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Bradfield Walkers are Welcome

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

Stocksbridge Walkers are Welcome

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

Inclusive Route: Loxley Valley

- Length – 2 miles (3.2 km) in total (outwards and return)
- Time – 40 minutes (at 20 minutes per mile)
- Start – Rowell Lane S6 6SH (opposite Rowell Bridge Water Pumping Station)
- Grid Reference SK 299 896
- Parking – small car park alongside Rowell Lane adjacent to the start of the route.
- Public transport – bus route 61 from Hillsborough Interchange stops on Loxley Road (B6077) just past the top of Rowell Lane, 1/3 mile / ½ km from the entrance to the route. There is a pavement all the way along Rowell Lane and a dropped kerb opposite the route entrance.
Bus route 62 returns to Hillsborough Interchange from the stop on the opposite side of Loxley Road. There are dropped kerbs to cross the road.
- Accessible Refreshments –
 - [The Admiral Rodney](#), 0.6 mile / 1 km away: 592 Loxley Road, S6 6RU
 - The Gardeners Rest Café, 0.6 mile / 1 km away: [Loxley Nurseries](#), Long Lane, S6 6RL
 - The [Kafe Stannington](#), 1 mile / 1.6 km away: Stannington Park, Uppergate Road, S6 6BX
- Accessible Toilets – the Kafe Stannington, the Gardeners Rest Café and the Admiral Rodney.
- Seating - There are two benches at 200 m intervals along the first 350 m of the route, but no benches beyond.

Description

This riverside valley route passes through woods along the banks of the River Loxley, along quiet back lanes past old cottages, and then along a path between dry stone walls and hedgerows, with views of fields and the wooded hillside. Two-thirds of the route is off-road; the path is generally flat with some gentle slopes.

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



The millpond to the left of the path (4)

Access Information

Road/off road: Parking is in a small car park alongside Rowell Lane. There is approximately 2.20 m to unload a wheelchair from the back of a medium-sized wheelchair accessible vehicle (1), so it is advisable to look out for cars and wear a hi-visibility jacket when unloading.

The first and last third of the route are off-road; the middle section and the last 250 m are on quiet no-through-roads.

Surface: The surface of the paths is compacted gravel and is suitable for wheelchairs. After rain there are some shallow puddles and mud (2). There is no tactile paving at the entrance/exit and the ground there is slightly uneven.

Width of path: The entrance/exit is 93 cm wide at the widest part and can easily accommodate wheelchairs. The path is between 2.70 m and 1.30 m wide, with a narrow stretch 75 cm wide.

Camber: The path is mostly flat with an occasional slight camber.

Gradients: The path is mainly flat with some slight undulations. Along the first 350 m, there is a gradient of approximately 1:12, for 30 m uphill and 30 m downhill.

Rails / edges: For the first 450 m, there is a tapping rail along the opposite side of the path from the river (3). In a few places there is a gap of approximately 1.5 m in the tapping rail. In several places, foliage has grown over the tapping rail.

The bridge, approximately 300 m from the start, has metal handrails and there is a gap 120 cm wide between the handrail and where the tapping rail starts again on the path (4).

The tapping rail ends after the path makes a left turn, just where it meets Black Lane.

At this point, on the side opposite the tapping rail there is a gap in the wall where steep stone steps lead down from the path (5).

After the tapping rail ends, there is a driveway on the left, while the path opens out on the right into Black Lane.

On each side of Black Lane there are stone walls.

Cars are parked in front of the houses at the end of Black Lane and opposite the houses on Low Matlock Lane.

Apart from these sections by the houses, and one short stretch on the river side of the path, where there is a wooden fence, the edges of the route are either foliage or stone walls.

Along the first 450 m, there are occasional breaks in the foliage on the river side of the path and the ground slopes down from the edge of the path.

There are no painted edges at the side of the path.



Obstacles: There is an uneven surface approximately 200 m from the start, halfway up a short gradient where a drainpipe is buried under the path (6).

Halfway along the narrow section of the path, 450 m from the start, there is a 5 cm high uneven tree root across the path (7). It is possible to go around it as there is a concrete surface adjacent.

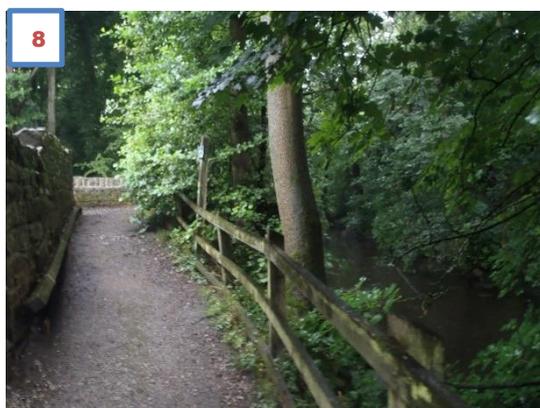
Foliage has grown over several sections of the tapping rail.

At the end of the riverside section of the route, just before the path makes a left turn, foliage juts out into the path (8).

Apart from this, at the time of writing there were no obvious overhanging branches.

Just before the path meets Black Lane, the compacted gravel surface gives way to concrete and the surface is uneven (9).

There are no stiles or narrow plank bridges.



Route Instructions

1. Go through the entrance to the route on the left hand side of the car park. The entrance is 93 cm wide at the widest part and will comfortably accommodate a wheelchair.
2. The route continues along the River Loxley.
3. After approximately 300 m you come to a bridge (3). Continue over the bridge and along the path to the left.
4. Pass the millpond on your left.
5. After 450 m, the path narrows and passes a stone house on the left (5).



6. Just after the house, the path turns sharply to the left, continues between two stone walls (6) and comes out onto a broad flat lane (Black Lane).
7. Continue along Black Lane, passing a row of cottages on your right.
8. After passing the cottages, bear round to the left, then turn right onto Low Matlock Lane (8).
9. After approximately 100 m, pass through a gate: there is an accessible gap to the side of the gate, 140 cm wide (9). Continue past some houses.
10. After passing the houses, go through a gateway (10) onto the continuation of Low Matlock Lane, which at this point becomes an unmetalled public footpath.
11. After approximately 550 m, the path joins a metalled lane.
12. Continue along the lane for approximately 100 m until you reach a junction, with a driveway to your right, a lane to your left, and a footpath straight ahead leading into the woods.
13. The lane to the left is a public right of way. It leads up to Loxley Road, after approximately 150 m. There are accessible bus stops close by on Loxley Road. The gradient of the lane is approximately 1:10 and the surface is rough and patched.
14. The inclusive route ends either at the junction, or if you wish, at the top of this lane, back on Loxley Road.



Historical Notes and Points of Interest

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 18th.Century. In the 19th.Century, 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. Weirs were built to raise the level of the river and water diverted into a head goit into dams. These fed pentroughs which governed water flow to the wheel before its discharge to a tail goit, either to another wheel or back into the river.

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 Althea Hague, and apprentice John Bower. The rolling mill owned by the Chapmans was completely destroyed. Some of the victims of the flood were buried at Loxley Chapel.

In the 19th.Century, Loxley became an important producer of refractory bricks, used to line furnaces in the expanding Sheffield steel industry. Ganister was mined in the area to supply firms such as Thomas Wragg, Hepworth, and Marshalls. Production ended in the 1990s. Industrial decline in the Loxley Valley has led to it becoming a haven for wildlife.

Loxley Chase was once a large expanse of open moor and woodland, used for hunting after the Norman conquest. In the 12th.Century it extended as far south as Nottinghamshire, where it joined Sherwood Forest, leading some to claim that it was the birthplace of Robin Hood, supposedly at Little Haggas Croft, in the area of Normandale House.

[Loxley United Reformed Church](#) is a grade 2* listed building near the junction of Loxley Road and Rowell Lane which was built in 1787. It closed as a chapel in 1993 and is now in private ownership, although the cemetery is still in use.

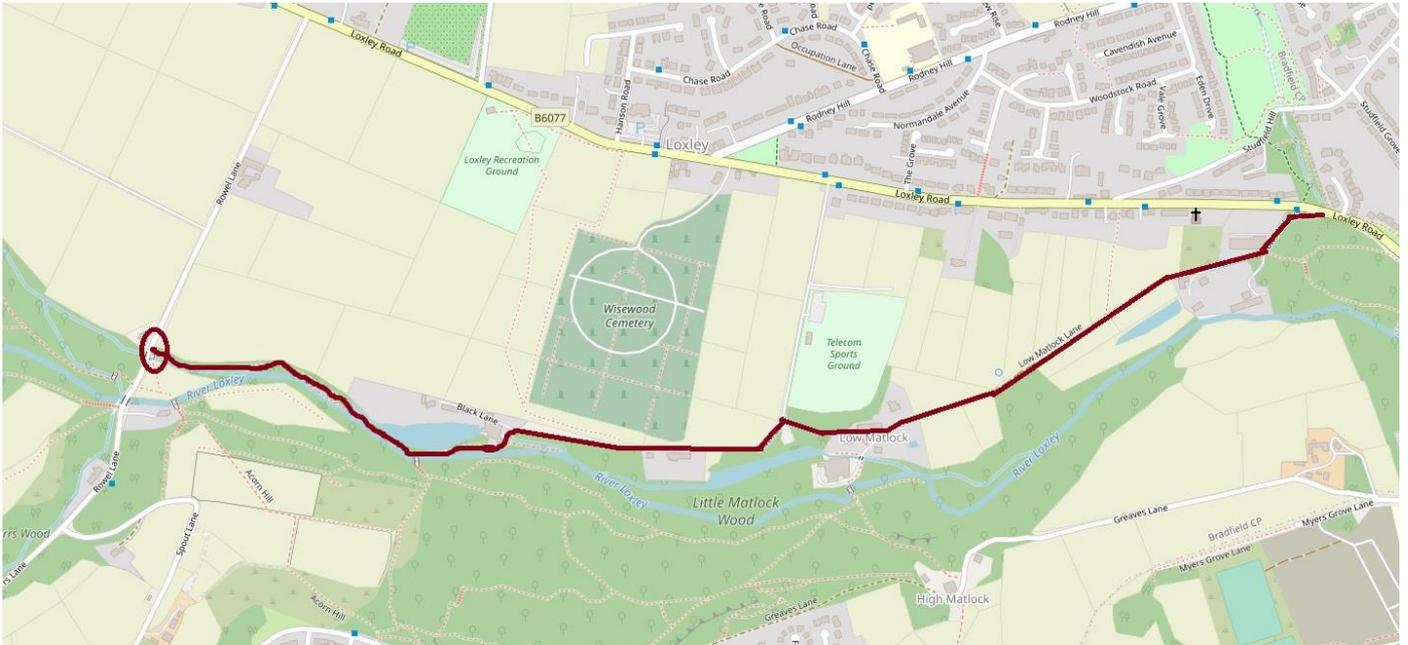
[Loxley House](#) is a grade 2 listed grand Georgian house on Ben Lane. It was built in 1795 by Thomas Halliday, who also built the Robin Hood Inn at Little Matlock. The house was completely rebuilt in 1826 by Thomas Payne. It is said that the last member of the Payne family was buried in the grounds in an unmarked grave, as he had had an argument with the vicar of Wadsley and vowed never to go to church again. Both the house and the Robin Hood are now private apartments.

For more information about the area, see:

Ball,C., D Crossley,D., and Flavell,N. (eds.) (2006) [Water Power on the Sheffield Rivers](#), South Yorkshire Industrial Society.

Battye,R. (2004) [The Forgotten Mines of Sheffield Especially Around the Upper Don, Loxley, and Sheaf Valleys](#), ALD Print and Design

Nun,M. (1996) [Around Bradfield, Loxley, and Hillsborough](#), Tempus Publishing Ltd



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Layout: Dave Pickersgill & Katherine Wedell

Text: Katherine Wedell & Isaac White

Photos: Dave Pickersgill & Katherine Wedell

Edited by: Dave Pickersgill

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