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FURTHER READING

A CHILD'S HISTORY OF CLITHEROE

– *Arthur Langshaw*

CLITHEROE'S 1000 YEARS

– *Arthur Langshaw*

CLITHEROE, FROM BURGAGE PLOTS
TO BOUNDARY STONES

– *Cyril Ainsworth*

CLITHEROE IN ITS COACHING AND
RAILWAY DAYS

– *Stephen Clarke*

A SHORT HISTORY OF CLITHEROE IN
EAST LANCASHIRE

– *David Best*

CLITHEROE'S LEARNING CURVE,
200 YEARS OF SCHOOLING

– *Robert O. Jones*

CLITHEROE HISTORIC TOWN
ASSESSMENT REPORT

– *April 2006*

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Discover the

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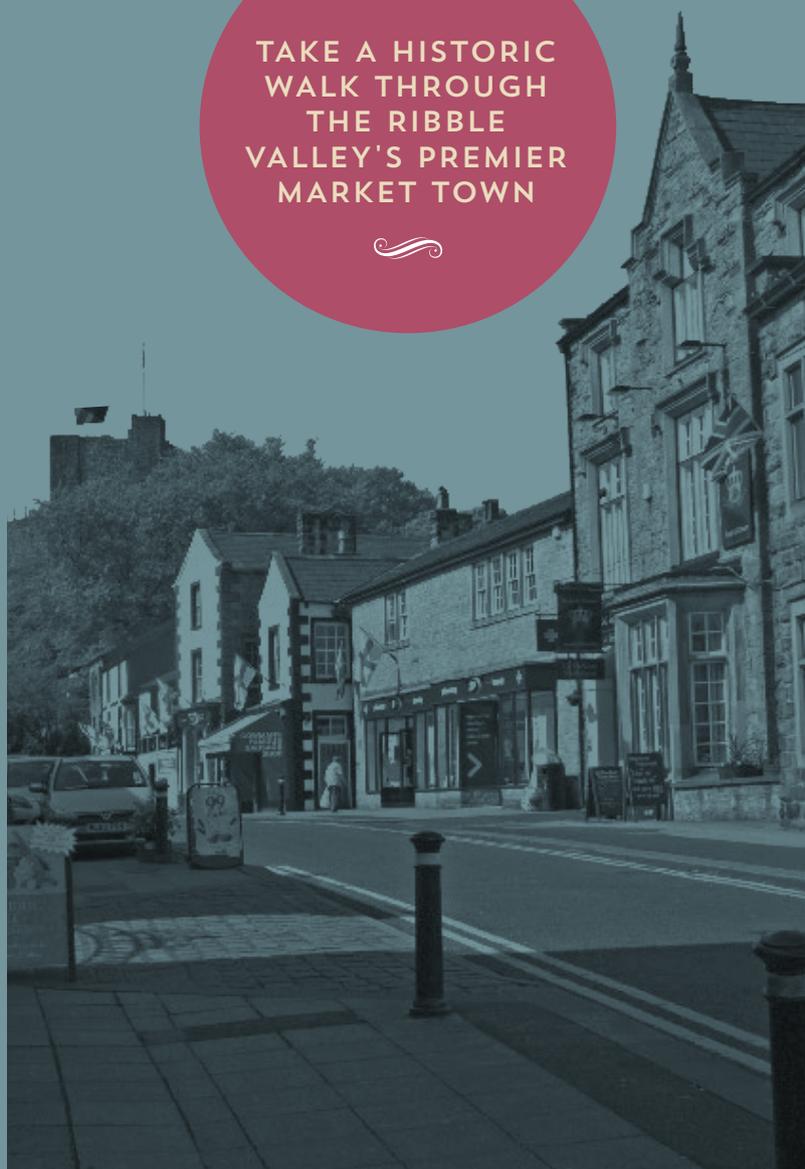
CLITHEROE



TOWN TRAIL

.....

TAKE A HISTORIC
WALK THROUGH
THE RIBBLE
VALLEY'S PREMIER
MARKET TOWN



A town built on
LIME, LATIN AND LAW

WELCOME TO CLITHEROE

This is the fourth version of the town trail which Clitheroe Civic Society has compiled since 1976 and, though the area covered is largely the same, changes within the area make updating necessary in order for it to be relevant to visitors and recent residents of the 21st century.

It is largely confined to the area which was essentially the developed part of the town from about 1100 to 1800. That is, the land between castle and church, each positioned on a prominent outcrop of limestone rock, for it is this area that was virtually the whole of the original town and still is the town centre today.

It will take an hour or so to complete the walk, longer of course if you visit any of the places of interest or take refreshment along the way – and there are ample opportunities for either.



A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY BEFORE YOU START

Around 1050 in the reign of King Canute, Earl Leofric, husband of the somewhat more famous Lady Godiva, held control of much of the North West of England including the Hundred of Blackburn in which Clitheroe then stood. At that time, the population of the “town” is likely to have been around two to three hundred and they would have inhabited a series of homesteads, most likely of wattle, daub and thatch, loosely gathered around the confluence of tracks leading out to other settlements. The Earl’s administration was directed from the village of Blackburn but it seems likely that, to deal with Ribblesdale, Clitheroe’s rocky crag would, at that time, have had at its top a probably timber defensive structure of some kind.

A century or so later, the Normans arrived and these same lands were granted to Roger de Poitou who, again, needed a castle from which to defend and control his fiefdom. Although no exact date is known, speaking of this area, William the Conqueror’s Domesday Book of 1086 makes reference to “...the Castle of Roger...”, so we can say that a castle was in existence by then but whether an improved timber version or a stone structure is not known. At this time too, the Normans built a church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene on top of a smaller crag a few hundred yards to the north of the castle. Again, this may well have replaced an earlier church.

By the mid-12th century, the de Lacy family became Lords of the Honour of Clitheroe and a document dated to 1186-7 from Pope Urban III leads us now to believe that the present stone keep was built shortly before that date by Robert de Lacy. Also, and importantly, it makes clear that control of the whole of the Blackburn Hundred had passed from Blackburn to Clitheroe vastly raising the status of Clitheroe within the north-west of England.

The complete control and ownership by the Lord of everything and everyone within the Honour changed once again with the charters granted by Henry de Lacy in the mid-1100s and his descendant, another Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln around 1283 giving the Burgesses of the town the right to elect their own Bailiffs and Town Council, this latter only some seventy years after the signing of the Magna Carta and allowing the town to act as a primitive Corporation and to manage its own affairs.

From a population probably numbering only around 300 or so living in what, by any modern standards, would be considered squalor, the population increased to 1,368 by 1801. In the intervening period the town had withstood the effects of Scots raiders, rebellion, the Black Death, the Wars of the Roses, Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Civil War.

In 1558 Clitheroe became a Parliamentary Borough and by 1660, whilst the castle had outlived its defensive usefulness, law for the district around was still administered from the town; it had a respected education available in the Grammar School and its merchants were flourishing as the population continued to grow. Many stone-built homes, businesses and inns appeared, most of which are still in existence and the roads system was radically improved. Each day, up to 1,000 “lime-gals” – Galloway pack ponies – were carrying lime out of town to as far away as Manchester. In 1782 the first cotton spinning mill was established in the town and in 1850 the railway arrived. Not surprisingly, we have the old adage that Clitheroe was “Founded on Lime, Latin and Law”.

Much of the present Clitheroe town centre would have been clearly recognisable to the population of this latter period although, undoubtedly the likes of our traffic, wine bars, supermarkets and electronic gadgetry might well have caused some degree of astonishment!



CLITHEROE TOWN TRAIL

The Trail follows a circular route and our numbering starts in the meeting point of all roads in and out of the town, the Market Place, still the central focus of the town despite the departure of its market many years ago. However, feel free to join it at any point and just follow the numbers round the map.

From at least Norman times the townspeople have gathered here for the weekly market and the general shape of the area has changed little since then though most of the current buildings are of somewhat more recent date. As late as the early years of the 20th century Market and Fair days here would have seen the Market Place, Castle Street, Wellgate and part of King Street thronged with horses, cattle, sheep and pigs together with stalls selling goods of all sorts and, doubtless, the surrounding inns would have done a roaring trade.

1. THE YORKSHIRE BANK, built in the early 1920s, replaces the former Brownlow Arms. This establishment, in its day a great rival as a coaching house to the Swan and Royal in Castle Street, was earlier known as the White Bull. Prior to that, as a private dwelling, it was the birthplace of Capt. James King whose father was Rev. King, vicar of St. Mary's church. Capt. King became the friend and companion of Capt. Cook and travelled with him as an astronomer on his voyages. Look on the King Lane side of the Yorkshire Bank for the circular Blue Plaque commemorating this.

2. THE NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK now occupies the former site of the Dun Horse Inn.

3. THE BOAR'S HEAD stood where the Skipton Building Society now is.

4. THE WHITE LION HOTEL was re-roofed in 1839 following damage after a lightning strike and fire and, if you look a couple of feet or so above the pavement, you can still see the iron rings which were used for tethering and to hold up animal pens.



The White Lion Entry, still marked above as "Private Road", is now a public pedestrian access to the Ribble Valley Borough Council offices, the main town centre car-park and the Health Centre.

5. THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY was built on 1905. It was extensively redesigned and extended in 1990 and, incorporated into this, are the former Clitheroe Town Hall of 1820 designed by Thomas Rickman, which had replaced a former Moot Hall built in 1610, the old public lavatories, an early 19th century police station and some older still local prison cells. Not many library buildings will be able to boast such a variety of former uses. The cells are still used as storage rooms whilst the Council Chamber of the former Town Hall with its attractive ceiling and leaded lights is used for lectures and music recitals and there is an extensive Community History and Reference section. The range of services now offered, in particular internet access via numerous computers would have astounded the original 1905 users.

If you have time, go inside and find the curved stairway of the original library which will take you to the old Council Chamber.

In recent years, two small but significant additions have arrived at the library. Largely by the efforts of Mr. R. Jones, a local historian and author of the previous version of this Town Trail, Clitheroe was able to raise public subscriptions of £1,400 to acquire the original 1781 sketch of Clitheroe Castle in 1995 and this now hangs on display in the library. Secondly, to commemorate the Millennium, two stained glass windows depicting the long history of the town were designed by pupils, one from each of the town's two secondary schools, and installed in the main ground floor library windows. There is also on display a good copy of Turner's painting "Edisford Bridge".

Not many library buildings will be able to boast such a variety of former uses.





6. On the west side of the library is Church Street and, until 1828, this was the route out of town to Skipton and the north and is the next part of our walk. As you begin, look up to the left and see the carved inscription on the building adjoining the White Lion which says “Joint Gable Wall Belonging to John Wilkinson and Leonard Baldwin – 1835”. We still wonder why it was thought necessary to inscribe this here.

7. A little further up and again on the left you will see the **CLITHEROE TOWN HALL**. Under the Local Government Re-Organisations of 1974, the Clitheroe Borough became subsumed into the newly created Ribble Valley Borough but retained the option of having a Mayor. Its civic regalia is the envy of many far larger towns and cities. If the door of the Council Chamber is open, peep in, a modern entrance disguises an excellent and roomy chamber.

8. Next above is the **COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH** which is connected through to the Borough offices in Church Walk. It is very modern, spacious and well equipped – and is currently Clitheroe Civic Society’s venue for our monthly talks.

9. Above here there are several very attractive **LATE GEORGIAN PROPERTIES**. On the 1851 Census, one of these is classified as “22½”. The enumerator found he had missed out this house and rather than renumbering his records he lighted upon this unusual method of correction!

The last property before the church has the date 1808 on the façade but a rainwater pipe in the yard at the side has the date 1757.

Nearby here was Dr. Webster’s Study, unfortunately now gone. Dr. Webster was a cleric, astrologer and student of alchemy but is best known locally, especially following the Pendle Witch trials of 1612, for his book, “The Display of Supposed Witchcraft” published in 1677 in which he denounced the existence of witchcraft as anything but superstition. St. Mary’s church alongside contains a very interesting brass plaque bearing his epitaph which is thought to have been written by Webster himself.

*Dr. Webster was a cleric,
astrologer and student
of alchemy...*



10.

10. There has been a church dedicated to **ST. MARY MAGDALENE** here at the top of the hill since at least 1122. This Norman church was pulled down in the early 15th century to be rebuilt once again in 1828 though the spire was not added until 1840. Thomas Rickman who designed the 1820 Town Hall, now part of the library was, here again, the architect. The east window, installed in the 15th century stonework of the second church contains fifteen shields which spell out the part played by the church, Holders of the Honour of Clitheroe and main families linked with the Borough of Clitheroe in the long history of the town. The spire developed a twist which had to be corrected in 1969 but, unfortunately, iron cramps holding the stonework together were recently discovered to have corroded badly and the whole spire had to be completely dismantled and rebuilt in 2012, re-opening again just in time for Christmas. In between times, in 1979, the interior of the church was badly damaged by fire and repairs delayed re-dedication until 1981.



Walk through the church yard to the foot of the tower for an excellent if often windswept view of the distant Bowland Fells. Also, glance down over the wall opposite the door to the tower and note the bare grassy area in the graveyard below. This was a plague pit where it is thought that seventeen of the twenty-four who died during the 1849 cholera outbreak in the town were buried.

At noon on Sunday 8th March 1891 a horse and carriage stood outside the church gates ready to play a part in a remarkable incident. A man kidnapped a woman member of the congregation as she left the service and drove off with her! The full story of events leading to this action and the subsequent hearing at the Court of Appeal in London with the Lord Chancellor and Master of the Rolls taking part can be read in a 48 page book entitled "The Clitheroe Abduction" by E. J. Jackson. Interested? Try Clitheroe library!



11.

11. In Church Street you will see, directly across the road from the church gates, the **ST. MARY'S CHURCH HALL**. Built in 1882 and now under the management of the Lancaster Foundation, this was the second public hall built for the church. We shall see the first a little later.

Once over the top of the hill the road becomes Church Brow. L. S. Lowry, the renowned artist, visited Clitheroe on a number of occasions during the 1950s and 1960s. He stayed with his niece, who lived in Church Brow and it was from here that he made one of his sketches looking towards Church Street. His sketches indicate a particular feature of the town – its roofs, and this is perhaps not surprising given that most properties in the old town are built on quite steeply sloping ground and stepping of levels between them is inevitable.

12.

12. The first property on the left below the church wall is **PROSPECT HOUSE**. It is an imposing early Victorian building and its distinctive roof and gable outline is clearly recognisable from many outlying parts of the town. Between 1797 and 1850 the four successive owners of this land went bankrupt!

13.

13. Across the road is a small **INFILL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT** of 1988 very conveniently using town centre land left spare after a former market garden business closed.

14.

14. Adjacent to this is what started life, in 1851, as **THE FIRST OF THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH HALLS**. This was soon outgrown hence the later, larger building at the top of the hill. It became the headquarters for the local St. John's Ambulance Brigade and, for some years now, has been used as a furniture store by a local retailer

15.

15. At the foot of the Brow on the left, the corner property was **THE CROWN INN** until 1973 but is now a dentist's surgery – rather appropriate given the former name!

16.

16. At the foot of the Brow you should turn right into Well Terrace but, before you do, look across the road to see a stone built mid-Georgian House called **THE ALLEYS**. It stands on land close by an earlier moated manor house of the same name dating back to the 14th century or earlier. At Agincourt on St. Crispin's Day in 1415 nine archers and three men-at-arms were supplied by its owner, Sir Thomas Radcliffe, and fought alongside Henry V. Imposing effigies of Sir Thomas and his wife now lie in St. Mary's Church.

A man kidnapped a woman member of the congregation as she left the service and drove off with her!

CLITHEROE



TOWN TRAIL



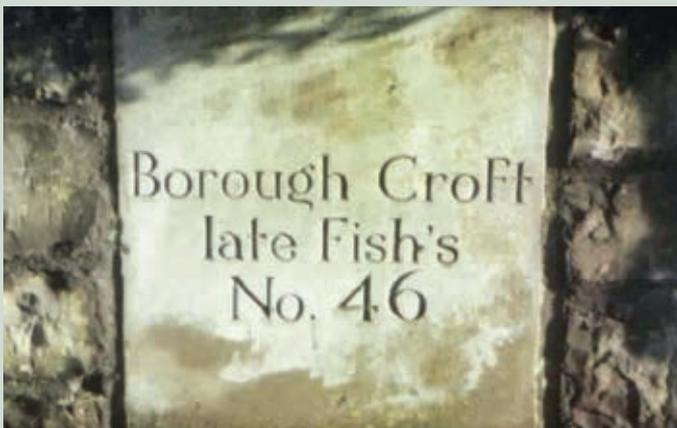
17. Also, directly across the road from the end of the Brow you will see **HAZLEMERE**, a contrast in style and material, it is a Victorian mansion built in the late 1880s. An interesting stone set in the boundary wall reads, "Borough Croft late Fish's No. 46". It marks one of the six crofts named after their owners. These crofts or burgages, of which there were about one hundred in all, enjoyed all the privileges of Burgage holdings including the right to vote for Clitheroe's two members of parliament from 1558 to 1832. They were therefore properties of value and importance.

18. In Well Terrace, on your right, by the bus stop, you will see the stone surrounds of **ST. MARY'S WELL**. Clitheroe had many but this is one of the three main public wells all of which were in use until the mid-19th century. At this time the Local Board of Health had become concerned about the highly insanitary conditions in which many of the townspeople were living – the cholera outbreak of 1849 no doubt having sharpened their interest - and had commissioned a report on it. In 1850, Mr. B. H. Babbage presented his report and, following this, the Clitheroe Waterworks Company was set up, piped water was supplied from a new reservoir at West Bradford to public pumps and the wells were largely abandoned. Invisible now, but still present below the pavement between the well and the bus stop are troughs at which horses etc., could be watered. Sadly neglected since then, this and the other two similar public wells in town are currently subject to Clitheroe Civic Society's campaigning for renovation work to be carried out.

Glance around in Well Terrace; note the terraced houses of 1890 across the road, the 1980s retirement homes just beyond (built on what had been for many years a corn mill) and, behind the well, the newer buildings of the Sixth Form College of the Clitheroe Royal Grammar School. Neither these nor virtually any other buildings to the north were present when the wells were abandoned in the mid-1800s and this was, at that time, essentially the northern edge of the built part of the town.

Continue now to the roundabout and turn right into York Street which, with its continuation, Chatburn Road, was built around 1828 by the Skipton-Clitheroe Turnpike Trust who employed the famous John Macadam as their consultant.

*...piped water was supplied
from a new reservoir...*



19. On your right, you cannot fail to notice the main building of the **CLITHEROE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL** built between 1912 and 1914 with its Millennium clock in the blue and gold of the school colours. Founded in 1554 by Queen Mary, the first school was built in 1588 and stood in St. Mary's churchyard. That building was rebuilt in the same place in 1782 and then, in 1834, it was carefully demolished stone-by-stone and re-erected in its present position at the town end of the school-yard. In 1989 further new building linked the 1782 building very sympathetically to the 1912/14 portion.

These buildings were shared between boys and girls until 1958 when a new Girls Grammar School opened in Chatburn Road. The two schools amalgamated in 1985, became a Grant Maintained establishment in 1991 and converted to Academy School Status in 2011. The main school, with around 600 pupils, is now based at the Chatburn Road building and these buildings in York Street constitute the Sixth Form Centre with around 690 pupils. Clitheroe Royal Grammar School is listed on Ofsted's "Honours List" – all a far cry from the days of 1826 to 1840 when the school must have been close to closure with a pupil roll varying between one and seven!

20. On the left hand side a little further up York Street is **THE GRAND**. Built in 1873 as a Public Hall, it became, from 1920 until recently, one of the three cinemas in Clitheroe and was the last to close. It was taken over by the Lancaster Foundation a charitable organisation set up by local businessman, John Lancaster, and, after a multi-million pound re-development, it re-opened in 2009 as a state-of-the-art theatre and music and arts production centre mainly catering for the youth of the town but as a venue for music and concerts generally too.

21. A little further up the road you will return to the library on the right hand side and, as you do, note the heavily studded door with the arched stone surround. This was the entrance to the **TOWN GOAL**, in use as such until 1870. The cells behind are still there and in use as storage for the library.

As you re-enter the Market Place at the National Westminster Bank which stands on the site of the old Dun Horse Inn, turn left into **WELLGATE**. This is one of the oldest thoroughfares in town and was, for hundreds of years, the route to Burnley and Pontefract where, at the latter, lay the principal seat of the Lords of the Honour, the de Lacys. From here at the top of Wellgate, there's a fine view to the southern flank of Pendle.



22.

22. On the left you will see **HARRIS COURT** named after a family who lived here during the late 18th century. Rev. Robert Harris, who became vicar of St. George's Parish Church in Preston, was born in Clitheroe, educated at the Grammar School and his family's bequests built the Harris Library and Art Gallery in Preston.

Note the old enamelled chocolate adverts on the wall of the café. The words "Queen Alexandra" give a clue to their age – she was queen from 1901 to 1910.

A little lower down on the left, there is some rather fine Art Nouveau glazing in some of the house windows.



23.

23. At the foot of Wellgate is the feature that gives the street its name – the **HEILD WELL**. Situated at the oldest junction of roads in the town, this is the largest of the town's public wells and its name is thought to imply that it was, at one time, covered. As with St. Mary's Well, this too is in need of attention and the Clitheroe Civic Society is currently working with the Ribble Valley Borough Council with a view to redeveloping this and the road junction itself.

Behind the well is the **DOG INN**. This, until 1999, was the Dog and Partridge which was rebuilt in 1806 replacing an earlier inn of the same name. It is the oldest rebuilt of the many inns in town, most of which were renovated from 1835 onwards. Across the road, you will see another old inn, **THE BUCK**; look carefully and you will see the year that it was rebuilt.

Alongside the Dog Inn is a pedestrian entry now leading only to the Tesco supermarket but which passes through an area called **WELLFOLD**. This, much earlier, had been a thriving industrial area including tanners, blacksmiths and rope-makers.

Immediately below the well we meet **LOWERGATE, SHAWBRIDGE AND DUCK STREET**, the last almost certainly named for the ducking stool which would have been in the Mearley Brook some 100 yards or so beyond. This is the oldest junction of roads in the town. Turn right here to enter Lowergate.

24.

24. A short distance along Lowergate is a large building which, unusually for a limestone town like Clitheroe, is built in brick. Built in the 1860s, the Royal insignia on the roof gives proof of its original purpose – **THE COURT HOUSE**. The magistrate's courts were transferred from here to the Clitheroe Council Chamber in 1932 and, again, transferred to Blackburn in 1994. It now serves as a Job Centre.

The road alongside the Job Centre leads to **CANDLEMAKER'S COURT**, the name of which commemorates the trade which went on here for many years prior to lighting becoming available by gas from 1836 and by electricity from 1926.

25.

25. Next, we reach **SS MICHAEL & JOHN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**. The Roman Catholic church, as a congregation here, dates back to 1790s but it was not until 1850 that the church was built. The dedication to St. Michael is a revival of that of the chapel in Clitheroe Castle.

26.

26. Cross over to the right of the road and follow the very narrow footpath until it widens at the foot of a stone staircase leading up to **MOOR LANE**. Look up to the first floor windows above and note the rounded head of one of them. This indicates one of the rooms used for **METHODIST MEETINGS** in town before their first chapel was built.

27.

27. Only a few yards further along Lowergate we reach the junction with Highfield Road, formerly Wilkin Street and, on the corner, what was **MOUNT ZION PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL** and the commemoration stones at pavement level give the foundation date of 1884. In 1940, the chapel closed and amalgamated with the United Methodist Free Church at Moor Lane. Since then, it has been used for storage and manufacturing. In 2006 it was acquired by the town's Muslim community are converting it into a place of worship and a community partnership centre. During one of his visits to Clitheroe, **L. S. LOWRY** included Mount Zion in a painting called "Street in Clitheroe".

Continue a little way further to the mini-roundabout.

Here we join Moor Lane leading out from Clitheroe town centre. Opened in 1809 under the **TURNPIKE TRUST SYSTEM**, it is the main road to Whalley and Blackburn.



28.

28. Overlooking the roundabout is the former **MOOR LANE METHODIST CHAPEL** built in 1884 on the site of a former chapel of 1838. The rebuilding necessitated the re-interment elsewhere of seven bodies, more victims of the 1849 cholera outbreak. The present chapel closed in 1962 and, in 1998, was converted to “The Emporium”, a wine bar, restaurant and household furnishings store.

29.

29. Turn now to the right up the hill of Moor Lane and see, on the left, **PICCOLINO'S RESTAURANT**. Opened in 2008 after very sympathetic restoration, the building it occupies had been used for many years for electronics manufacturing but was originally built in 1839 as the **NATIONAL SCHOOL** and there are still flavours of its original use to be noted both inside and out. One of the school's longer serving headmasters was **ARTHUR LANGSHAW**; widely known as the town's foremost local historian, much of his valued writing, which has widely informed this account, can be found in the Clitheroe library.

30.

30. Directly across the road, the present fish and chip shop was, in the days of horse-drawn equipment, the local **FIRE STATION** having housed the original hand-pumped and later the steam powered appliances and the “Chief Engineer” lived in the house next door.

Note, as you walk further up Moor Lane, the stepping of the roofs and the exposed gables of the upper floors. One or two of these still bear faded painted remnants such as “A.WILSON – Baby-Line Underclothing Depot.” on the cement rendered surfaces – one of the few means of shop advertising in the early days of last century.

Just around the corner at the top we reach Castlegate and the main entrance to **CLITHEROE CASTLE**.

31.

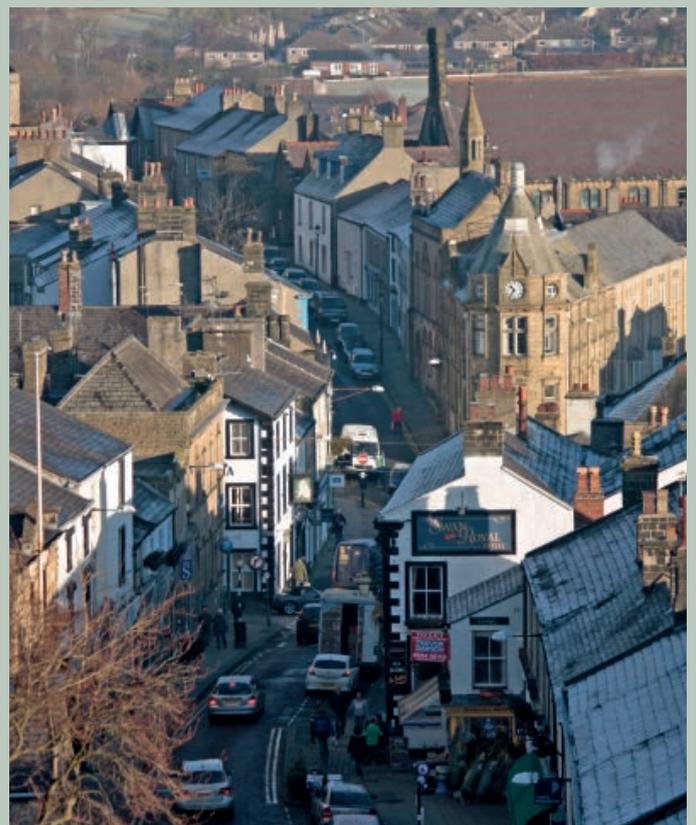
31. **THE CASTLE** and the 16 acres of its grounds was bought for the town by public subscription in 1919 as a memorial to townspeople who fell in World War 1 and the entrance area was further developed and dedicated to the fallen of World War 2 in 1952. The most recent changes have resulted from a £3.5M total redevelopment of the central castle buildings and the facilities they provide. Opened to the public in 2009, it added a link building containing an entrance foyer and atrium café to connect the two groups of buildings adjacent to the keep. The museum and the North West Sound Archives have been re-housed and redesigned and former stores converted to teaching, display and hire spaces.

All this in addition to the many acres of grounds containing beautiful walks, bowling greens, rose garden, tennis courts, skate park, band-stand, children's and general play areas prevents us from including it in this walk around our town. Rather, come again and fully experience the attractions to be found “up the castle”! However, if you have an extra few minutes, do, please, walk up to the ramparts surrounding the keep to see the most stunning views of the town, the valley and the surrounding Pendle and Bowland Fells running from beyond Settle all the way down to Preston.

Otherwise (or afterwards) follow the main road round to the right into Castle Street. This is the oldest street in the town leading from the castle to the church.

32.

32. Look, on the right, for a small “snicket” leading back down to Lowergate. Here is a delightful little infill complex, the original buildings having been converted for specialist retail and residential purposes around a patio giving a superb view to Pendle Hill.



33.

33. A little further on is the **SWAN & ROYAL**

HOTEL. Still known to the locals as its older name, simply “the Swan”, it may have acquired the “Royal” since, in the days when it was an important coaching inn, one of its coaches carried mail to Hellifield. Another reason offered is that it was the office for the Excise man. The present building dates from the 1830s but there was an inn on the site as far back as the 15th or 16th centuries. It came close to disaster in September 2009 when a fire destroyed most of the interior and the roof and did not re-open until February 2011.



In 1878, cotton workers, angry at proposed cuts in their wages, prompted the reading of the Riot Act from the steps of the hotel and the calling in of the 11th Hussars before control was regained. Only six weeks afterwards, these same Hussars had all been killed, having been sent off to the Zulu War.

Look on the front of the building for a Blue Plaque commemorating the transfer in 1942 of the development of **SIR FRANK WHITTLE'S** jet engine from the Rover Company to Rolls Royce. The old Waterloo Mill was taken over and, for some time afterwards, Clitheronians were treated to the scream and howl of engines being tested there. Sir Winston Churchill made a number of visits to inspect progress on this and stayed at the Swan & Royal when he did so.

Alongside the inn is the **SWAN COURTYARD**, another excellent example of town development by conversion of the inn's former stabling into a quieter, traffic free shopping arcade and through-way back to Lowergate.

34.

34. Across the road is another coaching inn, the **ROSE AND CROWN.** A much older inn was

demolished and rebuilt in 1836, bankrupting its builder in the process. At some later date it was renamed as the **STARKIE ARMS** and remained so until 2010 when its original name was restored. Walk through the arched entrance to the yard and, from the wall at the foot of the yard, you see the new market. The centre of the circular area marks the sale ring of the **AUCTION MART** which occupied the site from 1879 until moving to a new home on the edge of town in 1988.

From here it is a short step back to the start of our walk in the Market Place. But, before you go, look back up Castle Street and remind yourself once again of the influence that the castle has had on the development and, indeed, on the very existence of Clitheroe. What a dominating presence it must have been to the mediaeval populace; at once, their master and their protector!

Following the 2008/9 major re-development of the castle Ribbles Valley Borough Council removed from the surrounding slopes a number of large trees and undergrowth which had obscured much of the castle from view. The result has been that, no matter from which direction we view the town, we can now say proudly “We have got our castle back!”.

CLITHEROE - THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

So, what of Clitheroe now and in the future?

Lottery funding allowed us to spend £3.5M on re-development of the castle recently. Now, in the Spring of 2013, work is to start on site for the construction of a new £3.2M community hospital and in September of 2012 we became one of the first authorities in the north-west to have high speed fibre optics broadband services available throughout the town.

In 1850 the railway line was driven through the eastern edge of the town bringing much needed commercial and passenger connection with conurbations to the south. The coaching trade died and coal, raw materials, cattle, the mail and passengers came in and out by rail in ever increasing amounts. The goods sidings needed for this occupied the whole of the land now covered by Booth's Supermarket, its car park and more besides. In 1962 the axe fell, the line closed and was not re-opened for passenger traffic until 1994 and now it once again provides commuter and shopper transport to Blackburn and Manchester. The same railway enthusiasts who achieved this are working hard to have the connection extended to Hellifield and the Settle Carlisle line.

Cotton, our main supporting industry for many years, has gone as has quarrying for lime and stone although the cement works, begun here in 1936, thrives and provides a good deal of employment. Other disused quarried areas have been redeveloped as commercial estates, again providing jobs and, as ever was in Ribblesdale, farming is a major employer. However, in common with much of the rest of the country, goods for all these tend to be carried by road. Increasing affluence since the end of WW2 has resulted in virtually every family possessing at least one car, we drive to shop at supermarkets – of which Clitheroe now has four – and to work, and our children are driven or taken by bus to school.

The inner by-pass in the 1960s and the Whalley-Clitheroe outer by-pass relieved much of the pressure from this as did creation of the rail/bus interchange, re-organisation of bus routes and introduction of one-way systems but, still, much of the remainder of this traffic filters through the unforgiving mediaeval street pattern of the old town and that of the much larger residential areas surrounding it. Current central government advice is that much more housing is needed and this has prompted developers to submit speculative applications for very large numbers of new homes which will inevitably result in further increased strain on not only road systems but also health, education and other services.

However, for a town that has weathered invasion, pestilence and revolution, it's just another problem to be solved.

Clitheroe in the writer's opinion, is still, and will remain, a good place to be.

