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Low Bradfield to High Bradfield

- Length 1.8 miles
- Time – 1 hour
- Grade – Steady ascent and descent across fields. A short section on roads. The paths are well defined. There are stiles, steps and gates.
- Start – Car park, The Sands, Low Bradfield
- Public transport – Buses 61 and 62 from Hillsborough stop at Fair House Lane / Smithy Bridge Road, Low Bradfield
- Refreshments – Old Horns Inn, High Bradfield; The Postcard Café and The Plough Inn, Low Bradfield.
- Public toilets – Low Bradfield.
- Grid Reference – SK 2626 9204

Description - A walk above and along the Loxley Valley on the western edge of Sheffield. The route takes in open countryside, passes through small villages and returns along the valley past with the derelict works that were originally established in the valley to make use of water power.



St Nicholas Church in High Bradfield.

Route Instructions

1. At the entrance to the car park go left out to the main road, Fair House Lane. Turn left again and go down past the bus stop towards Smithy Bridge Road (See Points of Interest 1).
2. Do not go over the bridge, instead continue down Mill Lee Road, towards Dungworth.
3. Pass the Bradfield Parish Council Offices (2) on your left and the former water works (3) on the right.
4. At the Plough Inn (4) turn left and go along New Road.
5. At the last house on the left turn left down the footpath along the drive of the house and then to the right of the house down the old path.
6. Notice the old paving slabs which have been worn down by many years of use.
7. Continue across the bridge over the stream and at the junction with the road turn right (5).
8. On the opposite side of the road, 10m to the right, are steep stone steps going up into the field. Take this path to High Bradfield.
9. Go up the hill keeping the wall to your left.
10. Go up the hill passing through two narrow gates. The path aims towards the church and runs parallel to the electricity supply poles.
11. As the path nears the road keep the wall close on your right. The path turns at the corner of the field and crosses a stone stile onto the road.



12. Take care on the road. This road is steep and has tight bends limiting visibility and can be busy.
13. Go up the hill for a short distance and then cross the stile on the left, taking the footpath into the field below the church (7).
14. Go straight up the field, aiming for the left hand end of the retaining wall in front of the church.



15. Go through the black metal gate and cross in front of the church on the top of the retaining wall. Follow the path left up through the large metal gate onto the lane.
16. In front of you is the watch tower (8).
17. There is a footpath just beyond the watch tower. The path leads through the churchyard and to the woods. Just above the church are the earthworks of a motte and bailey castle. (9)



18. Having explored the [St Nicholas' Church](#) and churchyard the route returns to Low Bradfield.

19. Go back through the large black metal gate and take the path back across the retaining wall to the small black metal gate.
20. Instead of going down the hill and back the way you came, go through the gateway ahead and follow the wall gently down the hill.



21. Go through the next gateway and head down towards the bottom corner of the field, keeping the wall on your right.

22. Drop down through the trees to the metal gate.
23. Go through the gate, watching out for traffic, cross the road (Smallfield Lane), and go down the footpath opposite.



24. Continue down the path, down the stone steps (11) and over the narrow wooden bridge across the stream.
25. Turn left and follow the path back to the car park (12). Take care as the path is uneven and can be slippery.

Points of Interest

1. Low Bradfield.

The village probably grew up as a farming community where Agden Beck and Dale Dike meet to form the River Loxley. Indeed, the name Bradfield first appeared as 'Bradesfeld' in 1188 and means a 'broad stretch of open countryside'. Today the name is used to refer generally to the two settlements of High and Low Bradfield, and the civil parish of Bradfield is the largest in England, covering over 50 square miles.

2. Bradfield Parish Council Offices.

The Parish Council Offices are housed in the former Wesleyan Chapel, built in 1817, and used as a temporary school between 1864 and 1867, until a new school was built to replace that washed away in the Great Sheffield Flood. The former Methodist Chapel, on the opposite side of the road, was built in 1899 and closed in 1993. It is now a private house.

3. Water Works Filter Station.

On the right is the Filter Station, built in 1913 and extended in 1954, to purify water from the Strines, Dale Dike and Agden reservoirs. In 1930 it had the first telephone installed in Bradfield. The premises closed in 1994 following the completion of the new Water Treatment Works in the Loxley Valley.

4. The Plough Inn.

This was originally a farmhouse before being converted to an inn in the mid c19th. The archway was used to take cattle into the auction yard at the rear of the building, but was blocked in during the 1960's.

5. School Lane.

Although no trace remains today, the original Low Bradfield School, built around 1706, stood near here. The building was completely destroyed in the flood in 1864 but Mr. Nicholls, the headmaster, and his family managed to escape to higher ground by running up the steps opposite the end of the bridge.

6. High Bradfield,

was formerly known as Kirkton. David Hey notes that an 'open field by the church' was known as 'Kirktonfield' in 1416. The village probably originally grew up around the church and motte and bailey castle.

7. St Nicholas Church.

The parish church, St Nicholas Church, is in the Gothic Perpendicular style and dates from the 1480s. It incorporates elements of an earlier church that may have been built in the 12th century. It contains many interesting memorials, including green man roof boss, brasses and an Anglo-Saxon cross found in Low Bradfield in 1886. The church hosts a number of events, including a week long Festival of Music in June each year. Simon Jenkins mentions the church in his book 'England's Thousand Best Churches', and says "the view is glorious, enjoyed by the weather beaten gargoyles peering from under toppling pinnacles".

8. The Watch House.

This unusual building at the bottom of Jane Lane was built in 1745 to allow friends or relatives of the deceased to watch over the graveyard and apprehend bodysnatchers. Very few other buildings of this type now exist in Britain. In the 18th century, newly buried bodies risked being disinterred to be sold to medical schools for the study of anatomy. As stealing a corpse was only punishable by a fine or imprisonment, rather than transportation or execution, bodysnatchers found it sufficiently profitable to run the risk. The Anatomy Act of 1832 ended the trade by allowing bodies to be donated to medical schools.

9. Bailey Hill.

Although we do not pass it on this walk, on the northwest edge of the village, close to the church, but covered by trees, is Bailey Hill, a man-made conical mound that is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The date and purpose of its construction are unknown, though it has been interpreted as a Saxon fort, a Norman motte-and-bailey castle, or a place of public village assembly. David Hey, however, says there is no doubt that Bailey Hill is a motte-and-bailey castle, calling it, 'One of the best preserved and most dramatic motte-and-baileys in Yorkshire.'

10. The Old Horns Inn.

The present building was built around 1830 on the site of an earlier inn. It was also previously used as a farm. The private houses across the road from the Old Horns Inn were used as the Bradfield Parish workhouse between 1759 and 1847.

11. Kirkgate Steps.

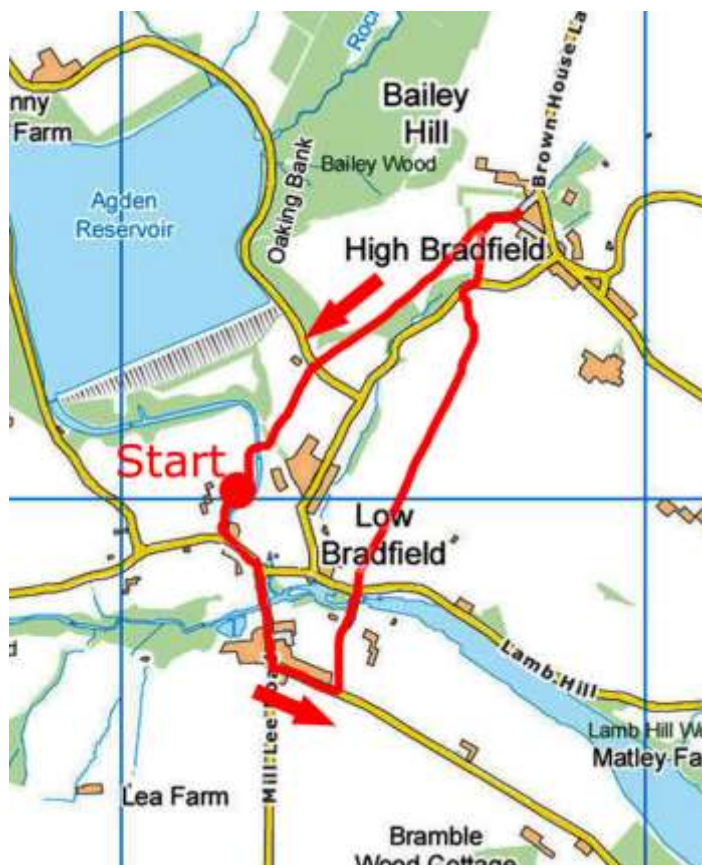
Kirkgate Steps are also known as the 'Fairy Steps'. They are thought to be part of an old burial road to High Bradfield.

12. Ibbotson Memorial Field.

The sports field on the left was given to the village by the Ibbotson family who lived at Burnside House (the large house on the opposite side of the field), and is named after them. It is used today for cricket, bowling and tennis. The village hall is the focus for many activities, including a film club, local history and craft fairs, and farmers' markets.

Acknowledgements:

Malcolm Nunn, Archivist, Bradfield Parish Council. References: David Hey (1979) 'The Making of South Yorkshire' Moorland Publishing, Ashbourne; Bradfield Local History Group, Bygones of Bradfield, Vols 1 – 3, Hilltop Press, Sheffield.



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