

Worrall Trough 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 short walk takes you from the village of Worrall, across open fields to an unusual washing trough and well. Open views from this walk present a wide panorama stretching from Wharnccliffe Woods down into Sheffield.

Length - 1.0 miles

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

Start - Corner of Haggstones Road and Kirk Edge Road. Parking on the road.

Grid Reference - SK 308 920

Maps – OL1 Dark Peak

Parking - Car Park (free)

Public transport – Buses (service 57) stop at the corner of Haggstones Road and Kirk Edge Road

Public Toilets – none on the route.

Directions

The walk starts at a large, interesting set of troughs at the corner of Haggstones Road and Kirk Edge Road which have been recently restored. Although their precise origins and uses are unknown it is likely that they provided a water supply to the village as well as watering for horses at this busy crossroads. **Figure 1**



Go up Kirk Edge Road to the junction with Top Road. Wellhouse Farm is on the right - perhaps the name indicated a water source as old maps mark a well in the field in front of the farm but there is nothing visible there now.

Turn right down Top Road and after 100m turn left along Town Gate Road. Continue past Towngate Grove and after the right bend take the wide path on the right through the metal barriers.

The path opens onto Walshaw Road. Follow the road down for 100m to the junction. Take the marked footpath opposite between the walls.

Go down the path for about 100m to reach the Tungate well and washing trough where there is a pleasant sitting area and information board. Some local people used to believe the spring water had medicinal properties and possibly collected and used it to cool those ill with fever. The troughs and area around them have been restored and planted using Lakeland Landscape Partnership funding.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 (before and after restoration) and Information board



Continue on footpath to emerge on Boggard Lane. Turn right then right again at the junction with Haggstones Road to return up the road to the starting point. Notice the carved bridges in the stone sign for Worrall on the other side of the road. These suggest the importance of the bridge over the River Don at Oughtibridge in the valley below.

Map



TUN GATE WELL AND WASHING TROUGH

WELLS AND TROUGHS
Worrall has many wells but this public trough provided villagers for centuries with water for drinking and for washing. Please help look after this fondly remembered part of our heritage.

HOW OLD IS IT?
This valuable spring allowed people to settle here in Viking and Saxon times. A 1789 map shows the Flower Gate Well Lane wide enough for a cart and with this turning area, built with walls to keep animals out, the 19th & early 20th century garrulous villagers leaving the quarry may have stopped here to wash off the dirt. Adults and children were washed here until the 1920s when piped water reached Worrall. Low profile washing troughs like this are rare.

WHY IS IT HERE?
A fault along underground cracks here lets water out of the ground as a spring. To collect clean water, a hole was dug and a covered trough added. Keeping the washing trough here away from the village kept dirty washing water away from the wells.

SAFETY AND ACCESS
Feel free to use and enjoy this area. However please remember it is privately owned with no public right of access. Help by taking your litter.
You can see there are some hazards you need to be aware of. The stones can be slippery if wet or green. Do not drink the spring water. Do not allow water over drains. Broken glass and other sharp objects may be in the water, grass or concrete. Do not drink the water. Keep an eye on young children.

RECOLLECTIONS
There was a single roof here, perhaps to shelter washers. Lads drank from the small troughs. Girls in the 1950s staged 'beauty parades' along the wall top (not recommended) and paddled in bathing costumes on hot days.

PARTS OF THE TROUGHS
A wall was later built over the first trough when the lane was made from the village. The flow was diverted left into a second, smaller trough. The flow then went into a deeper channel. There is a paved path to the right with kerbstones added in the 1980s. A trougher basin is on the left. The water goes into a culvert under the path and down under the field towards a house by the road. After heavy rain the overflow pours onto the path and into the culvert.

RESTORATION
By 2020, collapsed walls allowed farm animals to drink here and foul the area. The culvert was blocked so water flooded the path. The restoration unblocked the culvert, trimmed the goat willow tree, rebuilt walls, added the fence and gate, cleaned out the trough, landscaped the area and installed the bench.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Organized by the Worrall Environmental Group with funds from the Sheffield Labeled Landscape Partnership and local donations, all the following either helped with the restoration or provided information on the trough: Henry Blue Halls, Alan Barnes, Anthony (Overseas), Jack Budge, Ben and Carl Whitaker, Charlotte Hedges, Chris Wilcox, Christopher Gaskell, David Bryan, Ray Bingley, Helen Barnes, Helen Smith, Henry Bingley, James Stevens, Jane Wilcox, Julie Thomas, Michael Gowers, Michael Smith, Owen Paul Bryan, Peter Hells, Philip Hedges, Ray Bingley, Richard Gill, Richard Smith, Sheila Stone, Val Slater and Vicke Priday. They worked by ones and twos, usually obtained through the 2020 period of COVID-19 restrictions.

Map drawn by © Christopher Gaddard

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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.



This route is distributed in association with Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership