

7. Up and Down the Colne Valley: Slaithwaite and Linthwaite

Duration: 1½ Hours

Linthwaite and Slaithwaite both grew rapidly during the Industrial Revolution and as you walk round both villages there is still much evidence of their textile pasts.

Slaithwaite is fortunate to have the Huddersfield Narrow Canal running through it and during the summer it can be nice to end your walk by taking tea on the Moonraker Floating Tearoom (called Moonraker because some residents of Slaithwaite when caught smuggling claimed to be 'raking the moon out of the river'!).

There is also an amusing anecdote about Linthwaite residents: apparently some residents were having problems with a leaking lead water pipe. Someone had the idea of going up to Crosland Moor rifle range and collecting lead bullets to be melted down, thus using them to mend the leaking water pipe. They boiled water in a pan to melt the lead but, of course, the lead did not melt – it is impossible to heat water to a temperature which will melt lead, hence the name Linthwaite Leadboilers was given to residents of Linthwaite. NB: Be careful how you pronounce Slaithwaite if you stop to talk to locals (it being pronounced 'Slawit').

This walk begins on **Britannia Road, Slaithwaite** where cars can be parked. Walk up Britannia Road towards the canal, turning left at **Market Street** passing the **Shoulder of Mutton** public house on the right. At the church turn left in **Nabb Road** passing the **Silent Woman** public house on the right and head towards the viaduct. Pass under the viaduct – here Nabb Road becomes **Holme Lane**. Continue up the hill until you reach the public footpath immediately before **Slaithwaite Reservoir** (below). Turn right and walk along the dam wall, crossing the bridge at the end of the reservoir and walking up the cobbled path to the road.



Cross the road, then go left and immediately right onto **Royd Street**. Walk along Royd Street until you reach Pretoria Street on the left. Turn up **Pretoria Street** and walk along the track passing the home of **Slaithwaite Cricket Club** (below) which is on the left. Continue along the track until you reach **Racton Street** where the main entrance to the cricket club can be seen to the left (feel free to take a look at the cricket field and maybe stop and watch a few overs if you are doing this walk during the cricket season).

Rejoin the main road – Royd Street - passing what was **Slaithwaite Equitable Society Ltd, Branch No.4**. When you reach the junction of Royd Street, Meal Hill Lane, Bank Top and Hill Top Road you will see some very old houses to the left along **Meal Hill Lane** – one of these houses having the date 1685 engraved above the door.



Walk along Hill Top Road passing some fine examples of weavers' cottages and continue down Hill Top Road taking a sharp right down to **Slaithwaite train station**. Pass the station and walk under the bridge, following the road round to the left (Station Road). On the right is **Globe Worsted Co Ltd** (1887).

At the end of Station Road you will pass **Slaithwaite Methodist Church**. Shortly after, turn sharp right and immediately left just before Slaithwaite Town Hall on to Cross Street. Walk along Cross Street, turning left onto New Street, passing **Colne Valley Sports Centre**. Just after Platt Mill House turn right onto Platt Lane. Notice how close what was the mill owner's house is to Spa Mill and how close the mill is to the canal. Also note the workers' terraced housing nearby.

After crossing the canal, follow the road round to the right and then turn left taking the public footpath which crosses the **River Colne**. Continue up this footpath until you reach the very busy Manchester Road. Cross the road and walk up **Linfit Fold** passing some beautiful old weavers' cottages. Just after Linfit Hall turn left along Bank Road. Notice at **Linfit Hall** that we have another example of industry and domesticity living side by side.

As you walk down this road you can glimpse the northern slopes of the Colne Valley with the mills and viaducts of nearby Slaithwaite in the valley bottom. Continue along Bank Road into a new housing estate until you reach a public footpath on the right at the side of a children's playground. Take this path along the back of the new houses, passing through a gap in the wall into a field. Walk along the well-worn path in this field, again taking notice of the fantastic views across the valley.



Pass through the gate into the next field and head straight on. As you cross this field Linthwaite and its church comes into view as well as **Titanic Mill** (above) down in the valley bottom. Pass through the gap in the wall into a second field. At the end of this field go over the stile and follow the tarmac path. Cross over the wide track at the houses and continue down another tarmac path towards the Methodist church. You emerge in **Stones Lane, Linthwaite**. Follow the lane round to the left passing the **Methodist church**. You will notice another Methodist building straight ahead on Chapel Hill. This was erected in 1867 and is now unused. Turn right between the two buildings and follow the main road up the hill (**Waingate**).

At the end of Waingate follow the main road (Causeway Side) right up the hill. Again as you walk up this hill if you look back you will see fantastic views of Slaithwaite in the valley bottom. At the top of the hill take the steps on the left, finally emerging on to Gillroyd Lane. Walk past the schools – **Colne Valley High School** (the former school of the poet Simon Armitage) and **Linthwaite County Junior & Infant School**. This rather tedious climb is immediately rewarded with a view of the austere but splendid **Linthwaite Christ Church**. Turn right just before Gillroyd Lane becomes Cowlersley Lane and walk past **Christ Church** along Church Lane. After the church the second of our three cricket clubs, Broad Oak Cricket Club, can be seen on the left. Continue along the road at the side of a wall until you reach a

public footpath on your left. Walk down this path (be careful: it can be rather slippery in winter) which skirts the boundary of the **Broad Oak** ground (below). At the end of the path turn left where you can either stop for a rest in the children's playground or continue another 100 yards or so and stop for refreshments in **Th'Alma** public house.



Continue back along the road (Cowlerlsey Lane) turning right down **Tommy Lane**. Walk down Tommy Lane and you will eventually emerge at **The Sair** public house (if you didn't stop at Th'Alma, The Sair is a good place to stop, brewing its own ale). Follow the road (Hoyle Ing Road) round, passing **Hoyle Ing Working Men's Club**. At the bottom of Hoyle Ing Road cross over the busy **A62 Manchester Road**. Take the steps on the right down towards Titanic Mill, crossing the River Colne via the road bridge and walking along Lowestwood Lane.

When you reach the canal turn left onto the towpath towards Slaithwaite. As you walk along the towpath you will see the home of the third of our cricket clubs – **Linthwaite Cricket Club** - on the left. Cross the road at Spa Mill (which we passed in the early stages of the walk) and continue once again on the footpath into Slaithwaite, eventually emerging at Britannia Road where the walk began.