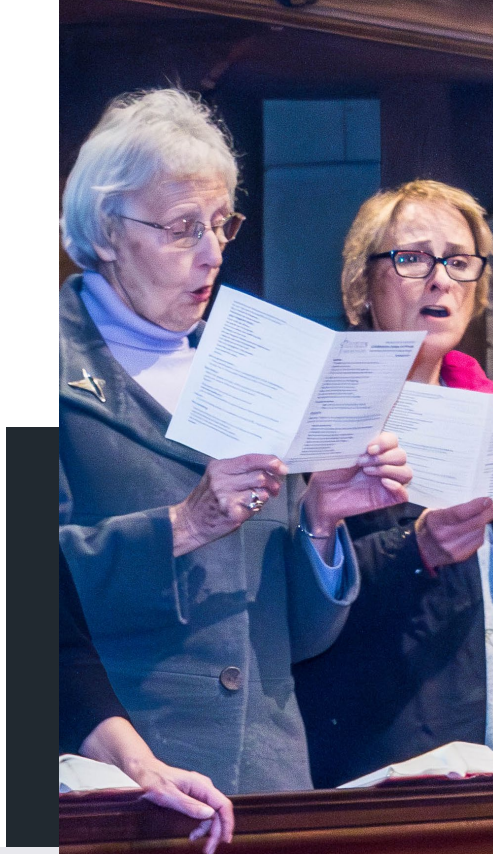


THE UNITED BENEFICE OF

RIDDLESDEN & EAST MORTON

PARISH BROCHURE 2025

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Leeds



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▲ COWPER'S CROSS, ILKLEY MOOR

OVERVIEW

Greetings from St Luke's, East Morton, and St Mary the Virgin, Riddlesden.

We are two friendly churches who seek to be welcoming and work well together, having been a United Benefice for the last 10 years.

Within the churches the two congregations are supportive of each other and care for one another. Both churches have core congregations who attend regularly. St Mary's and St Luke's are part of communities, recognisable as a village in the case of St Luke's, with a central, cohesive core that see themselves as communities and present significant opportunities for outreach, notably to families.



◀ ST LUKE'S PARISH CHURCH

There are strong, long established connections with the schools in the local area and demonstrable involvement with the wider community. St Mary's is part of Riddlesden Christian Churches, and St Luke's has good links and occasional joint services with the Congregational Chapel in the village.

Both churches have strong musical traditions, and St Luke's has an established choir. There are two active licensed lay ministers (LLMs) within the United Benefice. One already has permission to officiate (PTO) status, the other hopes to be granted this later in the year.

St Mary's has a meeting room and in 2022 St Luke's removed its pews and re-ordered the church to create a flexible space. A new, more flexible and environmentally friendly lighting system has been installed. Considerable work has been done on both churches over the course of the past year, especially in respect of the roofs, particularly at St Luke's following storm damage.

There are established activities such as Messy Church and Open the Book across both churches, and a youth club at St Luke's.

In terms of challenges, intergenerational communities need to be built up at both churches. Though some younger people and families attend, the core memberships consist mainly of retired people. The long-term finances of both churches raise issues. St Mary's is currently paying its share, while St Luke's has not achieved this on more than an irregular basis. Stewardship and fundraising are therefore priorities.

St Mary's Vicarage, and both churches, have stunning views over the valley. The vicarage is of recent construction and is in good repair.

BISHOP'S STATEMENT

These two parishes form a significant joint benefice within the Bradford Episcopal Area of the Diocese of Leeds.

In recent years there have been great developments in growing lay leadership, and making the joint benefice more of a reality.

There are excellent relationships with the church schools in each village, as well as with ecumenical partners and local community organisations.

Our Diocesan vision is about confident clergy equipping confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

In appointing to this post, we are looking for someone who has a joyful and confident faith which has inspired a track record of church growth.

(S)he will be an enabling leader who can work with the congregations to grow the churches, develop discipleship, and nurture relationships within the villages and local communities in creative ways.

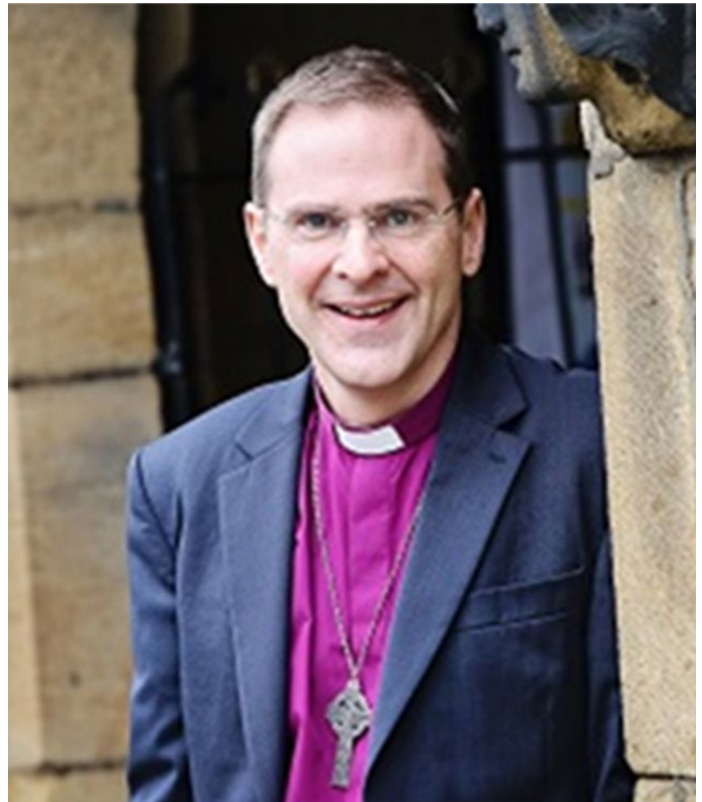
Given the post relates to two churches and two parishes, we are seeking a person who can inspire and develop others into ministry, leadership and responsibility alongside themselves.

From the Episcopal Area's perspective, we see five key priorities for the new incumbent:

a) To provide leadership that enables numerical and spiritual church growth, serving the local communities, reimagining ministry with a 'mixed ecology' of newer forms of church and worship alongside traditional ones, and developing pathways to keep growing lay discipleship and leadership, taking them to the next level. This will require excellent team building and team leadership, as well as strong teaching skills.

b) To support and extend effective outreach and ministry with families, young people and children to grow young people as Christians, drawing on existing links with the church schools and the various community organisations in both villages.

c) To develop active and visible relationships within the villages in creative and entrepreneurial ways, both personally as an individual and also through the



◀ BISHOP TOBY

congregations. S(he) should be able to engage strategically with the life of the communities, contributing with others to a vision both for Morton and Riddlesden, and for the Church's place in these villages.

d) To improve the PCCs' financial health, both through effective teaching about stewardship and also by supporting fundraising to develop the churches buildings and mission.

e) To continue deepening the relationships between the two churches, enabling them to support and encourage each other as much as possible.

The Deanery of Aire and Worth includes several parishes with a similar demographic to Riddlesden and Morton, many of whom are experimenting with mixing new approaches to worship and mission alongside inherited patterns.

The new incumbent will find a group of creative and supportive colleagues in the Deanery chapter, all of whom will be familiar with the joys and challenges that each other faces.

We expect the new post holder to work with a spirit of generosity in sharing wisdom and insights about ministry within the Deanery of Aire and Worth, and across the Episcopal Area.

+TOBY BRADFORD, 10 DECEMBER 2024



▶ BISHOP TOBY WITH CLERGY AND CONFIRMEES AT ST MARY'S CHURCH

© Andy S

THE DIOCESE

The Diocese of Leeds was formed at Easter 2014. It is one of the largest dioceses in the country, covering an area of around 2425 square miles and a population of around 2,642,400 people. The diocese comprises five Episcopal areas, each served by a suffragan Bishop. Each Episcopal Area is coterminous with an Archdeaconry.

The Diocesan Vision is 'confident Christians, growing churches, transforming communities and so helping share the Good News of Jesus Christ across our Diocese'. This Vision is embedded into the Diocesan Strategy and Goals.

The Diocese is a mix of urban and rural. The area includes the major cities of Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield; the large industrial and post-industrial towns of Halifax, Huddersfield and Dewsbury; the market towns of Harrogate, Skipton, Ripon, Richmond and Wetherby; and the deeply rural area of the Yorkshire Dales.

The Diocese is unique in having three cathedrals; Bradford, Ripon and Wakefield. The Deans of the Cathedrals work together to provide key diocesan services.



Our goals

- ① Thriving as a distinctive diocese whose culture is shaped by a shared vision and values
- ② Re-Imagining ministry
- ③ Nurturing lay discipleship
- ④ Building leadership pathways
- ⑤ Growing young people as Christians



◀ BRADFORD CATHEDRAL

THE UNITED BENEFICE

The United Benefice of the Parishes of St Luke's, Morton and St Mary's, Riddlesden sits on the south-facing hillside of the Aire valley, nestled between the towns of Bingley and Keighley. The two churches are about a 10-minute drive away from each other.

The two churches have shared a priest since 2004 and in 2015 became a United Benefice. Although the two parishes operate largely independently, with each parish having its own PCC, there is increasing and improving communication and sharing across the Benefice.

Both are village churches of a central tradition, with a broad range of church backgrounds. Both have family services. Both use liturgy.

Both churches would describe themselves as welcoming, friendly parish churches serving their local communities. Both churches were built in the mid-19th century as the local populations grew following the industrial development of the Aire Valley.

HISTORY

Morton and Riddlesden are both mentioned in the Domesday Book. There are a small number of very old buildings in each parish, the best known being East Riddlesden Hall built in 1642 which is now a popular National Trust property.

East Morton grew in the Industrial Revolution when a number of mills developed whereas West Morton remained a much smaller farming community. Riddlesden was a village and although it still has a village feel, has become more a suburb of Keighley, and Morton village has strong links with both Keighley and Bingley.

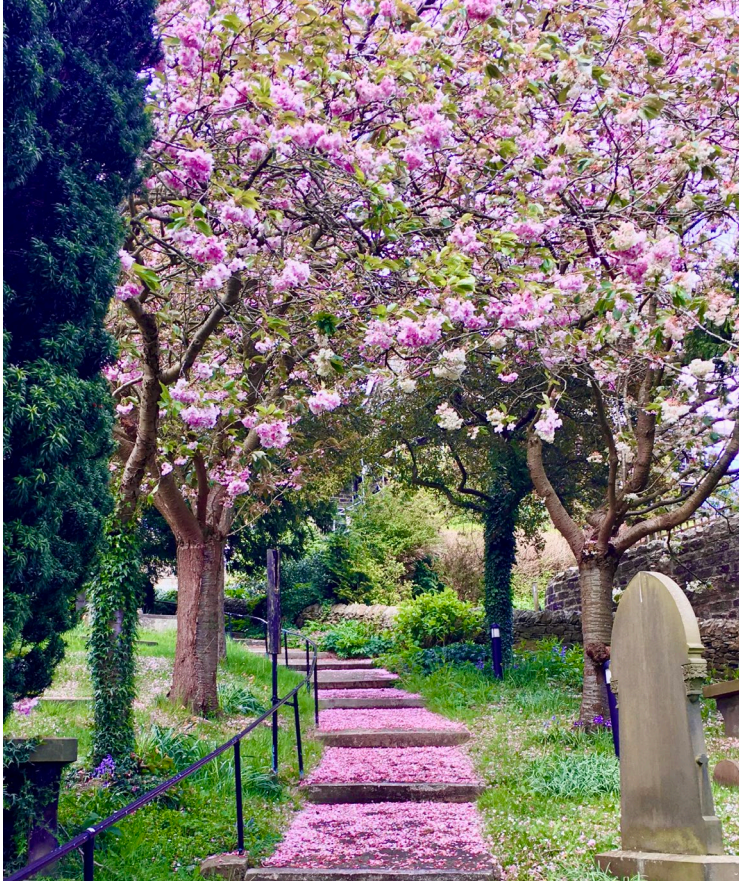
MEMBERS OF BOTH PARISHES ON THE ANNUAL MAUNDY THURSDAY WALK



SCHOOLS

Both parishes include a church school. In Riddlesden the local primary school, also called St Mary's, is a voluntary aided church school classified 'good' by Ofsted. The instrument of governance identifies the Vicar as an ex-officio governor and Foundation Governors make up the majority of the Governing Body.

East Morton CE Primary School (VC) is an excellent school and is regularly oversubscribed. The Vicar is an ex-officio governor and there are two Foundation Governors. The school is part of BDAT, one of the Diocese's Multi-Academy Trusts.



▶ THE PATH TO ST MARY'S CHURCH

Crossflatts Primary School, although technically outside the Parish, regards St Luke's as its church. Crossflatts is rated by Ofsted as good and many children from both Morton and Riddlesden attend this popular school.

Clergy and members of the congregations in both communities have good relations and regular involvement with the schools. Maintaining links will be a priority.

RELATIONSHIPS

Both churches play an important part in the life of their communities and work hard to have a strong Christian presence.



▶ THE TWO PARISHES ARE CONNECTED BY THE LEEDS-LIVERPOOL CANAL

ST MARY'S

Riddlesden parish is a mixed community of approximately 4,600 people. The population is mobile, and of mixed age. The number of people identifying themselves as Christian is falling, but is still the majority. There is a small but growing Muslim population, the majority of these being of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage.

The parish takes in the urban edge of Keighley, but is separated from Keighley by the River Aire and the Leeds/Liverpool Canal and has a distinct village character. There is a wide variety of housing types from farms and large detached to small terraces and apartments. Houses are predominantly privately owner occupied with just 2% privately rented. The area is generally prosperous but there are poorer areas closer to Keighley.

Riddlesden is home to two pubs and a variety of shops, including a Post Office and a well - stocked community friendly co-op. There are hairdressers and garages plus a flourishing tennis club and cricket club. Riddlesden Green Connection is a community café.

There are two other churches in Riddlesden parish, Methodist and United Reformed, and close links are maintained with them through the Riddlesden Christian Churches. In 1994 a statement was signed by the three churches, committing them to work together. Three joint services are held every year and a committee plans social events with the proceeds going to charity.

The majority of St Mary's congregation is over 60 years old, though 2-4 families with young children attend regularly. A further 6 or 7 families attend Messy Church in Riddlesden St Mary's Primary School. There are 15 males and 49 females on the parish electoral roll, 37% of whom live outside the parish.



▲ UNITY STREET, RIDDLESDEN



◀ ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH

Services follow a central tradition following the liturgical seasons for example by the changing of the altar frontals, falls etc. The clergy usually wear choir dress or cassock, alb and stole for formal services.

St Mary's Meeting Rooms is a modern, church-owned building close to the church, with a kitchen and meeting area.

There are several outreach and mission programmes, including Messy Church, Start Courses, Alpha, a Holiday Club and Youth Club. The annual Christmas Barn service at East Riddlesden Hall attracts a good number of people.

The parish donates to several home missions and charities, but has no current international link. The parish meets its annual share in full.



◀ ST MARY'S MEETING ROOMS

ST LUKE'S

Morton Parish has a population of 3,500 and is centred around the village of East Morton but also takes in the hamlet of West Morton, a part of Micklethwaite village and an area on Bradford Road known as Sandbeds. About 20 years ago a modern housing estate of 400 houses, the Waterside Fold estate, was built which connects the parishes of East Morton and Riddlesden, though it falls within East Morton parish.

The development of new housing around the village has seen an increase in the number of families – the 2011 census showed that children under 16 made up almost 25% of the population.

Many people from the parish commute daily to Leeds and Bradford using the local Crossflatts station. There is a care home – Morton Close, where a service is held regularly and communion when requested - within the parish and a Council-run children's home.

The village of East Morton is a prosperous, predominantly white community, though it is becoming more diverse. There is a thriving Village Institute and one pub, The Busfeild Arms (so spelt). There is a volunteer-run community shop and a small business centre. Along Bradford Road there are also two convenience stores, two garages, a hotel and restaurant, two takeaways and a further pub.

In Morton the only other church in the parish is a Congregational Chapel, sited very close to St Luke's. There is a very close relationship with the Chapel with several combined services a year, especially their Anniversary Service, Harvest Service and the Remembrance Sunday Service, which is held in the Chapel and is a village community event.

Like St Mary's, St Luke's services follow a central tradition following the liturgical seasons for example by the changing of the altar frontals, falls etc. The clergy usually wear choir dress or cassock, alb and stole for formal services.



▲ MAIN ROAD, EAST MORTON



◀ ST LUKE'S PARISH CHURCH

The congregation is predominantly older, white and female, with families of other nationalities worshipping with us. There are about half-a-dozen regular members of the congregation who are of working age. Several of them may be in jobs that pay minimum wages or just above that level.

St Luke's parish share has not been paid in full in recent years and this situation is unlikely to change in 2025, and is unlikely to meet it this year or next. There have been major repairs to the main body of the roof as there was significant danger from falling slates and other building maintenance has been carried out.

The church has an ongoing five-phase re-ordering, which has seen the pews removed, floor levels and chairs purchased as phase 1. This enables a much more flexible use of the church, which has subsequently hosted Christmas tree festivals, choral concerts and ceilidhs. New energy efficient lighting has recently been installed as phase 2.

Phase 3, yet to begin, will see the installation of new toilets and kitchen for which fund raising has already commenced. Phases 4 and 5 cover the installation of multi-purpose flexible flooring and a total re-decoration of the church will follow in due course when funds permit.



◀ THE SQUARE, EAST MORTON

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Both St Mary's and St Luke's aim to be their village churches, though East Morton has retained more of the village ethos than Riddlesden, which makes this easier for St Luke's. The three churches in Riddlesden (St Mary's, the United Reformed Church on Bar Lane, and the Methodist Church) have very close connections with each other and with the members of these churches.

Both settings offer opportunities for outreach, including with families. Both have the technology to livestream services.

Both St Mary's and St Luke's have good connections with one another and attend one another's' events.



◀ MESSY CHURCH, ST MARY'S

There is well-established work in both schools that lie within the area of the United Benefice, East Morton Church of England Primary School and Riddlesden St Mary's Primary School. The clergy take Collective Worship in both schools on a regular basis. Open the Book and Messy Church have been running successfully in both schools. These initiatives have regular, reliable teams with personnel from both churches.

St Luke's has a Youth Club. The START course has been run successfully on several occasions. There are fortnightly Bible Studies in both churches.

Both churches have longstanding musical traditions. The St Luke's Choir is a mutually supportive team with a consistent, accomplished leadership and a history of musical excellence. Riddlesden does not currently have a regular choir, but it comes together successfully for special occasions and events. It has musical talent including past and present members of Opera North.

Riddlesden has achieved an Eco Church Bronze Level Award, and once a month runs the Riddlesden Green Connection



▶ THE OPEN THE BOOK TEAM



◀ ST LUKE'S HOLIDAY CLUB

(RGC) meeting, which is held in the church's meeting room. The meeting room is well appointed and also hosts toddlers, SMARTs (St Mary's Art Group) and the RGC along with a variety of private hire events.

St Luke's has been a much more flexible space since the re-ordering of the church and the removal of the pews in 2022. As well as church services it has been used for an annual ceilidh and other fund-raising and private community events. The church has an active and effective fund-raising team in connection with the Community Spirit project, the term for the re-ordering of the church, which is ongoing with a view to a new kitchen and storage space being created at the back of the church.

St Luke's has good community involvement, including participation in Morton Meet, a weekly community gathering in the village institute, and well-attended coffee mornings in church. Events such as the Taize services, Christingle Service and Carols and Candles are also well attended.



◀ CEILIDH, ST LUKE'S

DESIRED QUALITIES

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A PRIEST WHO

- Can embody their confidence and joy of Christ in their life and ministry
- Can enthuse and guide parishioners in worship and witnessing, and encourage us to push the bounds of our faith
- Can provide Bible-centred teaching both within services and through less formal opportunities.
- Has hands-on experience in Church growth.
- Has a passion and commitment for pastoral ministry.
- Will cherish, respect and encourage older members as much as engaging with younger people.
- Can help us improve the churches' financial position. Fund-raising experience and skills would be an asset.
- Can engage with young people and families, building on the foundations already laid and who will actively engage with our local schools and community organisations.
- Will be supportive and approachable and a visible presence in both parishes, and inspire us in our own discipleship.
- Has good communication skills, including the use of IT and social media.
- Is a leader who will continue to make full use of the licensed ministry team and encourage and make use of the gifts and skills among the laity in both churches.
- Will continue to encourage the musical tradition in both churches.

MAIN AREAS OF MISSION

- To focus on outreach and mission in our communities.
- Maintain and develop the established initiatives with young people and inquirers.
- Maintain and develop our relationships with the Parent, Teachers and Friends Associations at both church schools.



ST MARY'S ENTRY IN THE RIDDEDEN SCARECROW FESTIVAL

MAIN CHALLENGES

- To grow the church both spiritually and numerically by developing and strengthening existing community links and outreach opportunities as they arise.
- To help us improve the churches' financial stability while maintaining the impetus of initiatives such as the Community Spirit Project.
- To encourage more church members to take a more active role in the mission of church and community life

AREAS IN NEED OF DEVELOPMENT

Though welcoming everyone, the engagement of families with parents of working age needs to be built-up in order for the church to be sustainable in the long term.

Fundraising skills would be an asset, both in respect of the regular giving and the Community Spirit initiative at St Luke's.

Appropriate pathways/activities for children's discipleship during the main Sunday services should be developed

Further involvement of the congregation in church services e.g., leading intercessions or occasional speakers, such as our Diocesan Mission Enabler for the Environment or our Parish Safeguarding Officers.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Post is a full time role. Provision of the house includes water rates and Council Tax. All expenses are paid. Removal costs and a resettlement grant are available.

The appointment is made under Common Tenure and is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.

There are six weeks holiday per annum plus Bank Holidays.

Participation in annual Ministerial Development Review and in-service training is required and an annual retreat is strongly encouraged.

THE VICARAGE

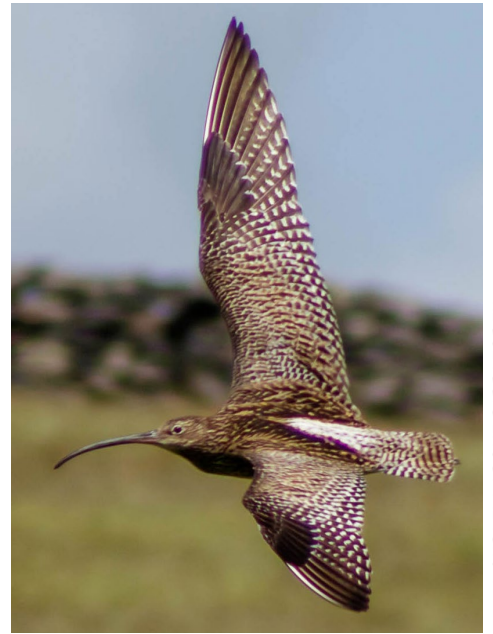
The Vicarage in Riddlesden is a modern home with two entrance vestibules, a dining room with a french window offering access to the garden terrace, a living room, a study, a kitchen and toilet, and a staircase leading to the lower floor where there are three double bedrooms, large storage room, store cupboards, and access to an extensive garden. The vicarage has a double garage with electric roller shutters, and one of the best views in Airedale.



THE VICARAGE

THE WIDER AREA

BLUEBELLS IN LOW WOOD, BETWEEN RIDDLESSEN AND SILSDEN



A CURLEW ABOVE RIDDLESSEN

The parishes are surrounded by beautiful countryside including spectacular moorland – the famed town of Ilkley lies just over the ridge of Rombald’s Moor – yet have urban links, particularly to Keighley. Skipton, known as the Gateway to the Yorkshire Dales, is a 20-minute drive away; while the bustling cities of Leeds and Bradford can be reached in a 25-minute train journey. The Leeds/Liverpool canal links the two parishes.

MAINMAN’S MONUMENT, EARL CRAG



HAWORTH MAIN STREET

FURTHER AFIELD

EAST RIDDESDEN HALL



KEIGHLEY AND WORTH VALLEY RAILWAY

Further afield, the town of Haworth, birthplace of the Brontë Sisters, is easily accessible by road or by steam train via the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway. To the north, in Wharfedale, lie the picturesque villages of Appletreewick, Burnsall and Grassington. East lies the World Heritage Site at Saltaire.

The area is an ideal base for ramblers, with Malham, Ribblesdale and Wharfedale all accessible via car and bus, and many local walks.

TWELVE APOSTLES STONE CIRCLE



SHEEPFOLD, GLEN FARM



HERON, LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL, MICKLETHWAITE