

Around Historic Starbeck

This walk can start anywhere on the route, depending on whether you are walking or parking. If parking, I suggest that you park in Prospect Road or The Avenue, both of which are on the route. You could also park on Forest Avenue, near to the allotments mentioned later.

If starting at Prospect Road, turn left at the end of the road and walk towards Harrogate for maybe 70m. Cross the road at the central reservation and here is Starbeck Hall, built in 1811 as the Harrogate Workhouse, a convenient distance from the amenities of central Harrogate and the visitors who wouldn't like to see destitute people as they walked in genteel streets. The old workhouse is now a solicitor's office.

Walk now towards the railway line and go through the railway line underpass. Before Camwall Road, look across the High Street to see the former Star Inn (1904) which served ales from Warwick & Co - Anchor Brewery, Boroughbridge, then walk up to Albert Place where you look across High Street and here's the McColls which was fire damaged and still remains derelict.

A little further on, The Avenue is on your left and maybe 50 m down there is the St Michael's Hospice building, built in 1888 as the public library and then used as a Chapel until 1931. Continuing up the High Street you pass St Andrew's Church, built in 1910, replacing a small church built in 1889. This was a time of expansion for Starbeck and the Church of England. Further expansion for places of worship is now shown at the Methodist Church, built in 1931 to replace the smaller one mentioned above. This church also shows the consolidation amongst places of worship, which amalgamated the Wesleyan and Primitive branches of Methodism.

Look across the road and see Belmont House and Springfield school. Belmont House used to be the stables for both the West and North Riding police horses, Harrogate having been in the West Riding until 1974.

Now we come to the school opened in 1896, which you can look at from outside, before we then get to Clematis Lodge - the oldest building in Starbeck. Next door is the 18th century Toll house, which charged for using the turnpike road to Harrogate. At this point we cross the High Street at the traffic lights, and cross again at Forest Lane to the vicinity of Millfield Glade where there is a horse trough dating from 1895.

Not much further along we have a boundary stone which dates from 1778, when the Forest of Knaresborough was enclosed. You can easily miss this!

Again on the religious theme, but for some reason not adjacent to a Church or Chapel, Charlotte Harrison's Sunday School was at 75 & 77 Forest Lane. This was in 1857, before St Andrew's Church was built in the High Street, so it seems that in 1857 the school also served as a small chapel.

Crossing Forest Lane in the vicinity of Forest Crescent, Forest Avenue takes you back towards Starbeck High Street, but meantime you can admire the allotments on both sides maybe 200m down here, before coming to Starbeck Mission - built in 1910 as the Railway Mission.

Here it gets a bit tricky, as I found it difficult to see the route described on the Starbeck History site. However, down Belmont Terrace you can see the bowling green and go round rather than over it to get to the other side, where you bear left to come to the Starbeck swimming baths built in 1870 as the Prince of Wales Baths. These baths were built to compete with the existing Starbeck Spa, which you come to via Spa Lane a little walk away. The Starbeck Old Spa was discovered during the 17th century and commercialised as sulphur or chalybeate treatments until 1890.

Here's a lesson for us all. Nothing lasts! Particularly in the less fashionable or unfashionable areas.

Now it's back to the level crossing, which you cross in the other direction. The Starbeck history site notes that Starbeck had a fine station and goods yard, presumably dating from an era when Starbeck was an important rail centre and coal was delivered into the area for use in the gasworks and as industrial and commercial fuel.

This is the end. Take a break in Prospect Park. A grand name for a tiny park, but you can look at the notice and the sculpture of Gordon Beers.

Parts of the walk are by courtesy of Stephen G Abbott.