

THE WANDERING BARD WALK

a wonderfully varied 11-mile walk from Luddenden Foot to Haworth in commemoration of Brontë Branwell's bicentennial year



Brontë Parsonage MUSEUM

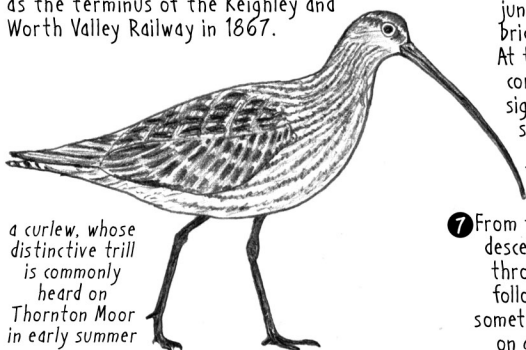
Branwell was an enthusiastic member of the **Masonic Lodge** in Haworth in his early twenties, acting as organist, junior warden and secretary before he left town to in 1840.

① Reaching Brow Road, turn left, then follow Station Road right to **Haworth Station**. A path leads left in front of the station and high over the railway. At the end continue straight on up the cobbles of Butt Lane. Carry on across the B6142, joining **Haworth's Main Street** near the Fleece Inn. After 100 yards you can divert left down Lodge Street, a beautiful dead-end square where you'll find the old **Masonic Lodge**. Continue up the hill to the **Black Bull**, one of Branwell's many hangouts, and turn left past the church to reach the end of the route at the **Brontë Parsonage Museum**.

Branwell was well-known in most of Haworth's pubs, particularly the **Black Bull**, but remained well-liked and would frequently be called to entertain whenever any gentlemen visited the premises, a particular party trick being to write with both hands at the same time while maintaining an undistracted conversation.

The **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway** is a single track branch line that was extended to Oxenhope due to persistence from local mill owners as Haworth was originally planned as the terminus. The line was closed in 1962 after the Beeching Report, but re-opened in 1968 as a volunteer-operated heritage railway specialising in serving real ale on-board and it thrives to this day.

Oxenhope is one of the most unspoilt villages in West Yorkshire, its grey terraces climbing across the hillsides of the Leeming Water. Rather than one village it is really a conglomeration of several hamlets, including Uppertown, Lowertown, Leeming, Shaw and Marsh. The name Oxenhope means 'valley of the oxen', referring to a time when it was part of the estate of Bradford Manor. Oxenhope only became the village's name when it was adopted by the station built as the terminus of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway in 1867.



a curlew, whose distinctive trill is commonly heard on Thornton Moor in early summer

Jew Lane is thought to come from the Old English *ceo* (or *chew*), referring to a hollow.

② Emerging on a path at the bottom, turn left across the stream. At the next junction, descend right to cross another bridge and join a narrow walled pathway. At the end, follow the track right to the corner of **Leeming Reservoir**, where a signed path leads straight on down the slope. Turn right at the bottom and join **Jew Lane** running delightfully along **Leeming Brook**.

⑦ From the top of **Thornton Moor**, continue along the well-defined path as it descends towards Oxenhope and Haworth is glimpsed for the first time. Go through a gate over the conduit at the bottom, then bear left at a sign, following the **Brontë Way** down the hill towards **Leeming Reservoir**. The sometimes boggy path runs parallel to an old walled track, then goes straight on across another conduit to descend into the trees near the reservoir.

Branwell returned to the **Parsonage** in Haworth in 1842 and by the end of the year had secured a position as tutor at Thorp Green, near York, where his sister Anne worked. He was dismissed in 1845 after an alleged affair with his employer's wife, and sank into a deep alcoholic depression for the last three years of his life. Despite his early precocious talent, Branwell died unrecognised and unfulfilled, but his personality, imagination, and ultimate self-destruction are integral elements in the Brontë story.



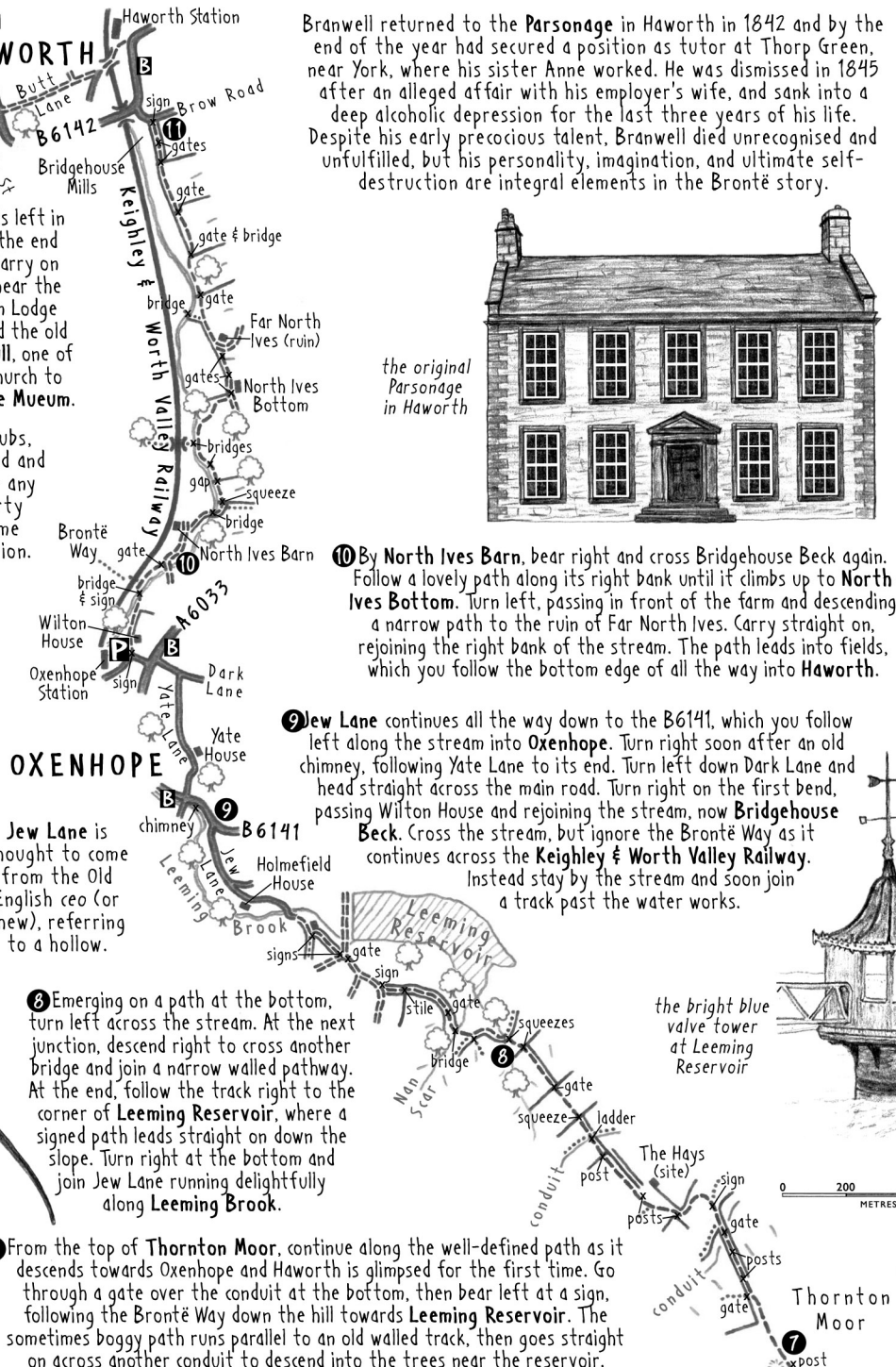
the original Parsonage in Haworth

⑩ By **North Ives Barn**, bear right and cross **Bridgehouse Beck** again. Follow a lovely path along its right bank until it climbs up to **North Ives Bottom**. Turn left, passing in front of the farm and descending a narrow path to the ruin of **Far North Ives**. Carry straight on, rejoining the right bank of the stream. The path leads into fields, which you follow the bottom edge of all the way into **Haworth**.

⑨ **Jew Lane** continues all the way down to the B6141, which you follow left along the stream into **Oxenhope**. Turn right soon after an old chimney, following **Yate Lane** to its end. Turn left down **Dark Lane** and head straight across the main road. Turn right on the first bend, passing **Wilton House** and rejoining the stream, now **Bridgehouse Beck**. Cross the stream, but ignore the **Brontë Way** as it continues across the **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway**. Instead stay by the stream and soon join a track past the water works.



the bright blue valve tower at Leeming Reservoir



0 200 400 600 METRES



Leaflet by Christopher Goddard (www.christophergoddard.net)
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THE WANDERING BARD WALK

Distance: 10½ miles (17km)

Ascent: 520m

Parking: Pay car parks in Haworth. Free car park by canal in Luddenden Foot, in Oxenhope and at Jerusalem Farm.

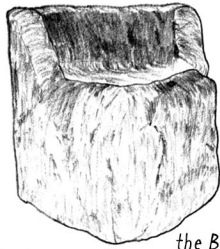
Public Transport: Bus 500 runs hourly from Haworth to Hebden Bridge. Buses 590 and 592 run regularly from Hebden Bridge to Luddenden Foot.

Character: A wonderfully varied trek from the Calder Valley, where Branwell Brontë worked at Luddenden Foot Station, over the tops to his family home in Haworth. The route takes in rich woodlands, open moors, lively brooks and of course many pubs.

KEY TO MAP SYMBOLS

- tarmacked road
- rough vehicular track
- walled path or track
- path on the route
- path off the route
- wall or fence
- stream or watercourse
- pool or pond
- steep slope or edge
- crag or rocky edge
- buildings or ruins
- woodland or trees
- bus stop
- car park / layby

The **Boggart's Chair** stands in the far corner of St Mary's Church. It is actually the oldest of four fonts, but was removed to the garden of Ellen Royd House when the church was attacked during the Civil War. It was only recognised in 1902, by which time it had acquired its new folkloric name.

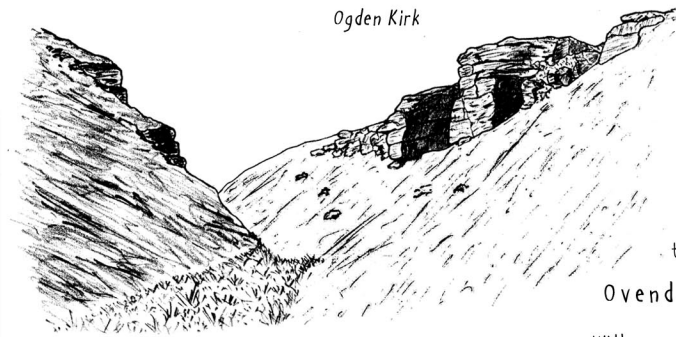


the Boggart's Chair

Head through the churchyard opposite the **Lord Nelson** and turn left just before a bridge over the stream. A clear path follows the left bank of Luddenden Brook all the way to **Booth**, passing the sites of a number of the valley's old mills before turning into a metalled road. Turn left up the hill at the end, then go right up some steps opposite the old school. Reaching another lane, follow it right to **Jerusalem Farm**, where there are public toilets near the car park.

On April 1st 1841, Branwell Brontë was promoted from his post in Sowerby Bridge to position of clerk-in-charge of the railway at **Luddenden Foot**. He was paid £130 a year and lodged at nearby Brearley Hall. He befriended Francis Grundy, a young railway engineer whose descriptions of Branwell (provided forty years later) are responsible for the belief that this period proved his downfall. In fact it was a very creative period for him, the first of many of his poems being published in the *Halifax Guardian* under his favourite pseudonym, Northangerland. He spent a lot of time exploring the countryside of the Calder Valley, so much so that in March 1842 he was dismissed for neglecting his duties.

LUDDENDEN FOOT B



Ogden Kirk

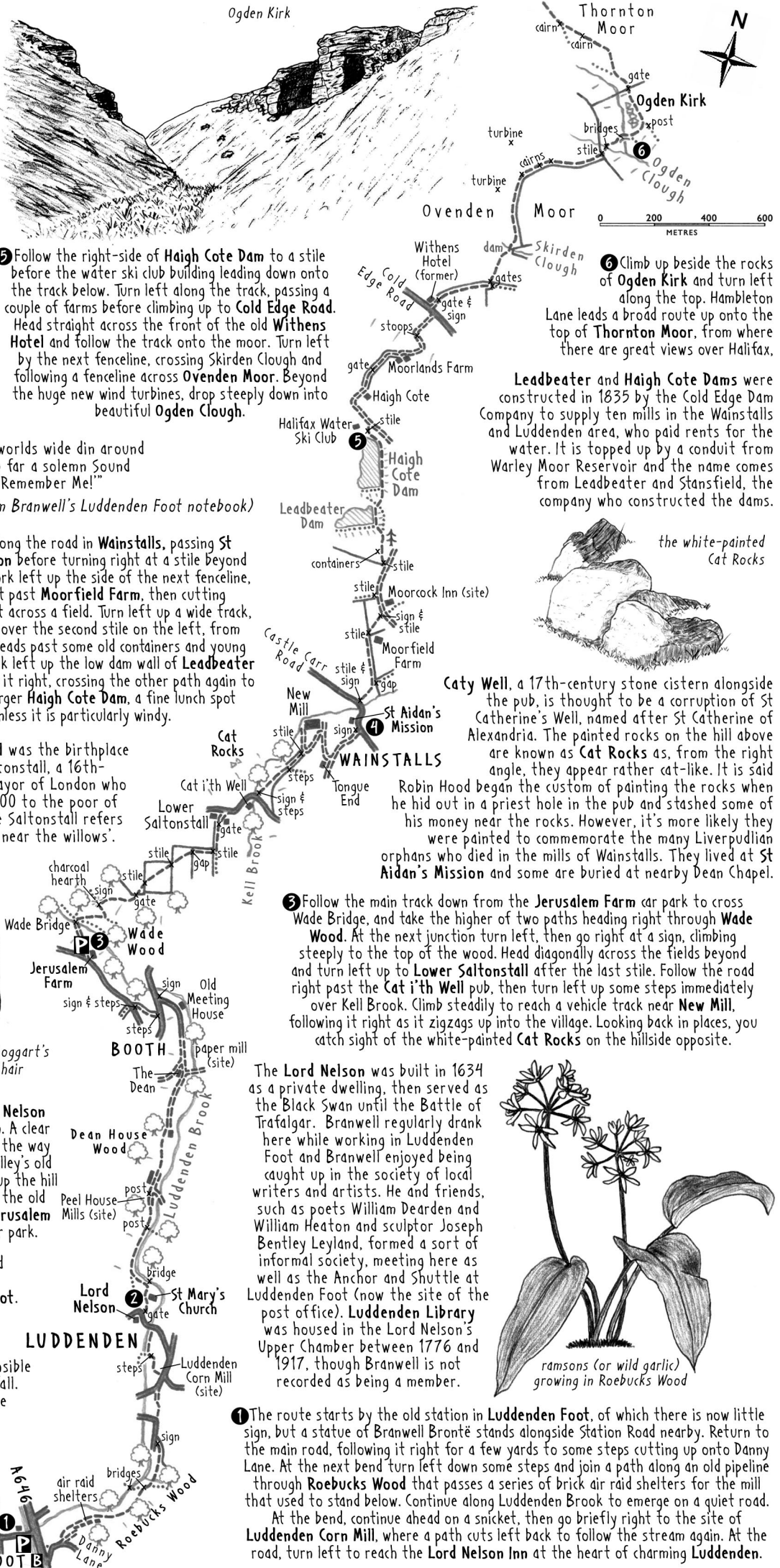
Follow the right-side of **Haigh Cote Dam** to a stile before the water ski club building leading down onto the track below. Turn left along the track, passing a couple of farms before climbing up to **Cold Edge Road**. Head straight across the front of the old **Withens Hotel** and follow the track onto the moor. Turn left by the next fenceline, crossing **Skirden Clough** and following a fenceline across **Ovenden Moor**. Beyond the huge new wind turbines, drop steeply down into beautiful **Ogden Clough**.

"Amid the worlds wide din around I hear from far a solemn Sound That says 'Remember Me!'"

(taken from Branwell's Luddenden Foot notebook)

Turn left along the road in **Wainstalls**, passing **St Aidan's Mission** before turning right at a stile beyond the stream. Fork left up the side of the next fenceline, following it past **Moorfield Farm**, then cutting diagonally right across a field. Turn left up a wide track, then go left over the second stile on the left, from which a path leads past some old containers and young plantations. Fork left up the low dam wall of **Leadbeater Dam** and follow it right, crossing the other path again to reach the larger **Haigh Cote Dam**, a fine lunch spot unless it is particularly windy.

Lower Saltonstall was the birthplace of Richard Saltonstall, a 16th-century MP and Mayor of London who famously left £100 to the poor of Halifax. The name Saltonstall refers to a 'farmstead near the willows'.



Climb up beside the rocks of **Ogden Kirk** and turn left along the top. **Hambleton Lane** leads a broad route up onto the top of **Thornton Moor**, from where there are great views over Halifax.

Leadbeater and Haigh Cote Dams were constructed in 1835 by the Cold Edge Dam Company to supply ten mills in the Wainstalls and Luddenden area, who paid rents for the water. It is topped up by a conduit from **Warley Moor Reservoir** and the name comes from **Leadbeater and Stansfield**, the company who constructed the dams.



the white-painted Cat Rocks

Caty Well, a 17th-century stone cistern alongside the pub, is thought to be a corruption of **St Catherine's Well**, named after **St Catherine of Alexandria**. The painted rocks on the hill above are known as **Cat Rocks** as, from the right angle, they appear rather cat-like. It is said **Robin Hood** began the custom of painting the rocks when he hid out in a priest hole in the pub and stashed some of his money near the rocks. However, it's more likely they were painted to commemorate the many **Liverpudlian** orphans who died in the mills of **Wainstalls**. They lived at **St Aidan's Mission** and some are buried at nearby **Dean Chapel**.

Follow the main track down from the **Jerusalem Farm** car park to cross **Wade Bridge**, and take the higher of two paths heading right through **Wade Wood**. At the next junction turn left, then go right at a sign, climbing steeply to the top of the wood. Head diagonally across the fields beyond and turn left up to **Lower Saltonstall** after the last stile. Follow the road right past the **Cat i'th Well** pub, then turn left up some steps immediately over **Kell Brook**. Climb steadily to reach a vehicle track near **New Mill**, following it right as it zigzags up into the village. Looking back in places, you catch sight of the white-painted **Cat Rocks** on the hillside opposite.

The **Lord Nelson** was built in 1634 as a private dwelling, then served as the **Black Swan** until the **Battle of Trafalgar**. **Branwell** regularly drank here while working in **Luddenden Foot** and **Branwell** enjoyed being caught up in the society of local writers and artists. He and friends, such as poets **William Dearden** and **William Heaton** and sculptor **Joseph Bentley Leyland**, formed a sort of informal society, meeting here as well as the **Anchor and Shuttle** at **Luddenden Foot** (now the site of the post office). **Luddenden Library** was housed in the **Lord Nelson's** Upper Chamber between 1776 and 1917, though **Branwell** is not recorded as being a member.



ramsons (or wild garlic) growing in Roebucks Wood

The route starts by the old station in **Luddenden Foot**, of which there is now little sign, but a statue of **Branwell Brontë** stands alongside **Station Road** nearby. Return to the main road, following it right for a few yards to some steps cutting up onto **Danny Lane**. At the next bend turn left down some steps and join a path along an old pipeline through **Roebucks Wood** that passes a series of brick air raid shelters for the mill that used to stand below. Continue along **Luddenden Brook** to emerge on a quiet road. At the bend, continue ahead on a snicket, then go briefly right to the site of **Luddenden Corn Mill**, where a path cuts left back to follow the stream again. At the road, turn left to reach the **Lord Nelson Inn** at the heart of charming **Luddenden**.