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Bradfield Walkers are Welcome

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Medium Walk: Rivelin/Loxley circular

- Length – 7 miles (11.2 km)
- Grade – a mix of roads, fields, woods and riverside sections. Included are strenuous climbs and descents.
- Start – Rivelin Valley Road car park
- Grid Reference – SK 324 888
- Parking – Rivelin Valley Road car park. This has a height limit of 1.8 m (5' 10"). Travelling from Malin Bridge, the car park is signed off Rivelin Valley Road. However, the sign is mostly obscured by a tree.
- Public transport – the Blue Supertram route from Sheffield terminates at Malin Bridge. The 81 and 82 bus routes pass close to the start point and also travel to Stannington (16).
- Refreshments – [Anvil](#), [Crown and Glove](#), [Hollybush](#), [Rivelin Hotel](#), public houses, [Rivelin Valley Park Café](#)
- Public Toilets – adjacent to Rivelin Valley Park Café

Description

Commencing in the Rivelin Valley, we progress along some quiet roads before a steep drop into the Loxley Valley. A riverside stroll is followed by a strenuous climb to Storrs, a drop and another climb to Underbank Chapel, all with extensive views. Another climb takes us into Stannington before a descent to the Rivelin Valley and a riverside walk to our start point.



Installed in 2011, designed and produced by local artist Jason Thomson, the Rivelin Chair sculpture sits on an island on the remains of the New Dam weir. The cast iron chair is crafted to appear like a seat made of coppice wood to reflect the thriving coppice industry that existed in the valley before the watermills (19).

The car park was the site of Walkley Bank Mill. This worked for around 200 years from 1751, first as a cutlers' wheel, from 1762, as a forge and, from 1897 as a wire drawing wire drawing mill. As a forge it used a tilt hammer which worked on a see-saw principle to hammer the metal under force of gravity. It was the last working site in the valley. Havelock Dam was originally the dam for Walkley Bank Tilt and is now popular for fishing. Coots, mallard and moorhens, all nest here. Grey wagtails can also often be seen.

Route Instructions

1. Leave the car park via the green gate (1) which is opposite Havelock Dam and walk between the river (on your left) and allotments.
2. Cross a wooden bridge (2) and continue keeping the river on your right.
3. At the T-junction, turn left, passing Rivelin Fire Station on your right. You then pass Mousehole Forge on your left. Turning left, continue, following the track to reach Stannington Road. Cross the road, then at the Anvil public house, turn right onto Wood Lane. Take the first right onto Myers Grove Lane.

Mousehole Forge dates from the early C17th. and operated until the 1930s. Over the years lead was smelted here, iron and cutlery forged, and in the 1800s anvils that were world-famous were made to be exported round the world. The anvil in the smithy at Gretna Green bears the Mousehole mark. Remains of the forge, the manager's house and storage buildings still exist. The site is now privately owned.

4. Passing Forge Valley School on your left, continue along the road. After 500 m, turn right onto Greaves Lane. After 500 m, you will reach the Robin Hood. On the right of this ex-pub, take the steep partly cobbled lane with a handrail, towards the River Loxley (4).
5. Cross the bridge (5) and follow the path to the right across a second bridge. Pass Pro-Roll on your left and ignore the first left (it is a dead-end).
6. Bear left, up a series of stone steps (6). Turn left onto Low Matlock Lane, passing Don House on your left. Turn left onto Black Lane, passing Wisewood Cemetery on your right. The river is on your left. Take a left across a bridge. You then pass a mill pond on your right. Follow this trail to Rowell Bridge, Rowell Lane (opposite Rowell Bridge Water Pumping Station).

The riverside valley easy-going route was opened by Councillor David Blunkett, Leader of Sheffield City Council on 14th. July 1985.

On 11th. March 1864, just before midnight, the Dale Dyke Dam collapsed and a great flood surged through parts of Sheffield, causing extensive property damage and killing about 270 people. The affected area stretched from the dam, through the Loxley Valley, on through Malin Bridge and Hillsborough to the Sheffield town centre. The enquiry afterwards determined that the dam construction was defective and the resulting claims for damages formed one of the largest insurance payouts of the C19th.



At Rowell Bridge a grinding mill was completely swept away. About 40 men were employed at the time. All their tools were carried away, and a grinder named William Bradbury, who was still working at midnight, was swept away by the flood and drowned. The mill was rebuilt and is now called Croft House.

7. Turn left and cross the bridge. Then turn right. Pass through a gap in the stone wall before ascending the path by the left fork (7).
8. At the end of Beacon Wood, cross a wooden stile into a field. Ascend, keeping a stone wall on your right.
9. At the end of the field, pass through a wide gap in the stone wall before following the sign and turning right, keeping the stone wall on your left.
10. At the footpath sign (10) turn left towards Storrs farm.
11. Cross two fields, then pass through a gateway (11) then a metal gate. Follow the footpath signs through a second metal gate, pass between houses and turn left to emerge onto Storrs Lane.

The name 'Storrs' may derive from an old Norse word meaning 'a plantation or place growing brushwood'. The house with the post box outside was formerly a shop which closed in the 1960's.

12. Turn left, descending past both Storrs House Farm and Storrs House Boarding Cattery. When the road bends to the left, turn right onto a marked bridleway (12): Spoon Lane. This descends steeply, then, crossing a stream, turns left. A steep climb then takes you to Stannington Road. Turn right passing Underbank Chapel.

Spoon Lane probably takes its name from Richard Spooone, who left a bequest in 1652 for the support of a 'preaching minister' at Stannington.



The Unitarian Chapel dates from 1741 and is still used by Quakers. Underbank Schoolroom (on the opposite side of the road from the chapel) was also established after Spooone left property for "paying for the learning of poor children...whose parents are willing but not able to keep them to school." Until 1911 this was the only school in Stannington.

13. Turn left onto Riggs Low Road. After 20 m, turn left, up steps (13) onto a steep signed footpath (Uppergate).



14. Turn left along the ridge, then, ignoring the kissing gate, turn right through a metal gate into a field (14).
15. At the end of the field is a small metal gate followed by steps. You emerge onto Uppergate. Turn left and pass the Crown and Glove on your left.
16. At the end of Uppergate, turn right onto Church Street, passing Christ Church Stannington on your left. Turn right onto School lane, passing the ex-Sunday School on your right. At the end of School Lane, cross onto Nethergate.

Grade II listed, Christ Church is a Commissioners' church or "Million Church" as it was built partly with money provided by the 1824 Church Building Act. The foundation stone was laid on 16th October 1828 by Thomas Richard Ryder, Vicar of Ecclesfield. It is built from coarse gritstone blocks in a symmetrical Gothic style. There is a low square bell tower with a weather vane on top and a three-faced clock and louvres below. Among the exterior features are the seven embattled turrets which stand on top of corner piers. The lychgate at the front entrance was erected in July 1940 by Rebecca Nichols in memory of her husband John who died in December 1914.

17. When the road turns to the right, go straight on, following the marked path, number 65 (17). Cross two fields. A short, but steep descent through woods is followed by a path between two walls until you reach Tofts Lane. At this point the Rivelin Hotel is 500 m, along the road, to your left.
18. Cross Tofts Lane and continue on the footpath opposite (18) to Rivelin Valley Road. Cross the road and take the path opposite descending to the River Rivelin.



19. When you reach the riverside path, turn left. Continue following the riverside path. At Upper Cut Wheel, ascend the steps (19) and cross the road, taking the path on the opposite side.
20. When you reach the playground (20), either bear left, passing the playground and café and following the riverside path, or continue onto Rivelin Valley Road. Turn left onto the road.

The site of Spooner Wheel lies under the cafe building and the playground was built on the infilled mill dam. Operating for some 300 years from the 1630s, Spooner Wheel was used to grind files, saws, knives and scythes. The paddling pools that were originally here were built in the 1950s as part of the Festival of Britain.

Rivelin Valley Road was built in 1907 between Malin Bridge and Rivelin Mill Bridge to connect with the main Sheffield to Manchester road, now the A57. Prior to this the valley had no road, just a series of cart tracks connecting the various industrial mills. Road building provided employment for 176 men.



21. When you reach Hollins Lane (the Hollybush pub on your left), do not take the path on the Hollybush side of the river. Instead, continue along Rivelin Valley Road and re-join the riverside path (21) until you reach the start point.

The River Rivelin rises on Hallam Moors, in north west Sheffield, and joins the River Loxley at Malin Bridge. The Rivelin Valley, through which the river flows, is a 3.5 mile woodland valley through which a Nature Trail has been created. For centuries, the river was used as a power source, driving the water wheels of up to twenty industries (forges, metal-working and flour mills). There are 21 artificially created ponds, testament to the twenty mills which were once present on the river. Though most of the mills and forges no longer exist, the ponds which used to feed them, survive: some are used for fishing.

There is evidence of Roman occupation in the area as tablets were found in 1761 on the Stannington side of Valley. These recorded the granting of land to retiring Roman auxiliaries.

In medieval times the valley was part of a large tract of land set aside by the Lords of Hallamshire for deer hunting. It was known as Rivelin Chase (or Firth) and covered thousands of acres on the western upland outskirts of Sheffield.

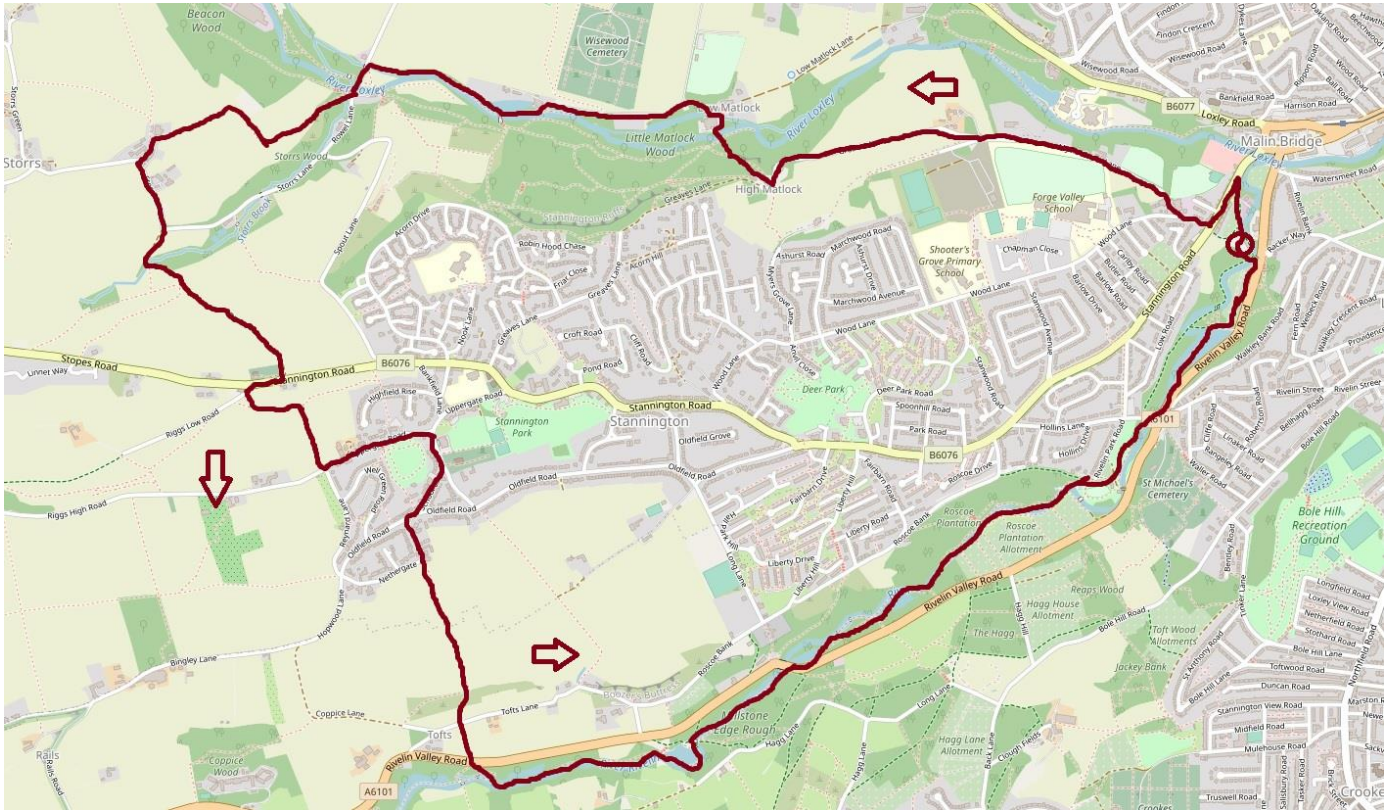
The River Loxley is one of five rivers which were the birthplace of Sheffield industry. The Loxley rises in the peat moorlands of the Peak District and flows for six miles before entering the River Don.

Now a rural backwater, the Loxley Valley was once a centre of iron and steel production, using the fast-flowing river as a source of power. The wooded hillside to the south hides the remains of stone quarries. There had been corn mills and cutlers' grinding wheels along the Loxley since Medieval times, but the main period of industrial development was in the C18th. In the C19th., forges and rolling mills began to replace, or were built alongside, the cutlers' wheels. A total of 24 mills, wheels, and forges are known to have existed along the Loxley. Construction of the dams was a major undertaking: many weirs and goits were built.



Many of these operations were destroyed or damaged when Dale Dyke dam burst in March 1864. Seventeen lives were lost in Loxley, including five members of the Chapman family, their servant Alatheia Hague, and apprentice John Bower. The rolling mill owned by the Chapmans was destroyed. Some of the flood victims were buried at Loxley Chapel.

Mill Pond on the River Loxley, close to Rowell Bridge (6)



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