



THREE SHORT WALKS IN THE HEART OF HEADINGLEY



Photo Tony Ray, 2010

“The charming, well-tended garden to the front [of the Parish Hall], a small oasis in the asphalt environment, is all that remains now of the former village green.”

Eveleigh Bradford, *Headingley* (2008)

Headingley's history goes back more than a thousand years. The first written record is in Domesday (1086), when it was part of the vast estate of the powerful Norman overlord, Henry de Lacy, founder of Kirkstall Abbey. By the fourteenth century the manor of Headingley had been granted to the Abbey and the land was rented out. After dissolution in 1539, the Abbey's lands were granted by the King to Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and later to his son, but in 1564 a large part was acquired by the Savile family of Howley. In 1671, through a fortunate marriage to the Savile heiress, the estate fell into the hands of the Earls of Cardigan, based in Northamptonshire. The Earls of Cardigan (family name Brudenell) remained Lords of the Manor and owners of much of Headingley until the 1880s when the estate was sold to pay off the debts of the notorious seventh Earl, leader of the infamous charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War.

The nineteenth century saw the development of this once rural village into Leeds's premier suburb, with fine mansions and villas set in leafy gardens. As the century progressed and public transport improved, more working people opted to move out of town and close-packed red brick terraces began to fill all the available green spaces, boosting the population and giving the village its varied character.

WESTERN WALK

The **HEART Centre** was previously the home of Headingley Primary School, which moved out in 2006. The School began its life as the Headingley Board School, opened in 1882 after the introduction of compulsory elementary education up to age 13. For many children before the Second World War it provided all their education. Since the School's closure the building has been extensively renovated and refurbished by the Headingley Development Trust and opened in 2011 to provide an exciting new resource for the whole community.



Start at HEART! From HEART, turn right into Bennett Road, and then right along Otley Road, to the War Memorial.

(1) **St Michael's Church** is the third church here. The first was a small chapel [pictured], built on the village green in 1619 to serve Headingley, Burley and Kirkstall. In 1837 it was demolished to make way for a new church, designed by R.D.Chantrell, architect of Leeds Parish Church. Even this was not big enough to seat everyone, and in 1882 the London architect J.L.Pearson (architect of Truro Cathedral) was commissioned to design a new, grander church, opened in 1886, 'proud and prosperous' (Pevsner), to match what was now Leeds' premier suburb. Features: Pulpit (sculptor Nathaniel Hitch), lectern and screen by Pearson; Madonna carved by Robert Thompson the 'Mouseman' from the Shire Oak's wood, and other work by Thompson; E and W windows by John H Powell; reredos by Temple Moore.



Continue along Headingley Lane, turn right into Bainbrigge Road, then left into Cardigan Road, and cross the road to:

(2) **The wall of the old Leeds Zoological and Botanical Gardens**, flanking the main entrance. The Gardens were opened in 1840 with high aspirations, to provide fresh air and recreation for the people of Leeds – 25 acres of lawns, flowers, walks, lakes, and fountains, enclosed by a high stone wall (much still survives along Chapel Lane). Spring Road was built as the access road from Headingley Lane. Attractions included a bear (the turreted Bear Pit remains in Cardigan Road), band concerts, fireworks and hot-air balloon ascents, but the Gardens failed to make money and were finally sold in 1868 as villa sites.



Continue down Cardigan Road to the Bear Pit (1841), once on the edge of a lake, where people climbed the towers to throw buns to the bear in the pit behind. A unique survival, it is maintained now by the Civic Trust. Turn back along Cardigan Road to Chapel Lane. Note Clareville (George Corson) and Cardigan House, built 1870 (Edward Birchall), occupied 1877-1886 by John Hawthorne Kitson of the famous Kitson engineering family.

(3) **Cardigan Road** was cut through the middle of the old Gardens in 1868-70, and extended through fields to join North Lane. A small triangle of spare land was left, between Cardigan Road, Chapel Lane and Spring Road, now known as Sparrow Park. The road was named after Lord Cardigan, the notorious 7th Earl, Headingley's Lord of the Manor, who had died in 1868. The villas on the right [pictured in the late 19thC] were built then, with a rural view (left) over cornfields and pasture down to the river. In 1888 when the Cardigan estate auctioned all its property in Headingley, this land was bought by 'a company of gentlemen' to create the famous cricket and rugby grounds, which lie behind the houses on the left.



Turn right up Chapel Lane, the ancient route from Burley to Headingley chapel.

(4) **The Parish Centre** [on left] was originally St Michael's C of E Primary School until it moved to a new site in Wood Lane in 1978. Its origins go back to 1783 when a small charity school was built on the village green here, by subscription, to teach poor children to read. By 1844 it was too small and poorly funded to cope with expanding numbers and was rebuilt as a National School (C of E). It was extended in the 1870s and 90s. Take a look at the **garden** at the front – all that is left now of the original village green of Headingley.



Turn left down St Michael's Road

(5) **King's Place** [on left] – these houses were converted from the original Wesleyan Chapel, built 1834; there are old cottages hidden behind, built in the 17th and 18th century as encroachments on the village green.

Continue along St Michael's Road.

(6) **Muir Court** [on left] built in the late 18th century, originally with a group of cottages to the side and a 'skinhouse' (the builder was a dealer in skins and hides), stables and a garden. There is a stone mounting block still at the front (*please note the garden is private*). In 1973 the house was bequeathed to the Anchor Housing Trust by Dr Charles and Mrs Irene Muir of Headingley and was named Muir Court in their memory.

Continue along St Michael's Road and cross to the other side.

(7) **The New Headingley Club** (originally called **Bleak House**), was built in the 1850s for John Eyres, a prosperous grocer with a business in town (clearly a Dickens fan - Dickens came to give several readings in Leeds). In the 1920s and 30s the house was the home of the Director of the Lounge Picture House in nearby North Lane (see 11). Around 1940 it was converted into a Friends' School and Meeting House (Fellowship House), with a popular youth club, and then for many years housed the local British Legion branch. In 2001 the Club took it over.



To the left of the Club:

(8) **Westfield Grove**, the pair of stone houses on the corner of St Michael's Road, was built in 1842 on 'the low green', overlooking fields. The first tenant was Richard Oastler, the famous campaigner for factory reform, who came to live in 'this lovely spot' when he was released from debtors' prison. He is buried with his wife at St Stephen's, Kirkstall.



Look left to see the Carnegie Pavilion (2010) of the famous Headingley Cricket Ground (opened 1890), towering above the houses – sports lovers may want to divert to see the Len Hutton gates.

Either turn right into North Lane, and right again into Bennett Road. Return to HEART for tea and biscuits (or similar)!

Or cross North Lane at the traffic lights and walk up South Parade to (9) for the North Lane walk.

NORTH LANE WALK

North Lane is an ancient route which led from Kirkstall and the Abbey across Headingley Moor to Monk Bridge and Chapel Allerton. Narrow and curving, it was originally bordered by fields, cottages and nursery gardens, with some small industries and a smithy. In 1932 it was widened to make it a tram route: some old buildings were demolished and others knocked back.



Start again at HEART! From HEART, turn left into Bennett Road, and then left into North Lane. Continue to the traffic lights, cross and walk up South Parade.

(9) **The small gatehouse** [right] originally guarded the entrance to the Headingley House estate of the wealthy flax baron, John Marshall and his sons, builders of the famous Temple Mills in Holbeck. Until the 1880s their grounds, including a second mansion called Headingley Lodge [pictured], extended behind North Lane and on down Kirkstall Lane to Queenswood Drive. Headingley House was demolished around 1912, Headingley Lodge survived into the 1950s. This gatehouse was moved back from North Lane corner when the first stage of **South Parade Baptist Church** [opposite] was built in 1909. The Church was completed in the 1920s.



Return to North Lane, and turn left.

(10) **Harris's greengrocer's shop** There has been a greengrocer's here for almost 100 years, and before that there was a maltings business, with a malthouse, dryhouse etc, dating from the eighteenth century. Look up above the shop and you will see the slanting roofline of the old house which was part of the original maltings complex. Across the road you can see other old cottage roofs above the small shops.



Continue along North Lane.

(11) **The Lounge Cinema** [frontage left] was built in 1916 on the derelict site of an old tannery which had been working here since the 18th century but closed around 1880. It was one of the first purpose-built picture-palaces in the city (Cottage Road and Hyde Park cinemas were earlier but used converted buildings). It boasted a magnificent organ, the latest comforts, and a 'lounge' serving refreshments, watched over by the manager in full evening dress. After 90 years, it was closed in 2005, in spite of a vigorous protest campaign, but the distinctive front has been retained.



(12) **The Rose Garden** was originally the garden and orchard of 'Tannery House' [pictured], built around 1820 for the owner of the tannery next door. The house was demolished in 1932 when North Lane was widened. The garden is a welcome green space for the community and now houses the popular monthly farmers' market [pictured above].



Cross Ash Road and walk up Cross Chapel Street.

(13) **Ivy Cottage, Cross Chapel Street.** This cottage was once the heart of a small farm surrounded by fields with sheep and cattle. The farmer was also a butcher – a plentiful supply of meat was needed to feed Leeds's expanding population. There were several small farms like this around the village.



Return to North Lane, and turn left.

(14) **Brett's Fish and Chips shop** has been here since the 1920s, when Arthur Brett, back from the Great War, bought one of this row of four cottages for his new business. They were built as workers' cottages in the 1850s by a local stonemason, on fields formerly part of a small farm. Many of the tenants were laundresses, taking in washing from the wealthy houses – they had a good supply of water from the underground stream which still runs under the back yard – one of many in Headingley



Turn back along North Lane and look across:

(15) **The Taps public house** [opposite] was originally a Waterworks pumping station, opened in 1860 by Leeds Corporation to pump water to the new higher level suburbs of Leeds – you can see the commemorative stone on the front. The whole water supply for Leeds came through here from Eccup. The pumps were originally powered by steam, so a tall chimney stood by the present entrance. The building was decommissioned in the 1980s and converted into a pub in 1994.



Now turn right into Chapel Place, and then right again into Chapel Street. The small cottages along Chapel Street and Chapel Square were built in the 1860s and 70s. Turn right into Otley Road.

(16) **The Methodist Church** was opened as a Wesleyan Chapel in 1845, and was later extended. It was one of the first in Leeds to be built in such grand Gothic style, reflecting the strength of the non-conformist community here.

Turn left to:

(17) **Alma Cottages**, a development, originally gated, of small stone cottages from the 1860s, with the most magnificent castellated outside privies. They were built on a narrow corridor of land which used to lead into Beckett Park.



Across the road the view was originally of open fields and then villa gardens and tennis courts: the **Arndale Centre** replaced them in 1965 [pictured here as the site was being cleared].



Either return along Otley Road (crossing North Lane) and turn right into Bennett Road. Return to HEART for coffee and cake (or similar)!

Or cross Otley Road at the pedestrian crossing, turn right, and join the Eastern walk at (18).

EASTER WALK

Otley Road became the main route from Leeds to Otley in 1755, when it was turnpiked – the Headingley toll bar was here at the North Lane junction, with the tollkeeper's house on the corner (where the Arndale Centre is now), next to a pinfold where stray animals could be locked up. Everyone except pedestrians had to pay – one penny if you were riding a horse, more if you had a carriage. Stage coaches were the only form of public transport along the road originally, but horse buses were introduced in 1838, followed by horse trams, steam trams, electric trams and finally motor buses. Tolls were abolished in 1867, when the Council took over the road.



Start at HEART! Either from HEART, turn right into Bennett Road, and then left into Otley Road. Continue along Otley Road to the traffic lights, and cross into Wood Lane.

Or for a shorter walk, turn right into Otley Road, and skip to 21 below.

(18) **Wood Lane** was developed in the 1870s, when the Cardigan Estate was selling off all its land on this side of the Otley Road. Conditions were imposed to ensure only superior villas were built, set in leafy gardens. Several survive, including **St Ives** (no 18) designed by the architect George Corson, who lived next door in Dunearn – only his gatepost remains now. At the end of the road take a look at the **view over the Meanwood Valley**, painted by the artist Atkinson Grimshaw in the 1870s when he lived in Cliff Road, next to Woodhouse Moor (in the Leeds Art Gallery's fine collection of his work).

Turn right, taking the right fork (which is Shire Oak Road) and continue up the narrow unsurfaced lane into Shire Oak Road.

(19) **Shire Oak Road** was also planned in the 1870s and similar restrictive conditions were imposed to guarantee an exclusive environment. Development was slow but mostly complete by the end of the century. Many of the large houses survive, with some modern infill. Particularly notable are the Arts and Crafts houses **Redhill** (1901) and **Arncliffe** (1894).

Continue along Shire Oak Road, passing Corson Court on the right, to:

(20) **Headingley Hall** This is the site of Headingley's medieval manor house (blue plaque). The present Hall probably dates from the 17th century, with many later alterations and modern adaptations. Until the late 19th century it was surrounded by gardens and fields, with a barn and farm buildings behind, known as '**the Old Farm**' [pictured]. These buildings were converted by the architect George Corson into a large house, which in the 1940s was the home of the distinguished soprano Lilian Stiles-Allen – the young Julie Andrews often stayed there for voice training. The building was converted into cottages (Corson Court) in 2011.



At the end of the road, turn left into Otley Road

(21) **The Shire Oak Plaque** on the wall here marks the place where the ancient Shire Oak or Skyr-ack (the Danish pronunciation) stood for perhaps 1000 years. This famous landmark was thought to mark the meeting place of the historic Skyrack Wapentake (an old county division). It collapsed in 1941, in the midst of World War II – no steel could be found to prop it up, but it was probably too old to save. The wood was cut up and sold in aid of War charities. To preserve the Oak's memory, the young oak tree you see in the corner of the pavement was planted in 1956.



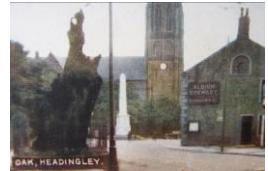
Further along Otley Road ...

(22) **The Original Oak pub** was named after the tree, copying the wording of the old notice which used to be nailed to it. It was originally a farmhouse, with a garden in front and fields outside the village. As an inn, it probably dates back to the 17th century or even earlier, although it has been much altered over the years. As well as refreshment, food and accommodation, it traditionally provided lodging and grazing for drovers bringing their cattle down to market in Leeds. For 150 years, until the 1990s, its garden was a popular bowling green with its own club. Inside, a scrap of wood from the Oak is still preserved.



Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing.

(23) **The War Memorial** (architect Sydney Kitson) was erected in 1921 in memory of the 125 Headingley men who died in the Great War. In the 19th century an acorn from the old Shire Oak had been planted in this place and was growing into a strong tree when it was decided to place the Memorial here, in the heart of the old village, to provide an enduring record of the names of the fallen. The tree was dug out, among protests from keen historians.



Turn back along Otley Road.

(24) **The Skyrack pub** was built in the late eighteenth century on a roadside piece of waste land. Like its rival opposite it was named after the old Shire Oak tree. It seems to have served the working men of the village and was the focus for some of their clubs – and at one point for some illegal gambling!



Turn left down St Michael's Road and then turn right into the Granbys.

(25) **The Granbys** were built 1886-1890 on land which had previously been a nursery garden, bought and mainly developed by one architect (James Charles) and his son, creating a distinctive enclave of redbrick terraces – a mix of small back-to-backs and larger through houses, including some corner shops, now gone. The sense of community and the urban landscape here were very different from Shire Oak Road, although the two areas were developed at the same time and are separated only by the main road.

Continue through the Granbys, to Bennett Road. Turn left to HEART for a well-earned glass and snack (or similar)!

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Based on Eveleigh Bradford's book *Headingley, 'This Pleasant Rural Village'* (2008): on sale at HEART. Pictures courtesy of Eveleigh Bradford; Leeds Library and Information Services; and the Thoresby Society, the Leeds Historical Society.