



HERITAGE ➔ TRAIL ➔



BRADFORD 2025
UK City of Culture





INTRODUCTION

MENSTON is a small but growing village on the edge of Ilkley Moor. It sits within the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and when Bradford was announced as the City of Culture for 2025, a group of Menston residents wanted to contribute. This trail aims to provide you with an easy walk through the village focusing on its history as a product of place and people.

Just as Bradford developed in the Industrial Revolution, Menston owes its growth to the railway age. The hope is that people will make use of the train service to Menston as it is the start of the trail. The walk is about a mile although it is possible to extend it by making use of local footpaths.

Some of the buildings mentioned might be open, so feel free to explore inside.

**TO START THE MENSTON HERITAGE TRAIL,
PLEASE GO TO MAP REFERENCE 1.**

➤USEFUL INFORMATION:

Public toilets can be found at the side of Kirklands Community Centre on Main Street. There are several places in the village where refreshments can be purchased depending on the day and time.



1 MENSTON STATION – The line was built by two companies – North Eastern and Midland. 505 men, 56 horses and one steam engine were needed to build it. Trains started running to Ilkley in 1865 but Menston did not get its station until 1873. Until then passengers had to go to Guiseley or scramble down to a temporary platform at the junction with the Otley line!

Up until the late 1980s the car park was a coal yard. The arrival of the railway changed Menston from a small agricultural settlement to the expanding village it is today. Leave the station on the ticket office side and start the walk up Cleasby Road.



2 CLEASBY ROAD – back in 1785, the land here was owned by the Fawkes family of Gunpowder Plot fame. With the arrival of the railway, an opportunity to develop the land was seized.

In 1876, some of the land was sold to a Richard Digby Cleasby – hence the road name. In 1882 there were no street lights and no telegraph office, so people had to pay for a special messenger to Otley.

3 As the road levels out, there is a field with a fine horse chestnut tree. This land was given to the village in memory of her parents by



local resident, Miss Porritt (1912-1997) who was a generous supporter of village organisations. **PORRITT'S FIELD** is held in trust and currently managed by the Menston Area Nature Trust who are in the process of rewilding it.

As you approach the Cleasby Road/Main Street cross roads, you come to various village facilities – Post Office, chemist, dentist, hairdresser and physiotherapist. Over the passage of time, there has been a bank, wool shop, shoe shop, optician, dress shop and butchers.

Turn right at the junction and head along Main Street to Kirklands Community Centre.



4 KIRKLANDS – The old building, known as **FOURNESS HOUSE** when it was built, had an adjoining barn as seen in the picture.

The property is now a community centre and library, run by a local trust and serving the village in many ways. Kirklands centre is at the heart of Menston with over 30 regular groups and over 100 events per year.

A Garden of Remembrance was created in 2008 for those who have died in the two World Wars (the original 1914-1918 war memorial is inside St John's Church).

Outside the Library entrance is a plaque commemorating Eric Knight who lived briefly in Menston and was the screenwriter for the film '*Lassie Come Home*'.



5 Further along Main Street on the opposite side of the road, you come to the local **NISA** store; part of the building housed the Post Office at one time. The NISA is an important village asset following the closure over the years of four butchers and three fruit and veg shops.



6 Beyond the NISA is **MENSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**. Schooling in Menston started in 1622 and both the Church of England and Wesleyan Methodists were instrumental in educating children.

The present school was built in 1894 and its adjacent buildings in 1967. A swimming pool was built by parents in the 1960s and this was in use until the late 1990s when it was replaced by a car park.



7 WILLOW HOUSE FARM – This farm house was used as the first school house in Menston in 1622. The outbuildings at some time used to house the local slaughterhouse and there was a butcher shop on the roadside.

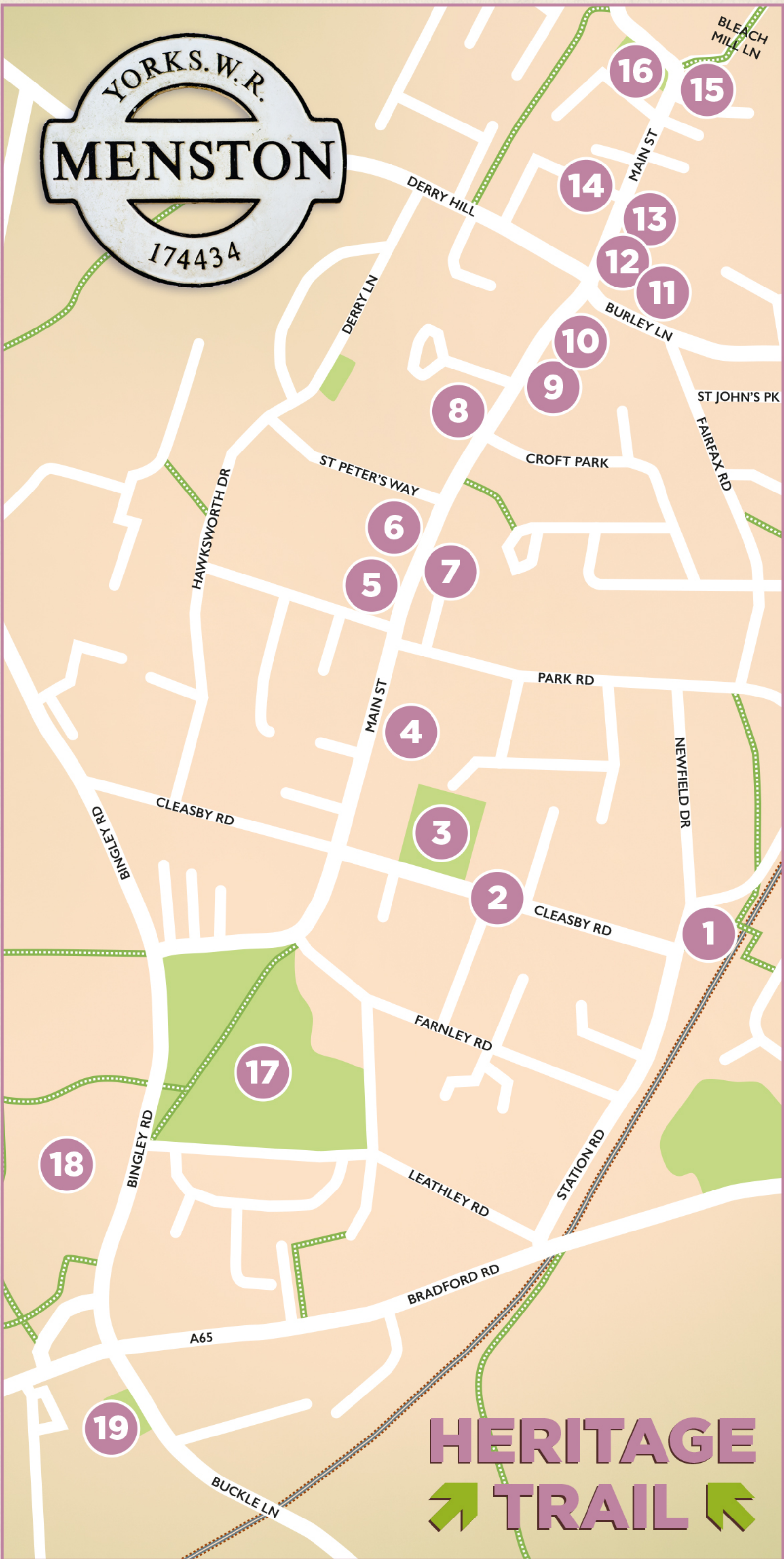
8 Back on the school side and opposite the Croft Park shops, there is a builder's yard and funeral directors plus the **OLD SCHOOL COTTAGE** (1871). These buildings were used as a school, Sunday school and Village Hall and later by Harry Corbett as his workshop. He created many of the props for the very popular Sooty Show there.

Magic tricks and slapstick comedy were hallmarks plus the catch phrases: "Izzy wizzy, let's get busy" and "Bye bye everybody! Bye bye!"

*Harry Corbett,
Sooty, and Sweep.*

*Picture from the
Gyles Brandreth
Bear Collection
at Newby Hall.*





HERITAGE
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9 The property with the post box outside was the Post Office for many years. The most recent postmaster, Peter Finlay MBE was a key person in village life and the Post Office was the 'go to' place for news!

Before continuing the walk, take a moment to take in the view up towards Ilkley/Rombalds Moor to the west. The landscape around Menston would have looked quite different in the Stone and Bronze Ages. The valleys and lower ground would have been heavily wooded, marshy by the streams and rivers, so people would have tended to live in small groups on the high open ground.

By the Iron Age, climate changes meant that people were able to move down from the highest ground and establish small settlements.

There are virtually no Roman remains in Menston, but it seems there was a Roman road linking Adel and Ilkley. The local tribes, the Brigantes, strongly resisted the Roman occupation and the Roman garrisons at York and Ilkley had to be well fortified.

It is easy to imagine, Roman soldiers marching across the Chevin and looking down to Menston and thinking how much further before we get a break!



10 Dropping down the hill on the right is the **METHODIST CHURCH** (1886) which replaced an earlier Chapel (1826). Adjoining is the Cornerstone Community Café – which may be open for refreshments

Next you reach **FOUR LANE ENDS** which is in the conservation area. The pubs, café and other local businesses form another hub at this end of the village, together with the **PARISH CHURCH** set up on the hill above Burley Lane.



11 The Church was built in 1871. It is open most days. Pop in to count the mice carved by the 'Mouseman of Kilburn'. Also, to see the original War Memorial.

12 Carry on along Main Street passing on your right buildings that were previously used as the old forge, a fire station and **PINFOLD COTTAGE** where stray animals were corralled.

13 This significant building is **FAIRFAX HALL**. It and a number of road names in Menston perhaps give a wrong impression of the importance of Menston's connection with Sir Thomas Fairfax, leader of the New Model Army. Fairfax Hall (originally Menston Old Hall) was occupied by Charles Fairfax in 1627. Despite local tales – there is no proof that the battle of Marston Moor was planned at Fairfax Hall or Low Hall in Menston Park.



14 Opposite the Hall is **DICK'S GARTH ROAD** – meaning the road leading to Dick's field. Many of the houses are back to backs. Continuing on your left, is a small development of homes on the site of what was White's Laundry, a thriving business and local employer until 2013.

15 Continue along Main Street until the road turns to the left. Look to your right and you will see **THE GRANGE** built in 1672.

The owners' initials RHS are carved above the door. Robert Hitch was the Dean of York and was instrumental in setting up the first school in Menston.



16 Opposite the Grange is **BUTTERFIELD PARK** donated to the people of Menston by the Butterfield family who lived at Low Hall and also donated Menston Park in 1955.

This is the end of the first section of the trail. Retrace your steps along Main Street and continue past the Cleasby Road junction towards the park.

➤ **WALK EXTENSION**

If you decide you would like a longer walk continue along Bleach Mill Lane. Part of the walk is often muddy particularly in the fields. Follow the lane until the Bleach Mill entrance and take the left fork. Continue on through the metal kissing gate and then go right through the gap in the wall where four paths meet: If you turn left, you head up onto Ilkley Moor.

If straight on, you reach Burley in Wharfedale station on a hard surface track.

Turn right and go through the gap in the wall, keep Carr Beck on your right but at the second bridge cross the beck and head up the field towards the railway until a kissing gate on the right is reached. This leads into Clarence Drive and then to Burley Lane.

You will pass Well House on the left then bear left and continue along an unmade road to the station **or** you could head up St John's Park back towards Four Lane Ends and retrace your steps back to the Cleasby Road/Main Street junction and head towards Menston Park.

17 MENSTON PARK still shows evidence of the ridge and furrow ploughing system from Anglo Saxon times. The Hall, now flats, was used by evacuees in 1914. The council took it on in 1955 and it was redeveloped several times.

The park is a valuable asset to the village and in 2021 a new footpath improved the link to the High Royds estate by use of a pedestrian crossing on Bingley Road. Use this path and crossing to head into High Royds/Chevin Park.

18 HIGH ROYDS HOSPITAL was opened in 1888 as the West Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum. Initially, it had 800 patients who with staff doubled Menston's population. Along with the opening of the railway station, the Asylum was a factor in the rapid growth of the village. The hospital was a self-sufficient community. It had its own farms and a railway link from the main line until 1951. The site was redeveloped for housing in 2017.

After exploring the grounds, leave the site by the main entrance on the A65 and head past St Mary's School and then turn right beyond the Ambulance Station.



19 HIGH ROYDS MEMORIAL CHAPEL – nearly 3,000 people lie buried in unmarked graves in the grounds. The Chapel and grounds have been restored and the Chapel is open occasionally.

After visiting the Chapel area, cross into Menston at the traffic lights and walk across the park, then along Main Street back to the Cleasby Road junction, where you can turn right and head back to the station.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- **Jack H Kell:** Menston Remembered
- **Elsie Fletcher:** The Story of Menston
- **Alastair Laurence:** History of Menston & Hawksworth

ARCHIVE ROOM

The Menston Heritage Group is grateful to Kirklands Community Library for the use of a room at the library for the archive collection that is being created.

This trail was devised in March 2025.

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MENSTON'S HERITAGE**

***Supported by
Shipley Area Committee***

