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It is distributed in association with [Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership](#)

[Walkers are Welcome UK](#) is a nationwide network which aims to encourage towns and villages to be 'welcoming to walkers.'

Stocksbridge Walkers are Welcome

www.stocksbridge-walkers.org.uk

Medium Walk: Wantley Dragon Circular

- Length – 6.0 miles
- Grade - Mostly well-defined paths, stiles and steady ascents. May be muddy in damp conditions.
- Start – Common Lane car park
- Grid Reference – SK 284 972
- Maps – OL1 Dark Peak, OS Explorer 278
- Parking – Common Lane car park, Deepcar
- Public transport – 23 bus to bottom of Common Lane
- Refreshments – none on this route
- Public Toilets – none on the route

Description



This circular walk takes you from Parsonage Farm, onto Townend Common, past the Wantley Dragon, into ancient woodlands and past the (reputed) grave of a Saxon King, Walder's Low (left). You then return across Stocksbridge golf course. Included are extensive views and a number of steep ascents and descents.



Route Instructions

1. Leave the car park on the track (1a) which is in the corner opposite the entrance. You will pass two wooden carved kingfishers on your right. Follow the way marked path as it curves to the left. The path then bends to the right, passing Parsonage Farm on your left (1b)

Parsonage Farm was established over 700 years ago. It was originally thatched and was owned by the local church.



2. Just after the farm, take the left turn onto Access land, passing the totem pole. Enter the woods, and follow the path keeping the stone wall on your left. Deepcar Station, Wharncliffe Crags and Wharncliffe Chase are visible away to your left. Following the wall, the path bends to the right, ascends and emerges onto Common Lane
3. If you wish to investigate Townend Common, cross Common Lane and take the footpath through ferns onto Access land (3). Following the path, continue to ascend
4. Take the right fork into a series of old quarries (4). After 150 m, take the sharp left fork up to a stone wall. Continue with the wall on your right. Follow the path as it bends round to the left, descending, back to Common Lane

Townend Common is a local nature reserve with a variety of habitats. It was originally common land for grazing and was broken up by the 1782 Inclosure Act.

5. Turn right up Common Lane. Going to the right of Hollin Edge Farm, pass through the second metal gate on your left (5)

At this point, in July 1966, the BBC installed vans in order to relay the signal from World Cup football games played at Hillsborough, the ground of Sheffield Wednesday. The signal was transmitted to the Emley Moor mast, near Huddersfield.

If you wish to divert to The Wantley Dragon and Bitholmes Wood, turn left. If you wish to avoid this loop, turn right and pick up our instructions at (14).

6. Turn left, forks to the right, downhill. Then left, then right through another gate (6) before continuing along a path with stone walls on both sides
7. Continue through another gate downhill through the woods. You will pass a left fork which is signed 'Ministry of Defence Authorised Firing Range'
8. At the end of the woods you reach, on your right (8):

*The [Wantley Dragon](#) was reputed to live near Wharncliffe Chase. His slaying by More of More Hall prompted a 1685 satirical ballad. The story tells the tale of how More slays a troublesome dragon which lives on Wharncliffe crags. The legend was mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in the opening chapter of *Ivanhoe*, "Here haunted of yore the fabulous Dragon of Wantley".*

In 2009, professional dry stone waller, John Alston, recycled an existing old wall into a dry-stone version of the dragon. The huge head, 1.6 m, in length and weighing a tonne was chainsaw-sculpted by Mark Bell using elm from a Woodland Trust site at Beverley.

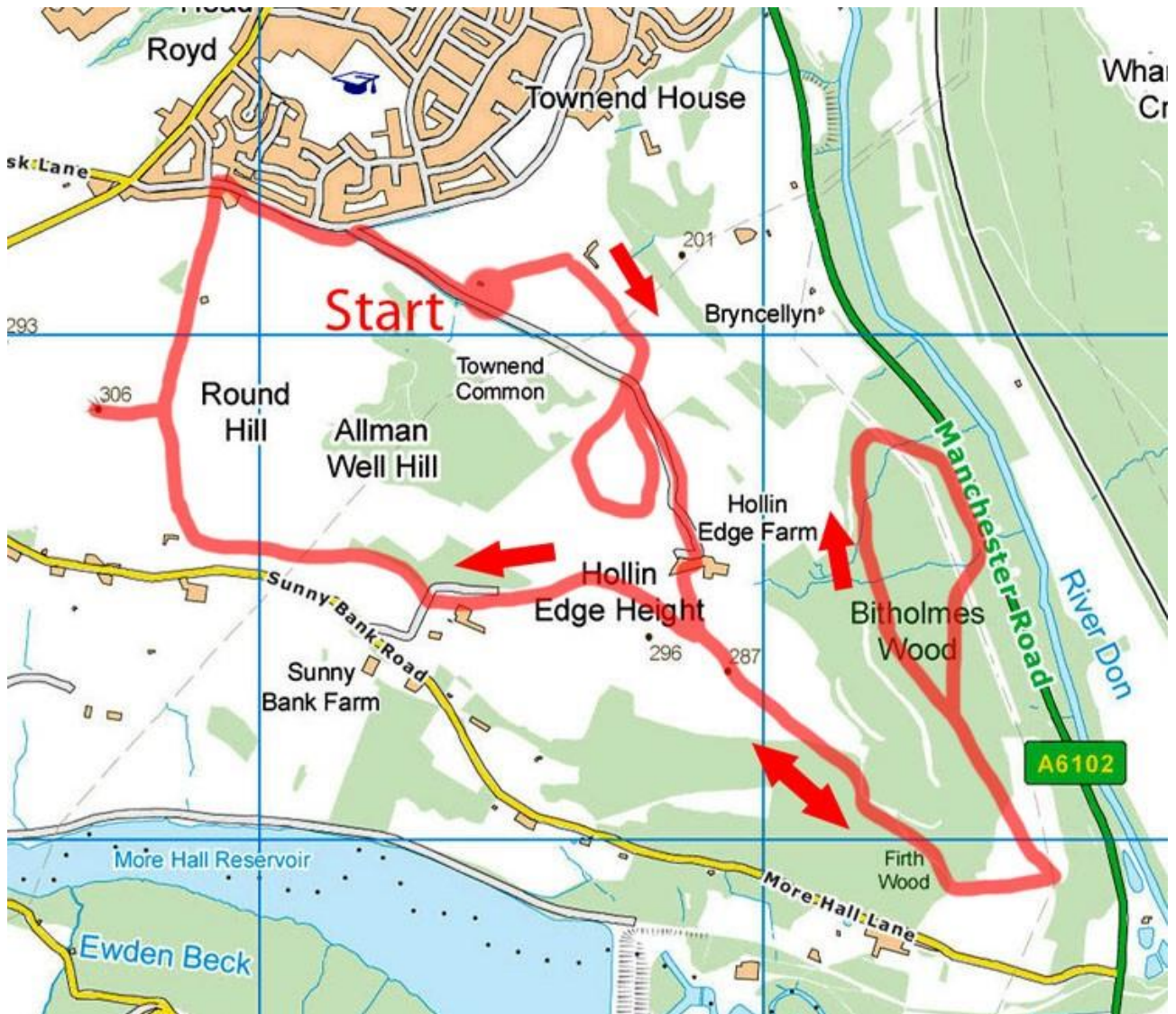


9. You may wish to visit woodland dating back to the 16th.Century. If so, continue descending on the marked path, keeping the stone wall on your right
10. Turn left, (two stone gateposts), keeping the stone wall on the left as you ascend. As you enter Bitholmes Wood, turn right (10)
11. When you reach a fork (post no.4), bear left, uphill. Continue along the marked path. About 20 m after post no.5, the path swings to the right. Continue following this route as it descends. The A616 can be seen to your left
12. At the T-junction, turn right, ascending steeply. When you reach post no.4, turn left, retracing your steps. At post no.6, turn left. 10 m after post no.2, take the steep right uphill
13. After the dragon, retrace your steps up the hill. Do not take the left turn into Firth Wood. After passing through two metal gates, you will reach (6)
14. Continue through the metal gate (14) between two stone walls. You will pass through a second metal gate before the track begins to descend steeply
15. When you reach Bank House and Bank Cottage at the top of Bank Lane, take the signed footpath to your right (15)
16. Follow this track, keeping left. Pass through the metal gate into a field. Cross this field keeping parallel to the line of trees
17. Cross into the next field. At the far side of the field, ignore the stile and turn right, ascend, following the line of a broken wall. Cross into the next field, ascend diagonally to the top corner, through the metal gate and over a rickety stone stile (17). Turn half-left into the next field and head towards Walder's Low

Walder's Low is a mound of Earth and stone. It is believed to be on the site of a Late Neolithic or early Bronze Age burial chamber for an Anglo-Saxon chief (over 5000 years old).

18. Retrace your steps across the last field, keeping the stone wall and golf course on your left. Cross the broken-down wall into the next field. Then, turning left, cross over the stone stile onto the golf course. Continue downhill. You will reach a ginnel (18) which is 100 m to the left of the clubhouse. Emerge onto Royd Road and turn right. When you reach Common Lane, turn right and return to the start point





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Historical information on the area is available from Stocksbridge and District History Society: <http://www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk/>

Please utilise the 'contact' link on our website if you wish to suggest any amendments to these instructions

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