

Dewsbury Heritage Walks



Incorporating the Blue Plaque Trail

1. Town Hall
2. United Reformed Church
3. Central Station
4. Cloth Hall Mills
5. Spinkwell Mill
6. Dewsbury Pioneers Building
7. 9 Wellington Road
8. The Reporter Building
9. Central Methodist Church
10. Church Of England School
11. 4 Grove Street
12. 16 - 18 Market Place
13. The Wellington Tavern
14. Dewsbury Minster



Dewsbury Blue Plaques Trail

The Blue Plaques Trail was initiated by Dewsbury Matters local history group to celebrate interesting historic buildings in our town. Dewsbury Matters was set up in 1998 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Wellington Road Railway Station. The plaques and this leaflet have been funded by the Dewsbury Area Committee. Photographs were taken by Porl Medlock & Andrew Stone.

The trail begins at the Town Hall in the centre of Dewsbury and takes approximately 1 hour at a gentle stroll.



1. Town Hall

The Town Hall was built in 1886 - 1889 of local ashlar stone in French Renaissance style at a cost of £40,000. It housed the municipal offices, courthouse and police station of the Borough Council which was incorporated in 1862. Designed by the eminent Dewsbury architects Holtom and Fox, it was built by Chadwick and Sons of Staincliffe.

Inside, the Victoria Hall is the town's main concert venue. The courtroom has featured in many television dramas including *Emmerdale* and *Touch of Frost*. The "Yorkshire Ripper" was held in the cells here after his arrest.



Leaving the Town Hall, turn left then walk through the raised Longcauseway garden, the site of the Market Place railway station 1867-1930. Cross the road to...



2. Longcauseway United Reformed Church

This is the third church on this site serving a congregation of Independents originally formed in 1814. The present church was built in 1882 - 1884 to the designs of Walter Hanstock of Batley. Behind the elaborate Gothic façade is a typical galleried chapel interior.

Return past the Town Hall and enter Crackenedge Lane between Barclays Bank, built for the West Riding Union Bank in the 1870s, and Broadway House, a 1930s shopping development.

3. Central Station

Opened in 1880 by the Great Northern Railway. Passenger trains operated to Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield, with through services to London King's Cross. Newspapers and perishable goods came in daily on goods trains and were distributed from the station yard. From 1923 it was owned by the London North Eastern Railway. In 1951 it was named Central Station by British Railways. After its closure in 1964, the building decayed until its façade was incorporated into the Ring Road which crosses here.

Return to the corner of the market, then follow round into Corporation Street, turning right into Foundry Street. The Covered Market, in glass and cast iron, dates from 1904. Its architect was Henry Dearden.

Walk along Foundry Street, with the open market on your right and the Kingsway and Queensway shopping arcades (1915 - 1920) on your left, as far as Cloth Hall Mills...

4. Cloth Hall Mills

The Machell Brothers moved their shoddy and mungo business from Bradford Road to Cloth Hall Mills in 1874. Portrait busts of Robert Fletcher Machell and his brother William, together with Cobden and Disraeli, adorn the office frontage. William was mayor of Dewsbury in 1880 - 1882. The quadrangle of mill buildings lay behind the former Railway Hotel.

Cross Northgate to Salem Chapel (1863) with a carved portrait of John Wesley in its pediment, then turn right and cross the Ring Road, towards the "Dewsbury Man and Woman" statues. Turn left and follow the pavement round beneath the viaduct into Halifax Road to Mark Oldroyd and Sons, Spinkwell Mill...

5. Mark Oldroyd and Sons, Spinkwell Mill

A carding and scribbling mill existed at Spinkwell from the early 1800s. Oldroyds became one of the world's largest cloth manufacturers with mills in Dewsbury, Leeds, Germany and Silesia. Sir Mark Oldroyd (1843 - 1927) was Dewsbury's mayor 1887 - 1888 and Liberal MP 1888 -1901. The company closed in 1959.

Cross Halifax Road, return under the viaduct, then cross the Ring Road to...

6. Dewsbury Pioneer Buildings

The Central Stores were designed by Holtom and Fox and opened in 1880. Departmental shops were on the ground floor; library, conversation rooms and offices on the first floor and an Industrial Hall (1500 seats) on the second floor. Further extensions northward were added in 1896 and 1914, the latter in a flamboyant Baroque style. The Hall was converted to a cinema in 1922.

From the junction of Halifax Road and the Ring Road, walk round to the back of the Pioneers' building and cross to the line of imposing warehouses on your left. Walk on up the hill to...





7. 9 Wellington Road (Prasad solicitors)

The buildings along Wellington Road were erected after 1850 on surplus land sold off by the London and North Western Railway Company. They served as warehouses and selling houses for woollen cloth manufacturers. Later in the century, warehouses were provided on mill sites and by 1890 many of the Wellington Road buildings had become rag warehouses. Though less stylish than its neighbours, this warehouse retains its hoist and the "taking-in" doors on each floor.

Continue uphill, noting, across the Ring Road, Wellington Road Station, built in Elizabethan style in 1848. Two earlier Blue Plaques record the history of this Grade II listed building, which can be used as the start of the Trail if you arrive

by train. The surviving part of the original building is now the "West Riding", a popular real ale pub serving award-winning food. At the top of the hill on the left is ...

8. The 'Reporter' Building

Built in 1851 on land owned by the London and North Western Railway Company, it was occupied at first by rag merchants, the last being Henry Day. The Reporter, founded in 1858 and originally based in Daisy Hill, moved here in 1897 and in 1905 bought the building outright for £2000.



Turn left down Wellington Street and at Daisy Hill turn left again. On your left is...

9. Central Methodist Church

(now Elim Pentecostal Church)

Built in 1846 in Georgian style, celebrating the centenary of Dewsbury's first Methodist Society. John Wesley visited the area at least five times between 1742 and 1760. Local people, inspired by his preaching, founded the Society with support from John Nelson of Birstall.



Continue down Daisy Hill and turn right into School Street. Ahead is the charming Gothic style...

10. Church of England School, School Street

Built in 1843 by the National Society for the Education of the Poor, this was Dewsbury's second 'National School'. The Pancake Dog on the roof, taken from the old vicarage in the 1880s, is alleged to jump down for his pancake when the bell is rung on Shrove Tuesday.



Return to Daisy Hill and cross into Grove Street. On your right is...



11. 4 Grove Street

An auction house built c.1870, this was later a dance hall before Luke Howgate, funeral furnisher, came here in the 1920s. The carved heads are Mr Fox, auctioneer, on the left, and Dr George Fearnley, first mayor of Dewsbury, on the right.

At the end of Grove Street, turn right into Bond Street, turning right at the foot of the hill to enter the Market Place. Beyond the handsome Italianate bank is...

12. 16-18 Market Place

Believed to be the oldest domestic building in the town centre, its façade was rebuilt in the 1830s. A draper, a currier and a watchmaker occupied the ground floor shops in Victorian times. Part of the building was replaced by 'The Picture House' c.1910. Just across the road was Dewsbury's Market Cross, built in 1826 and demolished only 27 years later.

Continue past Lloyds TSB (formerly The Royal Hotel) into Westgate. Across the road, facing the foot of Daisy Hill, is...



13. Wellington Tavern

The centre for local radical politics. Here candidates opposing the new Poor Law secured election in March 1838. Rev. William Hill, editor of the Northern Star, addressed local Chartists in May 1839 and secret meetings were held before the riots on 11 and 12 January 1840.

Cross Daisy Hill and walk along Church Street to the Ring Road, crossing to...

14. Dewsbury Minster

A church was established here after St Paulinus visited the town in 627 AD. Dewsbury Parish extended from Wakefield to Burnley. Eighth century masonry and carvings survive. The nave arcades date from the 12th and 13th centuries. The Tower and north aisle were designed by John Carr of York in 1767.

Patrick Bronte, father of the famous literary sisters, was curate here from 1809 -1811. There is a permanent exhibition in the Heritage Centre in the Minster. Meals and light refreshments are also available here.



Other places of interest in and around Dewsbury

Now that you have completed the Town Centre Heritage Walk you may like to visit other interesting buildings in Dewsbury's suburbs. In the next few pages four further walks are described

- "A Select Suburb" from the Town Centre to Halifax Road around St Mark's Church
- "Way out West" Dewsbury Moor, Crow Nest Park and West Town
- "Barging About" Industrial heritage of Savile Town Wharf
- "Over the River" Thornhill Lees and Savile Town

At present, only three of the buildings on these trails have blue plaques. These are Wallace Hartley's house, placed by Dewsbury Arts Group, St Paulinus Church, placed by the priest and people of the parish and Dewsbury Market, placed by Kirklees Council.



"A Select Suburb"

from the Town Centre to Halifax Road around St Marks Church

1. Dewsbury Market

The fabulous Edwardian Market Hall, the focal point of trading in Dewsbury when it was built in 1904, remains as popular as ever today with locals and visitors alike.

The largest and most renowned open market in Yorkshire, Dewsbury's famous open market boasts over 300 stalls on Wednesdays and Saturdays.



2. Boothroyds

Formerly Dewsbury Infirmary, a cottage hospital with eight beds opened in Northgate in 1876. This site in Halifax Road was bought two years later and temporary buildings were used until the Infirmary opened in 1883. This building, by Kirk & Sons of Dewsbury was built in the gothic style and could accommodate forty patients.



Enlargement in 1909 increased the bed complement to sixty and the Infirmary served until 1930, when the new General Hospital was opened. The building later housed municipal offices and clinics, and latterly was an annexe to the Technical College. It was converted into apartments in the late 1990's.

The foundation stone faces Carlton Road.

3. Oldroyd Building

Rejoining Halifax Road, note the foundation stone of the Technical and Art School, laid in March 1888 by Mark Oldroyd. The school, celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, opened two years later.

Turn right down Stonefield Street passing the main college buildings you will reach St John's Masonic Lodge (No. 827).

4. Masonic Lodge No. 827

The foundation stone was laid in 1865, beneath which was deposited a bottle, hermetically sealed, containing copies of newspapers, lists of directors, and the names of the members of the Masonic Order in Dewsbury. The occasion was a huge civic affair, with members of various Lodges wearing Masonic regalia walking in procession, preceded by the works band of Messrs. Mark Oldroyd Ltd. The building was completed in 1866 at a cost of £863.10.3d.



5. Stonefield Gateway

On the right is an arched gateway flanked by battlemented turrets, which now gives access to Rookby House. Formerly it was an entrance to Stonefield, an early 19th century mansion built for James Nowell, master mason and public works contractor. After James Nowell's death Stonefield was sold and became Dewsbury Vicarage. Today the site is occupied by the modern extension to the college.

Return to Halifax Road and cross to St Mark's Church.

6. St Mark's Church

St Mark's is a typical mid-Victorian church built for a prosperous suburb. When it was consecrated in 1865 church architecture had been influenced by the writings of A.W.N. Pugin and the Camden Society, and St Mark's conforms to their ideal middle pointed style. The architects were Mallinson and Healey of Halifax.



St Mark's closed in 1998 and the building has recently been restored as a church and school for Dewsbury Gospel Church. The organ and some stained glass were removed to Dewsbury Minster.

Walk up West Park Street on the north side of St Mark's.

7. Wallace Hartley Plaque

The long terrace of houses on the right hand side was built in late Victorian times. Number 48 bears a blue plaque, placed by Dewsbury Arts Group, in memory of Wallace Hartley who lived there with his parents from 1896 until 1912.

A talented violinist, Wallace Hartley became a bandmaster on Atlantic liners. He and his fellow bandsmen gained lasting fame for their heroism in remaining on the

deck of the Titanic, playing popular music and hymns to comfort those in the lifeboats until the great ship slipped beneath the waves. The Hartley commemorative plaque in the church was removed to the Minster Heritage Centre in 1998.

Opposite the centre of the terrace is Nowell Street. Walk along this street until it joins Oxford Road.

8. Oxford Road Villas

Merely a track between fields in 1850, Oxford Road later was lined by many imposing villas occupied by the town's wealthy business and professional families. Nowadays, many of the houses have been divided into apartments or have become care homes.

A short walk up Oxford Road gives a view of many of these houses, after which you may return downhill to Halifax Road.

"Way out West" Dewsbury Moor, Crow Nest Park and West Town

9. St John's Church, Dewsbury Moor

St John's Church, opened in 1827, it is one of three "Waterloo" churches built in the parish of Dewsbury in the 1820s. The land for St John's was given by John Hague of Crow Nest and the architect was Thomas Taylor. St John's has remained substantially unaltered, although internal modification to suit modern use is in progress.

The churchyard contains many interesting memorials, notably that of Charles Turner Thackrah, a Leeds surgeon and pioneer of occupational medicine. He campaigned for the protection of children working in factories and mines. The nearby Church of England School was opened in 1838 and the Parish Hall, recently sold, dates from 1912.



Adjacent to... (best view of Fletcher Homes is to the rear of the building)

10. The Fletcher Homes, Alms Houses

The story begins with Robert Fletcher, born in 1803, who, in 1831 opened up a wholesale/retail grocery business in what was then the market place. With the growing population of Dewsbury, the business prospered and the family became very wealthy. The family bequeathed £8,000 to build these homes for Dewsbury people. These homes were to be occupied by either couples or single persons who had reached the age of 60 years and had been ratepayers in the borough for a period of no less than 20 years.

The opening ceremony on October 10 1900 was recorded as being a most important function and attended by the Mayor, Alderman Haley, many well-known Dewsbury ladies, local worthies and, according to local press reports, 'a large crowd of towns people!' Mrs. Fletcher, who arrived in a chair drawn by a donkey, and Miss Fletcher, were received by the Mayor and members of the Town Council.

From Boothroyd Lane, enter the park through the gate and walk down the avenue of trees to Dewsbury Museum, housed in The Mansion



11. Crow Nest Park & Dewsbury Museum

The origin of the name 'Crow Nest' and the early history of the site of Dewsbury Museum are now, unfortunately, lost. It is believed that a house and estate existed in 1571, when it was owned by a family named Bedford, but there is no real evidence of this and we know nothing definite about the site before the 18th Century.

The Mansion and grounds were formerly the residence of a Mr Thomas Hague Cook, local mill owner and entrepreneur, the family sold the grounds to Dewsbury Corporation in 1893. Dewsbury Corporation stated they had purchased the estate with the intention of turning it into a park for "The Pleasure and Enjoyment" of Dewsbury people. It was for many people, Sunday promming around the bandstand; fishing in the lake; playing on the swings and roundabouts; using the paddling pool; playing tennis; playing bowls and horticultural shows. The park was awarded Green Flag status in July 2011.

Leave the park by the Heckmondwike Road gate and follow Cemetery Road to...



12. St Paulinus' Church

The first public mass in Dewsbury since the Reformation was celebrated in a room in Cloth Hall Street on Palm Sunday 1841 by Father Edward O'Leary. Irish immigrants to Daw Green in the 1840s ensured that the parish grew in numbers, and fund raising locally and overseas enabled land to be purchased for a school chapel and for the present St Paulinus' Church.

The church and adjoining presbytery, in the geometric-gothic style, were dedicated in 1871. The architect, Edward Welby Pugin overcame the difficulties of the site and achieved a fine and imposing building.

Adjacent to...



13. St Matthew's Church, West Town

St Matthew's, West Town was built 1847 - 1848 to the design of the Durham architects Ignatius Bonomi and John A Cory. With its sturdy west tower and low nave it has the air of a village church. St Matthew's closed many years ago and the building now provides accommodation for homeless people.

"Barging About"

The Industrial Heritage of Savile Town Wharf'

14. Savile Bridge

The first Savile Bridge, of three fifty-foot masonry arches, was built in 1862. Its opening allowed the development of Savile Town on what had previously been farmland crossed by the disused 'Old Cut' of the Calder and Hebble navigation. Growth of traffic meant that in 1936 the original bridge had to be replaced by a single reinforced concrete span, and further widening has been carried out in recent years.



Walk down Mill Street East

15. Tramways Depot

At the corner of Savile Road and Mill Street East is the former depot of Yorkshire (Woollen District) Tramways Ltd, a subsidiary of the British Electric Traction Company whose magnet-and-wheel badge adorns the building's façade. (Electric trams operated in Dewsbury from 1903 until 1934).



Continue down Mill Street East

16. Savile Town Wharf (Canal Basin)

The original Calder and Hebble navigation was opened in 1762, and until the 1790s used to continue to the right of the basin to join the river Calder (near Wickes). In 1876 the Aire and Calder Navigation Company created the basin, transforming it into a new and bustling port for Dewsbury. Barges delivered all manner of goods in cargoes of up to 75 tonnes between Goole and Hull in the east and Manchester and Liverpool in the west.

The yard closed in 1958 and the basin is now used by pleasure craft. The original stable block is now a real ale pub (The Leggers Inn) and a café.



"Over the River"

Thornhill Lees and Savile Town



17. Cleggford Bridge

Built across the river Calder at one of its shallowest parts. However, during heavy rainfall the river can rise dramatically half way up the arches. According to the national archives it was built in 1856 and altered in 1889 (probably adding cast iron handrails).

The upper part of the bridge was almost completely rebuilt in 2009 - 2010, sympathetically keeping its Victorian appearance using coursed natural stone and cast iron.

Opposite the bridge

18. Thornhill Lees Parish Church & nearby Vicarage

Church of the Holy Innocents, Thornhill Lees, was consecrated on 23 June 1858. This impressive church was built overlooking road, river and railway during the height of the industrial revolution, to which it owes its very existence.

In the mid nineteenth century the area was rapidly changing from agriculture to heavy industry. The Cook and Wormald families of Dewsbury Mills and Messrs Ingham and Hague were among those who commissioned Mallinson and Healey to create a church in the Early Decorated style of Victorian Gothic Architecture. These early benefactors are commemorated within the stained glass windows.

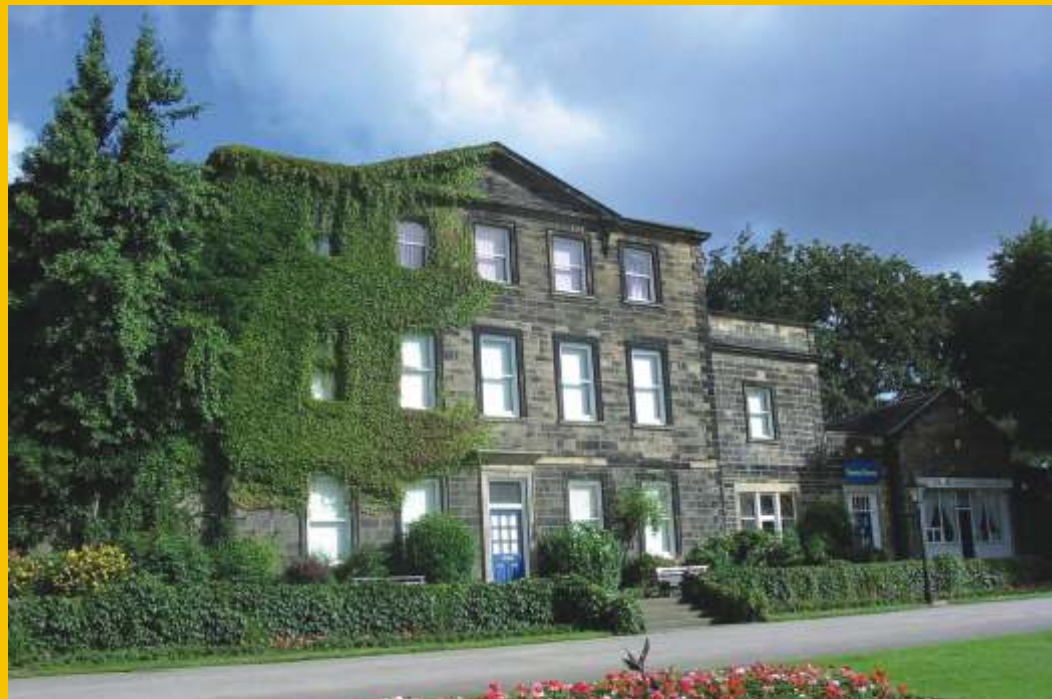
The church celebrated its 150th anniversary in June 2008, however, the congregation dwindled to such low numbers that sadly the church announced in 2010 that it would finally close its doors the following year.

Many prominent industrialists are buried in the graveyard, including the Kilner Brothers, glass manufacturers.

Follow Lees House Road to...

19. Masonic Lodge No. 208

Formerly the offices of the Savile Estate, now home of The Masonic Lodge of the Three Grand Principles. Constituted in London in 1772, the Lodge relocated to Dewsbury in 1804. They moved to the present location in 1974 after selling their large purpose-built premises in the town centre. Past members included Dr George Fearnley MD, the first Mayor of Dewsbury, and two MPs Michael Shaw and Marcus Fox, later to become known as Lord Shaw and Sir Marcus Fox.



This booklet was researched by Dewsbury Matters members Graham Hardy, Stuart Hartley, Alan Thomas and Denis Ripley; supported by Batley and Dewsbury Towns' Management and funded by English Heritage and Dewsbury Area Committee.
Graphic design by Andrew Stone at www.stonegraphica.com