Ed Glinert

111 Places in Yorkshire That You Shouldn't Miss

Photographs by David Taylor

emons:

For Lindsay Sutton, 'Mr Yorkshire'

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Foreword

This is a big, big book. Some 111 Places volumes cover a small locale: London's East End or one city, Liverpool. This 111 covers England's biggest county, and the county keeps getting bigger. This is because proud parochialists have come to remember that Middlesbrough shouldn't be in the strange anomaly Cleveland, or Hull in the hopelessly contrived Humberside, but should go back where they belong, to Yorkshire. To go back to how it was before Ted Heath needlessly messed up the boundaries, chopped up a few bits into a Greater Manchester dog's dinner, and reconstituted the much-loved East, West and North Ridings into the West, North and South Yorkshires.

This book honours proper Yorkshire – the Tees as the northern border, a choppy sea of foam and fresh fish on the east, the Humber, the Went and some fiddly bits on the south, and something called Lancashire on the west. Inside is everywhere you'd expect at first thought, from Barnsley, Beverley and Bradford to York and the Yorkshire Dales, and then many you would never think of, like Liversedge, Malton and Marsden. Leeds, Sheffield and York are not covered in detail as there are separate volumes dealing with those cities alone.

In limiting the number of entries to the necessary 111 in a place as huge as Yorkshire, some locations have had to remain in the sub shack. I've tried to avoid the clichéd and hackneyed, so there's no Nora Batty, *Heartbeat* Country and *Emmerdale*, farm or not. Far more important in a book like this are the Leeds Refectory, where The Who recorded *Live at Leeds*; Ann Lister's Shibden Hall; Bettys Tea Rooms (no apostrophe); the spookily abandoned church of Heptonstall; twisting *Temenos* by the Tees; Batley Variety Club, which Dean Martin turned down; the canal lock from hell in Sowerby Bridge; Ted Hughes' Kingdom of Elmet; the peculiar of Masham; and to honour Yorkshire's greatest modern-day cultural phenomenon, Cabaret Voltaire ('Always work, go to church, do right. Respect those in authority').

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1 The Aiggin Stone

Welcome to Yorkshire!

This ancient stone, scratched with a Latin cross and the mysterious letters 'I.T.', heralds the ancient entry to Yorkshire from Lancashire. It also marks the boundary between the rolling gentle hills of the South and the rugged landscapes of the North.

Although some believe the Aiggin Stone to be Roman in origin, it first appeared on a map, an engineer's map, in 1800. It may have been a milestone or simply a marker to guide people on their way during fog. The architect Herbert Collins writing in 1950 assumed the word 'Aiggin' to be a corruption of Agger, Latin for a pile or mound, or from the French aiguille, a needle. In 1965, James Maxim described the stone as 'an irregular block of gritstone seven feet long, tapering from two feet six inches to two feet wide, about ten inches thick. On one face is an incised cross with the ends of the arms slightly expanded'.

The stone mysteriously disappeared in the 20th century. It was found some time after laid in moorland heather and put back to its rightful spot in 1933. Since then it's been knocked over a few times, but it's now back where it should be. It used to be seven foot but has shrunk due to being pushed over and attacked.

Finding the stone is not easy. Look for the White House pub on the A58 Ripponden to Halifax road, itself a mid-18th-century packhorse route near the Pennine Way and Blackstone Edge reservoir. From the pub, cross the road and walk along the track below the disused quarry till you meet a straight uphill path. The stone is at the top. From there it is possible on a clear day to see Manchester city centre's new skyscrapers and the mountains of north Wales.

There's just one problem. Due to nonsensical 1974 boundary changes, the Aiggin Stone currently resides in a reformatted Lancashire. Elsewhere the boundary between the two counties is often vague and has led to hundreds of years of disputes.

Address One mile south of the A58 and Blackstone Edge Reservoir, three miles east of Littleborough | **Getting there** Train to Littleborough station | **Hours** Accessible 24 hours | **Tip** Fancy meeting another historic rock? Robin Hood's Bed overlooks the very edge of the ridge. Head over the stile by the fence opposite and trek a half-mile south to where the legendary hero enjoyed a well-deserved nap, protected by some of his followers.

26__Turkish Baths

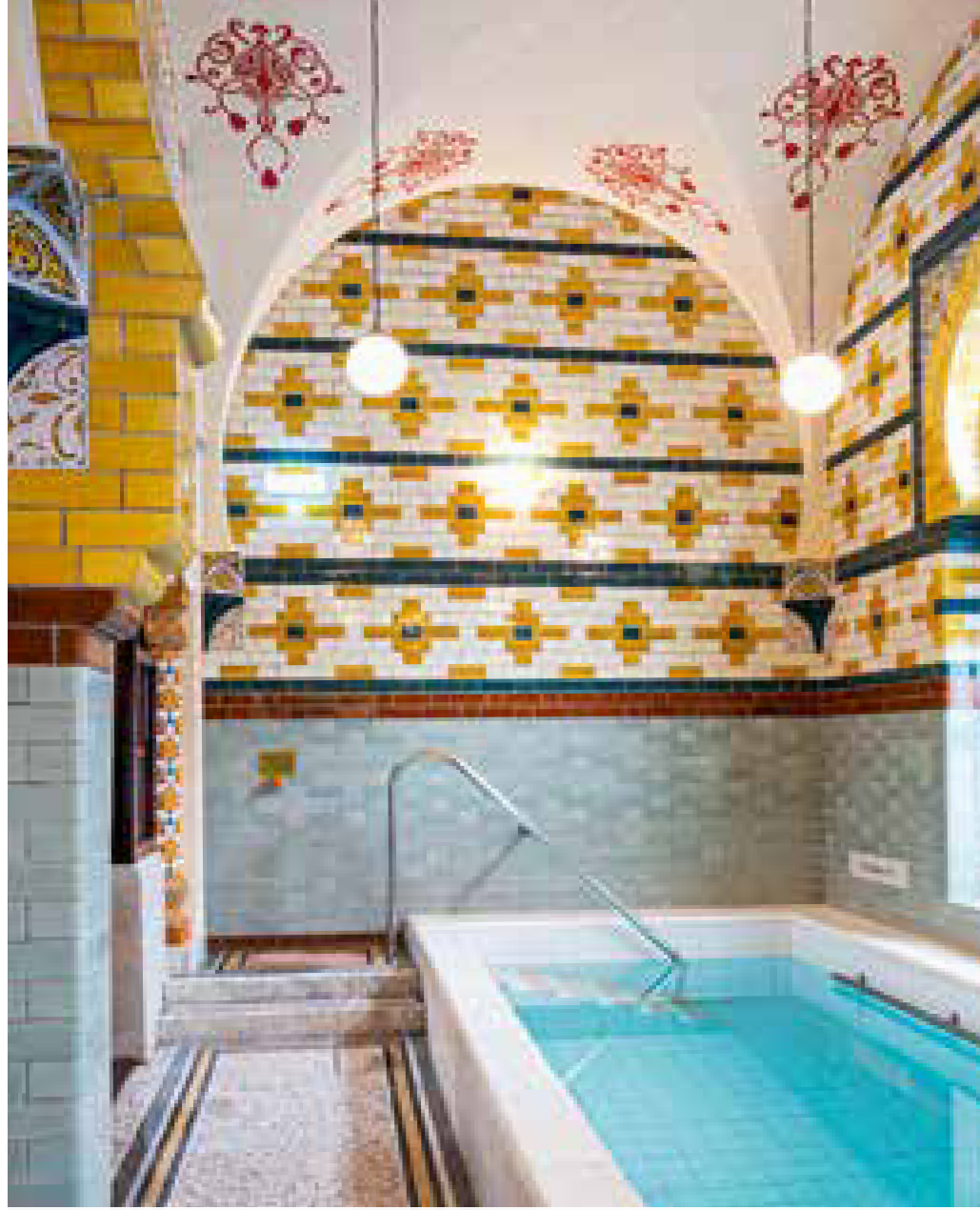
Ornate Ottoman décor washed with healing waters

Mesmerising proto-geometric patterns, serpentine mosaics and glorious azure tiles laced with lapis lazuli. These will soothe the eyes and inspire the mind while you lie back on the *gobek tasi* heated marble slab ready to take the heavenly Harrogate waters.

Turkish baths were once ubiquitous; now they are a rarity, but Harrogate's have helped make the town one of Britain's leading spa resorts, and it was recently named the best place in Britain for working from home. Harrogate's first mineral spring was discovered in 1571 by William Slingsby who claimed that water from the Tewit Well possessed properties similar to those found in the springs of the Belgian town of Spa. As word spread that the waters could cure scurvy, epilepsy and ulcers, wealthy visitors made Harrogate the 'Queen of Inland Watering Places'.

Around the baths a fashionable town grew. There were assembly rooms, libraries and theatres. Famous visitors arrived. Daniel Defoe wrote in 1724 of how 'coming to the Wells to drink the waters was a mere Matter of Custom; some drink, more do not, and few drink physically. But company and Diversion is the main business'. By 1860 there were over 10,000 annual visitors to Harrogate, but not everyone was euphoric. Charles Dickens wrote how 'Harrogate is the queerest place with the strangest people in it, leading the oddest lives of dancing, newspaper reading and dining.'

These Turkish baths opened in 1897 as one of a huge number of facilities in the Royal Baths complex. Treatments included a medicinal waters dispensary, hydrotherapy departments, mud baths and steam rooms. It also has a Calidarium (hot), Laconium (hottest), plunge pool, steam room and Frigidarium. Interest in such spas declined with the advent of the NHS, which gave ailing individuals more scientific choices. Now there's a revival in such establishments, if only for the novelty value.



Address Parliament Street, Harrogate, HG1 2WH, +44 (0)1423 556746, www.turkishbathsharrogate.co.uk | **Getting there** The baths are just off the A61, half a mile north of the railway station and a 20-minute walk from the bus station. | **Hours** Mon–Fri 9.45am–8.30pm, Sat & Sun 9am–8.30pm | **Tip** Where else to go after a Turkish bath than a short walk west to the Royal Pump Room museum with its displays on Harrogate's former role as England's premier spa?

29 Brontë's Shooting Range

Novel way of redecorating the church wall

The Reverend Patrick Brunty, better known by his altered surname, Brontë, Perpetual Curate of Haworth 1820–61, would wake up in the morning, pick up his flintlock pistols, and fire them out of the window at the wall of his church, St Michael's and All Angels. The pock marks can still be seen on the western side.

It sounds bizarre and drastic, but there was method to his madness. The good cleric, father of the world-renowned Brontë sisters, was fearful of a local uprising by the Luddites, the violent saboteurs who went around smashing machines that they claimed were putting them out of work, as Charlotte Brontë captured in her 1849 novel Shirley. Brontë had worked in areas beset by such trouble and was wary as a cleric of being targeted, so he slept with a pair of loaded pistols by his bed. His choice of firearm was dramatic. Flintlock pistols, once loaded, couldn't be unloaded. Rather than leave the loaded guns lying around each morning, he would discharge them by shooting out of his bedroom window at the church wall.

The Reverend's residence was the parsonage, now one of the most popular literary museums in the country. Alongside is the rambling graveyard, permanent home to some 40,000 people. Under the graveyard in the Brontës' days ran the water pipe into which, it was later discovered, remnants of the Haworth dead would seep, probably one of the reasons why the average life expectancy in the village was 24.

Revd Brontë insisted that improvements in sanitation be made and he was helped by the Board of Health's Benjamin Babbage (son of the computing pioneer Charles Babbage). It was too late to save his great writer daughters, whose tragic early deaths came from diseases exacerbated by the tainted water. When each Brontë daughter died, their coffin was carried into the church from the parsonage garden through the gate of death, still a morbid attraction.

Address St Michael and All Angels, 125 Main Street, Haworth, BD22 8DR, +44 (0)1535 648464, www.haworthchurch.co.uk | **Getting there** Arrive on the B 6142, park and walk. Only locals should try to drive up the ridiculously steep Main Street. The station is on a heritage line. | **Tip** Take in the Brontë Parsonage Museum, one of the most famous literary establishments in the country, where the Brontës lived, wrote and died.