

Walking Keighley's history

Waypoints are marked on the map overleaf

1 Start In the Town Hall Square

◆ Across North Street stands Keighley' Grade II listed library, the first in the country to be funded by Andrew Carnegie – who is even more famous for Carnegie Hall in New York City. (See pages 30-31).

◆ In the centre of the square is the War Memorial, unveiled on December 7, 1924, when 25,000 people attended – almost half the population of Keighley.

Facing the Town Hall is the coat of arms of Keighley, a combination of the crests of the de Kighley and Cavendish families, former Lords of the manor.

The memorial is 'topped off' by a female figure bearing a wreath of remembrance and palm branch of peace.

2 Head towards the bus station, the site of Townfield Gate, an area used for public meetings in times past.

3 Pass into the Airedale Shopping centre where in Cooke Lane there is the impressive statue of Giant Rombald, who seems about to cast a rock at his giantess wife.

4 Walk through the precinct and look up at the building on the right at the junction with Low Street and you will see an old plaque.

It reads: 'Belonging to the Free School of Keighley and purchased by John Drake – Gentleman 1713'

This was the site of the Free Grammar School established by innkeeper Drake of the Lord Rodney public house.

5 Turn right into Market Street alongside the indoor market, left down Church Way and cross Worth Way, turn right then left down Long Croft.

6 This brings us to the junction of

Long Croft and Coney Lane, where Low Bridge passes above the River Worth, once known as the 'River of Silver' because of the vast fortunes made by industrialists who used its flow to power their mills.

Beyond the bridge to the left is the shell of Low Bridge Mill. Can you spot a man wearing a bowler hat peeping out half way up the chimney?

It is said the stonemason died working on the chimney and the effigy is there to stop his ghost haunting the mill – he also has two small heads to keep him company.

◆ Above us is the bridge that carries the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway famous for its part in the

Within 35 years three different churches had stood on the same site – is that a record?

◆ Just outside the churchyard is the Lord Rodney, said to be the oldest pub in Keighley, overlooking the Market Square.

◆ In 1305 King Henry granted a charter for Keighley's market which was held on this spot for over 500 years. The market cross marked the centre of the town.

Next to the cross would have been the stocks and possibly a pillory.

8 Turn left and cross to the Royal Oak in Damside, once the home of the 'Keighley Henpecked Club' – husbands who claimed to be put upon by their wives.

Landlord Harry Tap was the order's Grand Master and pots and pans were their insignia. In 1863 they celebrated the marriage of the Prince of Wales with a feast of roast beef and almost a hundredweight of plum pudding!

9 From here we walk along Bridge Street, cross High Street and join an alley which takes us behind

a row of shops to discover possibly Keighley's oldest house.

Some historians claim the two-gabled cottage is what is left of the original Elizabethan Manor House, dating back to the 1500's

Certainly it is one of the oldest parts of town with a nearby date stone from 1668.

Here the streets are still cobbled with stone setts, deeply rutted by the wheels of countless carts that have passed along them.

◆ Return to North Street and admire the architecture above the rows of shops and think how grand it would have been 100 years ago.

◆ This walk was produced by Malcom Hanson, working with the pupils of St Annes School, Keighley. www.malcolmhanson.co.uk



film "The Railway Children."

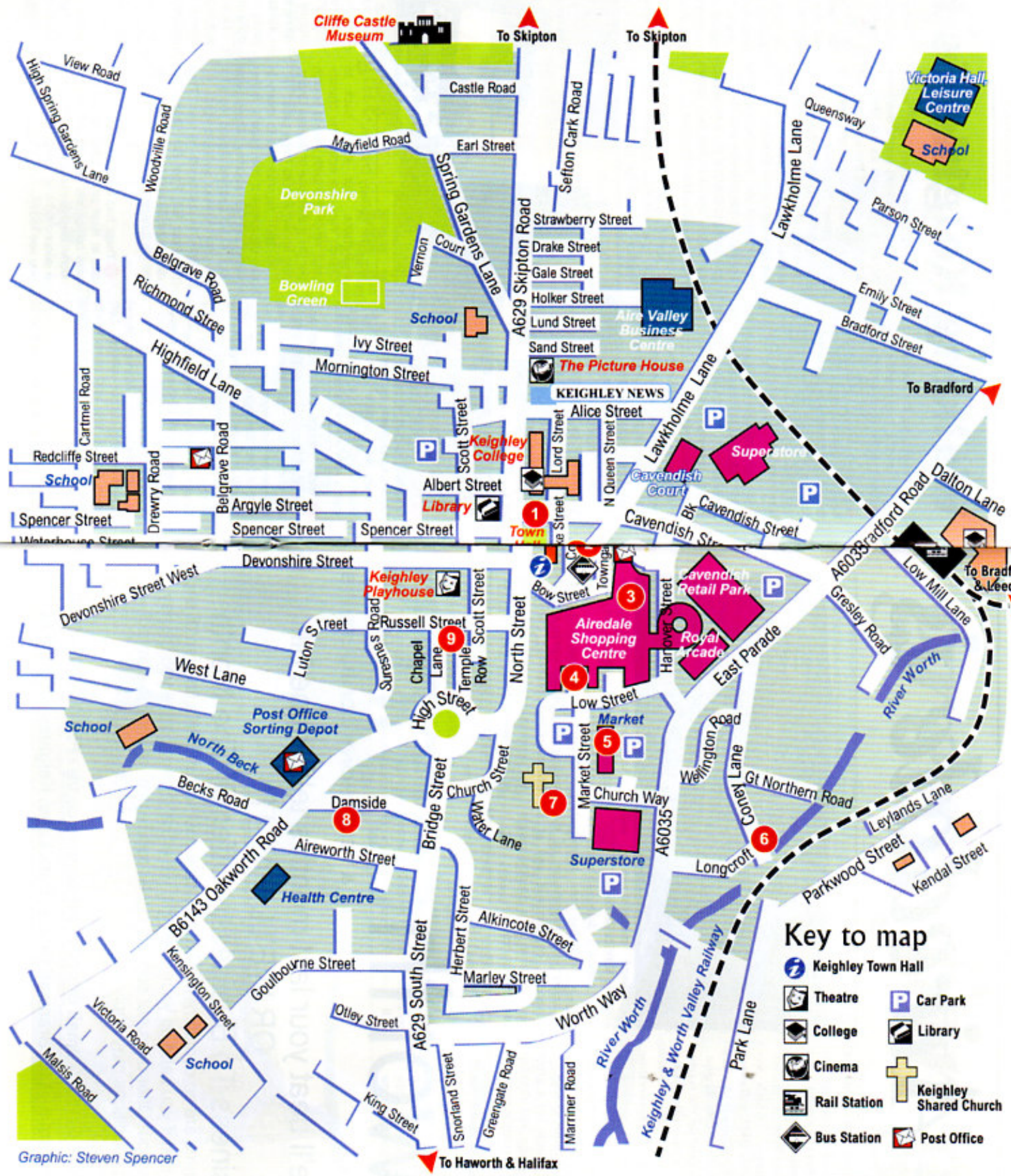
◆ Retrace your steps back to Church Way and enter the churchyard. Where the path widens search out the gravestone of William Sharp, also known as 'Old Three Laps.'

In 1807 he was due to marry in the church, but the bride's father called off the wedding. Three Laps took to his bed and stayed there for 49 years without saying a word.

With his last breath he said: "Poor Bill, Poor Bill, Poor Bill Sharp." He died aged 79 and thousands attended his funeral in 1856.

7 There has been a church on this site at least since 1245. In 1805 it was completely rebuilt, but shoddy workmanship mean it had to rebuilt a second time in 1840, the church you see today.

Keighley Town Centre Map



Graphic: Steven Spencer

- ### Key to map
- Keighley Town Hall
 - Theatre
 - College
 - Cinema
 - Rail Station
 - Bus Station
 - Car Park
 - Library
 - Keighley Shared Church
 - Post Office