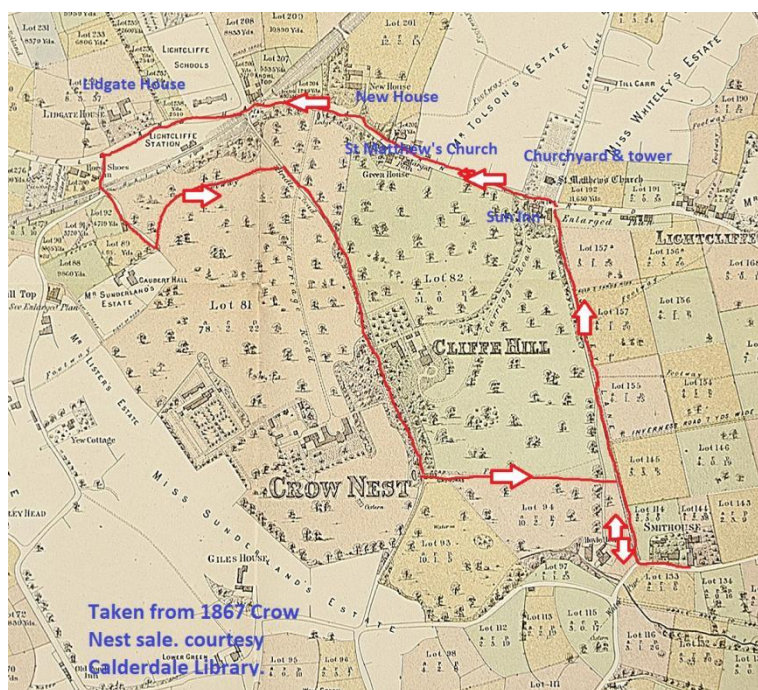


Ann Walker's Lightcliffe - Sun Inn start

Welcome to Lightcliffe. However if you are planning your visit you'll need to get to the churchyard for the start of your walk. There is a regular bus service (255) to Lightcliffe from Halifax, ask the driver to put you off at the Sun Inn Wakefield Road. If you are travelling by car the post code is HX3 8TH. Again, by taxi, ask for the pub. The walk is around 2 miles and is mainly on hard surfaced pavements though part of it, down the Coach Road, is a hard surface but could be muddy. Powered wheelchairs would have difficulty on the Coach Road.

Please respect the houses that are mentioned, they are all private.

This walk will take you round just a part of the Walker estate and introduce some local history which is after Ann Walker's time. The Walker family had been in Lightcliffe from early in C18 becoming increasingly wealthy. By 1770 William Walker embarked on the rebuilding of his two main houses, Crow Nest and Cliff Hill, and largely funding the church built on this site to replace a much older chapel. When his grandson, John, died in 1830 his two granddaughters, Elizabeth and Ann, inherited the estate. They owned much of Lightcliffe and Hipperholme, farms and other properties in the Shibden Valley, Ovenden, Greetland, central Halifax, Stainland, parts of Huddersfield and mills in Honley. This walk is round their Lightcliffe properties.



You may wish to wander into the churchyard before you set off, in that case please see the notes at the end of this.

Sun Inn coaching inn dates from at least 1730 and was a farm before becoming an inn. It was owned by the Walkers and sold to Whitaker's Brewery in 1867 for £860. It would have been converted into a coaching inn when the Halifax to Wakefield Turnpike was built.



Much of what we know about what they owned comes from detailed accounts written by Ann's land steward, Samuel Washington, in 1847 and the auction of much of the estate held in 1867 as Elizabeth's son – Ann's nephew, Evan Charles Sutherland Walker sold up as he moved to Skibo Castle in Scotland.

Turn and begin to walk towards the new church which is 300m back towards Halifax. You will see the current entrance to Cliffe Hill with its lodge. We don't know if there was a drive into the house from here at the time of the Walkers or whether it was from the Coach Road visited later. We'll get a distant view of the house later on the walk.

As you come up to the new church you will see a house and then a terrace called Greenhouses. Both terrace and church were built on the site of a farm, Green House, bought by Ann Walker in 1841.

The new **St Matthew's** stands on the site of **Green House**. It was founded by Major Johnston Jonas Foster who bought Cliffe Hill in 1867. Once the church opened in 1875 the old church became largely redundant but more of that later.



We now pass, on the right, where **New House** used to be. It has been called the Grange and the Manor and is now a new housing estate. The William Priestleys lived here and you can see that it was very close to the two principal houses belonging to the Walkers.

On the opposite side of the road is the lodge to Crow Nest estate. This was built after 1867 by Sir Titus Salt, a wealthy textile merchant. You can just about see an alpaca, the source of some of his wool, in the coat of arms. This new driveway would give easier access to the mansion going under the old road by a bridge. You will see original entrance later. [If you are new to the area and have time to spare do visit the model village of Saltaire, its mill and church near Bradford]

At the crossing you're at Knowl Top, a couple of the cottages are old and were part of a farm and workshops in the time of the Walkers. This is where Ann's school may have been. Opposite is the entrance to the **Coach Road** and you're standing over the Halifax to Bradford railway line. The railway was opposed initially by Ann but then she sold the land to allow the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway to come through, opening in 1850. The family did quite well out of this as, apart from the



land for the rail track, the land for the station and goods yard was sold as was a considerable amount of stone for the construction of bridges and the viaduct. We know that the line runs through both Lister and Walker estates. The records say £9,000 was paid by the railway company between the two estates. Ann received it all as she was heiress to the Shibden Hall as well as Crow Nest estate at the time. George Mackay Sutherland received £10,500 from the railway in a similar way.

Continuing along Wakefield Road you will pass the **National School** (now Lightcliffe Primary School). Land was owned by the Walkers and donated by Sutherland Walker as was the school dating from around 1865. It was designed by John Smith – the land agent brought down from Scotland by Sutherland Walker to replace Samuel Washington.

If you walk towards the newish housing estate and stand by the entrance pillars you can see the end part of **Lidgate House**. It was here that Ann moved sometime around 1830. It seems likely that she moved out of Crow Nest when her brother, John, got married. When she moved to Shibden Hall with Anne Lister in 1834, the house was rented out to the splendidly named Lamplugh Wickham Wickham (Hird) for 10 years – clearly Ann had no intention of returning. Later Samuel Washington rented the property. You'll notice the spelling has changed to



Lydgate but there have been other variations over time including Ledgate. The house itself has been changed considerably since Ann lived here. Similarly, Cliff Hill acquired a final 'e' later in its life.

Ann owned three pubs in Lightcliffe and Hipperholme (the Sun, the Travellers and the Hare & Hounds), Elizabeth inherited the Horse Shoes. This is immediately opposite to the front of Lidgate on the opposite side of the road. It is now a private house called The Poplars. When it was a pub, the turnpike ran in front of it. It was only when the railway came that this road was diverted to the current line of Wakefield Road.

Before you move on you might think of the walk that Ann and Anne would have had from here to Shibden Hall. It is about 2 miles and would have followed the lines of the current main roads. Halfway was reckoned to be Lane Ends which is on the A58 by the pet store.

You've now two choices depending on recent weather and ease of access. You can retrace your steps to the start of the Coach Road and walk down towards Crow Nest and Cliff Hill or cross the road, walk under the railway bridge on St Giles Road and bear left between a row of cottages and Park View leading to Brookelea.

Walk along past the houses and there is a path to the left of the golf course. It is flagged and passes through what was the grounds of Crow Nest. As you walk along, the mansion would have been seen on the righthand side in the distance. Much has changed since Ann's day. The house was demolished in the 1960s, a neglected ruin. The parkland had been quarried for the much sought after local sandstone, the house used for munition manufacture during the first world war and completely neglected for many years after that period. It was from a quarry here that huge blocks of stone were taken to form part of the foundations of Blackpool Tower.

At the top of the path, you join the Coach Road (and anyone who has taken the easier path). This road has access from both ends and was built to service both houses. Almost immediately you cross the bridge under which runs the drive created by Titus Salt. Look to the left and you have a good view of the church and the Arts & Crafts former vicarage.

The first feature will be the entrance gates to Cliff Hill on the left. You can make out the initial JJF for Johnston Jonas Foster and the date 1867 when he bought it at the sale. As you walk down the slope you may get glimpses of the side of Cliff Hill and its outhouses but this will be dependent on how tall you are and the time of year. In summer most of the view is blocked by trees even if you are tall!

On the righthand side there are views across the golf course, all of which was part of the parklands. A little further down you will come across the main drive gates to Crow Nest. Standing there you have to imagine a curved drive swinging left towards the house. You'll now walk between high walls separating the two properties. Crow Nest was the jewel in the crown of the Walker estate. The dining room was 33' by 19', the drawing room only slightly smaller with a large library, breakfast room, morning room and billiard room. Also on the ground floor



were school rooms, nurseries and a Steward's office. There was a butler's pantry, a housekeeper's room, a kitchen and servants' hall together with cellars for dairy, wines and washing. Upstairs were excellent bedrooms with servant bedrooms in the attics. The mansion was heated throughout by Ormson's Hot water apparatus.

Outside were extensive facilities for horses, coaches and a house for the coachman. There were standings for cattle, piggeries, hen houses, ice house and a series of outbuildings. In total, 78 acres and pews 1 and 7 were included in the sale.

The gardens were described in great detail and included a pheasantry, a rabbit warren and a fish pond (the only bit that remains). The conservatories were designed and recently built for vines, melons, camellias, peaches, cucumbers and orchids. The gardener had a four-bedroom house and there were potting sheds and a mushroom house. The ornamental gardens were augmented by an orchard. The carriage drive was about half a mile in length leading to a lodge.

All that remains is the small lake. As you walk down to the cross path, look to the right and you can see a bench on the golf course. In front of the that is the lake with an interesting shot across to the green.

Just before the road narrows for a bridge turn left along another flagged pathway. As you set off, look to the right and you can see where there was a passage from this field to the mansion. Tucked into the corner there are signs of some form of building. This was the gas works built by Sutherland Walker to service the two houses, Hoyle and Smith Houses. They all had some gas lighting, hot water and a form of heating.

Along this path you are walking along the southern edge of Cliff Hill. Frustratingly there is no view of the house.

Looking south you can see evidence of old buildings which were part of **Hoyle House** farm. At the end of the path, please turn right for a brief diversion to see **Smith House**. This is one of the oldest houses in the area. It, together, with Hoyle House were bought by Ann in 1843.

Go to the T-junction and turn left on Smith House Lane. At the end of the path, turn right and walk the short distance to the T-junction. A few paces up on the left you will find Smith House with a stone indicating 1672 but it may be older. Part of its fame came from its owner in the 1740s, Elizabeth Holmes who entertained John Wesley and other non-conformist preachers. When she died, she left money to help build the 'old' St Matthew's and £40 to the government of the day, in her will, to support it in quelling the rebellion in our North American colonies!!

Retrace your steps up Stoney Lane keeping to the left pavement. When you are passing the primary school and before you reach the secondary school's pitches, look to the left. Through the trees you will be able to see the facade of **Cliff Hill**. Even in summer with growth on the trees, there is still a good though distant view. There has been a house here for centuries, it was bought by William Walker in the 1760s and remodelled at the same time as Crow Nest.



In the sale document there is a glowing description which includes two halls, a dining room, drawing room, library and morning room on the ground floor. The domestic arrangements included butler's pantry, housekeeper's room, kitchen, servants' hall, good bedrooms and attics. It had stables for 13 horses, a coach house with hot water and standing for several cows. There were pleasure, flower and kitchen gardens and grand views to the south. Ann was born and died in the house.

Continue to the top of the road and cross into the churchyard. You see the tower which is all that remains of the old church. As we've seen earlier, once it was replaced by the new church it was rarely used. Following storm damage in the 1960s and then vandalism the Diocese decided to demolish the entire building. Crucially a newly founded charity The Friends of Friendless Churches stepped in and took responsibility for the tower. By 1973 the church itself had been demolished. Four memorials are stored in the tower which is opened occasionally each year.



Walk down the path and stand with the tower door to your back. You can see the outline of the old church on either side and the curved apse at the far end. It was a small simple Georgian church established in 1775 and replacing the earlier Eastfield Chapel which was founded in 1529. There was a gallery on three sides and the organ was above your head. Over your left shoulder, in the gallery, was the pew rented by Anne Lister and mentioned in her diaries.

Under the church were a few vaults where some of the priests and benefactors were buried. Ann Walker was buried with her two aunts towards the front of the church and marked by flowers and a simple stone. This should be replaced by ledger stone dedicated to Ann and her aunts.

Ann's nephew, Evan Charles Sutherland Walker made improvements to the church's interior including a stained-glass east window commemorating his parents and aunt and two pulpits. The one on the left (north) was over the Walker vault and a plaque, now stored in the tower, was placed across a window.

Immediately beyond the apse is a large flat gravestone commemorating Ann's parents. George Mackay Sutherland's grave is marked by a large chest tomb by a rhododendron bush. Towards the west wall are the graves of Samuel Washington the Crow Nest (and Shibden) land steward, Lydia Fenton who was at Cliff Hill when Ann died, William Mallinson the mason who built the church, Samuel Sowden who died of old age not as portrayed in Gentleman Jack and other tenants of both estates who also appear as characters in the series. If you use a QR reader on the two information posts in this area you will be given more

Ann Walker and Anne Lister linked gravesites



1. AL Tenant Charles Howarth senior
AL Joiner Charles Howarth junior
2. AL Tenant Samuel Sowden
AL Tenant's wife Martha Sowden
3. In AL diary James Hinscliff junior
4. AL coal merchant James Hinscliff senior
5. AW & AL Land agent/steward Samuel Washington
Wife Hannah Washington
6. Daughter Susannah Washington
Daughter Anna Maria Washington
7. AW Brother in law George Mackay Sutherland
8. In AL diary Rev George Fenton
AW Friend / Housekeeper Lydia Fenton
9. **Ann Walker**
AW Aunt Mary Walker
AW Aunt Ann Walker
10. AW Baby Brother William Walker
AW Sister Mary Walker
AW Father John Walker
AW Mother Mary Walker
AW Niece Mary Sutherland

This is very roughly where the gravesites can be found. Use the QR codes on the posts and / or the notice board posters for more directions.

Drone photograph courtesy of Friend Gary Edmondson.
information and directions.

Friends of St. Matthew's Churchyard.

Please feel free to wander round the churchyard and look at the gravestones. Many make interesting reading. There are further QR posts around the churchyard.

The Friends of St Matthew's Churchyard website has a lot more detail about the church and the many people buried here.

Visit lightcliffechurchyard.org.uk or keep up to date on its Facebook page.

We hope that you have enjoyed your walk. If so, please consider making a small donation towards the upkeep of the church using the Donate button on the webpage.

Ian Philp, Chair, Friends of St Matthew's Churchyard

Feb 2024