

# ILKLEY INLAND SPA

*Alex Cockshott Ilkley Civic Society / Ilkley Local History Hub*

by the 1800s Ilkley became famous as an inland spa for its pure cold water, fresh air and beautiful landscape. The village of Ilkley was around the Anglo Saxon All Saints Church, mentioned in the Norman Domesday Book, with a 15<sup>th</sup> century tower. The south east side, nearer 1850s turnpike road [A65] was enlarged 1860-1 as Ilkley began to grow. A stream down from the moor was culverted in 1854 to create Brook St. Wells Rd went up to the moor, White Wells offered renovated baths in 1790s with a Charity Bath-house from 1829. By the end of the 1850s the bath houses each had a roof and donkeys available to ride up to White Wells. The first purpose built Hydro in 1844 was a mile beyond Ilkley at Wheatley the Ben Rhydding Hydro with its cold water treatments, healthy food, exercise regime and consultations with Dr Wm McLeod. Wells House Hydro opened in 1856 and further Hydros followed.

## **Start at Ilkley Town Hall - BP1**

### **Walk to the zebra crossings, cross and continue right on Station Rd**

**BP12** Railway Station, opposite shops and inns built in 1870.

### **Recross Station Rd zebra crossing then turn right, cross Wells Road and then left to walk up Wells Promenade**

This once gated road was built at the end of 1860s. These buildings were both houses on Wells Promenade and shops on Wells Rd. Next comes Guardian Court, the site of 1870 Wesleyan Church, whose top boundary wall remains

### **After 100 yards turn right, cross the road to walk over a bridge at Mill Ghyll. Cross Wells Walk to walk straight along then cross over Riddings Rd**

**Bp 6** Abbeyfield Grove House with grounds looking down to The Grove

### **Return across the roads to cross the wooden bridge cross Wells Promenade to walk straight on**

**Bp 6** Chapel House

### **Turn right, cross over to walk up Wells Road,**

Note Wells Court, site of 1870 Royal Hotel and then West View: gentlemen's residences and lodging houses from the 1840s. Next is West View House 1860, an 1868 semi then The Rombalds **BP20**. At the top Moor Cottage is an old farmhouse.

### **Turn left to walk along Crossbeck Rd**

South View, once a lodging house. Opposite is Wells Terrace [Hillside] **BP 16**. Then on the right a series of 1860s houses including Crossbeck House and Terrace. Below on the left are the grounds of Ilkley Hall built late 1820s for Joshua Dixon, a Wakefield lawyer. Further along on the right is the Troutbeck Hydro opened 1862 [jumping fish on the gable]. Then comes Craiglands Park, site of 1860s semis which were converted in the 1890s to the Moorlands Hydro.

**Turn right up the drive to Craiglands, walk along path to reach Cowpasture Rd**

Craiglands Hydro **BP 14** - the only surviving hydro hotel. It has a new spa.

**Emerge on Cowpasture Road, turn right and then immediately turn right and walk up path to and through the gate at the top. Either walk up the steps to the rough path or right up sloping path which ends with some steps up to the Tarn. Walk round the Tarn [ several times for Ilkley Spa air!]**

**Look up for The White Wells bathhouse** - new baths 1790s by squire Middleton

**At the information board at the end of the Tarn follow the downward path**

To visit White Wells: by the bottom gate turn left up the steps & path. There is a drinking fountain behind White Wells. Flags fly when the small café & bathhouse museum are open. Pass White Wells and down to the 1829 Charity Bath-house. Continue down the gravel path which crosses a stream and then descends to Wells Rd. Turn right to walk down to Broderick Drive on the left.

Alternatively walk down to the end of the path by Hillside. Turn left by the cattle grid and walk up Wells Rd towards Wells House.

**Turn to walk along Broderick Dr to the large stone Wells House BP 3**

**Walk down through /explore Darwin Gardens Millennium Green to carpark**

This is site of West View Bandstand, constructed in 1904, removed in 1950s

**Walk down Wells Rd**

There is a pair of houses by the entrance to Wells House stables then a pair of large 1870s semis. Look at the hollow by the first semi, a former mill pond

**Cross Queens Rd** The upper corn mill stood here.

**Enter Mill Ghyll and walk down the path**

In the middle of this was the lower corn mill which was demolished in 1873. The stone was used to edge the paths. William Middleton leased this narrow strip of land to the Local Board in 1873 at a rent of one shilling per annum,

At bottom of the Ghyll, the brook goes into a culvert. Just before the main road is a large stone bowl full of flowers. This was a water fountain built in 1875 by public subscription for £135.