

Bradfield Walks & Trails

Low Bradfield - "An Awful Thundering..."

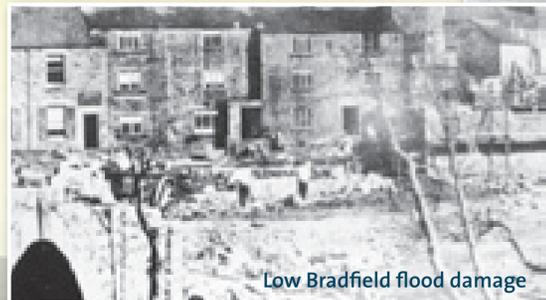
Little evidence can be seen today of the terrible disaster that took place here almost 150 years ago. Yet the lives of many were ruined by the collapse of the Dale Dyke dam in 1864.

Although there was only one fatality in Low Bradfield, many buildings were damaged or swept away and livelihoods destroyed.

Mr. Joseph Ibbotson, owner of Bradfield Corn Mill, described the night of the disaster.

"On hearing a noise and a shout, "The flood is coming!" I instantly leaped out of bed and looked out of the window. I could hear the roar and just discern the rushing water up the valley. I ran out of the house down to within fifteen or twenty yards of the flood. Language cannot convey the awful thundering, crashing roar of the torrent. It seemed as if the bowels of the earth were being torn up, or as if some monster were rushing down the valley, lashing the hillsides with his scaly folds, crunching

up buildings between his jaws and filling the air with his wrathful hiss. Trees snapped like pistols, mills and houses stood and staggered for a moment and then disappeared in the boiling torrent. Within the short space of five minutes the bridge, the triple-storied mill, the school house and the master's house had all vanished."



Low Bradfield flood damage



Construction of Filter Station 1913

The mill was rebuilt, but burned down in 1940. The remains of the mill pond can still be seen by the bridge behind the Smithy Garage.

Joseph Dawson was the local tailor and lived at Burnside Cottages. His child was the first victim of the flood.

"The flood caught us and washed the blankets and my child away and left my wife naked in my arms. I was obliged to leave the child to its fate or I could not have saved my wife, for the flood was in the house. I opened the back chamber window and tried to place a mattress across to connect the window with an embankment at the back of the house, whence we could get on to the hillside out of danger. The mattress was too short to reach across and it fell down. I shouted out for help. My brother came to the window with Thomas Robinson. They brought a ladder and laid it across from the window to the hillside. My

wife was still undressed but I put her out of the window and she was carried across and taken to Mr. Joseph Ibbotson's. The body of the child was found in the coal cellar a few days after. My house was six feet deep in water and was much damaged."

(Adapted from Samuel Harrison 'A Complete History of the Great Flood at Sheffield 1864')

Dale Dyke reservoir was rebuilt on a smaller scale in 1875. By this time other reservoirs at Agden and Strines had also been constructed, learning lessons from the collapse at Dale Dyke. The reservoirs in Bradfield Dale were built to meet the demand for a guaranteed water supply from the population and industries of the expanding town of Sheffield. In 1913 a filter station was built in Low Bradfield to provide a purer supply. This has now been replaced by the water treatment works in the Loxley Valley at Damflask.

Suggested walk in the area

A short walk from Low Bradfield around Agden Reservoir

2.5 miles, allow 1.5 hours



Sets of walks leaflets are available from local outlets.

For more information visit www.bradfield-walkers.org.uk

Please follow the Countryside Code when visiting the area.

- ✓ Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.
- ✓ Leave gates and property as you find them.
- ✓ Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.
- ✓ Keep dogs under close control.
- ✓ Consider other people.

Acknowledgements:

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Bradfield Parish Council works in partnership with other local authorities, organisations and community groups across Bradfield, Stannington, Worrall, Loxley, Oughtibridge and Wharcliffe Side to improve the quality of life of everyone in the area.



Bradfield Corn Mill