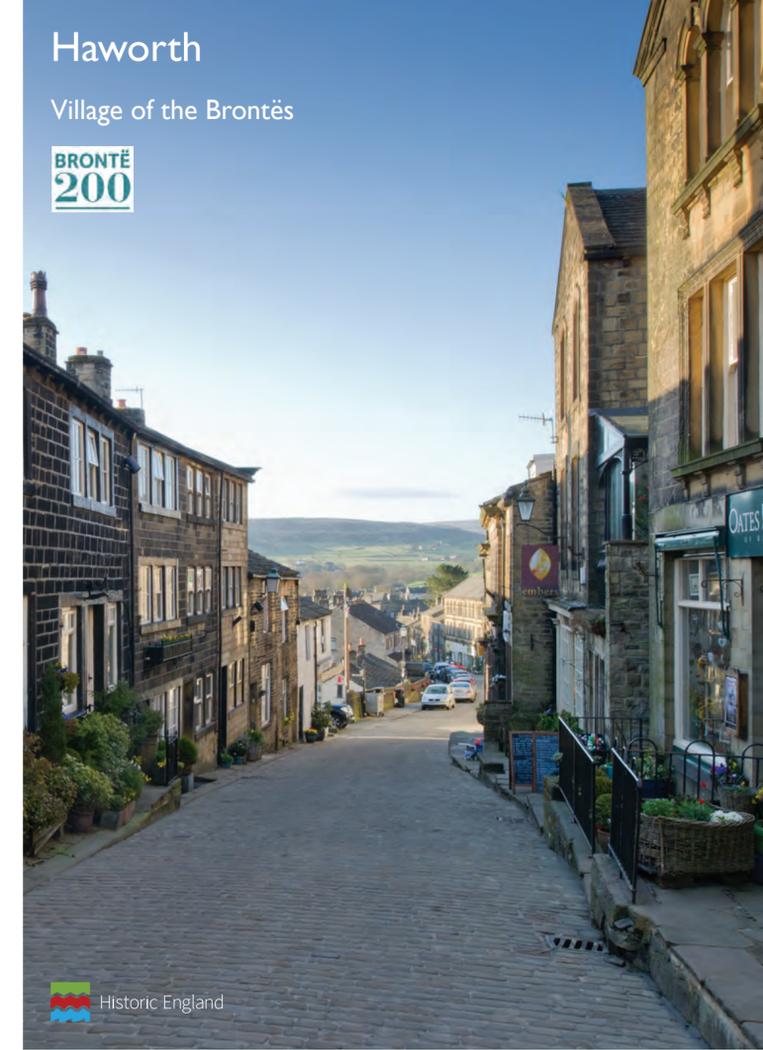


# Haworth

## Village of the Brontës



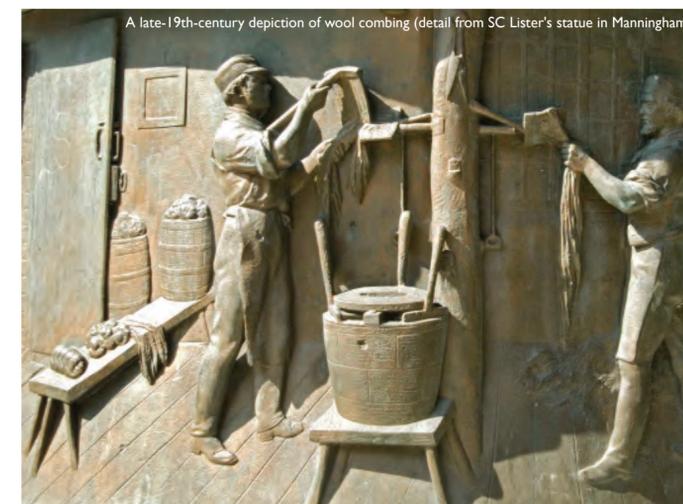
Engraving of Haworth of circa 1860-80 (Courtesy of the Brontë Society)

**Acknowledgements:**  
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**Further reading:**  
The history of Haworth is described in some excellent recent publications, including:  
Baumber, M 2009 *A History of Haworth from earliest times*. Lancaster: Carnegie  
Whitehead, S R 2006 *The Brontës' Haworth*. Kendal: Ashmount  
Wood, S 2009, 2011 *Haworth Oxenhope and Stanbury from old photographs*. Stroud: Amberley (2 volumes)  
Wood, S and Palmer, I 2009 *Haworth through time*. Stroud: Amberley  
The story of the Brontës is explored in numerous publications, the most extensive being:  
Barker, J 2010 *The Brontës*. London: Abacus

Places to visit:  
Brontë Parsonage Museum, Church Street, Haworth (<http://www.bronte.org.uk/>)  
Keighley and Worth Valley Railway (<http://www.kwvr.co.uk/>)

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A late-19th-century depiction of wool combing (detail from SC Lister's statue in Manningham)

Many of the cottages in the village today were once used for wool combing.  
Historic Haworth is largely a product of the 19th century. The Brontës knew a village that was a scene of constant building activity: new houses and shops were always in the course of construction and old houses were replaced by new. The cottages are substantially built of local sandstone and gritstone, with dressed stone surrounds to the doorways and mullioned windows in characteristic Pennine style. Some houses were built back-to-back and some had a main dwelling at one level and a cellar dwelling below: a short back-to-back terrace on West Lane (5) has four cellar dwellings below the houses on the main street front. Not all of Haworth's houses, however, were relatively new in the time of the Brontës. The Old Hall at Hall Green (18) is an excellent example of 17th-century Yorkshire Pennine housing and on North Street is another fine 17th-century house with its aisled barn alongside (4).

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Shops on Main Street (13)

time of the Brontës it had booksellers, grocers, tailors, drapers, a clockmaker and surgeons. Around the miniature square at the church steps (8) were an apothecary, a wine and spirit merchant, an ironmonger (who doubled as a postmaster), a temperance hotel and four inns (the Black Bull, the Old White Lion, the Cross, and the King's Arms). In among these businesses were more humble trades: many boot and clog makers, a blacksmith and joiners, plasterers and stone masons. The atmosphere was captured vividly by a 19th-century visitor: staying at the Black Bull, she was just looking from the window which gave on the square. Indifferent to the rain, the people clattered by in their wooden shoes. Two toddlers, bare necked and bare armed, stood hand-in-hand, looking wistfully into the window of a bake shop, where



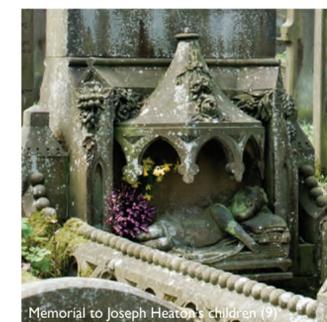
The Co-operative Stores (15)

central 'square' but later further down Main Street, where its premises, built in 1897, proudly display the inscription 'Haworth Industrial Cooperative Society Limited Central Stores' (15). The village also had a branch of the Yorkshire Penny Bank, which opened in 1860 and by 1894 had moved to what is now the Visitor Information Centre (7), adding the prominent turret on the older building to proclaim its importance.  
In the time of the Brontës, Haworth was very much a working village. The main industry



The Black Bull inn (8)

before they were six years old. In St Michael's churchyard, one memorial records that Joseph Heaton buried seven infant children, and there are many similar gravestones in the village's burial grounds. For those who survived infancy, life expectancy was around 44 years. The Brontë family itself illustrated the devastating impact of disease and sickness: none of the six children died in infancy, but none reached the age of forty.



Memorial to Joseph Heaton's children (9)

### Conservation in Haworth

The heart of Haworth is a conservation area which contains over 80 listed buildings and a significant number of others which contribute greatly to the village's character. Haworth Conservation Area has a chaotic but cohesive

charm; buildings of different size, type and age are set at different angles and distances from the street, but are nevertheless united by their level of preservation and by the colour of the stone from which they are built. Together they reflect the gradual and organic development and the diverse assortment of facilities, employers, people and institutions once found in an industrious, self-sufficient Pennine hill village. They also provide the very fabric of the present-day living village, which is home to a thriving community and is also a popular and friendly tourist destination. In partnership with Bradford Council, local groups and business owners, Historic England is working to maintain the character of Haworth and its authentic atmosphere, for visitors and residents alike, by assisting and advising on schemes of maintenance and through the sympathetic management of change. The aim is to protect and enhance Haworth, and its international reputation as a high-quality tourist destination, for generations to come.



The square (8)

### Haworth: village of the Brontës

'We no sooner reached the foot of the hill than we had to begin to mount again, over a narrow, rough stone-paved road; the horses' feet seemed to catch at boulders, as if climbing. When we reached the top of the village there was apparently no outlet, but we were directed to drive into an entry which just admitted the gig; we wound round in the entry and then saw the church close at hand, and we entered on the short lane which led to the parsonage gateway. Here Charlotte was waiting, having caught the sound of the approaching gig'. So wrote Ellen Nussey, describing a visit to Haworth and her great friend Charlotte Brontë in 1833. Her experience of arrival at the village has been shared by visitors ever since: the steep hill is still a challenge and the way to the Parsonage, home of the Brontë family, remains the same.  
Haworth is, of course, best known for its association with the Brontës. Patrick Brontë was appointed curate in 1820 and the family took up residence in the Parsonage. Here

were written the famous novels – *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and others – which shook the literary world in the middle of the 19th century. At first, the identity of the authors was hidden from the public, but soon the names of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë – and of Haworth – were known across the country. The family was touched by tragedy, however. Their brother Branwell died in 1848, aged 31, Emily soon followed, aged 30, Anne died in 1849, aged 29, and Charlotte died in 1855 at the age of 38. Their father Patrick lived on until 1861, aged 84. He had buried all his children.

Haworth lies four miles from Keighley and even further from the bigger towns of Halifax and Bradford. The village climbs the side of a steep hill and behind it, stretching to the Pennine watershed, rise the lonely, desolate moors so beloved of the Brontë sisters and made famous by Emily's great novel *Wuthering Heights*. Due to its remoteness and because it lay on an important trans-Pennine turnpike road, Haworth was rather more than a rural village, for it served a large hinterland. In the



The Parsonage (11)



Townend Farm (4)

The wealthier or higher status inhabitants lived in houses which introduced new styles of architecture to the village: the Parsonage (11), built in 1779, has a symmetrical elevation and sash windows, in contrast to the mullioned windows of the cottages, and Woodlands (22), the home of the family that ran Bridgehouse Mills, has a fine restrained classical front.



Woodlands (22)

A very important part of life in 19th-century Haworth was played by religion. Patrick Brontë preached for forty years in St Michael's Church, which in his time was largely an 18th-century building, although retaining the tower of the chapel established in 1655. Today's church (9) dates from a rebuilding of 1879-80. Patrick may have felt beleaguered in Haworth, however, for the Church of England was overshadowed by the Nonconformist denominations. In 1851, Patrick could count on 500 adherents, but three times as many villagers attended the three chapels – Wesleyan and Baptist – which flourished in Haworth (2, 3, 19). Competition extended to education:

the Methodists ran a school in the village from 1821 and in 1832 the Church of England responded by building a National School (10), close to the church and parsonage. Patrick Brontë was instrumental in founding the school and Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell all taught there. Only with the building of the Central Board Schools in Butt Lane (16) in 1895 was non-denominational education provided for the children of Haworth.

Despite the widespread ignorance which Patrick Brontë complained about, the village did enjoy a social and cultural life. A Philosophical Society was formed in 1780 and orchestral and choral concerts were held in the church and the Black Bull. Brass bands from the mills held concerts and the Haworth Brass Band, formed in 1854 and originating as the Springhead mill band, still meets in rooms next to the Fleece Inn on Main Street. The improvement of the working man was advanced by the founding of a Mechanics' Institute in 1849, offering a library, a newsroom and a lecture hall. Both Patrick and Charlotte Brontë were staunch supporters of the Institute, which moved in 1853 to new premises, now the Villette Café, in Main Street (13). The Freemasons were active in Haworth:



Victoria Hall (20)

Branwell Brontë was a member of the Three Graces Lodge, which met in rooms in Newell Hill (now Lodge Street) (14). Another form of association is represented by Victoria Hall (20), adjacent to the Hall Green Baptist Chapel. Built in 1854, the hall provided a meeting place for the Oddfellows Friendly Society, formed to provide help and support to its members. Nearby, in Minnie Street, is the Drill Hall (21), built in 1873 to provide training facilities for



West Lane Methodist Chapel graveyard (2)

the 42nd Company of the West Yorkshire Rifle Volunteers who were renowned for their shooting prowess, winning many competitions in the late 19th century.

Alongside the industry, the commerce, the religion and social life was one dominant presence in the village in the time of the Brontës: death. Haworth was a notoriously unhealthy place, as bad, it was reported, as the worst slums of London. A poor water supply, no proper provision for sewage, harsh working conditions and perhaps even seepage from the churchyard burials were to blame. Infant mortality reached horrifying levels in the middle years of the century: 41% of children died

For Haworth, nothing would be the same after the Brontës. The village expanded after the opening of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway (26) in 1867 and many of the local mills grew into large steam-powered factories. Brown, curiously in the valley below the village, became a distinct settlement, industrial in character. For the village itself, on the hill above, literary pilgrimages became an important source of income, especially after the foundation of the Brontë Society in 1893. Today, the Brontë association and the preservation of the village largely as it was in the middle decades of the 19th century, make Haworth a popular and rewarding place to visit.

**Key buildings and sites in Haworth**

**1** Sun Inn, West Lane: in the mid-19th century turnpike road tolls were collected here.

**2** West Lane Methodist Chapel: the chapel, built in 1758 and rebuilt in 1846, has been demolished, the congregation moving to the adjacent schoolroom of 1853. At the rear is the chapel graveyard.



**3** West Lane Baptist Chapel: founded in the 1750s, but provided with a new chapel in 1844. Behind the chapel is an extensive school.



**4** Townend Farm, North Street: a well-preserved 17th-century house and adjacent barn.

**5** West Lane, Nos. 21-34: a row of back-to-back houses, with cellar dwellings on the street side.

**6** The Fold, West Lane: this yard is lined with cottages. In 1851 there were eight households here with 52 inhabitants, nine of them lodgers in a lodging house run by a handloom weaver.

**7** Visitor Information Centre: the Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1849, originally met here. In 1894 the Yorkshire Penny Bank took over the property and added the short tower and pyramidal roof. The Brontë Society, founded in 1893, opened its first museum in an upper room in 1895.



**8** The 'square': the road widens at the foot of the church steps to form a little square. On the upper side, to one side of the old village stocks, is a short row of shops: No. 121 was the post office in the time of the Brontës, and No. 123 was a temperance (teetotal) hotel. It was supported by Patrick Brontë, who was President of Haworth's Temperance Society. Opposite is another row of shops: Rose's Apothecary, a fine building with smooth ashlar masonry, was a chemist's store in the mid-19th century. Two sides of the square are lined with inns: the Black Bull, favoured by Branwell Brontë, and the Old White Lion, rebuilt in 1858.

**9** St Michael and All Angels' Church and graveyard: the church was largely rebuilt in 1879 to replace the building known to the Brontës. Inside, a stained glass window commemorates Charlotte and a memorial tablet records the deaths of the family

members who are buried in a vault beneath the floor. The crowded churchyard contains many gravestones of interest.



**10** National School, Church Street: the little school house was built in 1832 as a Sunday school with funds from the National Society and from public subscriptions, generated through the efforts of Patrick Brontë. Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell all taught here.



**11** The Parsonage, Church Street: this is the centrepiece for visitors interested in the Brontë family. Built in 1779, the house is modest but dignified and provided a home for the family from 1820 to 1861. Patrick's successor, the Reverend Wade, added the gabled wing in 1878. The house is now the Brontë Parsonage Museum, owned and run by the Brontë Society. It acts as a research and cultural centre and attracts thousands of visitors each year. The museum displays many original pieces of furniture and exhibitions from their extensive Brontë collection.

**12** Gauger's Croft: through the archway next to Emma's Café lay Gauger's Croft. In the time of the Brontës, this was a densely packed area of terraced housing, with many cellar dwellings. The houses were demolished as part of a slum clearance campaign in the 1960s.



**13** Main Street: this leads steeply down from the square. On both sides of the street are cottages and shops, some with fine shop window surrounds in ashlar. 'Villette', built in 1853, was originally a lecture room for the Black Bull, then the Mechanics' Institute and later the Liberal Club. Perhaps the best shop front belongs to Nos. 75 and 77, a pair of shops built in 1854.



**14** Lodge Street (formerly Newell Hill): in this short fold are the rooms used by the Three Graces Masonic Lodge and the three-storey house of William Wood, a joiner, who made furniture for the Parsonage and the coffins for the Brontë family.



**15** The Co-operative Stores, Main Street: built in 1897, it originally provided drapers', butchers' and grocers' departments on the ground floor and an 'assembly room' on the top floor. Next to the Co-op, Nos. 25-27 were probably built half a century earlier as a workshop, lit by long mullioned windows on the upper floors and with a taking-in door for goods on the top floor.

**16** The Central Board Schools, Butt Lane: these large school buildings were opened in 1895 and replaced the denominational schools which up to that date had provided education in Haworth.



**17** Central Park: this opened in 1929 and brass band concerts were once performed in a bandstand.

**18** The Old Hall, Hall Green: the best surviving 17th-century house in Haworth, with characteristic mullioned windows, gritstone masonry and a projecting porch with a little chamber lit by windows on three sides. Inside, the main feature is a large arched kitchen fireplace with a small opening to an oven on one side.



**19** Hall Green Baptist Chapel: built in 1824 and retaining a galleried interior and original pews. The organ was added in 1840.



**20** Victoria Hall, Prospect Street: this meeting hall, in the middle of a terrace of houses, was built in 1854 by the Oddfellows Friendly Society.



**22** Woodlands, Sun Street: built by the Greenwood family, of Bridgehouse Mills, in 1832. A private drive leads to the house and after 1867 a bridge was built over the railway and the Bridgehouse Beck to provide direct access to the factory.

**23** The Ivy Bank Mills: this mill, now derelict, was built for worsted spinning in about 1870.

**24** Bridge House and Bridgehouse Mills: Bridge House is a beautiful mid-18th-century building with sophisticated architectural features which contrast strongly with the vernacular cottages of the village.



Next to it in the late 18th century was built Bridgehouse Mills. Originally water-powered and used for worsted yarn spinning, steam power and weaving sheds were added later. Only the frontage buildings survive: these date from the mid and late 19th century.



**25** The War Memorial, Bridgehouse: 105 men from Haworth village lost their lives in the First World War: their regiments saw action at the battles of Ypres and the Somme.



**26** Haworth railway station, Station Road: the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway opened in 1867 and the original station building survives. Steam trains run from Keighley to Oxenhope and the smell of coal smoke is an evocative part of the Haworth experience.



**27** Mill Hey and Brow: Mill Hey was originally a scatter of cottages near to the corn mill on the Bridgehouse Beck. Brow developed after the arrival of the railway in 1867 to form a settlement distinct from that of Haworth village on the hill above. The settlement had chapels, Sunday schools, shops, a police station and, by the early 20th century, two cinemas: the Hippodrome, on Belle Isle, of 1913 (now converted to flats) and the Bronte, which opened in 1921.