



# The Bronte Trail



Branwell's sketch of Monks' Lodge

From 1840 to 1845, Anne Bronte was employed as a governess to the Robinson family at Thorpe Green Hall. Her brother Branwell

was also employed there for some of that time. The people and surroundings inspired literary work by both of them. Follow in their footsteps today, as you take the Bronte Trail.

Great Ouseburn is mentioned in the Domesday Book and it's near here the Ouse Gill Beck rises and, where it joins the Ure nearby, forms the River Ouse. In 1840 around 30 retail establishments traded in the village supplying the day-to-day needs of Anne and Branwell.

## Walk Information



The full walk is five miles (8km) long and should take around two-and-a-half hours at a steady pace. Start at the walk interpretation panel on Great Ouseburn Village Hall. There is ample parking.

Follow the route shown by the green waymarkers. Thorpe Green Lane can be busy at the start and end of the school day.

OS Map Explorer 299 covers the area.

Buses serve Great Ouseburn ([www.northyorkstravel.info](http://www.northyorkstravel.info))

Farmland birds to look out for include skylark (pictured) and yellowhammer, especially in spring, and finch and sparrow flocks on autumn stubble. With luck the ghostly form of the barn owl might be seen hunting for rodents.



## URE WALKS THROUGH TIME

Boroughbridge and the lower Ure Valley are steeped in history and support fascinating wildlife. Ure Walks Through Time enable the people who live here and the visitors who come here to explore and enjoy the riches that surround us. This is one of a series of waymarked walks leaflets available from local outlets.

Ure Walks Through Time is an initiative led by Yore Vision, the regeneration partnership for Boroughbridge and the Lower Ure Valley, working to improve the area for people who live, work and visit here.

For further information about Ure Walks Through Time or Yore Vision, visit the Tourist Information Point, 1 Hall Square, Boroughbridge or call 01423 323373.

[www.boroughbridge.org.uk](http://www.boroughbridge.org.uk) | [www.yorevision.org.uk](http://www.yorevision.org.uk)

## FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.  
 Leave gates and property as you find them.  
 Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.  
 Keep dogs under close control.  
 Consider other people.



## URE WALKS THROUGH TIME



# The Bronte Trail



Front cover images: Top right - Anne painted by Charlotte Bronte; Middle - Barn owl; Bottom right - Nise swans on Ouse Gill Beck, Lake.





## The Route

Our trail begins as we walk along Main Street, heading for St Mary's Church. Then left through the churchyard, which contains a railed obelisk in memory of Dr John Crosby, a good friend of Branwell's.

Following country lanes and a short stretch of road we turn onto Mill Lane. In 1842, at Long Plantation, Anne Bronte wrote her three-verse poem *Lines Composed in a Wood on a Windy Day*, which was published in 1846 under her pen-name of Acton Bell.

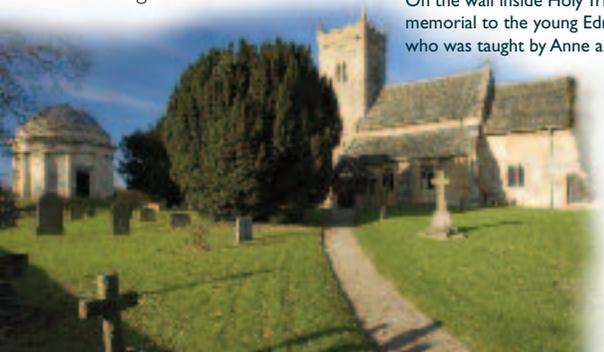
Kirby Hall was demolished in the 1920's but in the distance some of the service buildings can still be seen. It was still a fine Palladian-style mansion when Anne used it as an influence for Ashby Hall in her novel *Agnes Grey*, published in 1847.

*(To shorten the walk, take the bridleway from Low Farm up to Thorpe Green Lane and turn right towards Great Ouseburn.)*

Beyond Low Farm we use a footpath, known in Anne's day as Bowsers Lane which emerges at Thorp Head, close to the River Ouse. Branwell Bronte's poem *Lydia Gisborne* begins: "On Ouse's grassy banks - last Whitsuntide, I sat, with fears and pleasures, in my soul commingled, as it 'roamed without control'..."

Moss Hill Lane was Moss Lane in *Agnes Grey* and at its junction with Thorpe Green Lane we can just glimpse Monks' Lodge above a tall wall, where Branwell stayed. A sketch he did of the building still survives.

On the wall inside Holy Trinity Church is a memorial to the young Edmund Robinson who was taught by Anne and Branwell.



The main building of what is now Queen Ethelburga's College stands on the site of Thorpe Green Hall where Anne was employed, which became Horton Lodge in *Agnes Grey*. The original was damaged by fire and the new hall built in 1895.



**Branwell Bronte.** Branwell, who had been employed as tutor to the Robinsons' heir, fell in love with Lydia Robinson (Née Gisborne) and was convinced he would marry her on the death of her husband. That was not to be and, having been dismissed by Mr Robinson in 1845, he fell into a life of drinking and drug use which led to his death only three years later:

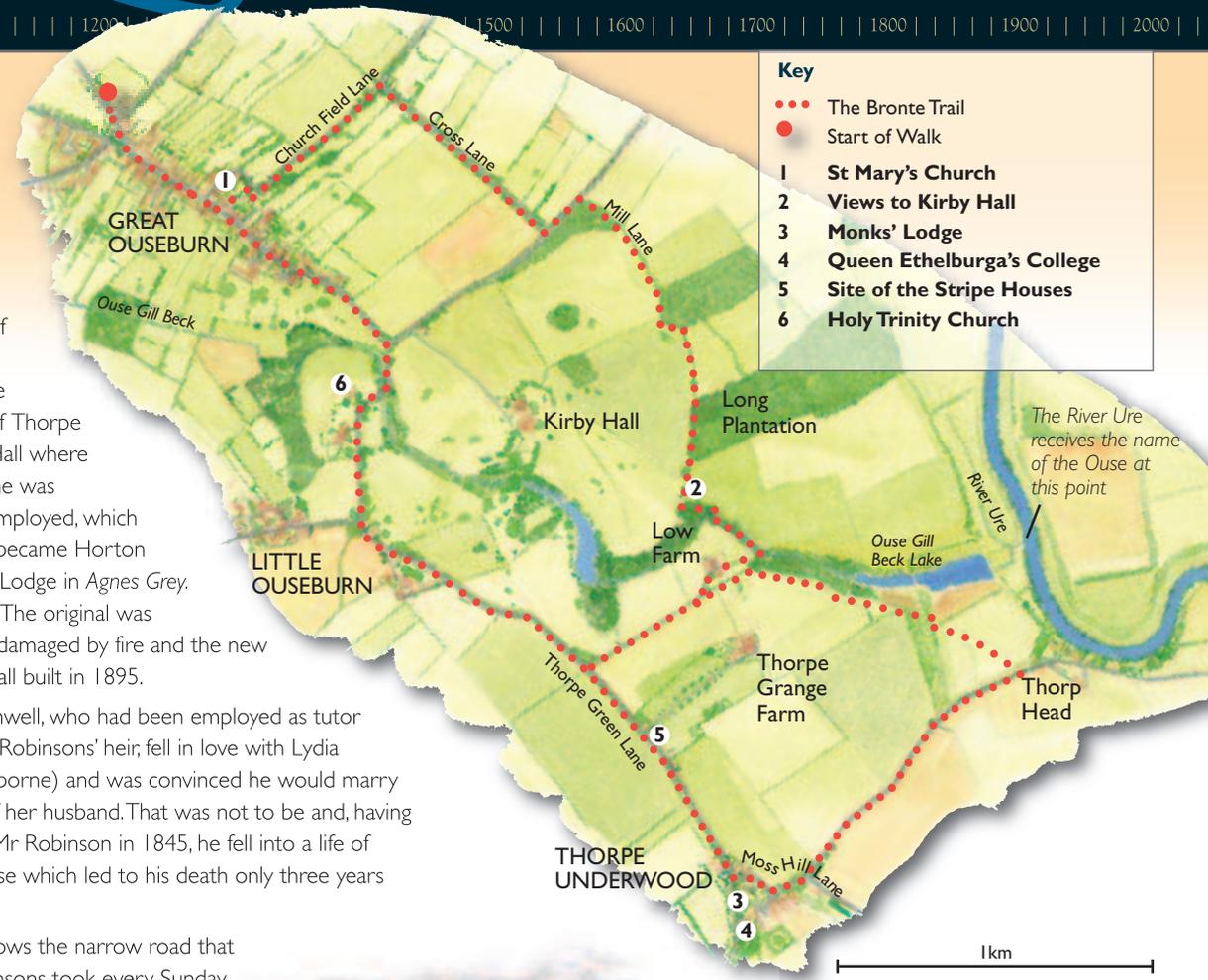
Our route now follows the narrow road that Anne and the Robinsons took every Sunday to worship at Holy Trinity Church in Little Ouseburn.

At the entrance to Thorpe Grange Farm the 'ridge and furrow' strips can be seen in the field that gave it's name to the Stripe Houses. Demolished in 1883 they housed the poor families of the area and were the influence for the cottages visited by Agnes and the Murray girls.

Anne Bronte's sketch of Holy Trinity Church.



Key	
•••	The Bronte Trail
●	Start of Walk
1	St Mary's Church
2	Views to Kirby Hall
3	Monks' Lodge
4	Queen Ethelburga's College
5	Site of the Stripe Houses
6	Holy Trinity Church



Passing Holy Trinity Church and crossing over the picturesque little bridge, you'll come to the spot from which Anne sketched the church. In those days, Ouse Gill Beck was much wider, forming a lake on both sides of the bridge.

Following the roadside footpath we arrive back at Great Ouseburn.