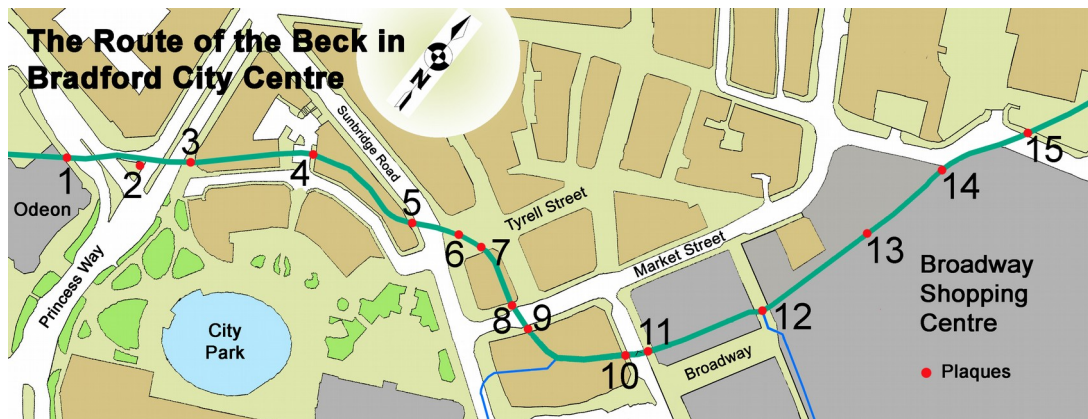


Bradford Beck: Take the Plaques Walk



Welcome to the Bradford Beck Plaques Walk.

A series of 15 plaques are placed along the route of Bradford Beck as it flows, hidden, beneath the centre of Bradford.

The walk begins alongside Bradford Live. Look out for the dark slate-coloured paving stones. Each bears two lines of a poem, the Friends of Bradford Beck logo and shows the direction of flow of the water under your feet.

Bradford Beck

On westerly moors
Rise Chellow, Pinch, Pitty

Energy once harnessed
To power this wool city

Goit and Beck in parallel
Power in, waste out

Spectral Saxon elders
Mourn memory of trout

In pure flow below Sunbridge
Fish once chased

Disregarded water
In gothic vaults encased

Culverted, covered
Forced underground, hidden

Cherished sparkling Beck
Degraded to a midden

Fouled by industry detritus
Sky just a dream

Under our city lies
A misused, abused stream

Awaiting a rebirth
Whispering in the dark

Water sighs, eddies, races
Unseen, unremarked

So small a waterway
For Bradford dale drained

Beck fed the canal basin
Its miasma ill-famed

Skip across the broad ford
Bradford is named

Jane Callaghan
2015

FOBB ©

Plaque 1 (Next to Bradford Live)

On westerly moors Rise Chellow, Pinch, Pitty

Standing here, Bradford Beck flows about 4 metres below you. In the 18th century a brewery stood here, using the beck as a source of water. The brewing process kills cholera bacteria and so beer provided safe liquid and calories for working people. A brewery had been there from at least the 18th century, and was used also as a chapel until 1780 for non-conformists to hold services. Princes Way used to be named Brewer Street.

Whitakers brewery was demolished and a cinema built in its place using some of the masonry from the old building. It opened in 1930. With a seating capacity of 3,500, it was the largest cinema in Britain outside London. The opening ceremony naturally included a Mickey Mouse cartoon entitled *Barnyard Concert*. The auditorium had excellent acoustics for it was designed with the new talking pictures in mind. The building also contained a restaurant and a ballroom.

In 1950 the cinema became the Gaumont. Because of its audience capacity, it was also used as a concert venue. Benjamino Gigli, Bill Haley and the Comets, Buddy Holly, The Beatles, the Rolling Stones and the Everly Brothers all played here.

In 1969 the it became the Odeon – a cinema once more. Its large auditorium was split so that several films could be shown at the same time. The Odeon's doors closed in 2000 but this building with its beautiful Listed facade looks hopeful once again as a major entertainment venue, as Bradford Live.

Plaque 2 (A traffic island at the corner of Godwin Street and Thornton Road)

Energy once harnessed To power this wool city

This plaque is close to the scene of a serious riot which took place on 13th April 1891. This was the climax of the bitter Manningham Mills strike, which had been going on since December 1890. There had been a downturn in the textile export trade and the management at Manningham Mills sought to deal with this by reducing the employees' wages. Negotiations quickly broke down and several thousand workers came out on strike. The winter was harsh that year and many families suffered severe hardship.

There was a good deal of support for the strikers, but the city fathers, and the local Watch Committee in particular, sided with the employers, even to the point of attempting to ban strike meetings. Nevertheless, a demonstration in support of the strikers was called for the 13th April. It attracted many hundreds of people to the centre of Bradford and violence broke out. The Mayor was compelled to read the Riot Act and troops with fixed bayonets were deployed to disperse the hostile crowd. Although many people (and some police horses) were injured, nobody was killed in the several hours of rioting. The strike itself ended later that month and the striking workers had to return to work on greatly reduced wages.

One important outcome of the strike was the creation in Bradford, two years later, of the Independent Labour Party, a forerunner of the modern Labour Party.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 3 (Bottom of Godwin Street, outside Aldermanbury House)

Goit and Beck in parallel Power in, waste out

Beneath your feet is the confluence of the Goit and Bradford becks. A channel was taken off the Goit further up the hill to power Bradford Corn Mill.

Close by, is City Park which you can see through the tunnel. It was opened on 24th March 2012. This is a six-acre public space right in the heart of the city and next to City Hall, which it complements very effectively.

City Park contains the largest man-made water feature in any UK city, comprising a 4,000 square metre mirror pool with laser lighting and 100 fountains, the tallest of which can produce a jet thirty metres high, making it the highest fountain in Britain.

City Park was originally conceived in 2003 and despite the failure to secure funding from the National Lottery work commenced in 2009. Its construction caused controversy, as some critics said that the cost of £24.4 million far outweighed any benefits it might bring. Bradford Council, however, estimated that City Park could generate £80 million per annum for the city's economy.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 4 (Bottom of Miller Gate, a small cul-de-sac off Aldermanbury)

Spectral Saxon elders Mourn memory of trout

The Bradford Corn Mill stood here on Miller Gate and this plaque is right over the mill race where water rushing down the hill powered the mill-wheel. The Beck was economically vital to Bradford before the industrial revolution.

Look through the tunnel, and you can see City Park. It cost £24 million, mainly paid for by the council and is a gathering place for many. The artificial lake constantly changes shape and size. Thus, water continues to contribute to city life.

Bradford has a history of religious non-conformism dating back to the Puritan vicars of the Elizabethan era. In the eighteenth century Methodism took a strong hold in the town. John Wesley visited Bradford on many occasions, the first time being in 1744, when he preached in Little Horton. He also preached at a hall in the centre of Bradford called the Cockpit, which was located near to where this plaque is situated today. The Cockpit was a hotbed of vice, gambling and drinking before being taken over by the Methodists for their meetings in 1756.

Drunkenness and vice could not easily be eliminated from the town. Titus Salt, Bradford's mayor in 1848 and 1849 (and later the founder of Saltaire) commissioned an enquiry into the moral condition of the town. In 1850, the report said, "Considerably more than 150 beershops exist in the borough and...scarcely any of them can be described as being decent and orderly houses of entertainment. Facilities for dishonourable intercourse between the sexes are afforded by almost all and some are in fact brothels under another name." The passing of the 1868 Beer Bill enabled ninety of Bradford's worst-conducted public houses to be closed.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 5 (Bottom of Sunbridge Road opp. the red-brick Prudential building)

In pure flow below Sunbridge Fish once chased

From this plaque you can just see Centenary Square. On 22nd March 1997 Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Bradford to commemorate the centenary of Bradford being granted city status by Queen Victoria. The Bradford City fire disaster memorial stands in Centenary Square and the Queen laid a wreath here.

This honour marked remarkable progress. Throughout the nineteenth century Bradford had grown at a phenomenal rate – faster possibly than any other place in Britain. In 1801 it had been little more than an obscure market town, with a population of about 6,000 people. By 1851 it had a population of 180,000 and was a chaotic and unregulated place. But by the last decades of the nineteenth century it had developed into a modern city of almost 300,000 people, and it had become the World centre of the wool trade. In 1910, it was estimated to be one of the wealthiest cities in Europe.



City Hall Centenary Square City Park from Plaque 6

Plaque 6 (By the seats)

Dedicated to the 56 who died in the fire at Bradford City football ground in May 1985.

Disregarded water In gothic vaults encased

From here there is a view of City Hall. Formerly the Town Hall, it was opened on 9th September 1873, when Bradford's reputation as the world centre of the wool trade was at its height. Designed by Lockwood and Mawson, the magnificent main structure was supposedly influenced by Amiens Cathedral and the clock tower is a copy of the campanile of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. Look around the building's walls and you will see statues of England's monarchs including Oliver Cromwell. Bradford's leading families supported the Parliamentary cause in the English Civil War.

When the statue of Cromwell was due to be hauled into place, the gang of Irish labourers charged with the task was rumoured to be planning to drop it 'accidentally on purpose' so that it would be smashed. Cromwell was loathed in Ireland because of atrocities such as the massacre at Drogheda, perpetrated by his soldiers. The rumour came to the attention of Bradford Corporation and the Irishmen were given a day's holiday. A gang of English labourers, who presumably bore no malice towards Cromwell, was hired to carry out the task instead and Cromwell was safely hauled into his place on the façade of City Hall, where you can see him today.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 7 (Near the bottom of Ivegate)

**Culverted, covered
Forced underground, hidden**

Here, if this was 1800, you would be standing on a bridge looking down on the Beck.

This plaque is close to the bottom of Ivegate, which is one of the oldest streets in Bradford. It rises sharply to join two more of Bradford's oldest streets, Westgate and Kirkgate. The ending of these street names has nothing to do with gates; it is a version of the Danish word *gata*, which simply means "street." The Yorkshire dialect was strongly influenced by Danish, because, prior to the Norman Conquest, this part of England was inhabited by Scandinavian settlers, who had their capital at Jorvik, now called York.

Originally, Bradford's market was held where the three streets meet; later the market was moved to Rawson Square. Bradford's dungeon was located at the top of Ivegate.

Nearer the bottom of Ivegate is the site of a building which was Sir Thomas Fairfax's headquarters prior to the Battle of Adwalton Moor in 1643. Bradford was on the side of Parliament during the English Civil War.

The Fairfaxes and their army were narrowly defeated at Adwalton Moor, and after a short siege Bradford was occupied by Royalist forces, led by the Earl of Newcastle. Although the townspeople expected to be massacred, Newcastle showed them mercy, supposedly because he was visited by a ghostly female who pleaded that he should "Pity poor Bradford."

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 8 (Market Street)

**Cherished sparkling Beck
Degraded to a midden**

This plaque is located in Market Street. A map published in 1854 shows that Market Street, originally known as New Street, was already a major thoroughfare. You are standing at a plaque opposite the former Tarapaca Bank building, formed to foster Anglo-Chilean trade in the high quality fibre of the alpaca camelid.

In 1947, heavy rain fell and water levels in Bradford Beck rose. Pressure built up in the culvert below you and Market Street became distorted, some of the wooden cobbles that made up the road surface exploding into the air and falling close-by. Nearby schools closed for the safety of the children, many of whom made their way into the city to gawp at the flood and the damage it had caused.

A pub called The Boars Head used to stand where Market Street joins Kirkgate. Although there are Boars Head pubs elsewhere in England, this one has a special relevance for Bradford for it commemorated the tale of "the boar with no tongue," a heroic legend of medieval Bradford.

The head of the boar with no tongue has featured on Bradford's coat-of-arms since 1847, when the town was incorporated: it became a legal entity, allowed a council and to enact by-laws.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 9 (A tight squeeze here, between a bin, bus stop and maybe a queue)

Fouled by industry detritus Sky just a dream

This plaque is opposite what was once Bradford's most prestigious department store, Brown Muff, the 'Harrods of the North.' Brown Muff could trace its history back to 1814, when a widow, Elizabeth Brown, opened a clothes shop on Market Street. Later the shop was taken over by Elizabeth's son, Henry, who soon went into partnership with his brother-in-law, Thomas Muff.

The original shop was replaced in 1870 by the present building, and over time Brown Muff became an up-market department store, attracting well-heeled customers from the Dales. By 1900 the store was owned solely by the Muff family, who lived in Ilkley. In 1909 the family changed its name to Maufe, thus provoking the following rhyme:



'In Bradford 'tis good enough
To be known as Mrs Muff,
But in Ilkley by the River Wharfe
It's better to be known as Mrs Maufe.'

In 1917 Thomas Maufe, a son of the family, was awarded the Victoria Cross. He survived the First World War, but was tragically killed whilst training with the Home Guard in 1942.

Older people can still remember customers arriving in chauffeured cars to be met by liveried staff who made sure they never had to open a door for themselves.

Brown Muff finally went out of business and the store closed on 27th February 1978. For a time a branch of Rackham's traded from the Brown Muff building, but this too closed in 1995. The building is still there, now divided up into a variety of retail outlets. B C S

Plaque 10 (Bank Street)

Under our city lies A misused, abused stream

This plaque is on Bank Street, named for the many banks on this road which served the city.

From here you can see the brown-tinted glass front to the printing annex of Bradford's newspaper. Founded on 16th July 1868 as the *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, the newspaper became the *Telegraph and Argus* in 1947.

Next to the newspaper's offices is St George's Hall, which was opened on 29th August 1853. Paid for by public subscription, it was Bradford's first public building. The town council met here for some of its monthly meetings until the Town Hall was built in the 1870s. In 1854 Dickens read extracts from *A Christmas Carol* in the hall, for which he received the then princely sum of £100. He praised the hall's excellent acoustics, as these were pre-microphone days.

The hall was also used for political meetings, notably during the Manningham Mills strike of 1890-91, when it became the venue for several rallies of support for the strikers. Churchill was attacked by suffragettes at a political meeting in 1910 and supposedly had to seek refuge under the stage.

BCS

Plaque 11 (Bank Street, near to the Wool Exchange)

Awaiting a rebirth Whispering in the dark

This plaque is on Bank Street, named for the many banks on this road which served the city. Below your feet the Beck runs through a cathedral of vaulted arches. Total darkness hides intricate Victorian masonry, elegant in its symmetry and geometry.

Look up the hill from this plaque, and you can just see a corner of the former Wool Exchange. On 9th August 1864 Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister at the time, laid the foundation stone of the building, which was designed by Lockwood and Mawson. By now the Corporation and Bradford's leading businessmen (usually, of course, the same people) were so imbued with self-confidence that they organised a celebratory event which was verging on the outrageous in its pomp. Church bells rang, flags were flown, and there was a nineteen-gun salute in Peel Park.

From here, approximately 100 carriages and two military bands drove in procession to the site of the Exchange on Market Street. In the evening Palmerston was the guest of the Corporation at a grand dinner held in St George's Hall, where the Bradford Choral Society greeted him with a rendition of 'See the Conquering Hero Comes.'

The Wool Exchange was the hub of Bradford's textile trade until the 1960s, by which time the city's world-renowned position as 'Worstedopolis' had all but ended. Nowadays the Wool Exchange building provides a beautiful location for a branch of Waterstones bookshop.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 12 (Charles Street)

Water sighs, eddies, races Unseen, unremarked

Close to this plaque stood one of the handsomest of Bradford's Victorian buildings, Swan Arcade, which closed its doors for the last time on 3rd March 1962. The next day demolition commenced. Swan Arcade was opened in 1879 on the site of the old White Swan Inn. The arcade housed up-market retailers such as a cigar shop and high-class tailors. Its office space was mainly occupied by firms of wool brokers and the like. The writer J B Priestley was employed by one of these for a time after he left school, and although he found the work rather dull he admired Swan Arcade itself.

Stanley Wardley, the city engineer, had devised an ambitious modernisation scheme. This involved tearing down many of the Victorian buildings in the city centre and replacing them with edifices which were supposedly more in keeping with the modern age.

When it became clear that the Swan Arcade was under threat of demolition, Priestley campaigned vigorously to save it, but to no avail. In fact many Bradford citizens felt that Priestley had abandoned his native city years before and so his opinion did not really count for much.

Thus it was that on 10th December 1963 Yorkshire and England fast bowler Fred Trueman ceremonially topped out Arndale House, a vastly inferior and aesthetically quite repulsive replacement for Swan Arcade. Perhaps Trueman should have stuck to cricket.

Bradford Civic Society

Plaque 13 (Inside the Market Street entrance to The Broadway shopping centre)

So small a waterway For Bradford dale drained

The Broadway Shopping Centre covers the former broad ford which was in fact a wide bridge across the Beck. It is after this river crossing that Bradford is named.

The Beck flows beneath your feet, hidden from view, unreachable by anyone but City engineers. Here the culvert is wide, rectangular in section and of heavily reinforced concrete. The bed is flat and smooth and the stream bubbles down a small three-stepped weir.

The Broadway Shopping Centre also occupies the site of the former Forster Square. The square was named after William Edward Forster (1818-1886) a Liberal MP for Bradford and his pointing statue stands at one of the entrances.

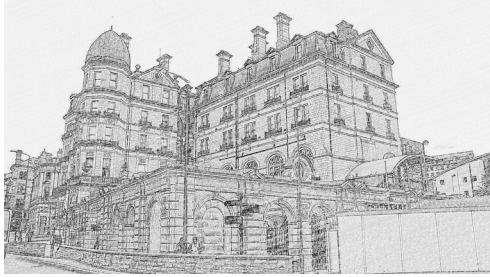
On 17th February 1870 Forster presented his Elementary Education Bill to Parliament, thus laying the foundations of compulsory education in England. His bill created controversy, particularly regarding the provision of religious education in schools, but the bill was enacted and became law.

The rationale behind compulsory schooling was never purely educational. By 1870 laws forbade the employment of very young children in factories. This meant that whilst the adults in a family might be working long hours, their children could well be left totally unsupervised.

There were reports of gangs of children wandering the streets of towns and cities, breaking the law and causing annoyance. Confining children every day in schools, where they would not be a nuisance, and where they could be taught good manners (and some basic literacy) was therefore an appealing notion for many.

Forster was followed by Margaret McMillan (1860 -1931). A Christian socialist, she came to Bradford in 1893 at the invitation of the Independent Labour Party and became a key figure on the Bradford School Board. Horrified by the conditions in which many of the children of Bradford's poor were living, she promoted some far-reaching reforms: a school meals service, a school medical inspection service, school baths, better facilities for handicapped children and the beginnings of a free nursery education system – all pioneered in Bradford.

Bradford Civic Society



Plaque 14

Beck fed the canal basin Its miasma ill-famed

This plaque is close to the Midland Hotel. On 13th October 1905 England's most famous actor of the time, Sir Henry Irving, collapsed and died in the foyer of the Midland Hotel, where he was staying. He had been appearing at the Theatre Royal on Manningham Lane, just a few hundred yards from the hotel.

During the performance, Irving was clearly unwell, even to members of the audience. His manager, Bram Stoker, author of *Dracula*, managed to get Irving to the Midland Hotel and was with him when he died. A battered suitcase, with Stoker's name on it, stands as an exhibit in one of the corridors of the hotel.

The Theatre Royal became a cinema and finally closed its doors in 1974. The building stood derelict until 1990 when it was demolished. The Midland Hotel, restored and refurbished in the 1990s, continues to flourish.

The Beck flows below you., incarcerated in concrete. Bradford Canal was completed in 1774 and although the Parliamentary Act that authorised the canal explicitly excluded using water from the Beck, here it was dammed to divert water into the canal basin.

BCS

Plaque 15 (Near the canal basin and the Cathedral)

Skip across the broad ford Bradford is named

This plaque is close to what was once the terminal basin of the Bradford Canal and what was formerly a vast area of docks. The canal was three miles long with ten locks. In the 1860s, following an outbreak of cholera, there were attempts to close down the canal, "that seething cauldron of impurity," as the Bradford Observer described it. The canal company argued that the water was polluted before it reached the canal. Indeed, it is said that one could light the surface of the Beck with a match in Victorian times.

However, the canal linked the centre of Bradford to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, and thus to the rest of industrial Yorkshire, Lancashire and beyond, including the ports of Hull and Liverpool. It was a key to Bradford's success as it enabled the town's manufacturers to trade coal, stone and iron with many parts of England and worsted cloth across the world. The Bradford Canal closed in 1922 and was filled in.

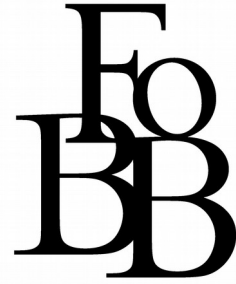
Also nearby is Bradford Cathedral. Records show that in 1281 there was a church on the present site of the cathedral, and it is likely that there was an earlier place of worship which may have been destroyed soon after the Norman Conquest. By the fourteenth century a stone church had been built, possibly to replace one burned down by marauding Scots who, after their victory at Bannockburn in 1314, frequently raided the north of England with impunity.

After the Reformation, Bradford had a series of Puritan vicars and the town developed a strong tradition of religious dissent. During the Civil War Bradford took Cromwell's side and the Parish Church was used as a defensive strong point when the Royalists besieged Bradford in 1642 and 1643. The Parish Church became Bradford Cathedral in 1919.

BCS

The Plaques Walk

The Plaques Walk was conceived in 2014 by the Friends of Bradford Beck and the plaques paid for by businesses, organisations and personal subscription.



Its aim is to highlight the water-course that has been closed in, polluted and mostly neglected during recent times.

The Beck enabled Bradford's existence and former growth to industrial might. It was a source of water for power and transport for the early citizens of Broad Ford.

The Friends of Bradford Beck believe that this little stream could once again become an important asset to the City of Bradford.

Urban streams bring beauty and interest to built up places and allow nature to have a foot-hold, contributing to our prosperity and well-being.

We want the Beck once again to be able to enhance our lives with charm and interest.

Visit us at www.markingbradfordbeck.org for more information and to find out how you can get involved to make a difference.

The Friends of Bradford Beck 2015

