

Dearne Way

The Dearne Way is made up of eight short walks joined to form a continuous footpath some 30 miles (48 km) in length, mainly through the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley, but also in part in Kirklees, Wakefield and Doncaster.

This leaflet is one of a series of four, designed not only to show you the route, but also to point out and explain many of the interesting facts and features to be discovered along the way.

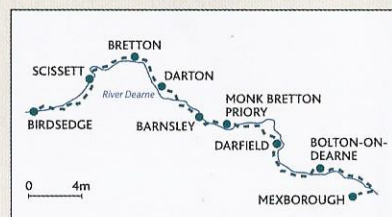
Further information

If you have any comments regarding the walk, or encounter any difficulties en route, please do not hesitate to contact:

Rights of Way Team,
Barnsley Metropolitan
Borough Council, PO Box 601,
Barnsley S70 9FA
Telephone 01226 773555
Email publicrightsofway@
barnsley.gov.uk

Information on bus and
train services is available on
01709 515151.
www.travelsouthyorkshire.com

OS Explorer maps nos. 278 and
288 cover the area



The Dearne Way follows as closely as possible the valley of the River Dearne from its source near Birdseyge, Denby Dale, to its meeting with the River Don at Mexborough. You will see for yourself that the valley is rich in wildlife, thriving in a landscape shaped and changed by human toil and industry over thousands of years.



Keep an eye out for grumpy, old
blokes perched by the riverside

Acknowledgements

Designed by FDA Design Ltd
Illustrations by Geoff Carr, Dan Powell
and Anna Sutton
Photographs by Phil Butcher, Laurie
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and NHPA

Supported by Barnsley Local Access Forum

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
BARNSELEY



Waymarked Walk No. 5

Barnsley to Monk Bretton Priory

Starting point

Twibell Street, Old Mill,
Barnsley

Distance

2 miles (3.2 km)

Time

Allow yourself up to 2 hours
for exploring at a leisurely pace

Footwear

Some sections can have wet,
muddy or uneven ground.
Stout shoes are recommended

Waymarks

The route is waymarked with a
miner's lamp symbol

How to get there

By Bus: Barnsley may be
reached by bus services
throughout the county. The
start is within walking distance
of the town centre, or a short
bus ride from the bus station.
A service also connects Monk
Bretton Priory back to the start
or back to Barnsley bus station

By Train: Barnsley is accessible
from Huddersfield, Leeds,
Wakefield and Sheffield

By Car: Areas suitable for
parking are available near to
the starting point off Twibell
Street

Barnsley's industrial heartland

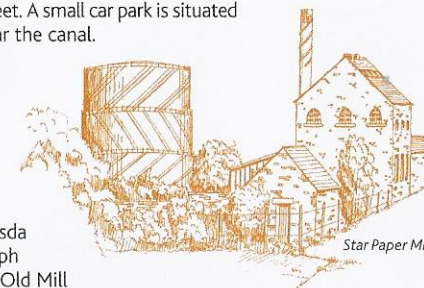
The period 1740-1860 witnessed the birth of some of the staple industries which were to carry Barnsley through to the 20th century. The canals and railways, by converging in this part of the valley, accelerated expansion in what was to become Barnsley's industrial heartland. Five collieries, three glassworks, two bleachworks and a brewery dominated the area. Little now remains of the numerous collieries, factories, canals and railways which once prospered here; so too their vital arteries, the canals and railways. Out of this ugly dereliction has grown the Dearne Valley Park, but under the veneer can still be seen remains of the industrial era.

Coal was first won in the area in the 15th century and the Barnsley seam was to become one of the richest in South Yorkshire. By 1620 wiredrawing was a thriving industry. The manufacture of linen was introduced to Barnsley in 1744 and the town's hand-loom weavers went on to produce some of the finest linen in the world. As the linen trade declined, due to cheaper Irish linen, the arrival of the railways in the 1840s allowed the rich coal seams to be exploited. Even in the early 1980s the mining industry still employed over one third of all working men in the Borough.



This attractive section of the Dearne Way goes through Dearne Valley Park, which following reclamation is now rich in wildlife

1 The route starts at the junction of Harborough Hill Road and Twibell Street. A small car park is situated along Twibell Street near the canal.

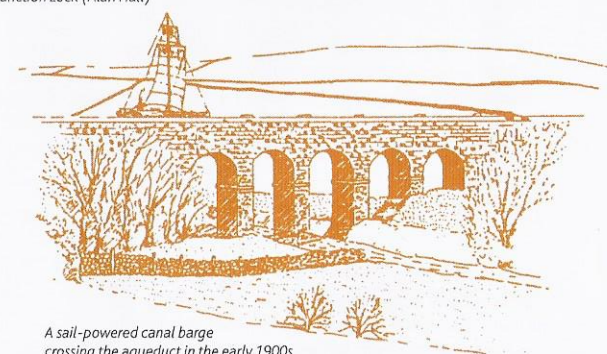


2 On the site of the Asda supermarket stood Joseph Beckett's linen mill and Old Mill bleachworks. Spun flax yarn for the linen weavers was transported by barge from Leeds and either distributed to the weavers' homes or to the town's steam-powered linen mills. In 1875, following the collapse of the linen industry, a paper mill was established here. Wood pulp for the mill and sand, lime and potash for the nearby glassworks and other cargo would have been unloaded off barges in the canal basin, where the PC World store stands today.



Junction Lock (Alan Hall)

3 Follow the footpath beside the canal to Junction Lock. There you'll find a restored section of the lock, and the remains of the lock-keeper's cottage. The lock-keeper would collect a toll, the amount depending on the cargo, and this would provide income for the canal company.



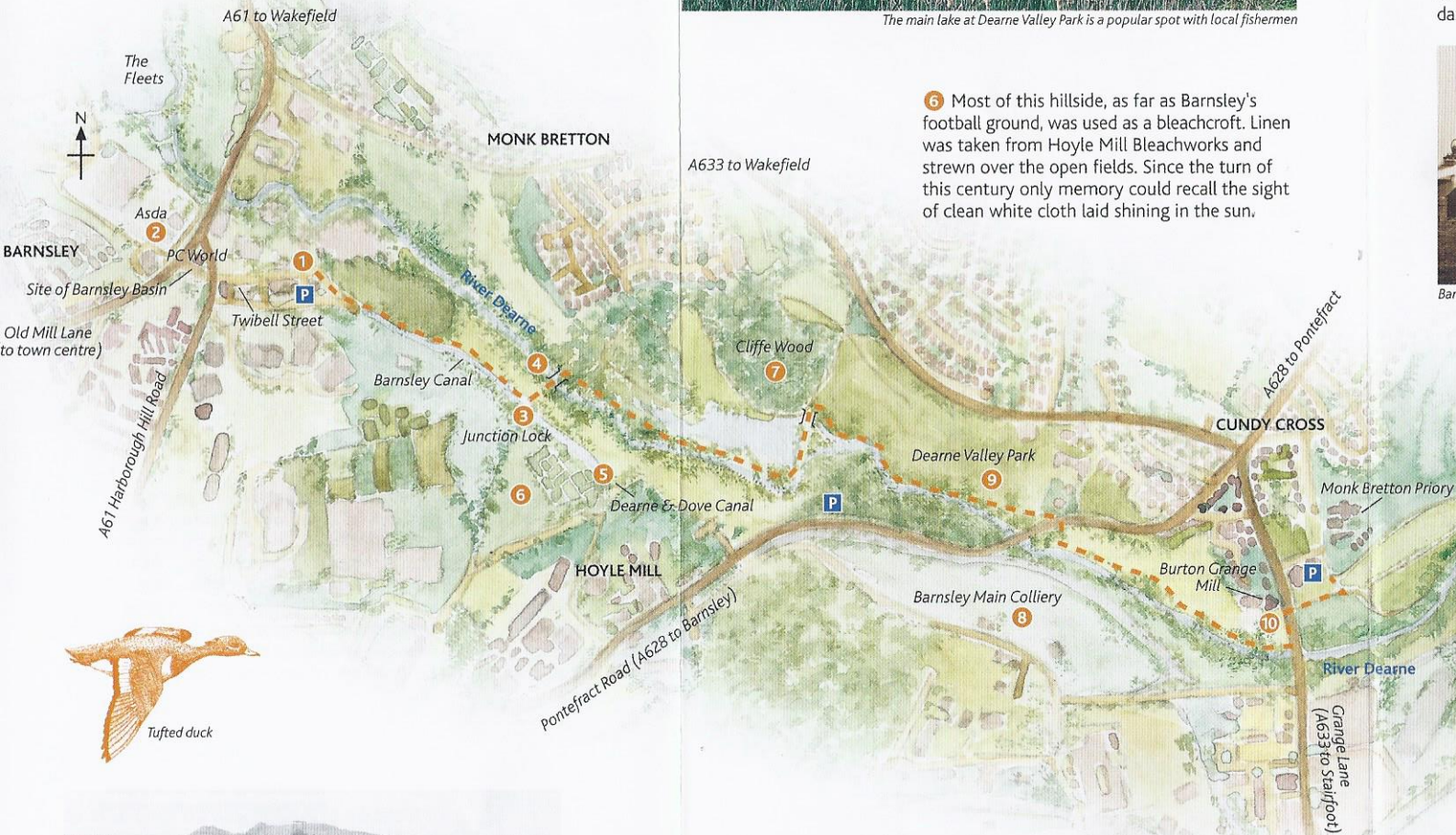
A sail-powered canal barge crossing the aqueduct in the early 1900s

4 Go down the steps, cross the bridge, turn right down steps to the former railway line (not up the steps ahead of you), and turn left alongside the river. The stone pillars here supporting the bridge, are all that remain of the magnificent aqueduct which spanned the valley for over 150 years until the late 1950s. The Barnsley Canal was built to carry coal from Barnby Bridge, near Silkstone, to Junction Lock, high up the valley side to your right. The aqueduct took the canal across the valley to your left, and from there it would sweep northwards to Wakefield and to the Aire and Calder Navigation. The main back-traffic was limestone for land improvements on the moorlands in the west and flax yarn for the linen mills.

5 The Dove and Dearne Canal joins the Barnsley Canal at Junction Lock and was built as an alternative route for the export of Barnsley coal to Hull, by linking up with the Aire and Calder Navigation. Apart from coal, in the early 1800s typical loads carried to Leeds, York, Manchester and Hull on these waterways were: iron from the furnaces and foundries in Barnsley, Elsecar and Sheffield; millstones from Wharnccliffe, which were loaded on at Worsbrough; and oak bark bound for the leather tanneries.



The main lake at Dearne Valley Park is a popular spot with local fishermen



6 Most of this hillside, as far as Barnsley's football ground, was used as a bleachcroft. Linen was taken from Hoyle Mill Bleachworks and strewn over the open fields. Since the turn of this century only memory could recall the sight of clean white cloth laid shining in the sun.

8 On the skyline above the park is the Barnsley Main Pit Head building (the last remaining large mining structure in Barnsley). The history of coal mining has been notoriously tragic with respect to the loss of human life. Barnsley Main Colliery, which closed in 1986, was sunk on the site immediately adjacent to the old Oaks Colliery. Wednesday 12 December 1866: '... he was black as coal... the hair almost entirely singed off his head, his body was frightfully blistered, and his arms were almost entirely skinned. His cries were excruciating beyond conception.' Only six of the twenty who survived the underground explosion lived, 361 men and boys died. The cause: poor ventilation leading to the build-up of volatile fire-damp gases. The reason: improved ventilation was considered too expensive.

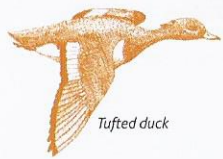


Barnsley Main with Beaton Clark's glassworks beyond (Brian Elliott)

9 Above you during the early 20th century would have been the railway viaduct spanning the blackened spoil-covered valley to Barnsley Main. Walking along this now green valley beside the River Dearne and within a 'stone's throw' of the town can be rewarding and rich in wildlife. Water vole, kingfisher, green woodpecker and various damselflies and dragonflies are evident at various times of the year.

10 On your left as you walk towards Monk Bretton Priory is an old public house known as the 'Mill of the Black Monks'. Extensive research has confirmed that this building was originally a corn mill, built by the Cluniac monks before the year 1200. Some time later iron was forged here. From its founding by the Cluniac monks in 1154, the Priory was to have a history dominated by bitter strife and legal disputes until dissolution in 1538, when Henry VIII seized the buildings and properties, only to sell them off shortly afterwards.

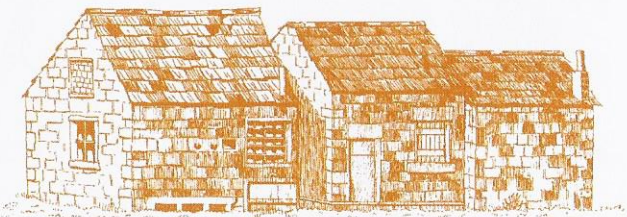
7 Follow the path, then bear left around the bottom of the lake, and turn right, keeping the river beside you. Look for the small Dearne Way mosaic next to the path. As the old industries closed, Dearne Valley Park was created on the reclaimed land. Fishing and nature lakes, new paths and bridleways, orienteering and trim trails offer amazing habitats and recreational facilities for local residents. Beyond the larger lake lies a semi-ancient woodland of oak and birch, that has existed in this location for over 500 years. When owned by Monk Bretton Priory, Cliffe Wood ranged over 40 acres (16 hectares) and probably provided fuel for an iron forge at Burton Grange Mill (see point 10). Since the 16th century the size of the wood has reduced significantly, particularly during the First World War when sections were clear-felled.



Tufted duck



The railway viaduct – which spanned across the Dearne valley from Barnsley Main – being dismantled in 1969 (Brian Elliott)



The old corn mill, before conversion to a public house



Waymarked Walk No. 6

Monk Bretton Priory to Darfield

Starting point

Grange Lane car park, to the rear of Monk Bretton Priory, Cundy Cross

Distance

5 miles (8 km)

Time

Allow yourself up to 5 hours for exploring at a leisurely pace

Footwear

Some sections can have wet, muddy or uneven ground. Stout shoes are recommended

Waymarks

The route is waymarked with a miner's lamp symbol

How to get there

By Bus: Monk Bretton Priory is easily reached from Barnsley town centre. Darfield is served by regular bus routes from the major towns in South Yorkshire. To return to the start from Darfield you will first have to travel to Barnsley, then back to Cundy Cross

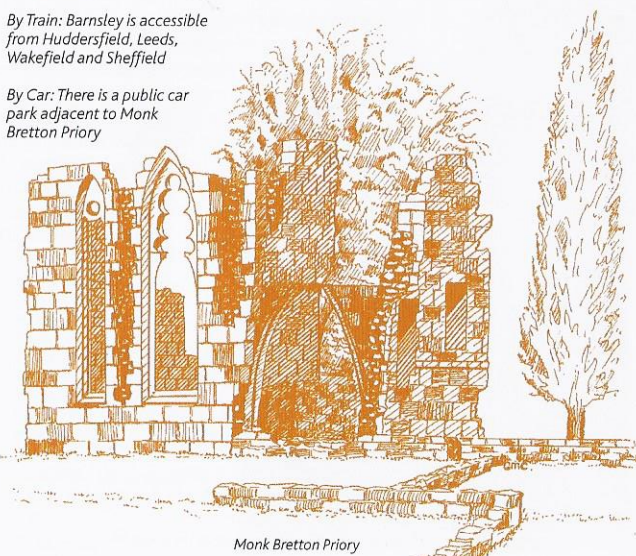
By Train: Barnsley is accessible from Huddersfield, Leeds, Wakefield and Sheffield

By Car: There is a public car park adjacent to Monk Bretton Priory

Bad habits and good habits

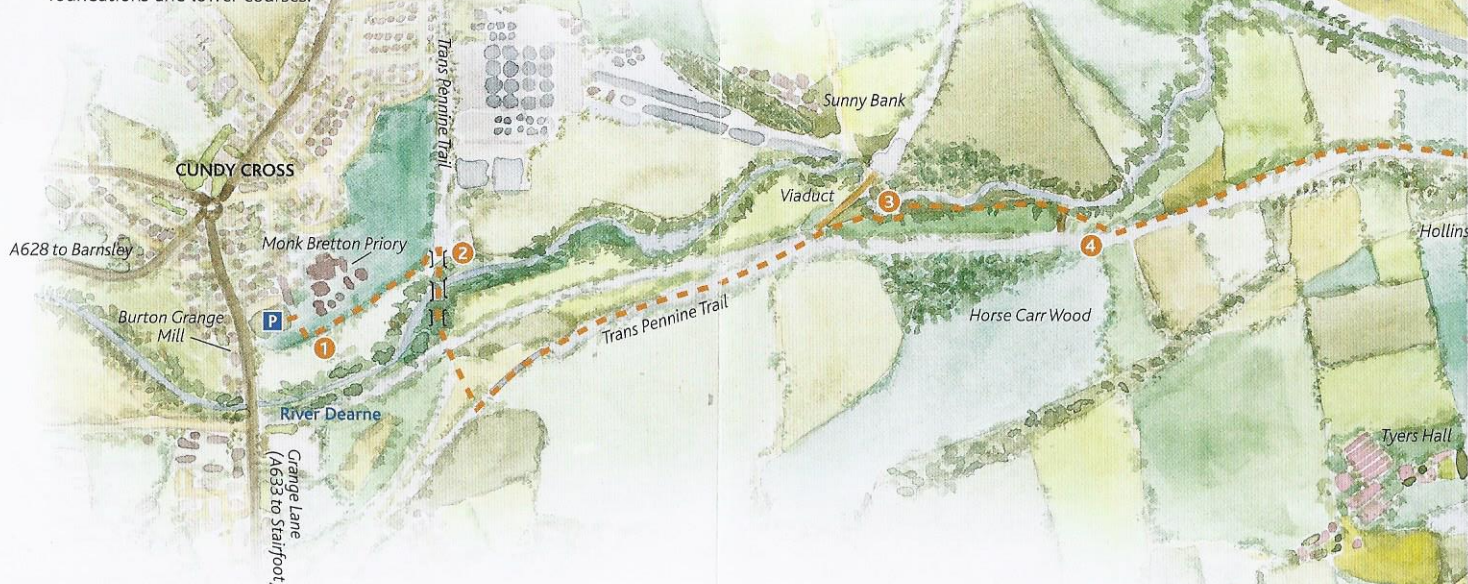
During the 9th and 10th centuries the Church of Rome was in the depths of depravity. The Cluniac Monastic Order was founded in Burgundy, France, to restore lost faith. By 1090 the Cluniac empire had established the Priory of St John at Pontefract. In 1154 land here at Burton Grange was given to the monks and so work began on the Priory of St Magdalene. Bitter disputes with Pontefract Priory led to St Magdalene's turning to the English Benedictine Order in 1279 and as lands were acquired the monastery became a powerful local land owner.

Besides being a menace to good government, the enormous wealth of the monasteries posed too great a temptation to a monarch short of cash. In 1538 the Priory was surrendered to the Crown during Henry VIII's purge of the monasteries. The lands and properties were immediately sold off to the loyal friends and supporters of the King.



Monk Bretton Priory

1 From Grange Lane take the surfaced path across the open space with the ruins of Monk Bretton Priory on your left. Through gaps in the tall hedge are excellent glimpses of the 12th century priory. Apart from the prior's lodging and the south wall of the refectory, little remains but the foundations and lower courses.



2 Take the path up to the top of the railway bridge and turn right. Look right as you cross the river for views of Barnsley town, Dearn Valley Park and Barnsley Main Pit Head. Look left down the rural river valley towards the high viaduct (your next destination). This part of the disused Hull-Barnsley railway line is now part of the Trans Pennine Trail long distance footpath, cycleway and bridleway. At the next junction turn left along another former railway line towards Cudworth and the high viaduct. Walk a little way across to enjoy the views then back to rejoin the Dearn Way.



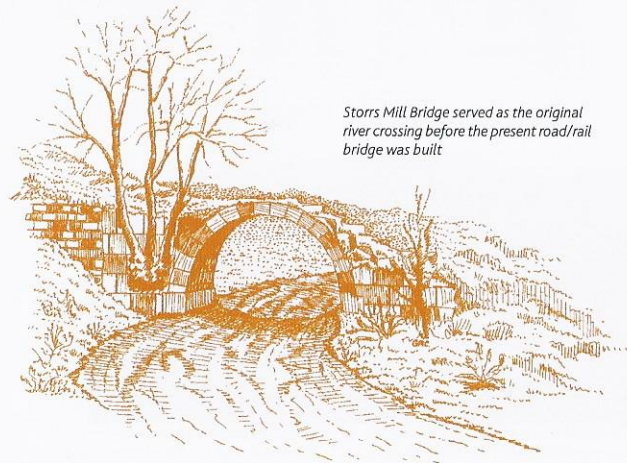
Kingfisher



Reed sweet grass

3 From the viaduct bridge, follow the River Dearne until you reach the wooded areas. As you walk along the meandering River Dearne keep your senses sharp for the sight and sound of kingfishers and herons. Also, if you peer into the waters, you may notice strands of vegetation being drawn by the flow of the river. This is an aquatic buttercup – *Ranunculus fluitans* – an indicator of the improving quality of the River Dearne.

4 Follow the path alongside the disused railway on your right. At about this point, have a look at all the wooded areas around you. Between 1700 and the turn of the 20th century, the amount of woodland changed little in this part of the valley; but when Britain was prevented from importing timber during the First World War there were fears for the coal industry's reserves of pit-props. The government looked to home-grown supplies and massive acreages of woodland were clear-felled, but not re-planted. This was the fate of Lund Wood and nearby Horse Carr Wood.



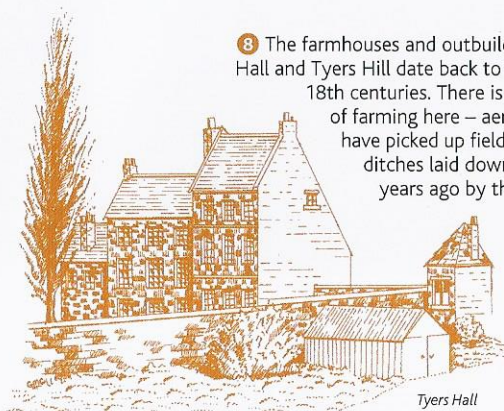
Storrs Mill Bridge served as the original river crossing before the present road/rail bridge was built

7 Walk alongside the field boundaries as far as the second stile on the left. Watch for the waymarkings.

Boxing hares



8 The farmhouses and outbuildings of Tyers Hall and Tyers Hill date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. There is a long history of farming here – aerial photographs have picked up field boundaries and ditches laid down about 2000 years ago by the Romans.



Tyers Hall

9 The earliest known reference to the hamlet of Edderthorpe is to the name 'Edric-thorpe' – the home of a prosperous Saxon called Edric! More recently, a Royal coat of arms, cast in plaster, belonging to Elizabeth I was discovered in the 16th century farmhouse (now demolished), and now resides at Darfield Church.

10 On reaching the River Dearne, the definitive route is right, up a lane to Doncaster Road. An alternative concessionary route follows the right bank of the River Dearne to Doncaster Road. The Dearne Valley Green Heart Partnership in 2009/10 helped transform Darfield Weir into a more natural river feature that allows fish to migrate upstream and canoeists access downstream.



Early grey moth

11 There is no doubt that Darfield was an important settlement in Roman times. Three hoards of gold coins have been found and a Roman road is known to have passed through the district. Less certain is the claim for a Roman villa and earthworks between Darfield and Middlewood Hall.

5 In amongst the dense thicket to the left of the footpath are the buried remains of Storrs Mill. Nothing as yet is known of its origin but we do know that the mill was occupied in 1839. By 1857 the mill was a ruin. The mill race and the foundations still exist.

6 This old single-arched stone bridge is thought to be 18th century. Both Storrs Mill and the bridge probably fell out of use at about the time the railway was built, when the road between Darfield and Cudworth was diverted to its present route. The bridge was badly damaged in the 2007 floods and repaired by the owners, Network Rail, in 2008/9. The sunken footpath away from here to Storrs Mill Lane is a part of that original road.



Oak

DARFIELD

Thaal Restaurant

All Saints Church

Middlewood Hall

River Dearne

A635 to Doncaster



Waymarked Walks

Barnsley to Darfield

