

WHITLEY HERITAGE TRAIL

An easy circular walk of 4 miles, strong shoes recommended

(3 miles if you miss out the extensions)

The starting point is the George and Dragon Inn, situated in the middle of the village.

There has been a **George and Dragon Inn (1)** on this site since at least 1822. The Landlord in that year was James Colley. The old George was stone built, and stood at the edge of the road. It looked like a farmhouse which is what it probably was originally. The current building dates from the 1940s.

Standing with your back to the George and Dragon, turn to your left and walk along the pavement in the direction of the motorway. As you approach Whitley Farm housing estate, on the right hand side, cross the road and follow the footpath signs through the estate towards **Whitley Lock (2)**.

The completion of the Leeds to Liverpool canal in 1816 brought a further increase in traffic to the Aire and Calder Navigation. This led to the construction of a new 13 mile long canal between the Aire at Knottingley and Goole which was completed in 1826. Whitley Lock is the first lock going eastwards some 4 miles from the junction with the earlier canal at Knottingley. Due to the flat topography there are only two locks in its entire length, one at Whitley and one at Pollington, until the sea lock is reached on the Humber in Goole.

Crossing over the Lock brings you to the site of the **Navy Camp (3)**.

The construction of the Inland Navigation in the 1820s was a very labour intensive and almost completely manual exercise. Large numbers of men were required and they lived in large camps nearby. One such camp was located here next to the lock. The workers themselves were called Inland Navigators or "Navvies".

Retrace your steps back to the main road. As you pass along the edge of the field, on your right you will see **Whitley Lodge (4)**. The Lodge appears to have been built in the 18th century and extended in the early Victorian period. The old farm building next to the Lodge dates back to 1719 and the

dovecote which is situated halfway down the drive is of a similar age.

Continue to the main road and turn right. Follow the footpath until you reach Tunstall Telecom. Here on your right you can see the frontage of **Whitley Lodge (5)**. Previous occupiers included William Rawden Earnshaw, Deputy Constable for the Lower Division of Osgoldcross, and from the mid 19th century, the Lyons family. Major Lyons had two sons killed in the 1st World War and there is a memorial to them in Kellington Church. The Lodge is now owned by Tunstall Telecom, who have been using it since the 1980s.

Here cross over the main road and enter Learning Lane, which leads to **Whitley School (6)**. The Education Acts of 1870 and 1873 for the first time implemented compulsory attendance at school for all children over five and up to the age of fourteen. Whitley School Board was set up in December 1874 under the chairmanship of John Croysdale and land was purchased from William Eadon at a cost of £72 13s.

The school was built by a Womersley based firm of builders Messrs J. Cookson and son, the architect being George Malcolm.

The school was opened in April 1877 as an elementary school with 93 children in attendance. The first headteacher was Henry Smith who was born in Shropshire and trained at Sattley College. The school's opening was celebrated with a public tea, and Whitley was especially proud that this was the first elementary board school in the district.

Retracing your path back to the main road, turning to your right, you will come to **All Saints' Parish Church (7)**.

The Church which you see in front of you was built between 1858 and 1861 on a site donated by John Earnshaw of Hull whose family had previously lived at the Lodge, and who are commemorated in the windows of the south side of the church. The then vicar of Kellington, the Reverend Joseph Mann, together with Mr Robert Barker and Mr William Roberts, raised the money by public subscription. The architect was James Wilson of Bath, and the church was built of Ackworth stone with a nave and round apse.

As a chapel of ease for Kellington it was built only for weekly services, it has no burial ground and was only licensed for the solemnisation of marriages in the 1960s. A previous chapel is known to have existed from at least 1200, but the site is unknown at the present.

Continue along the footpath and turn right into Whitefield Lane, passing the bungalows. Walk out of the village, following the road around a right-hand bend (care must be taken here!)

250m on the left-hand side of the road you will come to a footpath sign, indicating the path which takes you along the edge of the fields. As you progress along the first part of the path, looking to your right you will see the site of the old **Daffodil Woods (8)**.

The dilly or daffodil wood was well known for its spring display of daffodils and bluebells well into the 1960s, before the area was covered by fly ash tipping.

Gale Common is so called after the gales or bilberries which grew there in abundance. The common was an area of land which was available to all living on the manor for the grazing of sheep and cattle and for gathering nuts and berries and collecting fallen wood. The common was enclosed in the late 18th century.

Following the path along the edge of the fields you will eventually pass behind the mushroom sheds away to your left. You will now come to the recently formed **Whitley Nature Reserve (9)**, which being part of the land owned by the parish, is being transformed into an area of natural beauty.

Arriving at the crossroads, pass straight across into Whitley Thorpe Lane. Here, on your right you will find the remains of **Whitley Thorpe Moat (10)**.

This site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. You can see the remains of a square island surrounded by a moat. Remains of stone walls are scattered around. The site of several fishponds can be seen alongside and the whole area appears to be surrounded by a bank and ditch.

The site was a grange or outlying farm of the Knights Templar, who had been given the Manor of Whitley by the powerful De Lacy family before 1248. The Templars were one of the international military monastic orders established to protect pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. Granges such as this raised money to pay for arms, equipment and sustenance for the brothers who were stationed overseas on the pilgrim routes. The brothers here lived a life much like that of the ordinary farms around them, whilst observing the "rule" of the order.

In 1308 the whole order was imprisoned under a charge of heresy, idolatry and other charges. At that time the preceptor or leader of the house was Robert de Langton and Whitley was valued at over one hundred and thirty pounds. Though the charges were not proved the order was suppressed in 1312 by Papal decree, and the site fell into disuse.

Following on down the slope of Whitley Thorpe Lane, you will come to an example of one of the **village wells (11)**. Near