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Bradfield Walkers are Welcome <https://bradfield-walkers.org.uk/>

Stocksbridge Walkers are Welcome <https://stocksbridge-walkers.org.uk/>

Inclusive Route: Fox Valley

- Length – 1.6 miles (2.5 km) in total (outwards and return)
- Time – 15/20 minutes each way
- Start – Fox Valley Retail Park
- Grid Reference SK 275 985
- Parking – Fox Valley Retail Park. Parking is free for four hours.
- Public transport – bus 57 from Sheffield city centre, bus SL1 from Middlewood Park and Ride/Supertram stop. Both routes stop nearby on Manchester Road. There are dropped kerbs to cross the road.
- Refreshments – numerous refreshment options at Fox Valley Retail Park.
- Accessible public toilets – Brearley House, Fox Valley Retail Park. This is near the front entrance to the retail park. Take the lift to the first floor and follow the hallway round to the right.
- Seating - There is seating at Fox Valley Retail Park but not along the length of the route.

Description

A riverside route through the former steelwork's stockyards, now a housing development, and on through woodland along the river. There are views of the surrounding hills. The path is 2-3 m wide, mostly off-road and is relatively level with some gradients.



The Story of Steel in Fox Valley

Work started on the Fox Valley scheme in February 2014. It is a £42 million mixed use scheme on a former steelworks site. The retail development was opened by Joanna Lumley in June 2016.

Access Information



Road/off road: The route is almost all off-road. It crosses three quiet roads and has a section approximately 10 m long on a short, quiet no-through road with no pavement.

Surface: The surface is tarmac throughout. There is an optional section approximately 50 m long with a compressed gravel surface. Each road crossing has textured dropped kerbs.

Width of path: The path is 2-3 m wide. In two places there is a gate across the path with a side opening 95 cm wide, which narrows at a height of 87 cm to 57 cm wide. It is wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through.

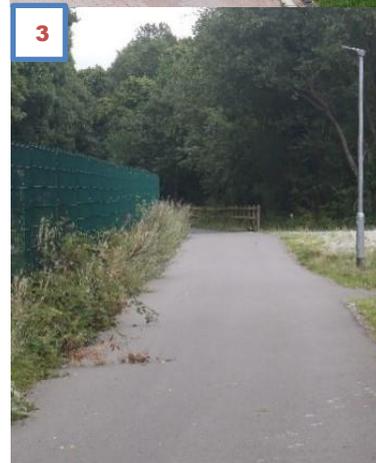
Camber: The path has no camber.

Gradients: The path is mostly flat but has some short gradients of around 1:12. At the end of the route there is a gradient approximately 1:12 for approximately 100 m. The optional rougher section has a steeper gradient approximately 30 m long.

Rails / edges: The path has mostly well-defined edges of foliage, fences, and walls. The exceptions/places to take extra care are:

- 1) There is a boggy area to the left just after the footbridge.
- 2) A section crosses the railway line.
- 3) A section of about 10 m opens out onto gravel on the right hand side.
- 4) There is a gap of 9 m in the fence on the left, approximately 100 m from the end of the route, where a service road crosses the railway line.
- 5) At the end of the optional rougher path, the edges slope gently downwards on each side.

There are painted white lines to mark the starts and ends of footpaths, and textured strips across the path on the approach to the end of the route. There are no painted edges at the edge of the path.



Obstacles: There are three obstacles:

- 1) In four places along the route there are bollards in the path. The gap between them is 137 cm.
- 2) In two places there is a gate across the path, with a side opening 95 cm wide, which narrows at a height of 87 cm to 57 cm wide. It is wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through.
- 3) The route goes over the railway line. The rails run in a groove 6 cm wide and 3 cm deep. You can cross straight over at right angles to the rails.



Route Instructions

1. Leave Fox Valley Retail Park by the footpath to the left of the building at the end of the car park (1).
2. Cross the road, carry on to the right, then take the footpath to the left (2).
3. At the end of the footpath, continue along Samuel Fox Avenue (3).
4. After approximately 50 m take the footpath off to the left.
5. After approximately 50 m there is a fork in the path, with two possible routes. Both will bring you out at the same place, but one is more accessible than the other (5).
6. The optional right hand path has a tarmac surface and a very gentle gradient. It joins a pavement for 30 m, with the river on your left.
7. Cross the road at the dropped kerbs and take the next turn right.
8. The optional left hand path has a gradient of approximately 1:10 for 30 m and a compacted gravel surface. If you take this path, turn right when you get to the grassy area and cross the bridge.
9. The gate at the end of the bridge brings you out just next to the dropped kerbs mentioned above. Cross the road and go down the short road directly opposite you.
10. Cross the railway line (10) and, on the other side, go up a short slope of approximately 10 m.

This line was originally privately built in 1877 to link with the national rail network for the transport of steel and other goods.

11. Take the footpath which leads off to the left (11).



12. Continue along the path, through a grassy open wooded area, crossing the river via a footbridge.
13. After a short gradient, the path continues, with the railway line on the left (13).
14. The path passes through woods and eventually meets Wortley Road (A6102) at Deepcar. The route ends here (14).



Historical Notes and Points of Interest

Stocksbridge grew from a tiny hamlet at the crossing place of the Little Don river, into a thriving industrial centre. The name Stocksbridge was first recorded on a map in 1772.

The river running through the valley formed the boundary between the parishes of Penistone to the north and Bradfield to the south. It was originally known as Hunshelf Water and was later given the name Little Don. It is also known as the Porter. This is thought to refer to its colour, probably caused by the seepage of peat into the water close to its source. Even the name Don was originally Dun, again believed to be due to its colour.

Samuel Fox first established a steel works at Stocksbridge in 1842 and built up much of the infrastructure of the town. Fox took over a disused cotton mill near to the current Fox Valley site and adapted it to making wire for textile pins. Initially he used water power from the river, which also served the nearby Hunshelf and Deepcar corn mills. Later, coal seams were discovered in the hillside and coal was used to power the developing steam driven machinery.

Fox's business expanded to include wire for umbrella frames and later started producing different products. By the mid-1860s the works included furnaces and rolling mills. The railway line along the valley was built to link the steel works with the wider region. The Retail Park and the area to the east of it, now occupied by the housing development, used to be part of the steelworks complex.

For more information on the area, see:

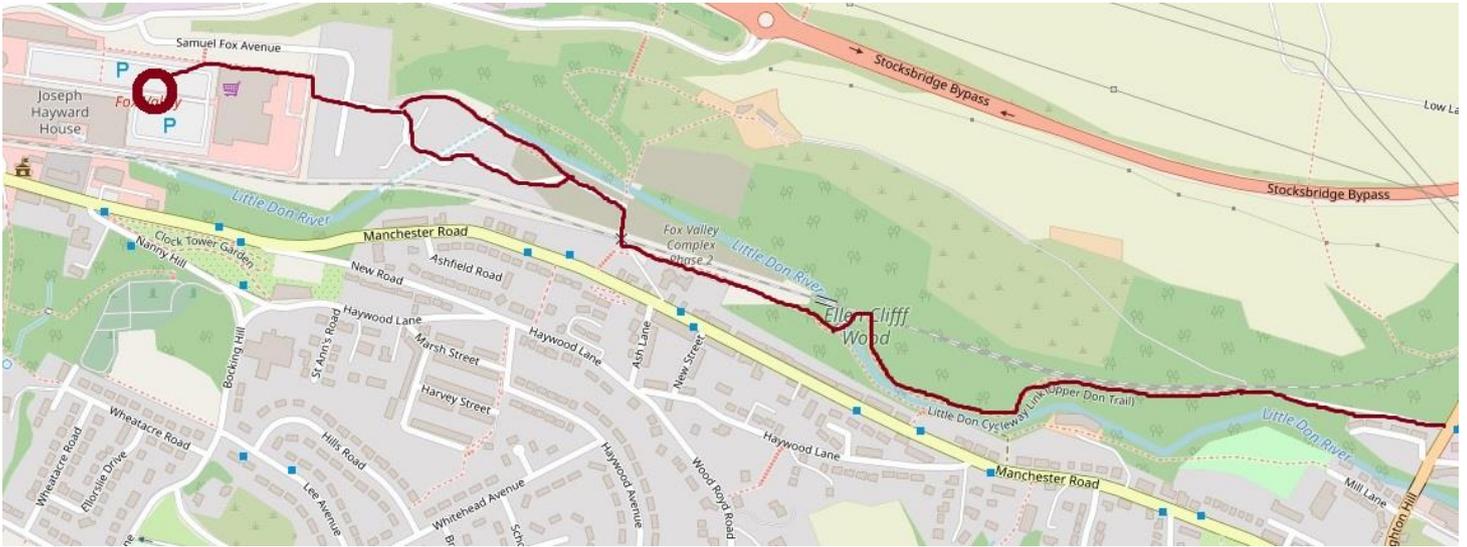
- Fox Valley: <https://www.foxvalleysheffield.co.uk/fox-valley-history>
- Stocksbridge and District History Society: <http://www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk/>



October 2015: Fox Valley under construction



June 2016: Fox Valley Retail Park opens to the public



<https://bradfield-walkers.org.uk/>

<https://stocksbridge-walkers.org.uk/>



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