

# POP OUT WALKS

## Town Trail Blue Plaques, Todmorden



### **Length**

About 3,600 steps, 1 ¾ miles.

### **Start and finish**

Starts and finishes at the front of Todmorden Town Hall.

### **How strenuous?**

Easy going, some slopes, a few steps.

### **How uneven?**

Pavement and asphalt paths.

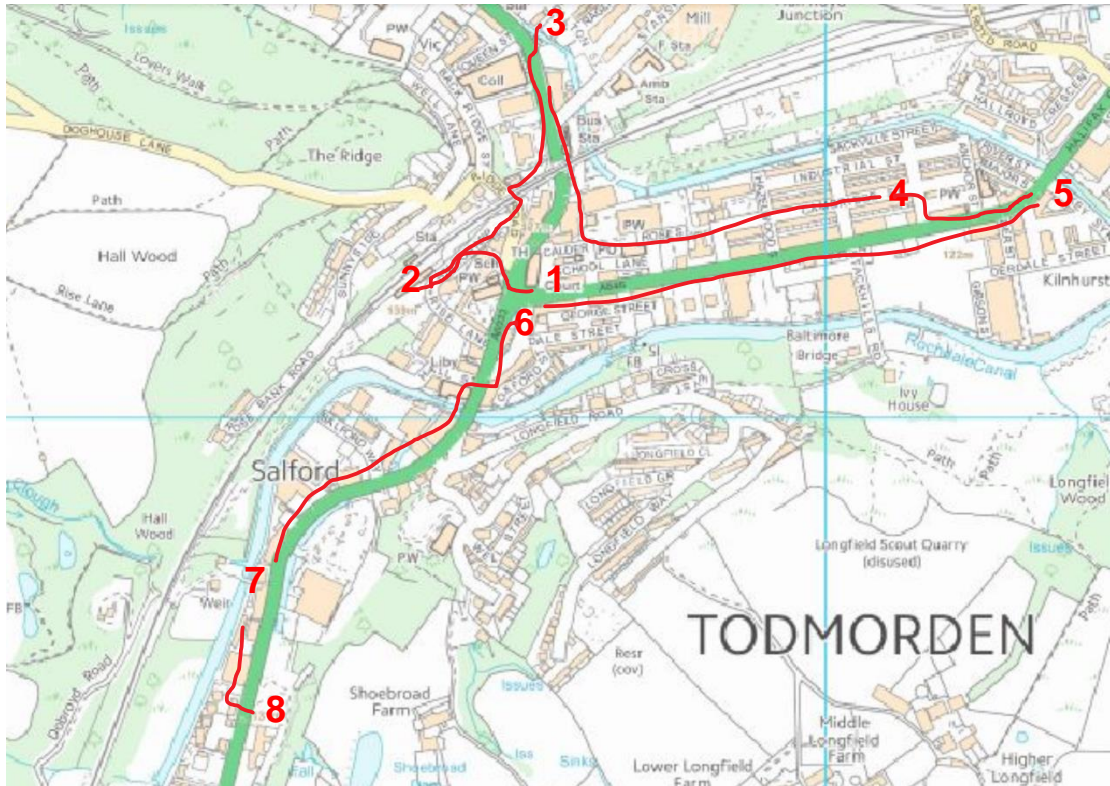
### **Obstacles**

Flights of steps at railway station which can be avoided.

### **Points of interest**

This walk visits the Blue Plaques in the town centre erected by the Town Council.

POP OUT WALKS take under an hour and are ideal for popping out for a summer evening or taking a break from work or being indoors.



## POP OUT WALKS: Town Trail, Blue Plaques

1 With your back to the Town Hall, turn right...cross the road...towards the White Hart...up steps to the left...at top turn left...to station.

### JOHN RAMSBOTTOM

*(This plaque is on the wall near the top of the steps to the ticket office. Non-step access is possible via the station car park entrance to platform 1.)*

*John Ramsbottom, born and raised in Todmorden, the son of a cotton mill owner, worked in his father's business until starting his career in railways. He rose to become the superintendent of all the northern division of the London and Birmingham Railway, based in Crewe. He is credited with several inventions, including the water trough and water pick-up system used by non-stop steam locomotives.*

2 Turn left from station back down Station Approach...turn left under the

viaduct...immediately take footpath across road towards bus station...at main road turn left...cross road at next traffic island...continue...turn right at first road (Wellington Road)...first house on the right.

### SIR GEOFFREY WILKINSON

*Sir Geoffrey Wilkinson was born at Springside, about 1 ½ kilometres east of the town centre. He was educated in Todmorden, and studied chemistry at Imperial College, London. He worked abroad from 1943 on projects such as the British Nuclear Energy Project, and in 1956 returned to Imperial College to take up a professorship, retiring in 1988. He shared the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1973 for his work on carbon-metal compounds, an area with many practical applications. He was a keen walker in this area as well as the Dales and Lake District. In 1990 he was*

*made an Honorary Citizen of Todmorden.*

**3** Return towards town passing the bus station...pass between the indoor and outdoor markets...enter the car park and turn left along footpath through middle of the car park...continue...through Cambridge Place...along Cambridge Street to number 76.

### **GEOFFREY LOVE**

*Born in Cambridge Street in 1917, Geoffrey Love never received any formal music training, but learned the violin from his sister and later the trombone. He gave up an apprenticeship to play in various orchestras ending up in a resident band on the south coast. After World War II he continued to play in several big bands, forming his own orchestra in 1953. He became increasingly famous as a musical director and worked in television. Whilst he lived in the south he maintained a deep affection for Todmorden and would frequently return to conduct local bands. In 1985 he became an Honorary Citizen of Todmorden.*

**4** Continue along Cambridge Street...take first turning on right...at main road turn left...cross road at traffic island...continue to 154 Halifax Road.

### **SIR JOHN COCKCROFT**

*Sir John Cockcroft, born 1897, educated in Todmorden and universities at Manchester and Cambridge became famous for “splitting the atom” with his colleague Ernest Walton. He served in World War I as a signaller and started WW II in the project to develop RADAR. In 1944 he became the Director of a joint British and Canadian project to produce plutonium towards the war effort, and*

*then Director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment. In 1951 he was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for his work on “splitting the atom”. He received the Freedom of Todmorden in 1946, and a plaque to his memory was unveiled in the Town Hall. (There is a second plaque recording his home from 1899 to 1925 at Birks House in Walsden, south of Todmorden.)*

**5** Return towards the town centre along the main road...250m...opposite the Town Hall.

### **FLOODING AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

*Todmorden has experienced regular flooding in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. Substantial flood prevention and containment work has been carried out along all three valleys from the centre of town.*

**6** Continue to the left along Rochdale Road...cross main road at pedestrian crossing...continue...library...400m... Dawson Weir across from the supermarket.

### **JOHN FIELDEN MP**

*“Honest John Fielden”, MP for Oldham, lived and raised his family in this house. He was well known for seeing the “Ten Hour Act” (which restricted the number of hours women and children worked in factories) through Parliament. This took several years in the face of substantial opposition. All the more surprising as he was a mill owner himself running a highly successful family textile business, based on moving from wool to cotton processing; a business continued by his three sons. The family had several mills in and around the Calder Valley, but the biggest was at Waterside where the supermarket now stands. As well as their business interests the Fielden family made great*

*contributions to both the architecture (Town Hall, Unitarian Church, Dobroyd Castle) and politics of Todmorden.*

**7** Continue...pass Firemen's Houses...cross Daleside...immediately cross main road carefully.

**JOHN FIELDEN MP** *This second plaque records where John Fielden was born in 1784.*

**8** Cross back and retrace route back to town.

*(There is blue plaque to William Holt at Kilnhurst Old Hall; see POP OUT WALK Oldroyd-Kilnhurst.)*

POP OUT WALKS are still being developed. Please help by emailing any comments, especially corrections or confusions to [gelliott123@gmail.com](mailto:gelliott123@gmail.com) Thanks.