The names of the three Brontë sisters and the passionate novels they wrote will be linked forever with Pennine Yorkshire. Our landscapes, including the wild beauty of our heather moorlands, are to be found reflected in their writings. Our heritage, the sometimes turbulent times when this land was the cradle of the industrial revolution, is recorded in them too.

It’s not surprising that visitors come from all around the world to Haworth, to pay tribute to the memory of Charlotte, Emily and Anne. But it’s not just Haworth where the Brontë story unfolds. As you’ll find, there are intriguing echoes of the Brontë family in other areas of Pennine Yorkshire for you to discover.

A visit in the footsteps of the talented Brontë sisters doesn’t need to be a solemn pilgrimage, Pennine Yorkshire today has undergone an astonishing transformation. As the industrial age has withdrawn, the landscape has re-emerged triumphant. The beauty and stark grandeur of this land is revealed once again for all who wish to see it.

Pennine Yorkshire was the land which once inspired the Brontës – now come, stay and let your own imagination roam free.

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the story of the Brontës

Patrick, father of Charlotte, Emily and Anne, was a man driven by ambition. Born in County Down in 1777, he quickly left his humble origins far behind, becoming an undergraduate at St. John’s College, Cambridge. He also left his humble surname of Brunty behind too, changing it to the more impressive sounding ‘Brontë’.

Tall and slim with red hair, he was a clergyman with a campaigning streak to his personality. His life saw much family tragedy. He married in 1812 but all of his six children died young: Emily died at just 30 years old, Branwell at 31 and Anne at 29, all of tuberculosis. Charlotte died just short of her 39th birthday. Two older sisters had died as children. Patrick’s wife Maria also died in her thirties.

But Patrick and Maria brought into the world three girls whose prodigious talent would ensure that the Brontë name is known worldwide. Charlotte’s novel Jane Eyre, Emily’s Wuthering Heights and Anne’s The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, together with their other writings, are outstanding contributions to English literature, enjoyed as much today as they were when first written.
haworth
the heart of brontë country

Haworth today is as entwined with the story of the Brontës as Heathcliff was with Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*. It was this small town, eight hundred feet up in the Pennines, which was the Brontë family home from 1820 to 1861. Here, in the Parsonage beside the dark graveyard, was where the sisters’ great romantic novels were penned. Just outside the town, the vast sweep of wild moorland was both their playground and their inspiration.

During the time when Patrick Brontë was the clergyman here, Haworth was a crowded industrial township, where life expectancy was low. Today, the contrast could not be more different. The Parsonage has become a world-famous museum, run by a charitable trust dedicated to telling the story of the Brontë family. The steep cobbled Main Street is home to a wealth of small independent shops, waiting to be browsed. Tea-shops, pubs and restaurants are here too, serving good quality (and often locally produced) food.

Haworth celebrates its Brontë heritage, but it’s proud too of what it has become today, a fascinating Pennine town which draws visitors from across Britain and the rest of the world.

Haworth Parsonage still retains the powerful atmosphere of the Brontës’ own time, giving a wonderful insight into domestic life in the nineteenth century. The rooms the Brontës lived in are largely unchanged and are filled with their furniture, clothes and personal possessions. The museum has an extensive exhibition on the Brontës’ lives, full of fascinating treasures as well as interactive displays for families. There are also regularly changing exhibitions and special events.

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<td>Adult £6.50, Concessions £5.00, Child £3.50, ES40 £4.00, Family £15.00. Group rates available and special offers run through the year.</td>
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Haworth Parsonage, now the Brontë Parsonage Museum

Opposite: Haworth Parsonage, now the Brontë Parsonage Museum

This page (top to bottom): Edgar (Andrew Lincoln) and Cathy (Charlotte Riley) outside Wuthering Heights (East Riddlesden Hall)

Wuthering Heights - a Mammoth Screen Production for ITV and Screen Yorkshire
st michael and all angels church
Church Street, Haworth, BD22 8EF
Open: 9.30am – dusk

The Brontë vault is inside the current church (dating from 1879), and holds the remains of all the Brontë family except Anne, who is buried in the churchyard of St Mary’s, Scarborough. The position of the vault is indicated with a memorial plaque.

black bull
119 Main Street, Haworth BD22 8DP • Tel: 01535 642 249

The Black Bull public house was the haunt of Branwell Brontë, brother of Charlotte, Emily and Anne. His chair can be found in the dining area and nearby is an original bell-pull of the period.

weavers restaurant with rooms
15 West Lane, Haworth, Keighley, BD22 8DU
Tel 01535 643 822 • www.weaversmallhotel.co.uk

Each 19th December, the anniversary of Emily Brontë’s death, diners in the Weavers Restaurant wait for the arrival of the ‘grey lady’. This apparition is reputed to appear only on this day, moving through the restaurant before disappearing into one of the walls (original plans of the building show an old staircase here).

the old apothecary
84 Main Street, Haworth, BD22 8DP
Tel: 01535 646 830 • www.rose-apothecary.co.uk

The Old Apothecary, where once Branwell Brontë obtained laudanum, is a shop which feels like a museum, fragranced with exotic oils, and packed from floor to ceiling with rich mahogany and glass display cases.
The wild Pennine landscape plays almost as central a role in Wuthering Heights as does the brooding character of Heathcliff. Emily felt the spirit of this land: ‘Every leaf speaks bliss to me’, she once wrote.

Today, the beautiful countryside once roamed by Emily and her sisters is there for all to discover. Our moors are a walker’s delight (the Pennine Way comes this way, for example), whilst mountain bikers work up a sweat on the many historic bridleways which crisscross the hills.

For a real taste of Pennine countryside, continue another mile or so beyond the Brontë Bridge to find the ruined farmhouse Top Withens. High up on Haworth Moor, Top Withens is thought to be the location Emily Brontë had in mind for the site of the house Wuthering Heights, although the building bears little resemblance to the one she describes in the novel.

It’s a windswept place, but one with its own stark beauty. The interesting outcrop of rocks known as the Alcomden Stones are close at hand, and well worth a detour.

A short walk from Haworth will bring you to Penistone Country Park and the edge of the heather moorlands which the Brontë sisters knew so well. From there it’s a three mile round trip to the little waterfall which bears the Brontë name. The falls tumble down the hillside to where an attractive stone bridge – the Brontë Bridge - crosses South Dean Beck. This picturesque spot is a great place to stop for a picnic. Don’t miss the nearby rock ‘chair’, where Charlotte Brontë is said to have enjoyed coming to sit and meditate.

There’s no church at Ponden Kirk, just a large block of dark gritstone which in times past was thought to have magical properties. Emily named the rock Penistone Crags, and it was this that she chose as the location in Wuthering Heights for Cathy and Heathcliff to meet.

At the base of Ponden Kirk is a hole just large enough for an adult to climb through, described by Emily as the Fairy Cave. Local legend has it that, if you’re single and you crawl through the hole, you will marry within the year.
the calder valley
hebden bridge and halifax

The Brontë sisters’ only brother, Branwell, was a potentially talented portrait artist and poet. Unfortunately, he ended life dependent on drink and drugs. In 1840 he sought employment in the Calder Valley near Halifax, working in Sowerby Bridge and later in Luddendenfoot as an official on the newly-opened railway.

Branwell spent many happy hours exploring the upper Calder Valley countryside, sometimes accompanied by a noted local geologist Rev. Sutcliffe Sowden from Hebden Bridge. Then, the Calder Valley was a place of industry and work. Today, narrowboats nuzzle together in the attractive wharf at Sowerby Bridge, whilst the pedestrianised streets of Hebden Bridge (recently declared to have the ‘least cloned’ high street in Britain) hold a wealth of small specialist shops. The Calder Valley countryside which Branwell knew is enjoyed by new generations of visitors who love the outdoors.

Halifax, which Branwell also knew well (he associated with the town’s respected artists, musicians and writers), has also undergone a remarkable transformation since his day. The eighteenth century Piece Hall is one of Pennine Yorkshire’s finest buildings, whilst the nearby nonconformist Square Chapel is now a lively arts centre. Families today make a beeline for the award-winning Eureka! - The National Children’s Museum, providing stimulation and education to its young visitors of a kind which the Brontë children surely could never have imagined.

shibden hall

Lister’s Lane, Shibden, Halifax HX3 6XG • Tel: 01422 352 246
shibden.hall@calderdale.gov.uk • www.calderdale.gov.uk

Prices: Adults: £3.50, Concs: £2.50, Family (2 + 2): £10.00, Group of 10 or more: £2.50 per person

March to November December to February
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Just outside Halifax, Shibden Hall is a beautiful house dating back to 1420 which is now a fascinating museum. It holds surviving decorative stonework from the demolished High Sunderland Hall, a place with strong Brontë connections: High Sunderland is believed to have been the model for Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights, though she relocated the house from Horley Green near Halifax to the moorland setting of Top Withens near Haworth.
pennineyorkshire.com

map of brontë country

- brontë parsonage museum
- st michael and all angels church
- black bull
- weavers restaurant with rooms
- the old apothecary

- brontë falls and charlotte’s seat
- top withens
- ponden kirk
- shibden hall
- red house, gomersal
- oakwell hall, birstall
- st. peter’s church, birstall
- healds hall, liversedge
- clough house, hightown
- st. peter’s church, hartshead
- all saints, dewsbury
- bell chapel, thornton
- east riddlesden hall, keighley
- ponden hall

map of brontë country
shirley country
the land the luddites roamed

Charlotte Brontë’s Shirley caused a real sensation when it was published in 1849. The novel is set in 1811 and 1812 against the backdrop of the Luddite riots, when the highly-skilled croppers (cloth shearers) took violent action in a bitter struggle to try to protect their livelihood. The Luddite name still resonates today, in our own time of industrial change. Follow the path of their doomed rebellion, from Marsden and Huddersfield to Mirfield and the Spen Valley.

Charlotte Brontë would have heard the Luddite story first hand from her father Patrick, for he was the curate at Hartshead church when the Luddites attacked nearby Rawfolds Mill in 1812. Charlotte knew this area both from her schooldays and from visiting her lifelong friends Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor in Birstall and Gomersal.

Even dedicated Brontë students can overlook the importance of the Spen Valley and its surrounding area in the Brontë story. Beautiful Red House in Gomersal (Mary Taylor’s home) and the Elizabethan manor house of Oakwell Hall (featured in Shirley) are today open to the public and should not be missed.

red house, gomersal

As the home of Charlotte’s close lifelong friend Mary Taylor, Red House played a significant role both in Charlotte’s life and in her novel Shirley. Charlotte often visited the Taylor family (the ‘Yorkes’ in her novel) in the 1830s. Today this award-winning museum looks much as it would have done in Charlotte’s time, with period rooms and original furniture. Find out more about Charlotte’s connections with the Spen Valley in ‘The Secret’s Out’ exhibition in the Old Barn. Experience local life in the ‘Spen Valley Stories’ gallery and stroll the restored 1830s gardens. End your visit browsing in the museum shop for books, toys and interesting gifts.
**Oakwell Hall, Birstall**

Built in 1583 and set in 100 acres of parkland, the splendid Elizabethan manor house of Oakwell Hall inspired Charlotte’s description of Fieldhead in *Shirley*; the home of heroine Shirley Keeldar.

Today, visitors can still see many of the features Charlotte described in her novel as they explore the fascinating period rooms and stroll through the gardens. The Green Flag award-winning Country Park also includes waymarked walks and nature trails, picnic sites, playground, gift shop, café and a newly refurbished Countryside Centre.

Visitors may also recognise Oakwell Hall from its starring role in the recent ITV1 adaptation of Emily Brontë’s novel *Wuthering Heights*.

**St Peter’s Church, Birstall**

Charlotte attended Birstall church when visiting her friends Mary Taylor and Ellen Nussey and the vicar inspired Charlotte’s character ‘Mr Hall’, the Rector in *Shirley*. The church was rebuilt in 1865-71, but the old tower remains.
Charlotte’s newly married parents, Patrick and Maria, lived in this three-storey house from 1812-15 when Patrick was curate at nearby Hartshead. Their first two children, Maria and Elizabeth, were born here.

(Please note this is a private residence. Please respect the privacy of the owners.)

Charlotte’s father was curate here at the time of the Luddite attack on Rawfolds Mill in 1812. It was also where Charlotte’s eldest sister, Maria, was baptised. The church, set in tranquil countryside, was rebuilt in 1881 but the original tower remains.

Patrick Brontë was curate of All Saints Church (now Dewsbury Minster) from 1809–1811. In 1810, his poem entitled ‘Winter Evening Thoughts’ was published and was the first piece of Brontë literature to be seen in print. A memorial plaque in Patrick’s memory can be found on the South Aisle of the Minster. Visit the Heritage Centre to find out more or stop for refreshments in the Refectory Café.
Before moving to Haworth, Patrick Brontë was the parson in Thornton for five years between 1815 and 1820, and it was in Thornton that four of the Brontë children were born. The old parsonage where the Brontës lived can be found in Market Street, Thornton, close to the Bell Chapel originally erected in 1612 and rebuilt by Patrick. Sadly, little more than a part of the east window survives today. The old font, in which all the Brontë children except Maria (the eldest) were baptised, has been moved to the nearby new church.

East Riddlesden Hall is a 17th century West Riding manor house with formal and wild gardens, duckpond and grounds. A National Trust property, the hall may look surprisingly familiar for anyone who saw ITV1's popular adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, for it was East Riddlesden which was used for the exterior shots. East Riddlesden Hall offers an interesting events programme, as well as a popular tearoom and shop.

Originally dating from 1634, Ponden Hall, near Stanbury is generally thought to be the house Emily Brontë called Thrushcross Grange, home of the Linton family in *Wuthering Heights*. Today, Pennine Way hikers pass close by what is now a private residence.
Soak up the atmosphere of the Brontë landscapes first hand. Get your walking shoes on and follow the Brontë Way, a waymarked trail which links key locations associated with the Brontë family.

The full forty mile walk will take you from Oakwell Hall in Birstall across to Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire, visiting on the way the Spen Valley (where *Shirley* was set), the wild moorland scenes associated with *Wuthering Heights* and the town of Haworth itself. Whether you're planning the full distance or a shorter stroll, you'll find plenty to enjoy in the beautiful countryside the Brontë sisters knew so well. More information and a pack (£2) can be obtained at the Haworth Tourist Information Centre, or look out for the comprehensive guide *Brontë Way* by Paul Hannon (Hillside Publications, £4.50).
brontës on screen

There have been many film and television adaptations of the Brontë novels, with the central characters being played by some of the world’s most acclaimed actors. The most recent was the popular ITV 1 adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*. Tom Hardy starred as the brooding Heathcliff, while Charlotte Riley played Catherine Earnshaw.

This haunting and gothic novel was spectacularly recreated using locations across Yorkshire, including East Riddlesden Hall and Oakwell Hall as the Earnshaw’s moorland family home. Find out more about the locations used and discover Pennine Yorkshire.

plan your visit

www.pennineyorkshire.com

For all the information you need to plan and book your stay in the Brontës’ Pennine Yorkshire.

Alternatively, call in to our Tourist Information Centre at Haworth where our friendly and helpful staff will be happy to advise you, share their knowledge and make your stay extra special.

Haworth Tourist Information Centre
Main Street, Haworth

Tel: 01535 642 329

Email: haworth.vic@bradford.gov.uk