

Sowood WI Poppy Trail -Walk 1-Sowood circular walk via Outlane-approx 2.5 hours

Start: Sowood Community Centre

Walk left out of The Community Centre. Up the road on the right is Sowood Green, home of **Private Vincent Bray** and **Private Wilfred Palfreeman (1)**.

Continue walking up Stainland Road and turn left down the side of the cream cottage called East View. East View was the home of **Acting Bombardier Lewis Brook Whiteley (2)**. **Lewis** was a professional musician with Scapegoat Hill Band and was an asylum assistant in Wakefield before joining the Rochdale Police. He enlisted in November 1915 and died of wounds on 29th May 1917 in Belgium age 25. Just behind East View look through the gate into Sowood Croft. This is where father and son **Private Albert Riley and Private Clarence Riley (2)** lived. Before enlisting **Albert** was a plasterer's labourer. He died in hospital on the Somme of a gunshot wound in 1916. His son **Clarence** was killed in action also in France on 2nd September 1918, age 19.

Return to the road and turn left. Here you have two options. Either turn left at Sowood Fold and walk along a very overgrown path to a gate. Then cross diagonally over two fields to Far Sowood and turn right to join the main road. Or the easier route would be to retrace your steps back onto the main road and walk up the hill onto Claypit Lane, arriving at 1 Sowood Hill on the right. This is where **Private Haigh Iredale** lived (3). **Haigh** attended Pole Moor Baptist Chapel and worked for Hoyle & Sons at Prospect Mills, Longwood, Huddersfield. He enlisted in May 1917 and was killed in action at Bailleul, during the Battle of Lys on the 14th April 1918, aged 23.

Walk up Gosport Lane to the cross roads and turn right on Forest Hill Road. Continue along to Greengate Head, just after the New Inn. This is where **Driver George Fairbank** and **Private John Henry Bintcliffe (4)** lived. **Private Bintcliffe** died of septic poisoning in hospital in France on 18th February 1918, age 25. He is Buried in Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France. **Driver Fairbank** won the reputation of being an effective bomb thrower. Prior to enlistment he was employed at Greetland Dyeworks. Walk back to The New Inn into the car park to see the fantastic views over Stainland, Norland Moor and the wind turbines at Ogden Moor (on a clear day!)

Return to the junction of Gosport Lane and Forest Hill Road. Turn right up Gosport Lane, past the new houses which are built on the site of the old Gosport Mill. Gosport Mill was the business of the Sykes family for over 70 years and it survived fires and tragedy until it was eventually demolished for building land in the 1970's. **Captain Arnold Walker Sykes (4a)** was a member of this family firm and he was killed in action on 30th September 1917, aged 42. He is buried in Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium.

Walk on until you reach Wilderness Farm on the right. Here three of our lost soldiers lived with their parents and eight siblings (5 – **Willy, Selwyn & Frank Booth**). **Private Willie Booth** was killed in action in France in 1916, **Corporal Selwyn Booth** was killed in action in France in 1917 and **Ordinary Seaman Frank Booth** was drowned off the coast of Ireland when HMS Anchusa was sunk by a German submarine in 1918. There is a **Booth** family headstone in St Andrew's Churchyard, Stainland.

From here there are two options:

Easier – Continue to the end of Gosport Lane to New Hey Road. If you turn left and make the short walk to the centre of the village you will find the family grave of **2nd Lieutenant Cyril Ainley Roberts (5a)** in the Bethel Methodist New Connexion graveyard. He was a member of the Huddersfield Hockey Club and the Moorlands Tennis Club. You will also pass the site of the demolished Old Row which was situated in the car park of Outlane Bowling Club. Old Row was the home of **Private Norman Hirst (5b)**.

Walk up New Hey Road some distance past The Commercial pub and turn right onto Marsden Gate. After a short distance take the first left and immediately turn right onto Broom Hill Road. Continue down this track and take the first right, a continuation of Broom Hill Road, which will bring you to New York Farm (**6-Private Joe Mellor**) On 7th November 1917 **Joe's** father, Sam, received a post office telegram with 27 words, reporting that **Joe** had been killed in action, dying from a shell wound to the head. He subsequently received **Joe's** effects: a disc (medallion), a photograph, pocket case, two religious books, a pair of nail scissors, a notebook, a French phrase book, a cigarette case, a waist belt, a set of dentures and three coins.

More Challenging- Turn right immediately after Wilderness Farm up the track and access the fields on the right through a stile. Keep the wall to your left and head for the gate. Go through the gate and head diagonally across the next field to the stile. Cross seven more fields via the stiles. On reaching Marsden Gate, cross over the road and through the gate or stile to access fields across Stainland Moor/Crow Edge. Keep to the left and head towards the wind turbine. Go through the gate and down the hill. At the bottom of the field go through the stile onto Broom Hill Road (track). Turn right at the FP marker and you will find New York Farm (**6-Private Joe Mellor**).

Continue down the track through the junction with Forest Hill Road onto Moor Hill Lane. **Private Clarence Braithwaite (7)** lived at this junction at Broomhill Bottom. Prior to joining up **Clarence** was still at school and was a part-time woollen piecer. He was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. If you make a short detour here up Forest Hill Road to the cross roads before the Dog and Partridge you will find Lower Park, (Now called The Park), home of **Rifleman Arthur Smithies (7)**. Lower Park is a Grade II listed pair of cottages close to Forest Hill Road. **Arthur** was the son of Thomas & Harriet Smithies and was employed as a draper before the War. He was the Poor Steward and Sunday School Superintendent of Sowood Wesleyan Chapel,

Continue down Moor Hill Lane past the recreation ground on the right and the homes of **Private John William Stott (1a)** and **Private William Edwin** and **Private Thomas Henry Nichol (8)** at Moor Hey Farm. **Thomas Henry Nichol** worked as a wool teaser for Sykes & Sons, Gosport Mills, Outlane before enlisting in June 1915. There is a WI picnic bench located in the recreation ground.

Finally, on the left just before the junction of Moor Hey Lane and Stainland Road, is Sandbed, home of **Gunner Verney Holroyd (9)**. **Verney Holroyd** was the youngest of six children of Ben & Hannah Holroyd of Sandbeds, Sowood. He was unmarried but is believed to have been engaged to a girl from the King Cross area of Halifax. He was an accomplished pianist who loved music. Turn left at the main road and across the road you will find Moormires, home of **Rifleman Norman Hirst (9a)**.

Continue down the road and you will find Knowle Top home of **Private Rowland Norcliffe Haigh (10)**. Rowland is remembered on the Roll of Honour of St Andrew's Church, Stainland and was associated with Beestonley Lane Providence Chapel, Stainland. If you walk further down past Knowle Top to the lay-by on The Hame you can rest on one of the WI benches.

Turn around and return to the Community Centre.

