

BAILDON HERITAGE TRAILS

Coach Road to Shipley Glen Walk



Produced by Baildon Local History Society ©
Commissioned by Baildon Parish Council

2011

First edition - 2011

This booklet is one of a set created by Baildon Local History Society and commissioned by Baildon Parish Council. Please see inside the back cover for a list of the other booklets within the set.

The walks are also available for download from the Documents section of the Baildon Parish Council web site - www.baildonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Countryside Code and Privacy

Several of these walks use public rights of way over farm land and others go close to houses.

Please help keep Baildon the beautiful place it is.

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs

Leave gates and property as you find them

Protect plants and animals and take your litter home

Keep dogs under close control

Respect other people and their property

How to get there

Bus: Service 624 terminates close to the start of the walk. (Bradford Interchange approx. 40 mins. Shipley 10 mins.) Alternatively start the walk from the track by the Old Glen House - see "Back to the Start" - near the Lucy Hall Drive terminus of the 656/7/8 services.

Rail: The Coach Road start of this walk is about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.2 km) from Saltaire station, which is on the Airedale Line with trains from Leeds, Bradford and Skipton. From the station, turn left down Victoria Road, over the canal, and then a quick left and right over the river by a footbridge. Turn left to follow the river upstream, pass the cricket pavilion, and a footbridge over the Aire (don't cross it). Further on, beyond a tiny footbridge over a stream by the weir, turn right up a lane for a few hundred yards to join Higher Coach Road near a bridge. Turn right and you'll see an information board on your left, in a little grassy area, where this walk starts.

For details of buses and trains, check with MetroLine (0113 245 7676 or www.wymetro.com)

If coming by car, park at the end of Higher Coach Road.

See the back cover for a map of the walk.

The OS 1:25,000 Explorer Sheet 288 Bradford & Huddersfield, or 1:50,000 Landranger Sheet 104 Leeds & Bradford may be useful.

BAILDON HERITAGE TRAILS

Coach Road to Shipley Glen

(Distance: about 2 miles, or 3 km)

A walk from Higher Coach Road through woods up into Shipley Glen and the Bracken Hall Centre, and back.

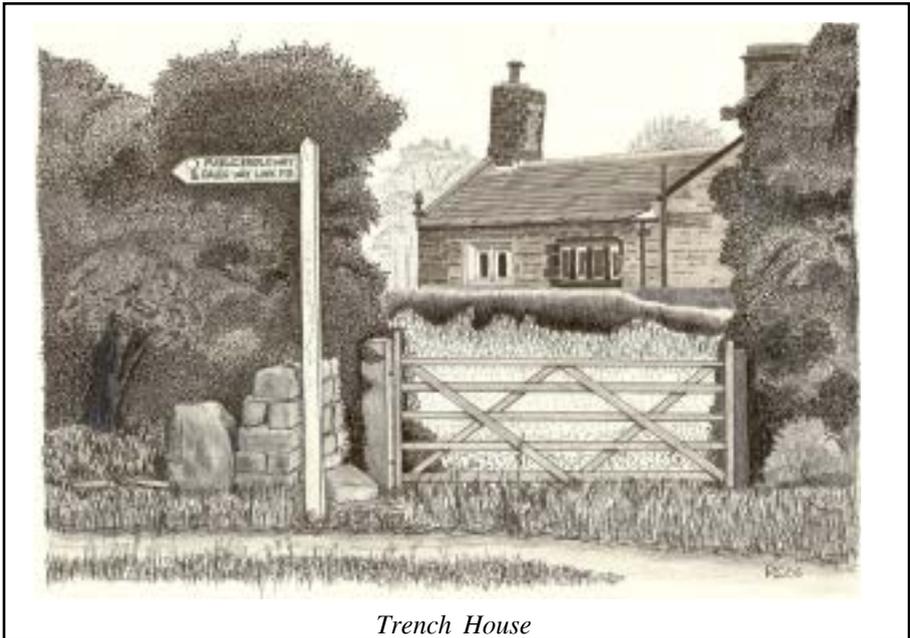
This walk starts at the information board situated at the end of the tarmac section of Higher Coach Road, a few steps beyond the bus terminus, on the other side of the road.

The information board describes the area around the seventeenth century settlement of Trench which was occupied by the Hudson family, who were yeomen clothiers. The first record of their occupancy of Trench Wood and Trench Close is in 1665.



Coach Road Information Board

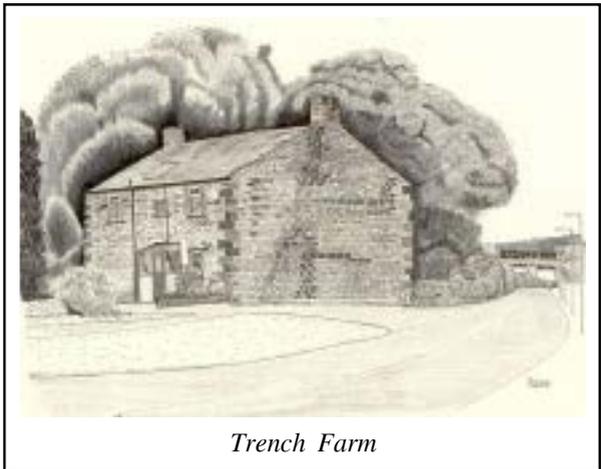
Trench House can be seen through the gateway close to the board. It is a listed building which has a datestone initialled I H E 1697. This refers to an



Trench House

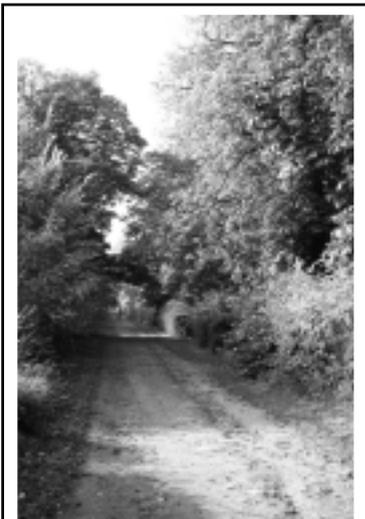
extension to the house, probably added by Jonathan Hudson who lived there until the 1720s. It is an excellent example of a yeoman's house. The front facade of the house is interesting as the builder deliberately moved away from the normal local style and incorporated classical elements. Close to the house is a listed barn, which used to have a date stone of 1669 with the initials SH over a door. Perhaps the original house and the barn were built around the same time.

Trench Farm is another old stone house a little way back along Upper Coach Road, beyond Trench Stores, by the modern garages.



Trench Farm

The name Trench is found in Trench Wood, the woodland close to Shipley Glen, at Soldier's Trench, the archaeological site near to the Countryside Centre (we'll see it later) and at Trench Hebble, probably a Victorian naming. 'Trench' as a name was first recorded in 1438 when it was part of the manorship of Baildon. The area was owned by the Fitzwilliams from that time until Walter Hawksworth bought it in 1515.



Higher Coach Road

Leave the information board and continue along the tarmac road towards the old bridge, with the houses on your left and the open meadow on your right. Just beyond the bridge, where the tarmac ends, is the lane down to the Bradford Amateur Rowing Club, a few hundred yards – those who came by rail walked up this way from Saltaire station. This was founded in 1867 and was originally based at the Saltaire Boathouse; its two storey Clubhouse was built in 1893 and boasts an upstairs bar and function room with a balcony which looks over the River Aire and Hirst Lock.

Carry on along the unmade road (which is still Higher Coach Road), noticing the

beautiful avenue of horse chestnut trees. Walk along towards the metal gates between three massive stone gateposts.

The building next to the gates is the South Lodge for Milner Field which was built by Titus Salt junior on the site of a seventeenth century house. (The North Lodge is at the far end of the drive next to Primrose Lane; there was a smaller lodge at the corner of Green Lane and the Coach Road). Milner Field itself has been demolished but some remains of the house still survive.

Milner Field detour

If you would like to visit the site of Milner Field, you can follow a detour: it's about a mile in total, and brings you back to this point. (Please note that there is no public right of way through Milner Field Estate, but it is used extensively by the public.) If you don't want to do the detour, skip on a few paragraphs to: 'Up into Shipley Glen'.

Walk through the left gate and along the former drive – it's a bit narrow to begin with, but soon broadens. Go on for about 500 yards; the closed-in holly avenue opens out, the road swings right a bit, and soon after you come to a fork. Actually, it's almost a cross roads, with a rough track sharply up to the right into the wood to a quarry, presumably which supplied the stone for building Milner Field. You keep left on the main track which then rises very gently.

Note: Take care here. The wood's a bit gloomy and there are no signposts. If you take the wrong turning, you'll come out at Primrose Lane in Gilstead by the North Lodge mentioned earlier. Turn round and come back.

In about 200 yards the gently rising track again swings right, and there is another fork, with a rather muddy pathway to your left which leads to the remains of Milner Field. Very soon it narrows, and you pass between two small ruins on either side: these are all that remain of the grand archway which marked the entrance to the house. (When we were checking this walk, a dead tree had fallen across the path at this point, but with care you can get round it all right.) As you walk, look out for rhododendrons and azaleas which still survive and add a touch of colour in spring.

A few yards further on you'll see ahead of you the enormous pile of rubble which is all that remains of Milner Field, and as the path turns right you can see on your left the remains of the mosaic floor of the winter gardens and conservatory. It is still possible to make out the patterns on the floor and the shape of the conservatory which used to house exotic/tropical plants and marble statues. (There were over 500 sq yards under glass).

This enormous neo-Gothic house saw two royal visits – in 1882 the Prince of

Wales (later King Edward VII) stayed here when he came to open the Bradford Technical College and in 1887 Princess Beatrice and Prince Henry of Battenberg stayed here when they opened the Yorkshire Jubilee Exhibition in Saltaire. Titus Salt junior died in 1887 and his widow Catherine sold the house to Sir James Roberts in 1903. The house gained a tragic reputation because of the early deaths of both Titus Jun and various members of the Roberts family. It was left empty, gradually decayed and was eventually demolished in the 1960s.

Retrace your steps, past the ruined arch and back to the main track, then keeping right until you reach South Lodge again. Go through the right gate into the broad drive, where this detour ends.

Up into Shipley Glen

At this point admire the view (weather permitting) through the field gate over the open fields which form part of Milner Field Home Farm. You can see Shipley from an unusual angle, with its many old church towers, and right over to Wrose Brow (with Carr Lane running up it).

Now go up the dirt track, with the holly hedge on your right – a feature of Roberts Park is the large number of different hollies in a collection begun by Sir Titus Salt. There were also holly hedges in the gardens of Ferniehurst which was built by Edward Salt who was the third son of Sir Titus Salt. If you're observant, you'll see in the hedge on the right, slightly obscured, a carved stone marking various hydrants set up by Shipley Waterworks. (There are a couple of modern-ish metal hydrant covers on the ground nearby.)

Pause at the old field gate on the left to look at a fine stone trough and another marker looking rather like a



Water hydrant stone

head stone. (These are on private agricultural land). Climb up the lane until you reach the ornate gates with the rails topped by metal spheres. This is known locally as the Birdcage.



The Birdcage

The cobbled way to the left goes up to Gilstead and passes the old kitchen gardens which once belonged to Milner Field (extensive and lavish in their heyday, there are currently plans to redevelop the gardens as part of a community initiative). However, you turn down right. Take care here, as although the centre is paved, some parts are deep in soil and leaf mould and can be very slippery. The field walls here are rich in moss and lichen.

Follow the path down the hill until you reach a large pond. This was the dam for the dyehouse at Salts Mill and was created in 1911. Old post cards show this area as Crag Hebble. In the Victorian and Edwardian eras this was a very popular picnic area for the millworkers of Shipley and Bradford.

Here, close to the pond in the lower part of the wood, is the remains of Sam Wilson's Toboggan Run which was one of the many attractions associated with Shipley Glen in late Victorian times. The riders were carried in small cars from the top of the edge of Brackenhall Green down to this area. On Whit Sunday 1900 one of the cars on the upward side fouled the steel cable which lifted it back up to the top. This resulted in several injuries and Sam Wilson immediately closed it, never to reopen it. So ended 'The Largest, Wildest and Steepest Toboggan Slide Ever Erected in the World'.



Crag Hebble Dam

The end of the run has been traced by the presence amongst the trees of a square hole in one of the rocks, now obscured by grass and moss and not at all easy to find. However, if you want to try, turn left up a short set of steps into the wood immediately beyond the dam and go to the end of the railings till you see a stone stile with a metal post in the middle (pictured). Have a hunt uphill from here. Looking up to the top you may be able to detect where the trees were cleared to create the run, although this is becoming more difficult. When you've found it (or had enough) come back to the track across the dam.



Stone stile by the pond

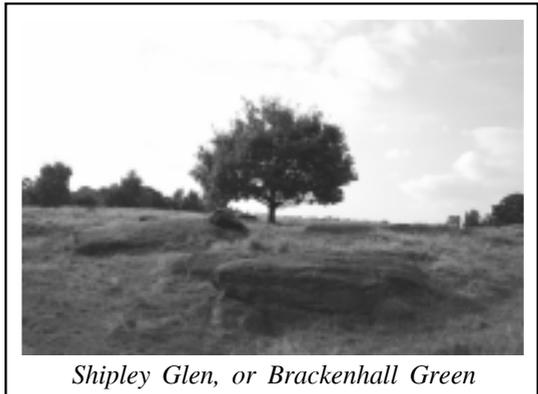
Follow the rough stony track away from the dam, which at this point goes gently uphill among the trees. Go on up, leaving the stream (Loadpit Beck) behind you, until you reach the corner of two field walls on your right, with a wooden stile into open ground. This is Trench Meadow, which we shall see more clearly later, but if you've already had enough, you can climb over the stile and follow the path a short way through the meadow back to the bridge on Higher Coach Road, close to where this walk began.

Otherwise, at this point fork left onto the path which bears slowly uphill, and go on until at the top you come to The Old Glen House (they serve refreshments), which stands by an ancient drove road we shall follow later. It was converted into a Temperance Hotel by Charles Clegg in 1850. Later owners established a thriving business with a circular railway running around a pond. It was in 1947 that Mrs Raistrick took over; she famously raised peacocks in her spare time. She retired in 1983 and soon afterwards it was converted into the licensed hostelry it is today.

Shipley Glen, or Bracken Hall Green

Now you can see the Shipley Glen plateau with rocks dotted around the Common land, some of them with ancient Cup and Ring markings. These are examples of Bronze Age rock art and another cup and ring stone can be seen at the nearby Bracken Hall Countryside Centre. The land was part of the 778 acres of land bought by Bradford Corporation from the Lord of the Manor of Baildon, Colonel Maude in 1898. The land which included parts of Baildon Bank and Baildon Green, with much of Baildon Moor itself, was purchased for £7000.

At The Old Glen House, turn left through the flat grassy area among the stones and walk parallel to the Glen Road for about 300 yards until you come to Bracken Hall Countryside Centre on the other side of the road, which is open to the public. (You can check the opening times on 01274 584140 or



Shipley Glen, or Bracken Hall Green

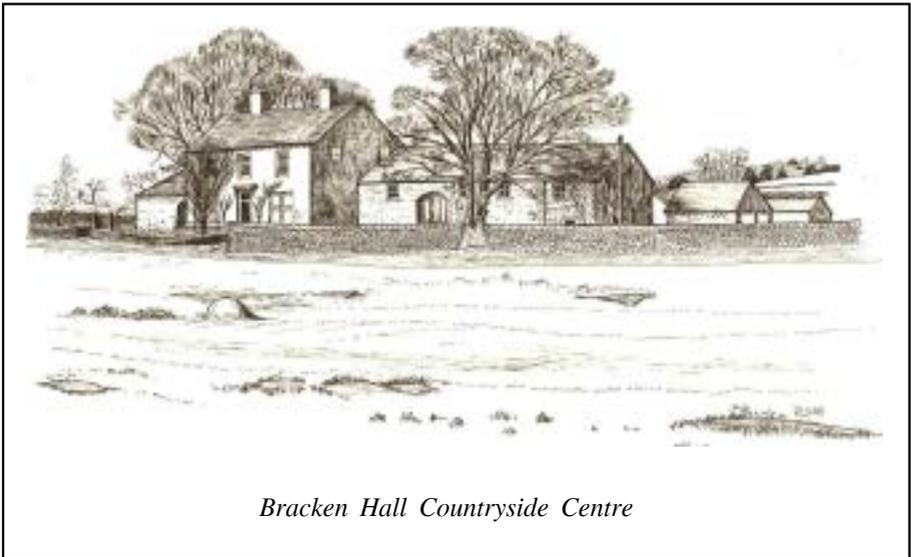
www.bradfordmuseums.org/brackenhall/)

The Centre was set up in 1981 by historians and artists John and Maria Friend as a private enterprise. When they left for a new life in Sussex it was taken over by the Council. Bradford Metropolitan District Council continues to run the centre with changing exhibitions on local history, geology, natural history

and ecology. There are frequent school visits and a programme of guided walks is published every year.

Shipley Glen is actually in Baildon and is more correctly named Brackenhall Green. It was named Shipley Glen around 1840 by a Minister from Bethel Chapel, Shipley, whilst he was promoting it as an attractive area for the workers to escape the harsh conditions in the mills.

The first major attraction here was the Ocean Wave Switchback built in 1888, a type of Big Dipper. Sam Wilson was the founder, he later went on to set up the Glen Tramway. (This is still to be found, at the foot of Prod Lane, about 300 yards beyond The Old Glen House.)



Near to Bracken Hall Countryside Centre there is an information board describing many features of Baildon Moor (see Heritage Walk: The Lost Hamlets of Baildon Moor), and another board about the Dales Way long distance walk, which you can reach at Ilkley along a link path from this point. There is also a sharp triangular stone marking the start and finish of Bradford's Millennium Way, founded by Bradford Countryside Volunteers in 2000.

Behind the Countryside Centre is Bracken Hall farm, a Grade II listed building dating from the late sixteenth century. Owned by the Baildon family, it was rented by Richard Ambler who probably added to the building. He was one of the wealthy Amblers who later had a textile business on Westgate in Baildon village.

Near to the farm there used to be a cottage which later became the British Temperance Society's Coffee and Tea House. This was built using the simplest of building methods whereby two large curved oak timbers, or crucks, formed each gable end. The cottage was thatched (possibly with ling) as were a few buildings in Baildon, including the original Bull's Head!

About 250 yards past the Countryside Centre is the Soldier's Trench, which has long been described as a double stone circle. A sturdy birch tree with two trunks now grows within the ring of stones. Many of the stones have been robbed, some by Baildon Urban District Council to create a rockery near to the toilets, demolished in recent years, which stood near to The Old Glen House. Sidney Jackson, curator at Cartwright Hall, who did much to popularise Baildon Moor as 'Bradford's Open Air Museum' led a group of enthusiastic volunteers on various local projects. One of these was the replacement of any removed stones. Any such are of course, not genuine, but are marked with the year they were replaced, e.g., 1954.



Bracken Hall Information Board

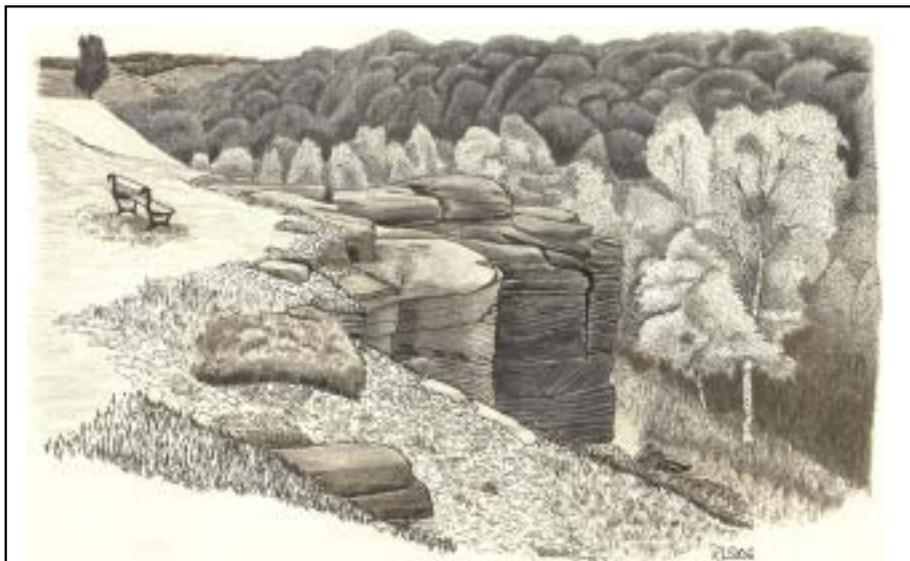
Modern archaeologists believe that this is not a stone circle for ceremonial purposes, but rather part of a settlement or field system, possibly to retain cattle. The enclosure is regarded as dating from the Iron age, as several finds from that period are recorded. One of the finest is an iron sickle found in 1964, an unusual form of a reaping hook, of a type which remained in use until the Roman period. In a field a little further along Glen Road is a section of boulder walling which is identified as from the Iron Age.

That this was an ancient settlement is confirmed by the finding of an earlier artefact, a stone quern which was used for grinding corn in the Neolithic (late stone age). The boulder wall can be seen through a gateway in the field wall a little further along the road on the right: it's a line of large irregularly-shaped boulders running up the field away from the road. This is one of several Iron Age walls to be found in the area. The old railway van, mentioned in Stanley Varo's book published in 1985 (see below), is remarkably still there in the field by the gateway.



Rock with Rainbow

Close to this point, Sam Wilson's Toboggan Run began. Again you can hunt for it: what you're looking for this time is a large rectangle of concrete set flush



Looking across Shipley Glen

in one of the rocks at the edge of the Glen.

Back to the start

That completes this walk between the two information boards, and now you can return to your starting point. Retrace your steps back down towards The Old Glen House. For those who came to Lucy Hall by bus from Baildon or Shipley, make your way back to Lucy Hall Drive and catch the bus home. For those who started from Higher Coach Road, take the ancient drove road (mentioned earlier) down past The Old Glen House. This track, signposted 'Public Bridleway', is the narrow paved way which begins to the right of the Glen House at the gap in the walls known as Trench Gate. The path is quite rough in places: mind how you go.

Further down the path, where the wood opens out and the path divides, is known as Trench Hebble. One path leads right, up into the wood, but you keep left, downhill towards Higher Coach Road.

This trackway divides Trench Meadows, which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The main features of this area are the wide variety of grasses and herbs, the latter including devil's bit



scabious, tormentil and betony. The soils are in some places neutral and in others acidic leading to species diversity. It is grazed by cattle as part of the management plan and remains an important unimproved species rich grassland. To the right of the track is the larger area which has a public footpath running through it; and to the left is a smaller area with no footpath through it. To reduce damage to the special flora of the Meadows, it is important that people keep to the paths.

Over the wall on the left can be seen the remnants of an old track which led directly to Trench House. All that now remains is a depression in the field, but the track once continued after the farm to end near Dixon Mill which stood on the site now occupied by Salts Mill. This would have been a busy route for drovers and pack horses, bringing animals, coal and textile goods down from Baildon on route to the markets in local towns.

Continue down the hill to where the track joins the main road. Here this walk ends, by the information board, where it began.

Those who came by train and walked from Saltaire station should make their way back by the riverside. Cross over the road towards the bus turning circle and walk between the houses down towards the river. Turn left downstream and continue past the cricket pavilion back to the far end of Roberts Park. Cross the river and go back up Victoria Road to the station.

For more information on the area covered by this walk, see the 1985 booklet, *Shipley Glen Ramble* by Stanley Varo.

Note on total distances

Distances were measured by pedometer, and are approximate. They do not include additional detours you may make for yourselves (e.g., to look at some things more clearly), and should be regarded as minimum distances.

- (a) Without the Milner Field detour: about 2.0 miles (3.2 km)
- (b) Including the Milner Field detour: about 3.0 miles (4.9 km)
- (c) Additional to and from Saltaire station: about 1.5 miles (2.4 km)

List of the Baildon Heritage Trails

1. ***The Baildon Village Walk:** visits the old lanes, folds and corners around the centre of Baildon.
2. *****Coach Road to Shipley Glen:** a walk from Coach Road through woods up into Shipley Glen
3. ***The Charlie Thompson Walk:** takes you round the places of interest around the St John's Court area of Charlestown.
4. ***The Turnpike Walk:** takes you between the two old turnpike road milestones on Otley Road.
5. ***The Kirklands Walk:** St John's Court to St James's, Kirklands and Hoyle Court.
6. ***The Riverside Walk:** will take you from Roundwood Road to Charlestown centre along the River Aire.
7. ***The Railway Walk:** the Arches at Woodbottom to the great Viaduct at Tong Park.
8. ****The Threshfield and Brook Hill Walk:** Based on Station Road, with glimpses of clothiers cottages and grand houses of later mill owners.
9. *****The Lost Hamlets of Baildon Moor:** A walk looking at the remains of Moorside, Low Hill and Sconce, and the archeology of the moor.
10. *****Ferniehurst and Baildon Green:** A walk looking principally at the sites of two Victorian mansions with Salt family connections.

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Drawings by Roy Lorrain-Smith ©

Map by Vic McLindon.

Photos by Mike Lawson

Print layout by Paul Marfell

Help from many people and sources is gratefully acknowledged, especially members of the Baildon Local History Group.

Comments on this walk are welcome and should be sent to the Clerk of Baildon Parish Council, Baildon Link, Cliffe Avenue, BD17 6NX.
clerk@baildonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Coach Road to Shipley Glen

NOT TO SCALE

