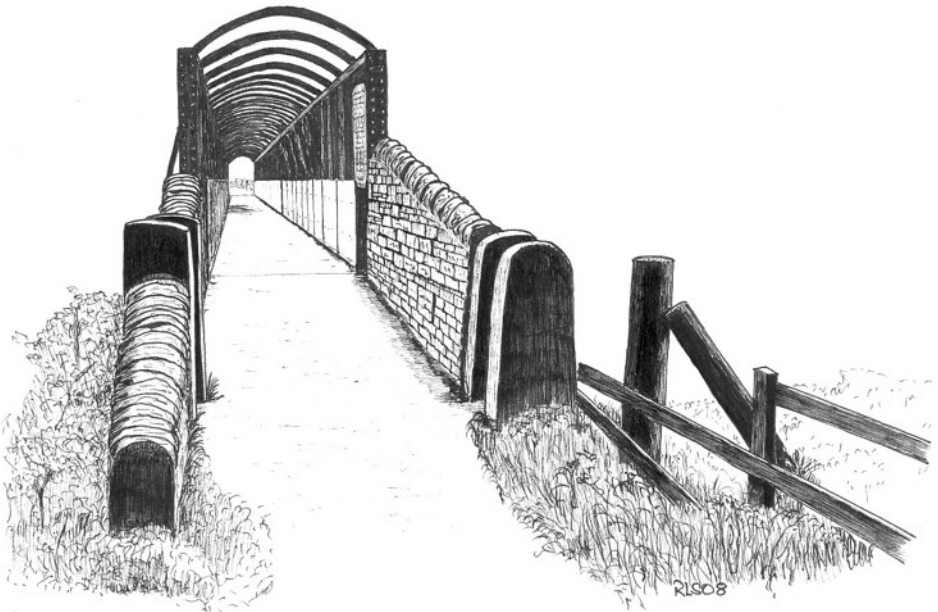


BAILDON HERITAGE TRAILS

The Riverside Walk



Produced by Baildon Local History Society ©

2018

First edition 2009
Second edition 2018

This Heritage Trail is one of several created by Baildon Local History Society and initially commissioned by Baildon Town Council. Please see inside the back cover for a list of the Trails in the series.

The Walks are available in booklet form from Baildon Library for a small fee, or you can download them free from the Baildon Town Council web site – www.baildowntowncouncil.gov.uk/local-publications.html

Countryside Code and Privacy

Several of these walks use public rights of way over farm land and others go close to houses. Please help keep Baildon the beautiful place it is:

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.

Leave gates and property as you find them

Protect plants and animals and take your litter home

Keep dogs under close control

Respect other people and their property

How to get there

Bus: Service 737 (Airport) runs along Otley Road.

Rail: Wharfedale Line trains run from Shipley and Ilkley to Baildon.

From Baildon station, cross over the footbridge and turn left along a path which leads into a residential drive. Turn right down Roundwood Road to meet Otley Road at the bottom of the hill. (Distance from station 0.3mi/0.5km.)

For details of buses and trains, check with MetroLine
(0113 245 7676 or www.wymetro.com)

Car: If coming by car, park in nearby streets.

See the end of this Guide for a map of the walk.

BAILDON HERITAGE TRAILS

The Riverside Walk

(Approx. 4 mi or 6½ km)

The walk starts at the old ‘tin chapel’, at the junction of Roundwood Road with Otley Road (the A6038), goes down Buck Lane to the River Aire, upstream along the riverside to Baildon Bridge, and returns along the canal towpath. Several detours and shortcuts are offered.

From Otley Road to Buck Lane Bridge

On the corner where Buck Lane meets Otley Road – immediately opposite Roundwood Road and just over the stone wall – stands a building with a metal roof and still with some shingle sides. It’s rather hidden in summer by small trees between it and the wall. It used to have a corrugated iron roof and was known locally as the tin tabernacle, or tin chapel. This chapel has had many uses in its lifetime: constructed in 1869, funded by public subscription and licensed by the Bishop of Ripon, it was used for services and Sunday school as well as dances and concerts before the coming of St James’s church



The Old Tin Chapel, or Tabernacle, Otley Road

and hall on Kirklands Lane (the white wooden church). A kitchen was added and in 1887 the Baildon Local Board approved a plan for a vestry or classroom. It was called St James Mission Church and seated 200. In 1888 Baildon Board minutes record that it was charged 8s (40p) per annum for water. The Sunday School was held here up to the mid 1950s when it switched to the Kirklands Lane church.

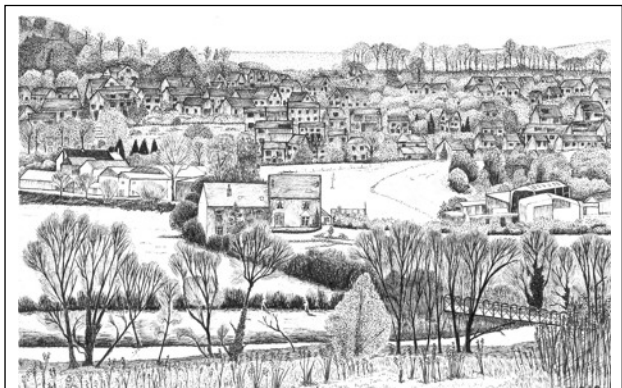
By the 1980s it had become the Chapel China Works where china was stored for the 'Flying Saucer' crockery retailer who worked mainly through market stalls, although for a time they also had a shop in Westgate, Baildon. The chapel is in good condition, having been re-roofed recently, and is still used for general storage, but not for crockery.

In the same triangle of land, behind the chapel, there has been industry since an ammonia works was started in the early 1870s by WW Wright & Co (it later became Baildon Chemical Company). Now a miscellany of light industrial firms find a home here. In 1888 a cottage was built at the chemical works: this could be the white building next to the old chapel, which is still occupied.

From the chapel, turn into Buck Lane from which you gain an additional view of both chapel and works, and a hen run. On the other side of Buck Lane, the field at the junction of Otley Road was the first cricket field used by Tong Park when it started in 1880 according to the late Sidney Jackson. It was levelled by using debris from the glacial moraine in the second field down the lane. (The second cricket ground was close to Tong Park Hall followed by the present third ground, which you can see in *The Railway Walk*).

Before the 'New Line' (as Otley Road was first called) was built, Buck Lane continued up Roundwood Road (formerly Roundwood Lane) and then along Low Baildon Road (the former name of Station Road before the coming of the Railway in 1876). This was part of Idlegate, a medieval route from Baildon to Idle across the River Aire.

Walk down Buck Lane. When you come to Ford House Farm – it's the red brick building (offering Bed & Breakfast) – keep to the right. You'll notice the new bridleway coming in on your right: it was created in the last few years to make it safer for horse riders coming up Buck Lane to join or cross Otley Road.

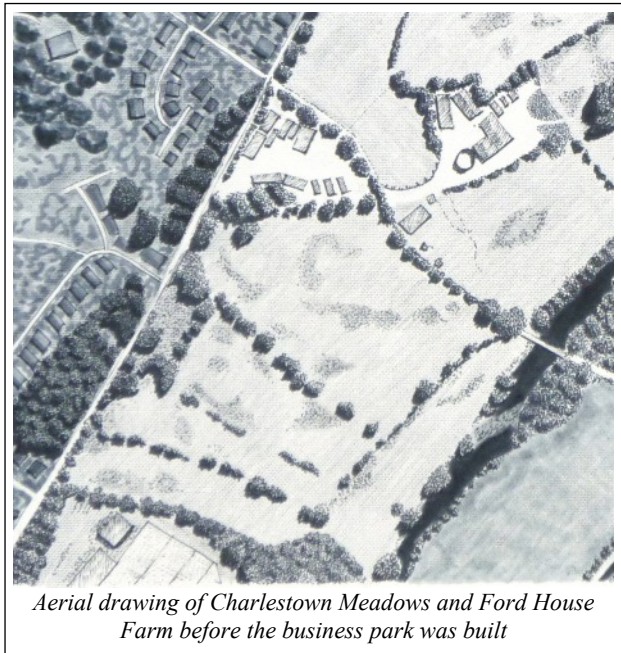


Ford House and Buck Lane with Charlestown Meadows (left) before the business park was built

Ford House Farm and adjoining cottages were built in the 1840s as show houses: an ‘exhibition’ to promote brick as a building material, but the fact that these buildings remain so unusual in this immediate area indicates that it didn’t catch on, at least at that time. There were local brickworks, and bricks were used for internal walls, but the preferred material was sandstone, of which Bradford had a particularly rich supply. Numerous quarries were opened up on the outskirts of Bradford until there were more than 40 and, benefiting from the opening of the Leeds-Liverpool canal, stone was shipped for the Customs house at Liverpool and for use in the construction of Manchester Town Hall. The really heavy demand for local stone came after 1850, and 20 years later at the peak period almost 450,000 tons a year was being sold by Bradford quarry owners.

Opposite the farm you will see the large new Baildon Business Park. Despite spirited resistance by a local protest group, it now occupies the larger part of what was Charlestown Meadows – former grazing land, which was once arable, covering about 13 acres (5 ha). Construction is very recent, and (in 2018) is still ongoing. One firm, Laxtons, is a manufacturer of specialist yarns, thus bringing woollen textile industry back to Baildon.

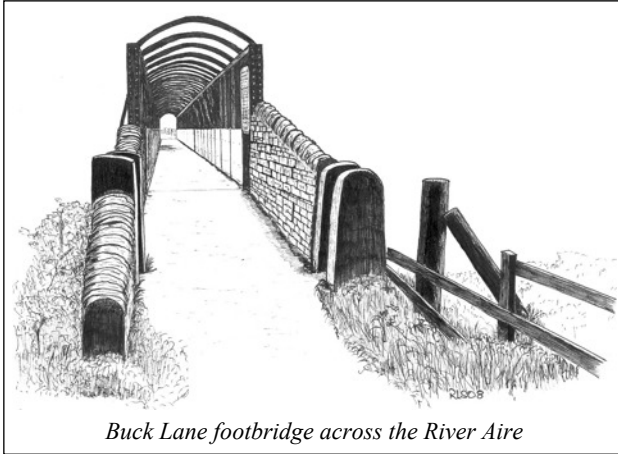
Immediately below the industrial site, on the banking above the riverside plain, 800 trees were planted in spring 2018 as part of Bradford Cathedral’s Wood Project to offset their carbon footprint. Aided by staff from the Forest of Bradford, a volunteer band of 40 people ranging in age from two to 80 undertook the work in one morning. The trees were donated by the Woodland Trust. Each one is planted in an individual treeshelter.



Aerial drawing of Charlestown Meadows and Ford House Farm before the business park was built

If you are very observant as you go on down the lane, you may notice in the hedge on the right some triangular concrete posts (some crumbling) about 18 inches high marked

BUDC. In 2012 members of the Local History Group found 18 of these between Charlestown Meadows (where three have now been covered by the new buildings) and the old site of Baildon sewage works a short distance downstream, but could not find out exactly what they were for. It can be presumed that BUDC stands for Baildon Urban



Buck Lane footbridge across the River Aire

District Council, and elsewhere in the country similar posts mark water pipes, which is implied here also by their location. But so far no written reference to them has been found.

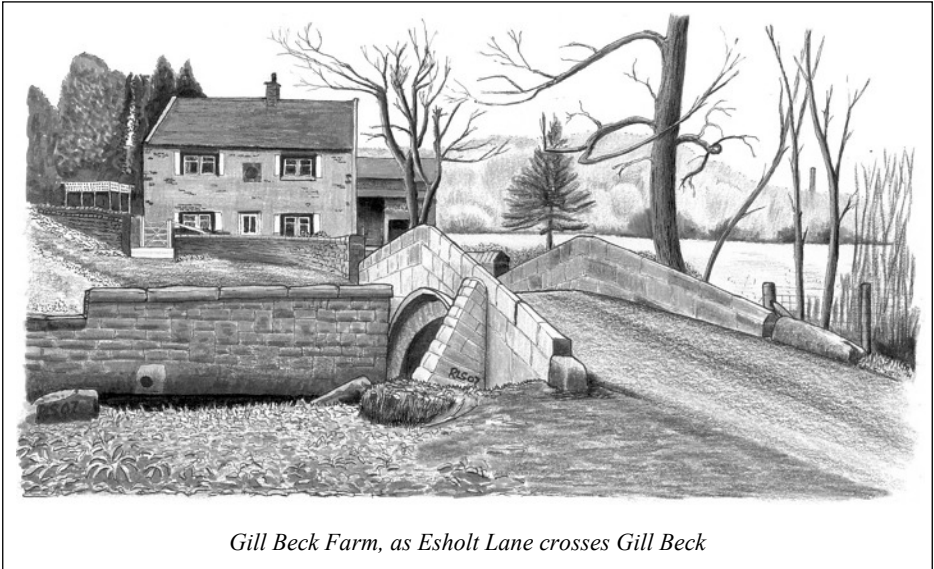
Stop at the green metal footbridge across the River Aire. There was a ford here in times past, but the bridge was built in 1889 to replace old stepping stones which had got into a bad state of repair. In 1877 Baildon Board gave William Illing-

worth permission to land passengers from his boat at Charlestown on the Board's land on payment of 6d (2½p) per annum. The Board borrowed £450 to pay for its share of the bridge: plaques on either end give some further details.

The River Aire is the southern boundary of Baildon, and thus of Charlestown. From this point our walk turns right through the stone stile (or the newer metal gate) and up the river along part of what is the Airedale Way, but if you have time, a detour is possible.

Detour down the river to Gill Beck

As an extra, you can take the downstream path as far as Gill Beck, still part of the Airedale Way. The old path, on the river side of the hedge, which the stone stile and steps lead to, had become so rough and eroded that a new and safer path has been created on the field side. As you go, keep an eye out for more BUDC posts, in the hedge to your right and across the field to your left. After two fields in which the horses are fenced off the path, you pass through a small gate by the remains of a giant poplar into some fields where horses may graze. The rolling hillocks on your left are mounds of glacial moraine (drumlins). Then you come to the Baildon Pistol & Rifle Club range, where the path leaves the river and enters a field with a metal rail fence. At the end of this you'll see the permanent gypsy or traveller campsite on the right. The rifle range and camp occupy the site of the old Baildon's sewage works, where the BUDC posts seem to stop. Pass through a rather narrow stile onto Esholt Lane (it leads to the village of Esholt, of Emmerdale fame) by The Old Barn events venue, which offers meals, and the



Gill Beck Farm, as Esholt Lane crosses Gill Beck

Ghyllbeck golf driving range. A few yards to the right along the lane is a little bridge over Gill Beck, which is the eastern boundary of Baldon.

When you have seen enough, return by the way you came, back upstream to Buck Lane beside the metal footbridge. This detour will add about a mile (1.6 km).

The flood plain

From the metal footbridge take the upstream stone stile or the little metal gate (they were on your right when you first reached the bridge). Head along the tarmac path with the river on your left and follow this through what remains of Charlestown Meadows. A short distance up river you can see, if the water level is not too high, the remains of the weir which used to channel water to the millrace to power Buck Mill on the other side of the river.

Keep your eyes open in the meadow. In these fields in the 1940s and 50s Cecil Woodward discovered stone age flints (chert) like the one shown in the photograph. Who knows what an inspection of molehills might not yield even now! The arrow head shown is about an inch high (2.5 cm). Cecil's notebook shows that in 1951 potatoes were being grown in fields at Briar Rhydding, on the other side of Charlestown Meadows, off Otley Road.



Stiles at Buck Lane footbridge



Flint Arrow Head (Chert)

There are plans to turn this field into a nature reserve (though not part of the one we shall come to next), but the only work so far appears to be the shallow scrapes as preliminary work for ponds, and some hedge laying just this side of the newly planted trees.

This field is part of the River Aire's flood plain, and is occasionally inundated. It has happened twice since the millennium, the most recent and most serious flooding was on Boxing Day 2015 when the water level reached more than half way up the mesh panels on Buck Lane footbridge which you have just passed, and caused widespread damage the length of the river. Containers were

swept down from Baildon Bridge and fetched up on the land just above the footbridge, and three cars had to be winched out of the river at various points farther upstream.

The River Aire has a long history of serious flooding, on average, it seems, about every 25 years. In 1445, farther downstream, floods badly damaged Esholt nunnery (built c.1200). The nuns needed assistance and relief, and the priory probably never fully recovered from the difficulties of that year. In 1688 another flood swept away most of the River Aire bridges, and when shortly afterwards Esholt Hall was built on the nunnery site, rubble and stone was thrown into the cloister to create a plinth. But this proved unstable and within a year or two of its completion the building broke its back due to differential settlement.

Continue up the river to the hedge and small woodland where there is a metal pedestrian gate straight ahead, and a tarmac path up to the right. (If you've already had enough, leave the river here and return by that pathway to Otley Road. Then turn right to return to your starting point.)

Denso Marston Nature Reserve

Go through the metal gate into Denso Marston Nature Reserve, where there are trees, ponds, bird observation stations, an education centre, and seats to rest on. There are also boards close to the downstream and upstream entrances, and by the larger pond, which list planned events and tell you a bit about what you can see.

In 1989 Nippondenso (later Denso) bought the Yorkshire based company IMI Radiators to make and supply car radiators for the new Toyota factory in Burniston Derbyshire. The factory was extended for the new production line, and this strip of pasture land adjacent to the factory and prone to flooding was landscaped and turned into the present nature reserve. It is three hectares in extent (about 7½ acres), with river, pond, woodland, grassland, and hedgerow habitats. Two ponds were excavated, lined and initially filled and maintained with water from a bore hole (no longer in use). Nature now retains

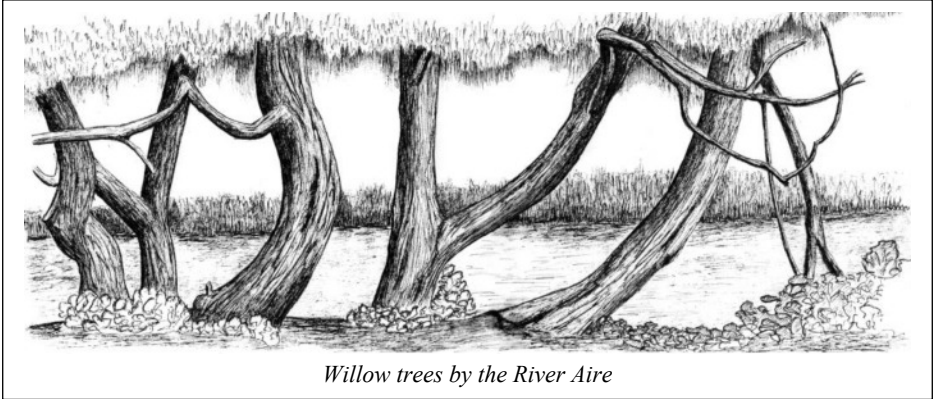
a constant water level in the pools. Not long after the creation of the reserve, the River Aire flooded but did little damage.

A consultative group of local community members was set up, with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Bradford Urban Wildlife involved in the initial stages. The group added its own ideas to the scheme, ensuring wildlife security along a section of the pond and creating a chalk meadow for the anticipated introduction of Common Blue Butterfly. In 2005 the 'Friends of Denso Marston Nature Reserve' was formed to make the reserve even more community friendly, and to enable application for external funding for planned projects.

The Reserve Warden and Friends organise a wide range of events, including wildlife walks, workshops, teaching and activities for school and other groups, especially in holiday times, and there is a thriving children's spider club. In the 30 years since the reserve was established some of the trees have grown to substantial sizes, particularly the aspen (a native poplar). Sightings of birds, animals, moths, pond-dwelling creatures, and plants are all carefully recorded, and details can be found on the Friends' website, where there are also photographs of what the site initially looked like: www.dm-naturereserve.org.uk.



Yellow flag iris at the nature reserve

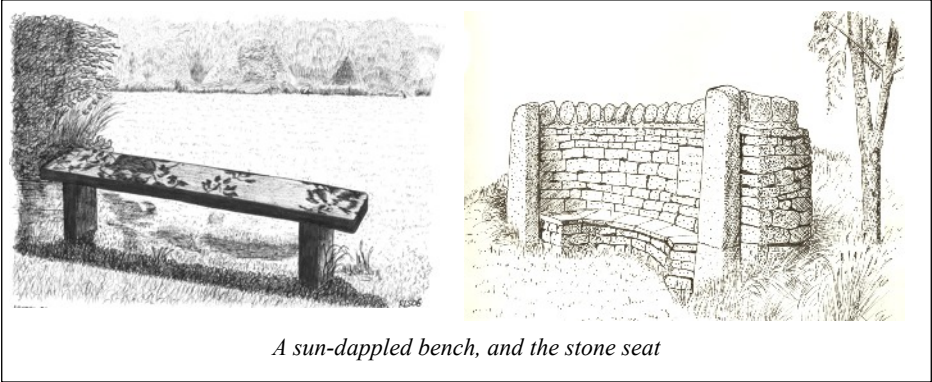


Following the December 2015 flood the mess in the reserve (and indeed all down the river) had to be seen to be believed. The water had risen to about head height, and the trees had combed out of the river much of its flowing debris, not to mention office furniture, a deep freeze cabinet, sleeping bags, wads of tachograph records, an uncountable number of flower pots, other plastic rubbish, and many unmentionable items, left festooning the trees and bushes. A band of about 60-70 volunteers appeared a week later to clean up what they could, but much ugly evidence of the flood still remains along both banks. Months later a car was recovered from the river at the top end of the reserve: it had been rolled down the bed of the river all the way from Baldon Bridge, a half-mile journey which had done nothing to improve its bodywork!

The river is active in other, less dramatic, ways too. At the lower entrance you can clearly see bank erosion which has left a couple of multi-stemmed alder trees on their own island in the river. Not so long ago the riverside path ran along the *other* side of those trees. Opposite, a little tributary stream has also been eroding its bed, washing down so much debris that a small delta has formed – a favourite place for ducks. It has been suggested that the effect of this delta has been to throw the flow of the river over to its left bank (where the reserve is), hastening the erosion at this point – though there is plenty of evidence of erosion along both banks in quite a lot of this stretch.

However, the river is not just destructive. It is also a very important habitat for a rich aquatic wildlife. There are signs of otter activity not far from here, and work to encourage their return to this part is ongoing – so keep alert as you walk, for this and the many water birds you may see, either on the river or making their way along it. You may also spot deer and fox on either side of the river.

When you have explored enough of its present peaceful beauty, and perhaps rested on one of the many seats, you may leave the nature reserve by following the riverside path upstream.



A sun-dappled bench, and the stone seat

As you leave you may see a timber yard on the right (only just visible behind the concrete piles), and about 50 yards farther on, the path comes to what was once a Victorian tip – you can still see cinders from the coal fires, but there was other household waste as well. Towards the end of the twentieth century people came looking for the more interesting waste, in particular old coloured glass bottles, some of which were complete with writing on. Unfortunately one man searching in the rubbish was killed when the hole he was digging in collapsed on him. The practice of searching there for interesting and valuable old waste ceased and not long afterwards an office block (now Teledyne) was built above the path.

Charlestown centre

Beyond these buildings, about 200 yards after leaving the nature reserve, you'll see a path up to the right, away from the river, with a couple of large industrial gas cylinders in an enclosure at the end of the building. Optionally, you can walk up into central Charlestown. Make your way along the path between the two wire mesh fences round the corner of the car park. When you reach the road (Acorn Park), turn right and follow it to the main Otley Road through the industrial estate, an area which used to be occupied by Charlestown Woolcombers and a cricket field. It's not far.

The centre of Charlestown is to your left by the pedestrian crossing, where there are some shops, including a butcher and a fish and chip shop should you need sustenance. Immediately opposite Acorn Park is Fyfe Lane – named after the family of James Fyfe, a limestone merchant who will be mentioned later. *The Charlie Thompson Walk* describes what you can see in the centre of Charlestown and how the area got its name.

If you wish you can return to the start from here. Turn right along Otley Road, past the New Inn (opposite which is Briar Rhydding, referred to earlier), and then the Halfway House, which serves meals. Cross over the entrance to Baildon Business Park, named Sapper Jordan Rossi Park after a soldier from Baildon who was killed in Afghanistan in 2009. *The Turnpike Walk* tells you about points of interest along Otley Road.

From Charlestown to Woodbottom

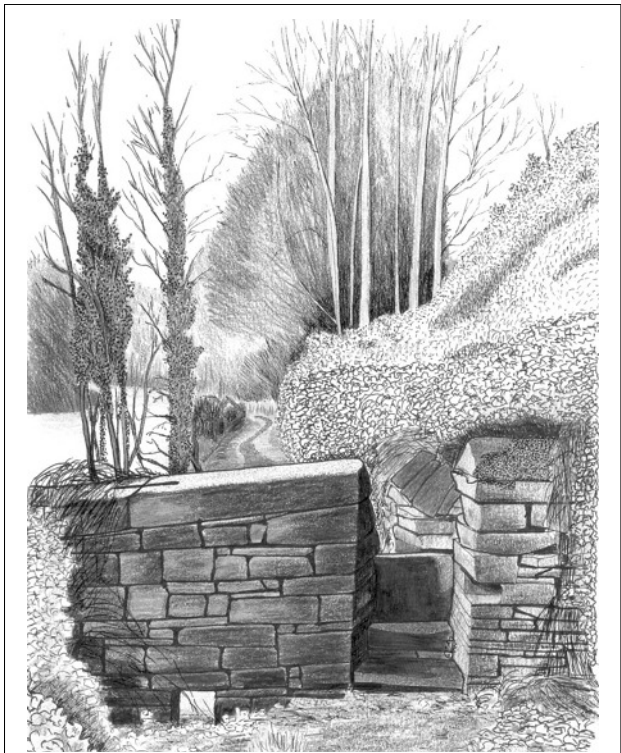
Warning: The next part of the Airedale Way has been both eroded by the river and heavily vandalised over the years. There have been partial repairs, but some sections are still quite rough. Don't attempt it if you are unsteady on your feet or feel insecure too close to the river, and the path is quite impassable when the river is in flood.

To bypass this section, leave the river and walk up to Otley Road as described above. Turn left and walk along it to the Railway Arch, and then immediately down a path to the left which leads to the the river footbridge: but just before the bridge, take a steep little path on the right down to the river. Pick up the instructions later, at either **Shortcut to the canal**, or **From Woodbottom to Baildon Bridge**, according to preference.

However, with care the path is still walkable. It's a quiet place, and sometimes dippers and kingfishers and other wildlife can be seen on this stretch of the river – even the occasional cormorant in transit. As you go, you may notice on the other side of the river some old stone walling and other construction: this is possibly the remains of an old limekiln, which is shown on the 1852 OS map.

Soon you come to a stone wall which is the boundary of Charlestown Cemetery (see *The Turnpike Walk*). Here there used to be a picturesque stone stile (illustrated), but it suffered considerable vandalism, and then the recent flood flattened the rest of it. The picture shows how it looked in about 1996.

Just beyond where the stile was, you will see a stream flowing into the river from a conduit. This is Barnsley Beck which comes down from Baildon Moor through the centre of Charlestown, but in culverts almost all the way after Pennithorne.



The path below Charlestown cemetery

The path continues below Charlestown cemetery. Where the low wall on your right stops (some of it thrown into the river by vandals) you may be able to make out a slight 'valley' to your right, and this is where Barnsley Beck used to flow out, along this edge of Charlestown Cemetery, before it was put underground. Now all that is left is a small outflow just visible in the wall at the very edge of the river, underneath the path.

The next section of the walk is paved with huge stone slabs, though trees have found their way into some



Paved section of the Airedale Way

of the cracks between them. After that comes a particularly rough patch as you pass under the railway bridge and a footbridge, and you arrive at Woodbottom, which can be reached by the little footpath up to the right onto Otley Road. There is a cafe and a sandwich shop here, with a local information board about Charlestown and Low Baildon, situated between the car park and bus stop. Farther towards Shipley is a Tesco Express. If you want, you can walk back to the starting point from here: turn right and walk along Otley Road under the railway arch.

Shortcut to the canal

The main walk continues up the river to Baildon Bridge, but if you want to skip that section you can take a shortcut to the canal from here. Just beyond the two bridges, take the path away from the river up toward Otley Road as if going to Woodbottom, but cross the footbridge over the river. At the height of the 2015 flood, other than by rail, this footbridge was the only safe way across the river between the Bingley bypass and the Leeds ring route! Turn right along Dockfield Road, away from the huge railway arches. The roadside drains here had to be changed recently. The workmen said the old ones, great heavy cast-iron contraptions about a hundred years old, had been of a special design, made locally and found nowhere else but in Shipley and Saltaire. Follow the road beside the railway embankment, rich with bluebells in Spring, up as far as the canal (0.3 mi or 0.5 km). For further directions go to just before the heading **From Metal Box to Buck Lane** – beware of cyclists on the towpath.

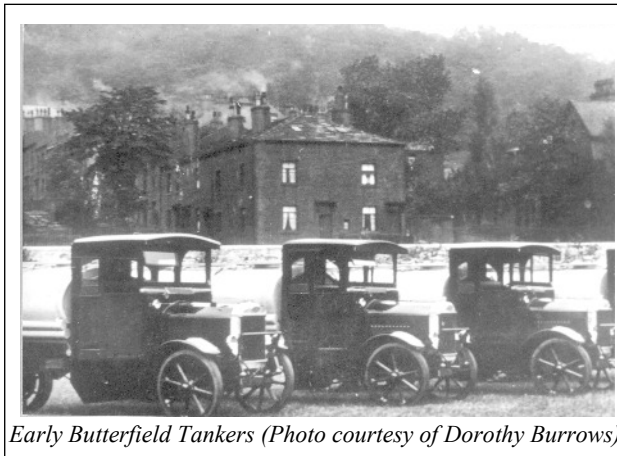
From Woodbottom to Baildon Bridge

This bit of the path is well maintained, with a seat after you pass the Nuffield Gym. (The 2015 floodwater covered the metal fencing here.)

In 1909 about half an acre of the flood plain immediately beyond the Woodbottom bridges was given as a playground, strictly for children, by Mr and Mrs Roberts, and became known as Roberts Park. The next year a shelter was built near the railway bridge (much later this was re-sited to a drier location up by the road where it became a club for veterans). Goal posts were erected in 1925, but only for the use of children. Council records show that tree planting was discussed at the time, and old photographs of the period show a pleasant walkway by the river here, but no trees at all.

Farther on, WP Butterfield moved from Windhill in 1895 and built a factory producing tanks of all kinds. It expanded to be an important manufacturing firm until the late C20th

when the buildings were demolished.

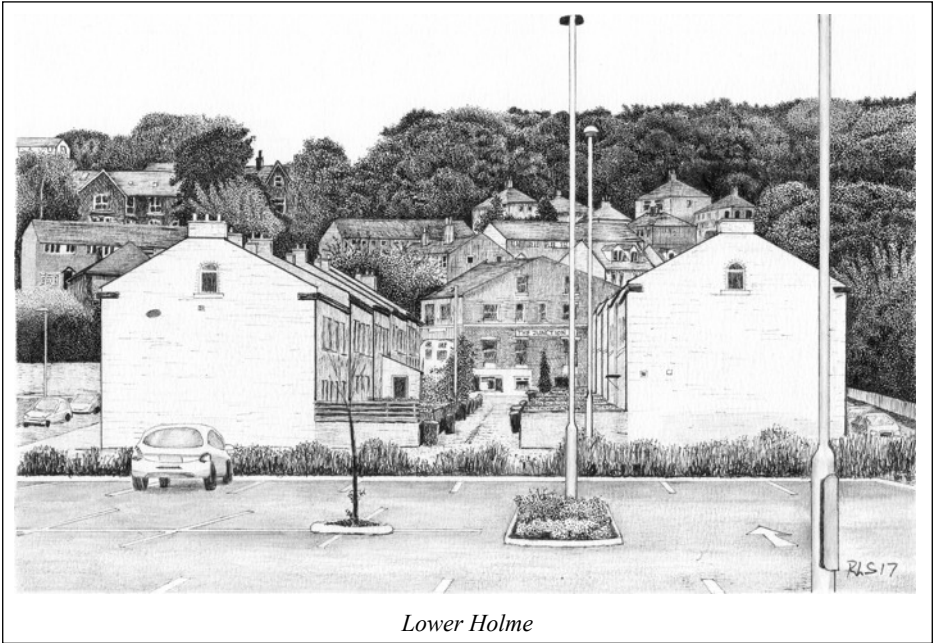


Early Butterfield Tankers (Photo courtesy of Dorothy Burrows)

You can make out various industrial units on the other side of the river – a floor covering pattern maker, a printer, and a maker of hand-built racing cars. You can also see quite a few interesting-looking remnants of long-past industrialisation on this bank of the river, but we haven't researched these, so we can't tell you anything about them.

The next footbridge you come to is at Lower Holme. Although not covered in the 2015 flood, it was temporarily closed for safety reasons because containers had floated up against it and were threatening its stability. You can still see the dents they caused in the mesh on the upstream side.

In the C19th and well into the C20th this area specialised in the region's main industry of textiles. CF Taylor's Ltd, Spinners, built a mill in 1858 at Lower Holme, which grew until in the 1960s it had 100,000 spindles and worldwide sales. It became part of British Mohair Spinners. Also here, next to CF Taylor's, was Airedale Combing Company Ltd which prepared wool for spinning. It grew to be a large mill covering 5 acres of land. In the 1970s Lower Holme Mill was very seriously damaged in an arson attack, but continued to function until just after the millennium. Initially there was a move to turn

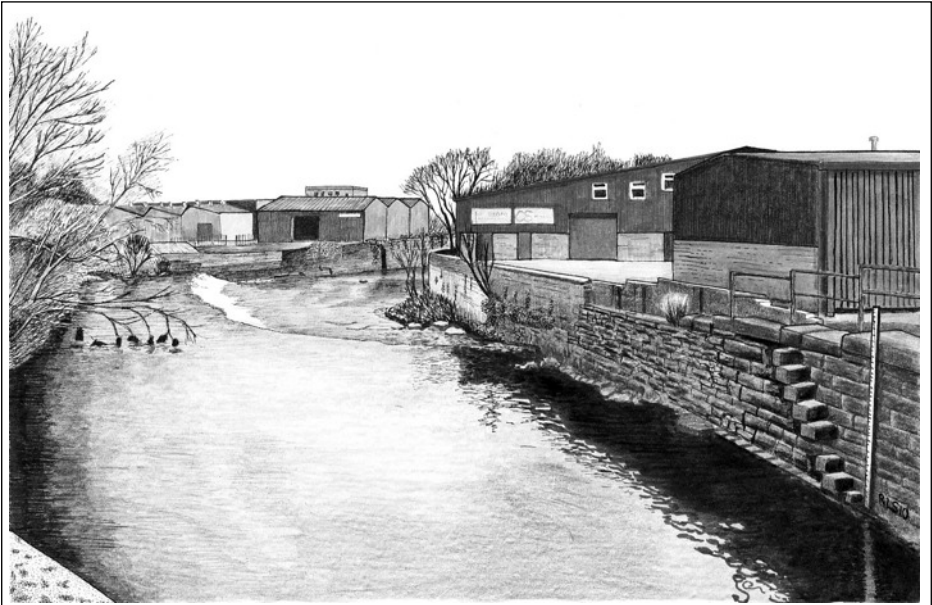


the building into apartments, but a slump in the housing market put paid to that, and it was later demolished.

All that is left now from that period are the two rows of terraced houses. The rest is a new industrial estate. You'll see Wickes (big grey building) ahead of you and a KFC to the right. Once more, the next part of the Airedale Way along the river has some rough bits, and if you feel insecure you can detour through the Wickes car park and past Topps Tiles and B&M, rejoining the walk as it emerges from the river side of B&M.

To follow the Airedale Way, continue down the steps on the far side of the footbridge and follow the riverside path, which comes out round the back of the B&M store. Follow the path into the open – where the car park detour rejoins – and then turn left, keeping United Carpets on your right and Travel Xpress on your left. You will find a snicket between metal railings past Northway Vehicle Sales to Baildon Bridge.

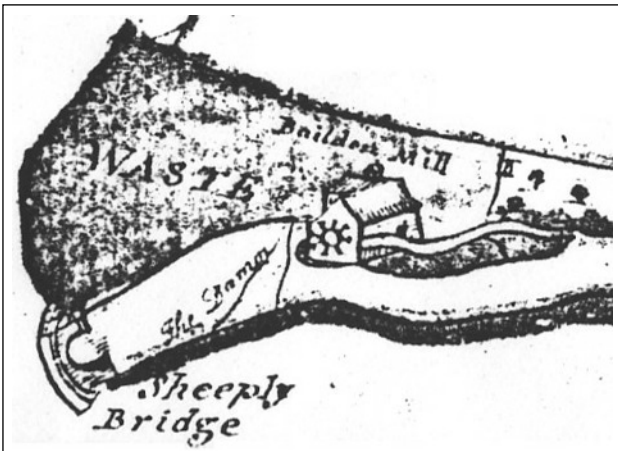
There is a record of a river bridge at this point from at least as early as 1627, with adjacent fields frequently flooded. Several other stone or iron bridges have been built since then, and the present structure dates from 1934. From here you have a fine view down the river with the surrounding new industrial units. On the right are old steps (one missing) and a river-depth gauge, and on the left is the weir, leading to where from long times past was the Baildon manorial corn and fulling mill – roughly where Travel



Baildon Bridge Weir

Xpress now is, with the millrace (or leet) flowing back out into the river behind B&M. It was shown with a waterwheel in a map prepared for a sale of land in 1737 (with The

Damm, by Sheply Bridge – Shipley means sheep field), and on the 1847 OS map, though less pictur- esquely. (Fulling was a process of beating woollen cloth with wooden ham- mers to scour it.) There is a record of one Serlo of Bail- don being found crushed by the wheel of a certain mill in Baildon in 1231, and that could well have been here. In 1854 what was then the ‘old mill’ was destroyed by fire, and in rebuilding large additions were made. It



Baildon Bridge Corn and Fulling Mill, as mapped in 1737

was four storeys high, with new machinery for manufacturing goods for the Bradford market. In 1897 there were disputes between the mill owners and Shipley UDC about the water supply, which under the 1854 Waterworks Act it was the Council's responsibility to maintain.

Leave the river and go up Otley Road across Dockfield Road (with great care) until you come to the canal, which you will see on your left in a few hundred yards. If you have the energy, you can turn right along the towpath under Otley Road (it's a safer crossing) and walk on to the World Heritage Site of Saltaire, and indeed far beyond. Either you can go past Shipley Wharf with its refurbished loading bays and on along the towpath, or you can go back down Otley Road to Baildon Bridge, and walk up the river. On the Shipley side of the river the path rejoins the towpath at Salt's Mill having passed a series of fun scrap metal sculptures. On the Baildon side, walk past Woodbottom Working Men's Club and round the brick built Baildon Recreation Centre (the Barracks) and continue up the open flood plain. But all of that is another walk.

Detour to Shipley

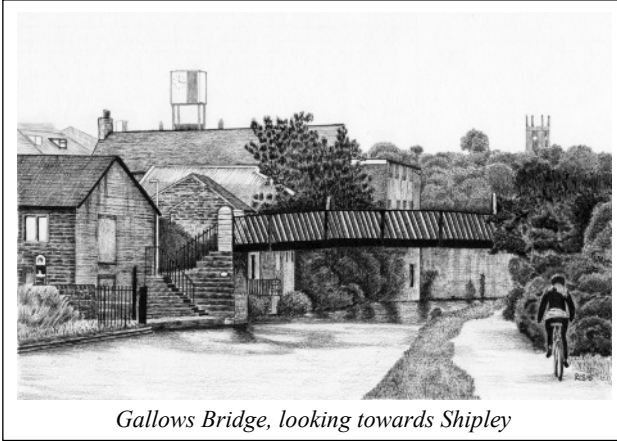
If you want to visit Shipley town centre, cross under Otley Road and turn back up onto the pavement and go up the hill over Wharf Street to the crossroads (called Fox Corner, after the Fox & Hounds Hotel which stood here, demolished in the early 1970s for road widening). There is a light-assisted crossing over Commercial Street, beyond which you turn right into Kirkgate, past the tiny taxi hire office, formerly a tripe shop, to Market Square (stalls on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays) where there are buses, shops, cafés, pubs, a library close by, and other facilities.

Seven canal bridges

To follow the rest of this walk, don't cross under Otley Road. Instead, turn left along the canal towpath for about two miles (3 km) to Buck Lane. Including the Otley Road one, we now pass seven bridges close together.

Nowadays, canals are almost exclusively used for leisure (and as you go, beware of cyclists on the towpath), but when this stretch of the canal was built in 1774 it was a wholly industrial commercial venture. The towpath was needed because all barges were pulled by horses, which were the chief source of power on canals, as they were for road transport and on the land. (Indeed, horse power remained important until well into the C20th.)

Barges brought limestone and agricultural produce from the Craven area. We have already noted one old limekiln by the riverside, and early OS maps mark several more in this immediate area. The Baildon Local Board minutes in the 1870s and 80s record that they sometimes bought limestone for repairing roads – the cost in 1875 was 3s 7½d (18p) per ton. It was brought to Junction Staith, Shipley, and one of the suppliers was James Fyfe, the head of the family after whom is named Fyfe Lane in Charlestown,



Gallows Bridge, looking towards Shipley

mentioned earlier. Another example of canal-based enterprise was a Mr and Mrs Kendall of Briggate, Shipley, who ran a carrying business. From buying their first canal boat when the canal first opened they eventually had 26 boats working between Liverpool, Shipley and Goole as coal and stone merchants (they were also quarry owners). Incidentally, the men who worked on the barges

were known in the Shipley District as boaties, not bargees.

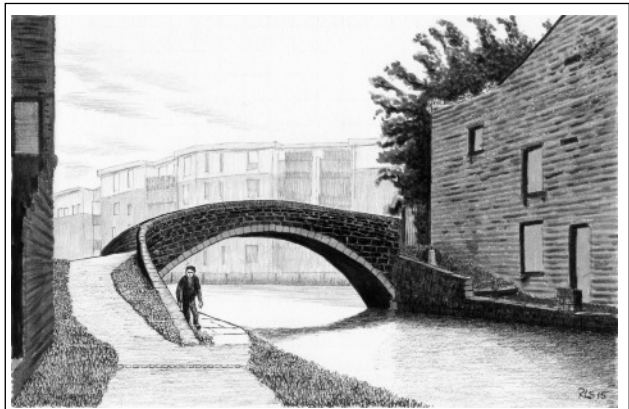
The first bridge you come to after leaving Otley Road has always been called Gallows Bridge, but this may be less macabre than it sounds because gallows once also referred to any contrivance with posts and a crossbeam for suspending things, or the main frame of a beam engine, either of which could easily have arisen from Shipley's industrial past.

Shortly afterwards, the canal passes over Bradford Beck. The land to the left of the beck is the site of the former Shipley gasworks, which until recently had large gasometers.

The next bridge, attractively hump-backed, marks the junction with what was Bradford Canal spur – which ran 3¼ miles (2 km) into the northern edge of Bradford, parallel with Canal Road and the railway. The building on the right is said to have been a toll house.

The bridge itself joined the towpaths of the two canals, and you may notice that on this side only one of the ramps leading up to the bridge is cobbled. This is the one horses towing the barges would always have used, in whichever direction they were going, to avoid having to unhitch the towrope.

Canal bridges used to have wooden rollers set into



Canal junction towpath bridge, Dockfield

them on the towpath side to stop towropes being worn as they were dragged past the stonework. You can sometimes make out the remains of the metal fixings, though not on this one.

Just at the foot of the cobbled ramp is an alleyway through to Dockfield Road, round the side of the factory on the left (which makes envelopes): half way along this alley a pair of swans has often nested successfully in recent years.

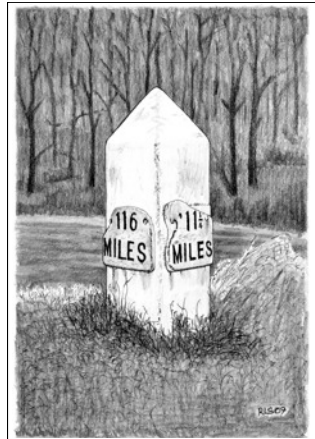
Bradford canal was built in 1774, with 10 locks, to the same dimensions as the one you're on. Boats from Bradford could reach Leeds and the North Sea or Skipton, carrying coal, stone and iron, with many ironworks developing along the canal because of its existence, but the trans-Pennine canal was not completed until 1816. The Bradford canal was initially very profitable, but was always handicapped by being unable to reach a good supply of water, and what was available was grossly polluted, so that it soon became stinking ditch. It was finally closed in 1922, having been used very little for a decade or so before that. You can still follow its general route into Bradford by the bridges under roads.

A little farther on is a swing bridge which has been recently electrified. For a short stretch beyond that the towpath is only a rough footpath, and you may find it easier to walk on the adjacent Dockfield Road pavement, past Saltaire Brewery (with shop) and the Printworks, opposite the new housing, until you reach the railway bridge. This is where the shortcut from Woodbottom rejoins the walk.

The railway bridge carries the Wharfedale line which crosses Otley Road by the impressive arches you saw earlier at Woodbottom, on the way through Baildon to Ilkley (see *The Railway Walk*). Just beyond this bridge, by the rough sheds with poultry runs, goats and barking dogs, is an old track across a swing bridge to Windhill, and in that direction you can see the Airedale railway line continuing to Leeds. This swing bridge is also known as Oddie's bridge, and apparently there used to be a small wharf on the far side, complete with crane, but no trace of this remains, save the raised stone bank of the canal. This is bridge number seven.

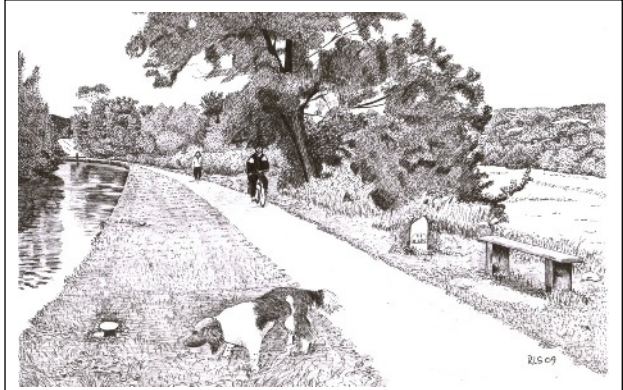
From Metal Box to Buck Lane

This section is quite easy walking, but can become very puddly in wet weather. The factory on the left, Metal Box, is built on part of the site of the old Shipley sewage works, some of which is still discernible beyond the far end of the factory enclosure, if you scramble up the banking.



Canal Milepost at Buck Lane

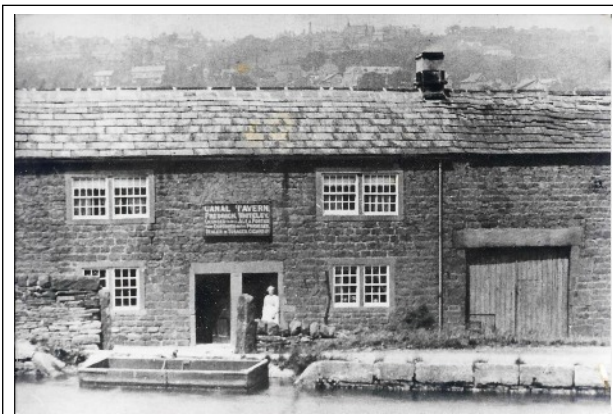
Here and there along the towpath you will see metal mileposts: miles, half-miles, and quarters. There was one just before the railway bridge, giving distances to Leeds (12¼ miles) and Liverpool (115 miles), and there is another at Buck Lane, one mile on (by a seat). Many such labelled posts were removed during the war, as were signposts on roads, to avoid giving guidance to the enemy in the event of invasion, and the replacements are wearing out. There is an active programme of refurbishment and renewal, thanks to dedicated local community initiatives, and the new signs are made here at Metal Box. There is said to be disagreement across the Pennines about whether the mileage should be shown on the destination side, or the side you see when you're heading there!



Leeds-Liverpool Canal, with milepost, looking from Buck Lane

As the canal swings gently to the left you may spot a winding hole, a cut in the far banking to enable barges to turn. It's just by a grove of aspen trees, with leaves that tremble and rustle in the slightest breeze.

Just before the next ½ mile post (by a large-diameter metal pipe), as the railway approaches very close to the canal and the land on the left falls away a bit, you will see



Canal Tavern, probably in about 1900, with Baldon beyond

an extensive pile of old stone, now all mossy and partly hidden by brambles and nettles. This is the site of the former Canal Tavern (called Newmarket on the 1852 OS map). It latterly belonged to Shipley District Council as part of the estate acquired for sewage purposes, and it seems that a decision to close the Tavern down was taken in 1909 because it was then considered too dangerous a site for

a pub, following three separate canal drowning accidents in the past two years involving customers. The woman in the photo standing at the doorway is Eliza Jane Whiteley, the wife of one of the last licensees of the Tavern, and so this photo was probably taken in about 1900. The punt in the foreground was apparently used to ferry people across the canal, perhaps to barges moored on the other side.

Continue along this peaceful part of the walk, noting the overflow, designed to maintain canal water levels, with mooring opposite for the former Brackendale mill which is farther up the slope beyond the railway. Old maps show the overflow on the far side of the canal, and if you walk back along the other side of the canal from the Buck Lane swing bridge ahead you can see the old channel quite easily.

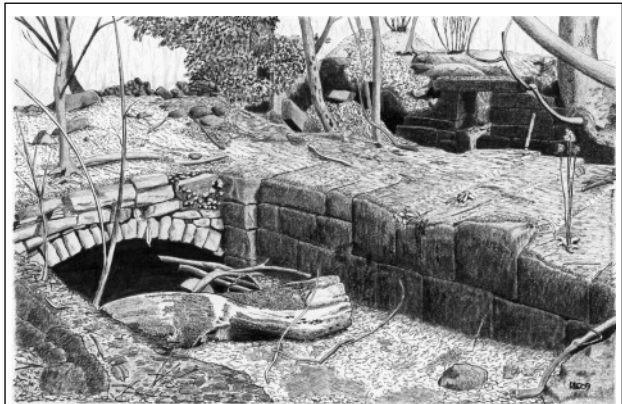
From about this point onwards you can look down over the fields on your left to the two-tone grey buildings of Baildon Business Park beyond the narrow strip of Charles-town Meadows which you passed before.

Soon you reach Buck Lane swing bridge where the woodland starts on the far side of the canal. This is Buck Wood, with a wide range of flora and fauna and a network of lovely walks.

From the Canal towpath to the Tin Chapel

There is excellent level walking on the towpath as far as Apperley Bridge and Leeds, but today's walk finishes by going down Buck Lane and across the river. At the top of the slope by the towpath is a notice board erected by the now defunct Friends of Buck Wood with (at the time of writing) some information about the once-thriving Buck Mill which used to stand just below the canal on the right hand side of the track as you go down, near the electricity pylon. The mill was demolished in the 1920s, but in spring when undergrowth is low its ruined remains can still be seen.

In Elizabethan times the mill and lane got their name from the Buck brothers, William and John, who worked a water powered corn and fulling mill beside the river in the C16th. Buck Mill was the manorial mill for Idle, built on the Idle side of the river. In 1876 it was Benjamin Thornton's wool textile mill, driven by steam power and greatly enlarged. Workers came to work in the Mill from Tarn



Buck Mill Ruins

and Park (the earliest houses in Tong Park were built there). On the other side of the lane, opposite the ruins, you can still see the hollow which was the mill pond to supply water for a steam engine in the C19th when the mill was extended. It is still a mini-wetland, and occasionally herons fish here.

Now it's only about 0.3 mi or 0.5 km to the finish of this walk. At the foot of the slope you reach the footbridge over the river. Make your way across this, noting the mill race, and follow Buck Lane back up the slope past Ford House Farm to Otley Road, and turn left to the Tin Chapel, to complete this walk.

How many bridges can you remember seeing on the walk? We counted at least 14.

Summary of distances

To nature reserve and back by Charlestown	1.4 mi	2.2 km
To Woodbottom and back by canal	2.7 mi	4.3 km
To Baildon Bridge and back by canal	4.0 mi	6.4 km

Detours

To Gill Beck bridge and back	1.0 mi	1.6 km
To Shipley Market Square and back	0.4 mi	0.6 km

Note: Distances are approximate, and don't include your own additional explorations.

List of the Baildon Heritage Trails

Except as noted, these walks are available in booklet form at Baildon Library for a small charge, or download free at www.baildowntowncouncil.gov.uk/local-publications.html

1. **The Baildon Village Walk:** the old lanes, folds and corners of central Baildon.
2. **Coach Road to Shipley Glen:** a short walk through lanes and woodlands.
3. **The Charlie Thompson Walk:** old Charlestown round St John's Court.
4. **The Turnpike Walk:** between the two old turnpike road milestones on Otley Road.
5. **The Kirklands Walk:** St John's Court to St James's, Kirklands and Hoyle Court.
6. **The Riverside Walk:** from Roundwood Road to Baildon Bridge by the River Aire and back by the Leeds-Liverpool canal towpath.
7. **The Railway Walk:** the Arches at Woodbottom to the great Viaduct at Tong Park.
8. **The Threshfield and Low Baildon Walk:** Based on Station Road, with glimpses of clothiers cottages and grand houses of later mill owners.
9. **The Lost Hamlets of Baildon Moor:** the remains of Moorside, Low Hill and Sconce, and the archaeology of the moor.
10. **Ferniehurst and Baildon Green:** A walk looking principally at the sites of two Victorian mansions with Salt family connections.
11. **The Salt Market Walk:** Sconce, Birch Close and Faweather by old lanes.

Also available

Exploring Baildon: a Guide to Public Spaces: brief information on 55 selected sites within the extensive, interesting and beautiful network of public spaces in Baildon.

The Baildon Peace Walk: a short walk based on the Baildon Peace Garden between Cliffe Avenue and Green Road. Published by and available from Baildon Community Link: 01274 588681 baildon.link@btinternet.com.

Acknowledgements

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Mike Lawson, Tish Lawson, Stewart Main and Marian Taylor,
with help from Roy and Jean Lorrain-Smith.

Drawings by Roy Lorrain-Smith ©

Help from many people and sources is gratefully acknowledged.

Comments on this walk are welcome and should be sent to:
The Clerk of Baildon Town Council, c/o Baildon Library
Hallcliffe, Baildon, BD17 6ND 01274 593 169
enquiries@baildowntowncouncil.gov.uk

The Riverside Walk

