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The Colne Valley Trail
A series of Countryside and Village Walks

Exploring Old Slaihwaite

www.golcarandslaihwaitewalkers.org.uk

The Walk

1. Start the walk at the junction of Carr Lane, Britannia Road and Station Road, adjacent to the Commercial Inn. Walk up Station Road

Notice on the right No. 24 (A on the map), the former egg-packing station. This was run for many years by a firm called Yorkshire Egg Packers. Eggs delivered from various farms in the area would be candled by hand for impurities, graded for quality and packed by hand into boxes of 30 dozen. Eggs would come in sometimes with farmyard detritus still clinging to them.

2. Turn right into Lewisham Road

In Lewisham, London there is a Slaihwaite Road. Lewisham is a family name of the Dartmouth family.

Lewisham Road was once known as Branshledge Street because of its elegance. During the First World War, Belgian refugees were housed at No. 12. Notice two buildings (B and C on the map), both built in the first half of the nineteenth century in a Tudor revival style.

3. Where Lewisham Road joins Carr Lane, keep left. Opposite, the Wharfe Side Inn, take an unmade lane (Kinn Lane) veering left

Kinn Lane went to Hill Top before the railway was driven through Slaihwaite. Notice the block of houses in the middle (O on the map). The variations in door and window patterns suggest the residents were declaring their independence.

4. At the top of the lane turn right and continue down the road to re-join Carr Lane. Turn left and go under the railway viaduct

There is a horse trough to the left of the pavement (E on the map), the bottom of which is now well below the present road level, due to continual road re-surfacing.

Continue forward. You are now in Crimble. Note the drawing of the clock tower. This was located on the Brook Mills building until its recent demolition.

5. Continue ahead past the Swan Inn. Thoughts are on your right. Past the inn, bear left across the road towards a gap between the houses where there is a bus stop and public footpath sign. Go through the gap, between houses and join a path which at first bears right, then climbs up a flight of steps (which can be slippery) to the allotments.

This was one of the short cuts used by workers to get there from Hill Top to the mill at Crimble which have now been demolished.

There was a small dipping pool near to the path, constructed by the allotment holders as a source of water, the overflow water tumbling down the hill to Crimble Brook, but this has now disappeared. The 1846's was a time of bad trade and great hardship here. Most families had become dependent on the woolen mills and few had land on which to grow food. Unemployment money to buy food was unheard of. Spade Husbandry Societies were formed, with the support of the landlord and allotments of about a quarter of an acre were set up. There are still some fine allotment gardens up here, but those without tenants are going back to nature.

6. At the top of the steps continue up the path past the allotments. When you reach a road, turn sharp left away from the road down a track, passing garages on your left at the end Waverley Street. Keep to the left and shortly after passing the garages veer left away from Waverley Street down a track with a wall on your left which becomes a walled lane. Continue along this lane / path (which was once a road to Halifax) into Olney Street

Several old buildings in the fold were pulled down.
in the early 1900’s when Olney Street was driven through.

Now pause and look at the long house (F on the map) on the right behind the green, now numbers 15 and 16 Hill Top Fold. This building, Aeneas Bothamley’s house, is listed; i.e. it is on a Government list of buildings of architectural or historic interest that may not be altered in appearance without planning permission. This one is interesting on both counts; architecturally because it is a 1685 re-build in stone on an earlier cruck house, using the same ground plan; historically because Slaithwaite’s diarist Robert Meeke, lodged and wrote his diary here, between 1689 and his death in 1724. Note the blue historic information plaque on the wall of 15 Hill Top Fold.

7. At the end of Olney Street, go left along Meal Hill Lane to its junction with Royd Street and Hill Top Road. Turn left for a few yards to see numbers 13 to 19 Hill Top Road (G on the map)

Look at the datestone 1763 with the initials WH for Mr Walker and his wife.

8. Return to the junction and walk ahead along Royd Street

Forty years ago there were four corner shops at the junction of Meal Hill Lane and Royd Street. Now there are none, with one of the old shop premises having been demolished. One of the remaining former shops had the name White Royd. Terrace carved above a window but this is no longer visible. This first row of houses was built on a field called White Royd.

On the left hand side of Royd Street, number 8 (H on the map) is a two storey, 17th century house, of red brick. This house is listed, No. 4, a former ‘Coop’ shop. This is evidence of the extraordinary vigour and growth of the Co-operative Movement in Slaithwaite during the nineteenth century. In fine weather at the weekends, the cricket field rings with the sound of clapping. The Estate map of 1837, in Slaithwaite Manor House, shows four fields called Cricket Lands, adjoining the White Royd Fields.

10. Cross over Royd Street to Grove Street, then turn right into Nethereth Road

Near the end of the road on your right is a detached house (Nethered) number 45 (I on the map), sited at an angle. It is named after it, but the name is much older still. It appears in a document of 1460. The land falling away on the left, now with new houses on it, was called Tenterfield. Open as it is to westerly winds blowing down the valley, it was suited to drying wet finished cloth stretched on tenterposts.

11. Cross the road ahead (Bankgate – beware of traffic) and turn right up the hill. Take a path on your left over a footbridge and across the dam of Slaithwaite Reservoir

Note the colourful metal plates on the bridge railing giving various information about the area. The reservoir was constructed to provide water to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Merry Dale Brook runs into it. Looking left you have a grandstand view of Slaithwaite village.

Further down the road, number 11 (frontpiece and O on the map) is listed as a surviving manufacturing dwelling. The top storey has a continuous row of thirteen stone-mullioned windows, of which five are now blocked. This long room would have been full of looms from end to end.

In front of the house is a cruck barn which may be medieval.

As you approach the Silent Woman pub, notice the old stone gateway to your right. On the left of the building, turn right down a cobbled way (passing the Dartmouth Estate Office notice) and turn right to look at the front of the long building, the Manor House (P on the map). You can view it best from its car parking area. It was built by Slaithwaite landlord, the Kayes, in the sixteenth century.

On the green in front of the Manor House is an upright cylindrical stone found locally in 1587 and now believed to be a milestone from the Roman road that passed along the valley.

To the left of the manor house, see the small lock up intended for local felons. It is believed that it was never used!

Return to the cobbled way and walk straight across the end to the short lane opposite and walk down this. As you emerge from it into the public car park looking ahead you will see an old packhorse bridge over the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and to the left hand side, the back of the Free School founded in 1721 by Robert Meeke, Slaithwaite’s curate and diarist. The building on the right hand side, behind a new extension, was an old inn (The Dartmouth Arms). Go through the car park and turn left to see the front of the former school (Q on the map), which was rebuilt in 1842. It is now a funeral parlour. Note the blue historic information plaque on the wall near the entrance to the old school building.

Across the road is the Shoulder of Mutton, now the oldest pub in the village, built about 1800.

Here the tour ends.