

## Saltaire Brewery – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023

I left home at 7.15am on a promising summer's day, for the two mile walk to Saltaire. There were already a number of walkers at the brewery, when I arrived, I hope in anticipation of the walk rather than the beer on offer at the end - but I was not sure, particularly as Trevor was banging on the shutters to see if they were already open!!! We were only five strong at this point, Roger, Chris, Mike, Trevor and myself - or as we are collectively known 'the famous five.'

We departed promptly at 8.00am, we had a second group waiting for us at Shipley station, having arrived by train. Once at the station, the group had swollen to eleven, with the addition of Ian H & Ian H, - yes a little confusing I know!!! Steve, Helen, Ralph & Julia. Soon after our second departure we were crossing Gallows Bridge, over the Leeds/Liverpool canal, where we followed the towpath, west towards Salts Mill, crossing the river Aire by our second footbridge of the day into Roberts Park, but this was more than a walk of two bridges - as the group were soon to discover. We headed up to Shipley Glen on the steeply climbing path at the side of the Glen Tramway, built and opened to the public in 1895, but we are a hardy bunch and relished the climb, taking it in our stride, before hiking over the Glen and heading out towards the intriguingly named Spy Hill and Bingley Moor. Passing the Twelve Apostles, stone circle. If only we had been here yesterday on the summer solstice, where legend has it, if we had walked around the stones twelve times in an anti-clockwise direction, we would have summoned the spirits of our ancestors!!! But then again, one Trevor Wardman is just about manageable, I'm not sure I could cope with all his ancestors as well - particularly, Ethelred and Egbert Wardman!!! But being a day too late, we were spared this possibility and pressed on towards White Wells in Ilkley, which was our planned destination for lunch.

We were making good progress on this pleasantly warm summer's day, talk was already on the Saltaire Blonds that were waiting for the group back at the brewery. I assume this was the motivating factor keeping the group focused - the sooner we got back the more drinking time we would have!!! Our early lunch stop was reached shortly before 11.00am at White Wells, where we took advantage of the seats in the shade above the bath house, which also provided us with panoramic views over Ilkley and the hills beyond. We could also see the lido, which looked very inviting, with the sun glinting off the surface of the water. We had not seen too many people out on the moors during the morning but as the clock ticked towards midday and the sun got stronger, the tracks became busier.

Refuelled and watered, we headed down to Ilkley Tarn, where we started the steady climb to the famous Cow & Calf rocks. From here the climbing got tougher but the sky was aqua blue, as we followed a meandering path, all the way to the Great Skirtful of Stones, high on Burley Moor. We then headed to Horncliffe Wells and Faweather Grange, where we were able to take advantage of the hospitality offered by Steve, a friend and fellow walker with the LDWA – were you on his excellent history walk of Saltaire last autumn? After our unplanned stop, we continued along the lane, picking up the tracks back towards Baildon Moor. We were now insight of our destination, but there was still time for coffee and cake at the Glen Tea room, for Kevin & Mike. The bulk of the group at this point mutinied and lead by Trevor did not want to waste time on coffees & tea, when the Saltaire Blonds back at the brewery

were calling, like sirens from Greek mythology, and they pressed on to the finish. The official walk, after the coffee stop, continued down to the river and followed the North Bank back to the brewery, arriving a little after 2.00pm - GPS's checked and 17 miles agreed. This time the shutters were open and the hardened drinkers were already well into their first round and settled in for what I assumed was a long session!!!

Over the next couple of hours, we were joined by Gill & Warren, Myself & Chris had a couple of non-alcoholic drinks and left the group as they were launching into - we had a little drink about an hour ago and its gone straight to my head!!! Except Trevor and Ralph who were in the corner together, arm in arm, drinks held aloft, singing, 'marching on together' and contemplating Leeds United, fixtures against Cardiff City and Plymouth Argyle - Leeds having been relegated from the Premier League last season. Chris refers to them as the heavenly twins, I prefer to use their Greek or Latin names, Castor and Pollux - I'll let the reader decide which is which!!!

I set out walking back to Idle village, wondering if some of the group would have sobered up before my next walk at the end of July!!! This walk is back on familiar territory starting from the village car park in Idle, this time heading to Salts Mill, not the brewery, lunch will be in Salts Mill diner and we will be visiting the Hockney Gallery. A more genteel walk and day out, I would suggest - a better class of walker no doubt!!! No talk about offside traps or poor refereeing decisions, but about Hockney's use of colour, and the meaning of the title to his painting, 'the bigger splash.' I'm already looking forward to it.