

Bradfield Troughs Walk

Water, Walls and Walks in the Sheffield Landscape



Water plays a significant part in the Lakeland area of Sheffield, most obviously in the rivers and reservoirs which abound here. Less apparent are other water features such as water mills, wells, troughs and drinking fountains; all have fascinating stories to tell. Most of the mills driven by water power, which existed in this area, were submerged when the large supply reservoirs were built. However remains of some ruins can still be found along the length of the river Loxley. Many more functioning water troughs still exist however, and this leaflet gives some indication of the more interesting examples, with a guide to walking a local trail visiting some of these.

Walk Description

This walk combines visits to several troughs and a village pump in Low and High Bradfield with a pleasant walk up through open fields with stunning views of the upper Loxley valley.

Length - 2.0 miles

Grade - Well marked paths, some stiles, steady ascents. Parts can be muddy and slippery

Start - Corner of the cricket field opposite Smithy Garage. Parking on road beside the cricket field or in the Sands car park.

Grid Reference - SK 262 920

Maps – OL1 Dark Peak

Parking - Car Park (free)

Public transport – Buses (service 61 and 62 Hillsborough) stop outside the Post office on Woodfall Lane.

Public Toilets – above the village hall in Low Bradfield

Directions

From the cricket field walk towards the Smithy Garage on Lamb Hill. Opposite the Garage there is a large trough in the wall which was probably originally used for horses being shod at the smithy.

The garage operated as a blacksmith's shop until the late 1930s. **Figure 1.**



Continue along Lamb Hill to a signed footpath going up steep stone steps on your left. Go up the field to cross several fields before coming out over a stile at the top onto Woodfall Lane. Take care going over the stiles in the fields and particularly the last stile down to the road as it is steep and there is no pavement.

Cross the road and go up to a stile 50m on the left and continue on the footpath across the field up to High Bradfield Church. The footpath to the church takes you up some steps onto a narrow, raised walkway in front of the church, emerging through a gate on to Towngate.

Turn up Jane Lane past the watchtower. At the top cross Brown House Lane to see a large trough in front of the Rectory. The trough is set back into the wall with a paved area in front. **Figure 2**

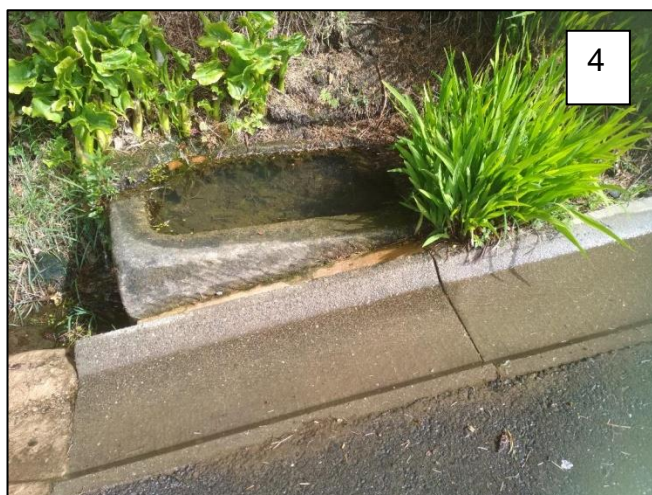


Turn back down Brown House Lane towards the Old Horns pub.

As you go down the road passing by Brookside Cottage on your left notice what is thought to be the original village pump and trough. This would have been the main water supply for the village and you can imagine it was a place where people met for a gossip as they filled their buckets. It is thought that originally the domed section of the trough at the bottom end would have been over the pump and the central trough part may have been used for horses. **Figure 3**



Carry on down Brown House Lane and turn up Kirk Edge Road to the left. Towards the top of the hill, opposite Little Lane, set in the wall and almost hidden on the left is a small trough. **Figure 4**



Turn round and go back down Little Lane. Towards the bottom you will find an unusual trough inset into the wall on the left. Its position suggests it was used both by stock in the field and passing horses. **Figure 5**



Continue down onto Loxley Road and turn left, passing Bradfield Brewery where a natural water supply is used to make the various beers on offer there. There are spectacular views across the valley from this road stretching from Derbyshire down into Sheffield.

Continue down Loxley Road some 600m. Shortly after the farm track on the right take the signed footpath sign and stile over into the fields. Follow the path through several fields emerging eventually at Mill Farm on Lamb Hill. (Take care as some sections of the path are very uneven.)

At the road go to the right, passing the top end of Damflask Reservoir on your left to reach Smithy Garage again.

On the way you pass beside the dam which was used to store water for the original corn mill in Low Bradfield. Records show a corn mill existed at Bradfield from around 1218. The last corn mill replaced one destroyed in the Great Sheffield flood of 1864. It had three storeys and was driven by a water turbine (as opposed to a water wheel for the previous mills). Unfortunately the last corn mill caught fire in 1940 and was completely destroyed; it was never rebuilt. The mill race and dam remains can be seen over the wall on the left just before reaching Smithy Garage.

Map



A History of Stone Troughs

Most troughs were made to provide animals with drinking water and are found both within and along the edges of fields. Some may be set into field walls so that they can serve stock in two fields and there will be a stone or metal divider down the middle of the wall. Troughs can be made of a variety of materials, carved from a solid block of stone or constructed from metal or concrete. Those found alongside roads and tracks are often fed by a natural stream or spring, although there may be a piped or culverted water supply.

In addition to roadside troughs being used to provide horses, donkeys and mules with a drink, in more recent times they would also have been used by traction engines and other steam road vehicles that needed to replenish their water supply. Householders might also have drawn water from a trough and relied on this source before the coming of mains water piped direct into the home.

Four troughs on Loxley Road are particularly interesting examples. The upper troughs have a stone canopy, which would have enabled only the householders to collect water, stopping animals' access to the water and avoiding contamination. The lower troughs were there to provide animals with a drink. Along the front of these lower troughs is a row of 'Kicking Stones' – there to prevent animal hooves from damaging the troughs.

