'what goes up must come down' and we now had in front of us the steady descent from Eldwick down to Shipley Glen. Following Eldwick Beck we soon reached the safe haven of the glen and having lost height, it was a little warmer. We were now heading along the glen and it was relatively flat and good underfoot and we made good time as we passed Bracken Hall Countryside Centre and reached the top of the Glen Tramway. But no tram ride for us today, we were heading down not up anyway - we walked down on the path at the side of the tracks to Roberts Park in Saltaire. From here it was just a twenty minute walk back down the north bank of the river to the brewery. Arriving

back at 2.30pm, GP's checked and 17 miles agreed - then the raison-d'être of the walk, the Brewery Tap.

I had asked for literary suggestions for history walks next summer, Chris had suggest The Bronte sisters with their local connect to Haworth and Thornton, places we had passed through on walks this year. Vera suggested Sylvia Plyth, who as we all know wrote the Bell Jar and was married to Poet Laureate Ted Hughes and is buried locally in in Heptonstall. J.B. Priestly is also an option, being a Bradford author, and a recent adaptation of his novel, the Inspector Calls broadcast on the BBC in 2015 was also filmed in Saltaire. Trevor suggested E.L. James!!! Who??? He went on to say the author of 50 Shades of Grey!!! I pointed that that she was not local to West Yorkshire, I believe she lives in West London and it would be difficult to put on a local walk - he said he wasn't bothered about the walk he just wanted to read the report!!!

As you know I'll turn my hand to anything, so look at for a walk titled the 50 shades of Trevor next summer!!!

I'm going to leave the winter walk leading to the more hardy leaders. My next Thursday walk will be in the spring when I plan to offer a Flying Scotsman walk, which will include a ride on this famous train. It is 100 years old next year and is touring the country. It will be visiting the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, in May and I plan to put on a walk to coincide with this.