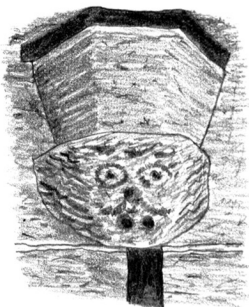


Heptonstall was described as a 'black village of gravestones' in one of Hughes's two poems entitled *Heptonstall*. Its stone setts, re-established in the 1980s, give the village a timeless air and it is one of only three places in Britain with two churches in the same graveyard. The original 13th-century church's tower was struck by lightning in 1847 and, though it was still used for a few years, a new church was built alongside in 1854. The new building, dedicated to St Thomas the Apostle rather than St Thomas a Becket, was also struck by lightning in 1875, but was repaired and is still used today. The atmospheric old church inspired the poem *Heptonstall Old Church* and one of its most interesting features is the green cat carved on a pillar in the north-eastern corner. Known as Old Mad Sal, these figures were popular in the 14th century and naughty children were sent to sit beneath this pillar.



Old Mad Sal
(the green cat
at Heptonstall
Old Church)

Perhaps the most notable gravestone in the old churchyard (located between the old and new church and often covered in coins) belongs to David Hartley, the 'King of the Coiners'. Executed in York in 1770, he was the leader of a band of outlaws who clipped coins and created counterfeit money that threatened the whole country's currency. Mytholmroyd-based author Ben Myers's award-winning *The Gallows Pole* gives an account of Hartley's life and death.

Hughes's poem *Heptonstall Cemetery* is not about this part of the graveyard but the modern cemetery across the lane, where Sylvia Plath and several members of Hughes's family are buried - 'Thomas and Walter and Edith/Are living feathers/Esther and Sylvia/Living feathers/(...) A family of dark swans.' *West Lai the Cobbles* can be seen along the narrow lane at the bottom of the churchyard.



Heptonstall Old Church

Discovering Ted Hughes's Yorkshire is a series of six route maps that will allow walkers to encounter the Yorkshire landscapes – Mytholmroyd and the Upper Calder Valley, Mexborough & the lower valleys of the Don & Dearne and Patrington in East Yorkshire – that formed and inspired Ted Hughes, poet laureate 1984-1998.

Colden Clough and Heptonstall were important landscapes for Ted Hughes. His paternal grandparents, John ('Crag Jack') and Polly Hughes, lived in the now demolished King Street at the foot of the clough, opposite the Stubbing Wharf pub. Crag Jack worked at the dye-works right behind his house. Hughes's parents moved to The Beacon at Heptonstall-Slack in the mid-1950s and several other members of his extended family had relocated from Mytholmroyd to 'the top-of-the-hill'. Hughes's first wife Sylvia Plath – who had stayed with Hughes at The Beacon for two extended periods in 1956 and 1959 – is buried in Heptonstall Cemetery.



window in
the wall at
Lumb Bank

Hughes briefly made a home for himself in Colden Clough, when in 1969 he purchased Lumb Bank, an 18th-century mill-owner's house situated half-way up the valley and only a few hundred yards below the Beacon. However, he only lived in the property for a few months before putting it in trust for his children Frieda and Nicholas. The house was rented by the Arvon Foundation, who purchased the house from the trust in the late 1980s. The *Elmet* poems *Lumb Chimneys* and *Chinese History of Colden Water* refer to the landscape around Lumb Bank and are just two of many poems in Hughes's oeuvre inspired by the Colden Clough and Heptonstall landscape.

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Walk devised by Donald Crossley, Nick Wilding and Ruth Crossley of the Elmet Trust. Thanks to Carol Hughes for her help and support in the production of the map.

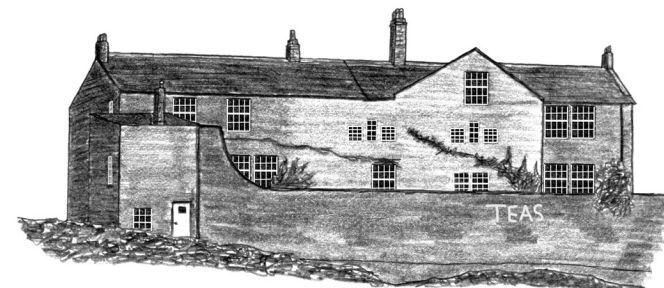
Leaflet drawn & designed by Christopher Goddard
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DISCOVERING TED HUGHES'S YORKSHIRE

The Upper Calder Valley

MAP 3: COLDEN CLOUGH & HEPTONSTALL

A 4-mile walk from Hebden Bridge around Colden Clough, Heptonstall and Ted Hughes's home at Lumb Bank



Lumb Bank

'A fallen immortal found this valley -
Leafy conch of whispers
On the shore of heaven.'
(from *Chinese History of Colden Water*)



**Ted Hughes
Network**

University of
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