

PELLON LANE - MOOR END ROAD (AREA 5)

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Twenty-five years ago we lived on one of the many side streets off Pellon Lane's north side, in a solid stone-built mid-terrace with four stories including a cellar, and a skylight in the attic, which is typical of that area. At street level the combined effects of the high roofs and sandy-grey stone imparted a slightly depressed feeling. But from the skylight you could see right across the valley to Shroggs Park, sitting in quiet splendour on a plateau out of the hillside, neatly ringed by trees. A steep wooded slope then to the road and to the valley bottom where Hebble Brook must flow, but doesn't. It must be underground at that point.

Like other streets on the north side, ours was a short stub terminated by a simple wall with a sheer drop at the other side. Streets on the south side lead to densely clustered communities through to Hanson Lane and Gibbet Street. But our side marked a boundary. After you leave town and pass the menacing New Ebenezer church that marks the start of the route, there's no way north again until you reach Brackenbed Lane.

There used to be a factory for manufacturing wire at the end of our street near that wall, stretching back into a space along the ridge. The firm left and the site is now a care home for the elderly. There was still some industry along the route back then, particularly closer to town. Now that area seems more focused on out-of-town retail – Aldi, Iceland, Farmfoods, Screwfix, Dunelm – and serving all of Halifax rather than just the local community.

At the other end on the corner there used to be a fish and chip shop. That became and remains a Chinese takeaway. The petrol station opposite was useful for forgotten grocery items. It's still there and now has an embedded Greggs for baked snacks.

For a few weeks in 1995 the route was a lifeline for the town. A severe drought threatened to leave Halifax without water. Yorkshire Water's provisional solution was to haul fresh water in specially commissioned and cleaned tankers up to the reservoirs and to pour it in. You heard and felt a constant rumble of heavy traffic and the air was heavy with exhaust from diesel engines. A more permanent solution constructed since then involves a network of pipes to transfer water from areas of plenty in times of local drought.

The Cherry Tree pub - just a short walk away on Pellon Lane – closed even while we were there. There don't seem to be many pubs now. The Running Man is still there though – named after John Lacey, who escaped execution at nearby Gibbet Street by running to the Hebble Brook boundary.

If these side streets are the capillaries, then Pellon Lane and its continuations form the artery that carries you from the heart of Halifax back to its hinterland in the hills, towards the old townships of Warley and Wainstalls. From there the route takes you over high moorland, populated by windmills and sheep, and eventually - nowhere. Unless you take your chances on the barely metalled road over the tops to Oxenhope.

The other arterial roads lead eventually to some sort of centre like Bradford, Keighley, Huddersfield or Elland. Pellon Lane offers no such destination. Instead it promises a swift climb out of urban life completely.

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