



Cotton, Culture and Characters

a guided walk
around Eagley and
Bradshaw Brooks

On this guided walk you'll
visit sites of early cotton
mills, weaving sheds and
bleachworks, be
introduced to
entrepreneurs and

workers in the textile
industry, but also
footballers, singers, Glo-
White, a psychoanalyst,
fighter pilot, an actor, a
DJ, a children's writer,
refugees and rogues.
(This is intended as a
guided walk but we hope
there's enough detail
here to help you do it on
your own)



The start of the walk is at the junction of Tonge Moor Road with Crompton Way, to the North of Bolton, a mile and a half from the town centre (BL2 3BQ). If coming from town, turn right at the Castle Hotel, on the right at the junction, and turn immediately right into the Family Shopper car park. The Family Shopper supermarket looks like an old 1930s cinema which is exactly what it was.

Park there – it's never full. (if the shop is closed though the car park is gated, in which case park on any of the nearby side roads off Crompton Way)

The walk will take about two hours. Though not an urban meander it is not too strenuous. Nevertheless there are parts on tracks by streams and several uphill sections, so stout shoes should be worn. It's worth doing for the walk alone.

But let's set off. Walk to the front of 'Family Shopper'.

ONE: The building which houses the 'Family Shopper' supermarket was built as the **Crompton Way Cinema** in 1934, just after Crompton Way was completed in 1929. Cinema was the big entertainment in town between 1920 and 1960, Bolton having more cinema seats per head of population than anywhere else. This was said to be something to do with the high number of women working. The cinema offered a touch of romance and was one of the few places unaccompanied women could go which was not morally suspect. But when TV ate into the cinema's popularity during the 1950s this building became the *Casino Club* in 1961, then *Jacks*, then *Copperfields* cabaret club in 1972, then the *Bees Knees* 'a disco-diner' in 1976, then *Kwiksave* (a supermarket not a music venue). This regular change of names was not unusual for such buildings, thrashing about to make ends meet - big useful spaces, but with high overheads having to respond to changing fashions in entertainment. The Queens Cinema at the corner of Bradshawgate and Trinity Street for a few years showed Asian films to a growing South Asian population. The Odeon on Ashburner Street became a bingo hall. The Lido on Bradshawgate introduced several screens, but they all closed down whatever they tried. The *Casino Club* hosted big names, Duane Eddy on one occasion and during her solo career Dusty Springfield backed by local band the Heebie Jeebies. And on 22 April 1969 the Who played there previewing much of the iconic concept album *Tommy*. Bolton was a big venue then, Jimi Hendrix played at the Odeon as a warm up for the Walker Brothers and Simon and Garfunkel played at the Man and Scythe – though they were unknown then, in the very early sixties, playing as Tom and Jerry.



Move onto the corner with the Castle pub in front of you.



TWO: The Castle Hotel was built in the late 1930s, to catch the local trade created by the building of Hall 1th Wood estate over the road. The Castle is renowned for the extraordinary show of window boxes each summer. Oh, and it was for a while run by Nat Lofthouse, or rather, by his wife whose name was on the licence. I'm not sure why this was, although it may well have been an echo of the early Wanderer's rule that no player could run a pub. Before the ending of the player's pay cap in 1961, which restricted their earnings to ten pounds a week, players often had to work in the closed season. Wanderers, with temperance roots, banned players from running a pub. Nat lived locally as a boy and went to Castle Hill elementary school, yards away from here, signing for Wanderers as a fourteen-year-old on 4 Sept 1939. Not the most auspicious day to sign on, the second day of a World War, but as all Wanderers' senior players had signed up for the army that day, it meant Nat was blooded in the first team, in what matches did take place, much earlier than he would have been. One tale of the pub relates to the notorious second and winning goal Lofthouse scored in the 1958 cup final, when he shoulder charged Manchester United's goalkeeper, Harry Gregg, into the net along with the ball. One day, it is said, Gregg, passing the pub, dropped in, had a chat with Nat and asked for pint. Lofthouse refused to take money for the drink, saying, 'No goalkeepers are charged in in here'.

Strangely another 1950s football legend went to Castle Hill School just before Nat. Tommy Lawton's tale is one of great achievement topped with appalling sadness. Amateur football in Ramsbottom was followed by a spell at Everton, Lawton scoring goals which helped them to win the First Division Championship in 1939. After the war he found himself at Notts County, where his career ended when he was sacked as coach by new manager Jimmy Sirrell. Never canny with money and with no income he was convicted of signing a dud cheque. Then he did it again. In the early 1970s he was put on Probation. His Probation Officer, Reg Fairley (who I worked with in the mid 1970s), said he was a lovely man but lost, a drinker.

THREE: Crompton Way completed in 1929, the second part of the North Bolton Ring Road. Beaumont Road in Deane was completed in 1919 and Moss Bank Way in 1939. It was at this time, between the wars, that the British trunk road system was devised and completed, helped by government funding for road building to give work to many of the unemployed. More road transport became available, bus routes for all, lorries for commerce and cars for

the rich. But working people bought motor bikes, many with cold, poky sidecars, and there were charabancs and motor coaches offering day outings and holiday tours. This allowed working people to experience more than Blackpool and Morecambe by rail.

Cross Tonge Moor Road and walk down Crompton Way on its right, towards the Railway Bridge. Go under that and just beyond it on the right there is a rise which leads to a ginnel on the right. Walk up there and soon you come to Pimlott Avenue.



FOUR: Hall I'th Wood Council Estate. So here we are, Hall I'thWood Estate, one of the earliest built in Bolton. Look at the quality of the houses – solid, spacious, garden front and back. The new council estates were usually beyond the cowl of smoke over the town and people mentioned how black Bolton seemed when you went to town from these clean streets. People had moved from crowded terraces, which were privately rented, two up two down, one source of heat, thin walls, outside toilet, chamber pot under each bed, tin bath hanging on the back wall, gas mantles for light and no electricity supply. And there were constant ash motes in the air from the chimneys surrounding them. The typical terrace opened out onto the street and people lived in each other's sight and earshot. Many people tipped out of bed in the morning and five minutes later were at work. So, getting a council house was a bit like hitting the jackpot, a huge change. You had to have an interview with the council to get a tenancy offered. Once through that the sanitation people came round checking for lice and fleas. At any sign of bugs the whole contents of the house, clothes as well, had to be fumigated on the day of the move and then deposited by a big red truck at the new property – so if you arrived with that monstrosity the neighbours knew immediately what a mucky crew you were. But you had moved in. On many of the new estates there were no pubs, chip shops or churches and the mills were often miles away. So, it cost you tram fares to get to work and it took time, half an hour or more. Dad went to the pub less, but occupied himself in the garden. The rent was higher and keeping warm more expensive (an electric immersion heater for hot water and more space to heat). Front gardens meant you could not so easily socialise from the doorstep and children could not be seen to be encouraged or scolded. Some missed the bustle of town so much they spent all their time there. Nevertheless, those with council tenancies occupied a slightly higher rung on that all important ladder of social standing.

Walk down Pimlott and turn right onto Green Way and then immediately left following a brown sign to Hall i'th Wood which is about 150 yards down there.



FIVE: Hall i'th Wood. Built in sixteenth century, the gay black and white 'Tudor' half timbering implies that it has always been the home of 'Quality'. But it hasn't. Built in the early sixteenth century the earliest occupants known were the Brownlows, then Christopher Norris, a 'clothier'. The Starkie family inherited it by marriage and rented it in the 1750s to the Pimlott family. It was never home to the rich again and it was more or less derelict in 1900, when William Lever bought it and refurbished the place to prevent it falling down. He gave it to the council and it is today a museum.

Born in Firwood Fold (which will pass later on) in 1753, Samuel Crompton's mother and father subsisted on farm work and spinning and weaving, like many others. When his father died young Sam was six. He, his mother and two younger sisters moved first to Lower Fold in Harwood but ended up here, at Hall i'th Wood. It was at the time a tenement block housing three or four families. Crompton may have worked for a while down the hill at the New Eagley Mill run by John Ashworth (which again we are going to visit), but mostly earned a Spartan living spinning yarn using a Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny. Crompton thought he could improve it and spent five years perfecting what he originally called the Hall i'th Wood Wheel, subsequently called Crompton's Mule – which took ideas from the Spinning Jenny and Arkwright's Water Frame. He didn't tell anyone what he had made but used it to spin his own yarn. The quality and fineness of the yarn and its reliable consistency was soon noted at Bolton Market. The Mule was the future, in modern parlance, a game changer. People came peering through windows to find out how he made his wonderful yarn, even, it is rumoured, Arkwright himself. Another who came was Peel, Bury based spinner of wealth and renown, father of Sir Robert Peel the future Prime Minister. Peel offered Sam a partnership using his new machine but Crompton didn't trust him and declined. Sam, an able and imaginative carpenter, was untutored, had no financial backing and had no idea how to patent his machine. The prying continued and in the end Crompton

offered up the secret in return for promises by local spinners to pay him. He received all of £60 for his pains and struggled on spinning on his own. More of Sam later.

Walk past with the Hall on your left and go downhill, after about 60 yards you come to a narrower steep downhill path straight ahead. Go down this. The wider path, less steep, veers off the left and soon a dogleg brings you back onto our route. You can follow this if the narrow path looks too steep. Whichever way you go when you reach a chain link fence turn right and ahead downhill is Eagley Brook, in a sylvan setting, with a bridge crossing it. Cross the bridge and walk up the wide track. Watermillock is up to your left, about 300 yards away.

SIX: Watermillock. All the brooks of North East Bolton flow into the Croal, which in turn joins the Irwell and then the Mersey. These brooks move briskly from the hills towards the town centre and rarely dry up. They are the reason that the land around Bolton became the centre of industrialised spinning and weaving. Arkwright's invention, the Water Frame, was so heavy it required water courses close by for it to work. Steam engines which were in place in Bolton by 1800 needed vast amounts of water to work. Bleaching and paper milling also requires huge amounts of water.

As we walk the Eagley Brook and the Bradshaw Brook, you'll notice the streams are often walled, lodges still exist nearby, canalised waterways survive next to the brooks as do the remains of engine houses and jetties. All this shows how important managing the water was. A flour mill needed a simple mill race to make the water wheel turn to grind the flour. But grinding only took place at certain times of year and for limited periods. Mill owners wanted their works to operate all day, all year with operatives working 12 hours a day or more. They could not leave the supply of water to chance, but had to carefully manage it. And there was competition and legal disputes about it. The Eagley brook hosted Egerton (later called Deakins) Mill, Eagley Mills, New Eagley Mill and downstream Thwaite and Eden's Dyeworks at Water's Meeting Road. We'll talk about dyeing in a bit...



The Thwaite family built Watermillock as a family home in 1890, a big house set in the woods then a mile or so from Eden and Thwaites Bleachworks. The family moved out in 1910 and it came into the ownership of the council. Watermillock was used as a military hospital during the Great War, but the interwar period saw the death knell of the country house as death duties, land taxes and income tax introduced in the war made the upkeep of such buildings more difficult even for the very well off. Used as an Anglican retreat in the 1930s and site for Scout camps it was facing demolition when in 1936 it was used by the Basque Children's Committee as a site for 56 children evacuated from Northern Spain during the Spanish Civil War. During the Second World War Watermillock was used by the Women's Voluntary Service – as a meeting place, occasional accommodation and storage unit. In July 1947 the council used it as a residential care home for older people. A change for older people cared for by the council as it replaced Fishpool Workhouse. For the next thirty five years Watermillock housed older people, back then admission being more about destitution than disability. In the 1980s as the council got rid of its own homes Toby bought it and it serves as a reliable carvery to this day.

Carry on up the track past a couple of cottages on the left. The track becomes Yew Tree Lane.

SEVEN: ACDO, Glo-White.



One of the lesser mentioned features of the cotton industry is bleaching and dyeing. Early doors cloth was 'fulled', that is dipped in fuller's earth, which absorbed grease, whitening it. Cloth was then 'crofted', which required sheets of cloth to be laid flat in the sun which bleached it. The side of Winter Hill was used as were the flood meadows by the Bradshaw Brook, and when more efficient bleaches became available, Wallsuches at Horwich and Bradshaw's dyeworks took over. From this traditional cleaning of cloth a chemical industry developed. Examples include:

- Sam Crompton spent a lot of time in his final years perfecting a mechanical device to make washing clothes easier
- William Edge made Dolly Blue (a blueing bleach), in Raphael Street, Halliwell.
- William Lever invented a soap, 'Sunlight' made from vegetable oils and not tallow, which created more satisfying suds. Lever Brothers became the biggest company in Britain and the first modern multinational.
- The dozen or so bleachworks which grew up in Bolton.
- And ACDO the washing powder company...

This started when Harry Pilling, working in Mallison Street, Astley Bridge (half a mile down the road) found that Sodium Perborate had a considerable effect in whitening light clothing

and established the Astley Dye and Chemical Company. He first sold his soap as ADCO, but soon changed the name to ACDO. He launched many brands, but the big success was Glo-White, which was grated into the wash, mixed with soap and it made clothes whiter. No, it did, honest! ACDO became a national brand. The 1970s saw the introduction of lower temperature washing powders for front loading machines, easier to use than ACDO products. The company, now ACDOCO, successfully diversified and sells a whole range of cleaning products internationally.

Carry on up Yew Tree Lane and you reach more houses. At the top of the hill you find yourself on Ashworth Lane. Look left and you can see Holden's Mill on the skyline, coppery green dome and everthing.

EIGHT: Holden's Mill is a grand sight. Now it houses classy flats and looks in good fettle. It is less than a hundred years old, only opened in 1927. Holden's was the final mill built in Bolton, vying with one in Oldham as the last ever cotton mill built in Britain. It was also the first built entirely to use electric power, thus it never had a chimney, nor caused grime to fall on leafy Sharples. Spinning mills were the heart of Bolton's wealth and it had scores of them, hundreds of them. The first, probably started in 1780 was St Helena Mill at the bottom of King Street. This finished spinning cotton waste in 1979. It is still there but today houses the Probation Service. Swan Lane Mills, completed in 1906 when it was the biggest spinning complex in the world.



One of the managers who worked at Holden's Mill before the Second World War, brought his family over from the Wirral in the early 1930s. His step-son John Colin was 16 and he started working on textile design at the mill. Next door to the family was a Mr Bird, a qualified pilot with a number of books about aviation. John Colin devoured these, grew to love the idea of flying and in 1937 was taken on a short service commission with the RAF. When war was declared he was posted to a Spitfire Squadron at RAF Hornchurch. During the Battle of Britain Colin Mungo Park shot down 11 German aircraft, scored 5 more 'probables' and damaged 4 others, one of the 'Few'. He received a Distinguished Flying Cross for his achievements and a Bar to the DFC in July 1941 just before he was shot down and killed in Holland.

Now turn to your right and walk down Ashworth Lane. This is Bank Top.

NINE: Bank Top United Reform Church. You are now in Bank Top village. This is one of Bolton's several nineteenth century model workers' villages built by mill owners, including:

- the Dean Mill complex at Barrow Bridge,
- Ainsworth's St Peter's Place in Halliwell,
- the village accommodation, school and sports facilities built by the Chadwicks and Gregs at Eagley Mills, which we shall see...
- ...and here: Henry Ashworth's Bank Top village above New Eagley Mills.

From around 1820 until the 1850s the Ashworth brothers Edmund and Henry operated New Eagley Mills down on the Eagley Brook, which we shall see. Up here at Bank Top they built nicely appointed terraces for the operatives, a church, here the United Reform Church, (though Henry himself was a Quaker), and a school.

A little farther on to the right is a low half-timbered building. It was a tennis pavilion and the green area in front were the courts.

TEN: Bank Top Brewery



Bolton, like many towns had many small breweries, the signature company in Bolton until the 1950s being Magees. But all the breweries were swallowed up by bigger competition and, embarrassingly by the 1980s there were no Bolton based beers. Bank Top, started in 1995 and run since 2004 by Dave Sweeney brews a variety of much loved ales including *Flat Cap* and *Bad t' Bone*, producing 22,000 pints of beer weekly. Even though only a quarter of a century old Bank Top is Bolton's oldest brewery. A big outfit now, the popularity of the beer rests a lot on it being local. But they use a very sophisticated quality control protocol – 'yeah', says Dave 'if we like it, we make more of it. If we don't, we don't'

Now carry on down Ashworth Lane. Pass Thornham Drive on your left and when you see the sign for Hathaway Drive leading off the right, take the cobbled road to the left downhill. This bends round to the right and through the trees you'll see a flattish grass area.



This was the site of the New Eagley Mill built in the crook of a wide bend in the brook. Carry on right to the bottom. You will be taking the footpath (there's a sign) to the left along the brook. But first you may want to wander along the road to the right first as it curls past some cottages into a yard. There to you right is all that remains of New Eagley Mill, the stone and brick foot of the chimney.

ELEVEN: New Eagley Mill and Henry Ashworth. The Ashworth family in the eighteenth



century lived up the opposite bank towards Bradshaw in Great Oak and Little Oak farms. They had been involved in textiles for over a hundred years, buying cotton, putting it out to home workers and selling the completed yarn and cloth. Their speciality was thick fustian - half linen, half cotton - and it is suggested that Samuel Crompton spun yarn for the Ashworths for a while. John Ashworth built New Eagley Mill in 1802. He put managers in to run the new mill and it was not successful. In 1818 when John's sons Henry and Edmund took over they expanded and made New Eagley Mill among the most efficient and profitable around. In the picture here Bank Top is out of sight to the left. Up the opposite bank to the right is a simple image of The Oaks, where Henry Ashworth lived from 1820.

Henry Ashworth was a committed Quaker and progressive. He was also closely associated with Cobden and Bright, both also involved in cotton, campaigning for the repeal of the Corn Laws. The price of wheat was set artificially high after the Napoleonic Wars, at the behest of parliament dominated by the landowning elite. They wanted to keep their incomes up. This caused recurring distress to workers, especially after poor harvests. Representatives of the new industrial classes, who could see the damage caused first hand, led the campaign, which was crowned with success after the shock of the Irish famine led Peel (another cotton man) to repeal the laws.

We've already heard about the model worker's village at Bank Top, built as a result of Henry Ashworth's Quaker convictions about helping his fellow man. But as a mill owner he wanted no interference with market forces and freedom of labour. Henry and his brother

Edmund fought tooth and nail against the Factory Acts and restrictions on child labour. They argued with factory inspectors who raised complaints against their practice. Henry and Edmund were adamant that their workers entered their work as free agents and that their profits would benefit their workers. They were not rapacious employers, but believed in the market and 'trickle down'.

Henry and Edmund split the business in the 1850s after falling out, Edmund running Egerton Mill, in Walmsley upstream. The split diminished their influence, after which both New Eagley and Egerton mills were in the second rank of production.

Now carry on upstream along the brookside path. After a hundred and fifty yards is a bridge across the brook. Do not cross it, but take the nine steep steps up to its left and walk along the raised dyke with the stream on your right.



This then rises, angling left up through the trees, away from the course of the brook. After, say, ten minutes you will reach a plateau where the path you are on joins a wide, flat track coming in from the left. Shortly after joining that a smaller path snakes off to the right. Take that and you'll find yourself twisting down and down, back to the brook again.



Notice the workings all along the brook, stone and brick walls and platforms. Along the brookside path the land soon opens out and you use a wide cobbled bridge to cross to the right bank of the stream. Here an expanse of grass appears and you can see, in the distance, Clock Mill in the Eagley Mill complex.

TWELVE: Eagley Mills. This tiny enclave was once a thriving industrial community. The land you walked across to get to Clock Mill was once the site of a paper mill, another works that required copious amounts of water. There was a dyeworks here too. Early mills powered by water were replaced by steam powered mills owned by the Chadwick brothers from the 1820s. In the 1850s the Greg family bought into the company. The Greg family had set up Styal Mill much earlier and ran Eagley into the twentieth century, Mrs Greg being one of the key philanthropists who established help for deaf and blind people in Bolton. The company established a school by 1800 and supported a Lads Club, library, social events, performance spaces and bands. Later Eagley became the home of a top-notch ladies rounders team.



Turn right and look up Hough Lane

THIRTEEN: The Black Boy, Hough Lane. One of the towering figures of the history of the Lancashire cotton Industry is Richard Arkwright, 'inventor' of the Water Frame. Born in Kirkham he came to live on Churchgate in Bolton in 1752 and became a hairdresser and wig maker. On his tours around he heard about the search for a more effective machine for spinning. He knew that whoever discovered something more reliable than Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny would make a fortune. No craftsman, Arkwright paid two men, John Kay, Warrington clock maker, and Leigh carpenter Peter Artherton to complete their work on an efficient spinning device. He patented what was produced and put the machinery to work immediately. His device, so bulky it had to be powered by mill races, was called the Water Frame. His idea was not welcomed in Bolton so he set up his first mill in Cromford, Derbyshire - miles from anywhere. He employed children and women to work the machinery and made a lot of money. Important Bolton tale this, but why talk about it here in Eagley? Well, Arkwright was an entrepreneur, always on the look-out for ways to make money. For a while in the late 1760s he had the licence for a pub at the bottom of Hough Lane – the *Black Boy* – a building no longer identifiable. The name, of course, immediately suggests slavery. At that time slaves were used on British sugar plantations in the Caribbean but while there were tobacco plantations in the Southern States of America there was no cotton until later. So the name can have nothing to do with cotton and probably nothing to do with slavery. It must be said that having a black servant in Britain in the eighteenth century had some cachet, but pubs do not seem to have been named after them. The name may be much older, possibly a way of signalling support for Charles II, whose nickname was 'Black Boy', or a salutation to chimney sweeps (but surely not in Eagley then), or a reference to a tobacconist, again sometimes known as black boys. who knows? There are *Black Boy* pubs in Caernarvon, Reading, Winchester, Manchester, Oxford and probably more.

For the full route walk up Hough Lane, pass Paper Mill Road to your right and take the next right at Lower Brow, along a path which leads to a series of steps, up and up. At the top of the flight the land opens up to the left and soon you reach Darwen Road. Cross immediately and walk long there, then turn left into Rose Hill. The second right is The Crescent. Note no 17.

*(from the bottom of Hough Lane, there is a shorter route, one which misses the streets of Bromley Cross and Shaun Greenhalgh's old house. Instead this route takes you back through the Eagley Gorge to Birtenshaw. Just walk up Hough Lane and turn right onto Paper Mill Road. Go through the gate at the end onto a path which leads slowly down back to the main track you walked along earlier, in the other direction away from clock mill. As the grassy area narrows just before the cobbled bridge back over the stream, turn left – there are three separate tracks that all join so you cannot take the wrong one. The path climbs up in shallow steps to the top of the cliff overlooking the brook. At the top is a metal post. Turn sharp right there and follow the track along the edge of the cliff, then down a steep path, back much closer to the brook. The land opens up again in a slanted meadow, but then narrows as it passes the remains of stone buildings on your left. As the brook turns sharply right the path angles up and you come to a T junction. Turn left there and head upwards. The path gets narrow and is fenced in, but soon on the left you become aware of old buildings. These are the remains of Birtenshaw Old Hall. Once you reach Darwen Road look to your right and you'll see the railway bridge over the road about 150 yards ahead. Go to **FIFTEEN**).*

FOURTEEN: The Crescent. Shaun Greenhalgh is well known as the Bolton Forger. He lived here with his mother and father and sometimes other family members. He was imprisoned for 4 years 8 months in 2006 for creating and selling art works for gain, pretending they were done by well known artists. His major coup was the sale of the 'Armana Princess', a calcite statue purporting to be 3,500 years old. The piece was referenced in a catalogue from 200 years ago, but since then had been 'missing'. Such provenance convinced the British Museum of its legitimacy and Bolton Museum parted with £440,000 for it. This was among about forty items Shaun had made and sold. He was eventually caught out by spelling mistakes on an Assyrian frieze. Bonhams alerted the British Museum, and Christies and Sotheby's shared their suspicions of the work offered by Shaun and his father George over the years. The game was up. At first local sympathy was with Shaun because he had got one over on a self-important art establishment caught with their trousers down. But now several years after his release with sales of his work buoyant, an autobiography and a TV series, he is being seen as a very special artist who can turn his hand to anything, oils, stonework, metalwork, watercolours. You name it Shaun Greenhalgh can do it.

Carry on along the Crescent and turn right at the end into Lord's Stile Lane. At the end cross over Bromley Cross Road and turn immediately left back onto Darwen Road. There is a 200 hundred yard walk down that road now so stride out. On your right over and through the hedge a boxy set of pale green buildings will appear. This is Birtenshaw School.

FIFTEEN: Birtenshaw School. Once the NHS and Welfare State was set up by Atlee's government after the war had the New Jerusalem come? Some thought so. There was even a hope that, once everybody had been issued their teeth and glasses that the cost of the NHS would go down. But there were still problems. Although welfare benefits and health for all helped the general population there were gaps in provision for a number of groups of people. It was in the twenty year period after the war that the great voluntary bodies of the later twentieth century appeared, to champion the needs of forgotten minorities: Mencap, MIND, Shelter, the Samaritans, Cruse, Gingerbread, Scope (formerly the Spastics Society), Age Concern. In the early 1950s a group of parents of children with Cerebral palsy, learning disabilities and autism lobbied for specialist provision. Among their number were Arthur and Elizabeth Catherall, a local couple with two children, one of whom was John who had both physical and intellectual disabilities brought on by meningitis. Together with others they raised money and bought, for a song, Birtenshaw Old Hall and in 1956 opened it as a school for children with disabilities. They were aided by two older single women, both of whom ran shoe shops in Bolton and both of whom donated considerable sums to Birtenshaw. The school operated out of the old building until 2014, when it moved to brand new premises here. Ironically Arthur and Elizabeth's son did not go to Birtenshaw, his disabilities not catered for by the school. Arthur Catherall, by the way, was a very senior figure in Scouting in Bolton, but his main achievement was publishing 106 children's books between 1937 and the 1970s. He sold over a million books and was very popular across the English-speaking world. The Library and the University both have collections of his books.

As Darwen Road veers sharply left, look to your right and you note a derelict barn. This is all that remains of Birtenshaw Old Hall, home of some of the Ashworths from the late 19th century

SIXTEEN: Birtenshaw Old Hall. For some reason Henry Ashworth's Children did not stay in the Oaks down the road, where Henry lived all his life. Henry's son, George Binns Ashworth chose to live at Birtenshaw Old Hall, and fully refurbished it in 1867. But like other successful Bolton industrial families the Ashworth children and grandchildren grew away from their industrial roots. Philip Henry Ashworth, Henry's great nephew epitomises this. Brought up as English upper classes still are - Eton, Oxford, Grenadier Guards – he became ADC in the Great war to Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, Queen Victoria's youngest son. But it went downhill from there after bad speculation, bankruptcy followed and penniless death in Switzerland in 1942. Birtenshaw Old Hall was abandoned by the Ashworths in the 1940s.



As the Darwen Road bends to the left and you can see the railway bridge 150 yards in front of you, turn right down a narrow path just to the left of the land which used to be a garden centre but now seems destined to host a Lidl supermarket. This straight, narrow path joins a slightly wider path running parallel to the railway line. Carry on along this path for about 500 yards – very boring, I'm afraid, although as I reconnoitred the route I came within four yards of a deer. Towards the end a refurbished barn appears on your right – this is old Oaks Barn. As you meet a wider cobbled trackway with a level crossing a few yards to the left, look right up the lane.



SEVENTEEN: The Oaks. Think back to the flood meadow where the Edmund and Henry



Ashworth's New Eagley Mill stood. The Eagley Brook there describes a curve between Bank Top, where the model worker's village was built and an equally steep bank, Oak Bank. In 1820 John Ashworth built the Oaks on top of that bank and gave it to Henry on his marriage to Letitia in 1823. Henry lived there until his death in 1880. The Oaks, from which you could see the mill chimney, was a palladian style columned mansion not far from the original Ashworth home at Great Oak Farm. Henry brought up his and Letitia's eleven children there and it was from there that he left for his final winter tour of Italy in 1880. He caught a cold in Florence and died there and was buried in the protestant cemetery. His children abandoned the Oaks after his death, selling it in 1906. After passing through several hands it was bought by Lancashire County Council in 1942 for use in the wartime Government Evacuation Scheme. It was pulled down around 1956.

Wander up the lane if you like towards the edge of the bank. It is wooded here - you'll only see a few lumps and bumps in the ground - all that's left of the Oaks.

Much is said about the disappearance of mills in Bolton but Tudor, Jacobean and later houses have gone too. Arkwright's barbershop at 15 Churchgate went over a hundred years ago. Bradshaw Hall has gone. The Ainsworth family's Moss Bank House has gone, as has Hacken Hall, Darcy Lever Old Hall, Brightmet Hall, Thicketford House, Edmund Ashworth's Egerton Hall, Hulton Hall, Darley Hall in Farnworth and Great Lever Hall. Brynmoor, Burnthwaite and Brooklyn have all gone too. Halliwell Hall on Church Road and Sharples Hall (previously Ollerton) are still there but split into flats. Farnworth's Rock Hall is still there, just, and of course Birtenshaw Old Hall was demolished recently as well.

Now turn round, cross the railway line and walk the length of Oaks Lane. Soon you'll become aware of school buildings on your right. This is Canon Slade School.

EIGHTEEN: Canon Slade School. Originally called the Church Institute, the school was founded by the vicar of Bolton, Canon James Slade in 1855, to provide education for poor children. Situated close by St Peter's Church, off Silverwell Street, it was next door to the sixteenth century Grammar School. Re-endowed by William Lever and moved to Chorley New Road, this ancient establishment became the ultra-prestigious Bolton School. Even in 1855 the old Grammar catered for the sons of clerks, industrialists and solicitors, an education which cost. James Slade established the Church Institute to offer education to poor children. Here it stayed until 1955 – it must have been very cramped – when the Church of England moved the school, a Grammar School itself by then, to the present site on Bradshaw Brow. Still a faith school, although a comprehensive now, its academic results make it attractive enough for people to attend church, to gain entry for their children, even if not personally committed. The sixth form though attracts talent pure and simple, as it did Sara Cox (her name graced with an 'h' then) and Maxine Peake.

At the junction with Tonge Moor Road/Bradshaw Brow, cross over and turn right and walk along in front of the row of terraces. Look out for number 32.

NINETEEN: 32 Bradshaw Brow. Susan Fairhurst was born in this house in 1885, sister to Isaac who became a miniaturist painter and daughter of William who edited the Bolton Journal and Guardian, the weekly version of the Bolton Evening News. When she was 15 Susan's father took her out of school, an act which led to Susan moving in with her sister in Bromley Cross for a while. She took an apprenticeship with a photographer but then worked as a nanny in Morocco for a year. On her return she taught in a private school, then secured a scholarship to gain a nursery school qualification at Manchester University, then a BA and finally an MA in psychology from Newnham College Cambridge. After teaching nursery education in Darlington she was taken on to run an experimental school, the Maltings in Cambridge, between 1924 and 1927. It was here that she developed her ideas about the significance of play in early years education. She also studied psychoanalysis, championing ideas about fantasy in children and emphasising the relationship between emotional and intellectual development. From 1933 she taught developmental psychology at London University founding the Department of Child Development there. At the same time she was answering queries about child development in *Nursing World* as Ursula Wise. In 1940 she led the Cambridge Evacuation Survey, which revealed just how complicated the emotional impact of evacuation was on children and their families.

She commanded a niche area in psychology, but Susan Isaacs is one among half a dozen or so professionals (including John Bowlby, Claire and Donald Winnicott among others) who revolutionised the approach to parent child relationships, child development, early years education and treatment for childhood trauma.

Walk along Tonge Moor Road towards town for another 100 yards or so and there is a footpath sign off to the left just in front of two brick built bungalows. Stop there.

TWENTY: T'Scopie. These two non-descript bungalows are...non-descript bungalows. And before they were built there was a non-descript shed here, but that burned down in 1930. Despite its tiny size and bench seats this was a cinema, The *Picturedome* by Scope o' the

Lane, T'Scopie to locals. This was one of the local fleapits like the *Empire* on Blackburn Road – tuppence to get in and frequent breaks as the projector broke down.

The first cinematic performance recorded in Bolton was at the Temperance Hall in 1897, but early shows were associated with fairs. And for long time individual showmen played a significant part in the growth of cinema. And it was all very local to begin with. Mitchell and Kenyon from Blackburn would set up a camera on a tram or outside a mill film all who passed by and show the results later in the week in town. 'Ooh, there you are ma' or 'Hey, that's me. Look at me!' Later small cinemas were run by eccentrics. Bill Naughton remembers:

Tutty Booth, an officer in the Great War ran the Derby Picture Palace. He stood outside welcoming every one of his regulars [not allowing] Edgar, the film operator, to start up until Mrs Fish and Mrs Hosky were safely in their seats.

Frank Hampson who ran the *Mount* in Halliwell tended to carry on the 'showy' tradition, dressing up each day - mind you he'd been the landlord of the Concert Tavern in Churchgate and the Man and Scythe. And 'Professor' Fenton Cross was never seen without his frock coat and top hat around his *Ideal* cinema on Silverwell Lane. This was a family affair as his son was the projectionist and daughter did front of house. All this boosted the income Fenton Cross made from his Punch and Judy show and his main entertainment standby, drawing 'Lightning Cartoons'.

By the late 1920s grand cinemas like the Capitol on Churchgate were built and the small fleapits began to fade. Perhaps T'Scopie burned down at the right time.

Take the footpath to the left down the steps, down and down, to Bradshaw Brook. Cross the metal bridge and turn right along the path. Follow path which hugs the stream to begin with, then the main path meanders away somewhat. There are smaller paths that stick closer to the stream but keep to the main path which never moves more than about 50 yards from the brook which should always be on your right. At the first bridge over the stream you come to, which is on your right, cross it. You find yourself on a narrow straight path, and reach a crossroads after 150 yards or so. Turn right, walking uphill and you'll soon see the cottages that form Firwood Fold. Walk up the cobbled street and you'll reach the cottage where Samuel Crompton was born in 1753. There is a sign on the wall marking it.

TWENTY-ONE: Firwood Fold. Well, we're back near the start. Once the Mule was in use Sam Crompton still struggled with his spinning, moving first farther out of town just off Blackburn Road, up towards Darwen. In 1811 he heard that Edward Cartwright, who invented the power loom had been awarded £5000 by Parliament so Sam decided to make his own claim. He travelled to Scotland and all over Lancashire gathering evidence of how many producers were using his Mule. Then he went to London where he stayed in the hope of a pension being agreed in Parliament. Unfortunately the day of the proposed debate, 11 May 1812, John Bellingham shot the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, in the lobby and proceedings were ended for the day. In the end £5000 was awarded enabling Sam to set up in business in Darwen, but the business failed. By 1820 Sam had a small works in King Street and eked out a living spinning. The Earl of Derby and others, without telling Sam, secured

an annuity of £63 for him. He lived out his days earning from his small spinning works, playing his organ at the Swedenborgian Church on Bark Street and refining a machine he had invented which washed clothes. He died in June 1827, forgotten. It was only in the 1850s that his life came to be celebrated.



Carry on up the cobbled street, which soon becomes a paved road. Walk straight on and you reach Crompton Way. Turn to your right and you'll see the 'Family Shopper' supermarket where the walk began.

Now it's time to go home. Thanks for coming along!



Live from Worktown is a resident led partnership promoting and supporting performance, the arts in the town centre and Bolton's unique culture and heritage. See website for details <https://www.livefromworktown.org>