

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.

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

From Broomhill the line of the Dearne Way is also the Trans Pennine Trail. The TPT is a long distance route stretching from Southport on the Irish Sea to Hornsea on the North Sea, with links to York, Chesterfield and Leeds. Most of the TPT is suitable for walkers, cyclists, horseriders and mobility impaired users. It continues as a footpath only towards Istanbul as part of EB European Walking Route.
www.transpenninetrail.org.uk

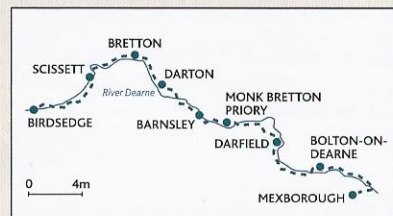
Old Moor Wetland Centre has a variety of wetland habitats which attract a diverse range of wildlife species

Acknowledgements

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Illustrations by Geoff Carr, Dan Powell and Anna Sutton
Photographs by Phil Butcher, Peter Farmer, Denis Sykes and Laurie Ramsay

Supported by Barnsley Local Access Forum

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
BARNSELEY



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.



Waymarked Walk No. 7

Darfield to Bolton-on-Deane

Starting point

Darfield Bridge (near the Thaal Restaurant) on the main A635 Barnsley to Doncaster road

Distance

3 1/2 miles (5.6km)

Time

Allow yourself up to 3 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: Darfield and Bolton-on-Deane are served by regular bus routes from the major towns in South Yorkshire. There is also a service which connects Bolton-on-Deane to Darfield

By train: A service connects Bolton-on-Deane to Wakefield, Rotherham and Sheffield

Parking: Areas suitable for parking cars exist near to the starting point in Darfield. A bus service from Bolton-on-Deane is available to take you back to Darfield

Wetlands from wastelands

This section of the Dearne Way links up two very old Barnsley villages, Darfield and Bolton-on-Deane. For hundreds of years neither village changed much until the mine shafts were sunk in the late 1800s. Darfield's population, for instance, rose from 600 in 1851 to 5000 by 1911, and now stands at around 7000.

As you leave Darfield and cross the River Dearne you can see from the top of the flood bank a large area of rough grassland with pools of water. In 1839, way before any coal had been won from local seams, more than half this land was growing crops while the rest was good grazing land. Mining operations have since caused the land to drop below the water table, resulting in extensive areas of wetland – much to the delight of local birdwatchers.

In spring, at Wombwell Ings and Broomhill Flash, you might see wheatear, yellow wagtail and various wading birds. In winter, the Flash is noted for its large number of duck and whooper swans. Year round can be seen heron, snipe, redshank, lapwing and tufted duck.

Old Moor Wetland Centre was created in the late 1990s by Barnsley Council, with a visitor centre and hides overlooking an extensive wetland nature reserve, which is home to large flocks of waders and wildfowl. The site is now managed by the RSPB.



Lapwing may be seen in large flocks in winter

1 Still called Saltersbrook Road, salt was brought over in carts from Cheshire to the market towns of South Yorkshire via this important trans-pennine route. Following the annual slaughter of livestock each autumn, a large quantity of salt was needed to preserve the meat.



All Saints Church, Darfield

2 On the left as you walk up from the playing field towards Darfield Church, there used to be a fish pond here and the fish were farmed by Benedictine monks, who would arrive by rowing boat along the River Dearne from Monk Bretton Priory.

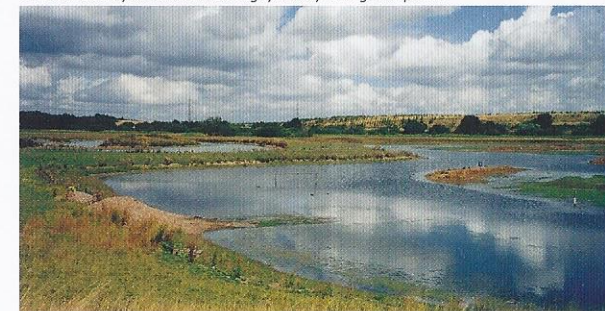
3 Take time to explore All Saints Church. Look for the names of the seven local townships on the capping stones of the walk that runs round the churchyard. 'Billingley' is easy to find – can you find the others? Each township was responsible for the upkeep of the section that bears its name. The lower parts of the main tower of the church date from the 12th century, but built into the stonework are what may remain of an earlier church on this site, dating from the 8th century.

4 The graveyard is well worth a closer look. It is said that miners at Houghton Main Colliery were superstitious about going into work for the last shift on New Year's Eve. The explanation lies here beneath a horse chestnut tree, where a column marks the grave of ten men who plunged to their deaths in a cage-winding accident on New Year's Eve 1886. Nearby lies the tomb of the 'Corn Law Rhymer' Ebenezer Elliot, the poet and social reformer prominent in campaigns for the abolition of the Corn Laws.



Ebenezer's tomb

Extensive areas of wetlands attract huge flocks of visiting bird species





Broomhill Flash

6 At Broomhill Lane turn right, past the Old Moor Tavern down Highgate. You could wander through Broomhill Park on your left, rather than walk down the pavement to the car park. Cross the road and go through Gypsy Marsh, then left along the Trans Pennine Trail. The colourful murals in the Gypsy Marsh underpass were part of a Dearne Valley Green Heart Project which local schools and art groups completed in 2010.



Water vole

7 Follow the Trans-Pennine Trail on past the RSPB Old Moor Wetland Centre, with occasional views through the trees into the reserve. Old Moor comprises 101 hectares of diverse wildlife habitat ranging through open water, marsh, reedbeds and species-rich grassland – it's well worth a visit to look around or enjoy refreshments at the café. Follow the TPT, rising through trees on the edge of the Manvers restoration site, which is now parkland, golf course and lake (including the Waterfront Boat Club), then drop down to another former railway line and bridge.

5 From the church, turn left by the Cross Keys Inn and follow Vicar Road right down to the River Dove. Cross the river, walk up to the top of the flood bank, and look out over the wetlands of Wombwell Ings and Broomhill Flash. These are excellent places for wildlife. As you follow the flood bank watch out for the blue flashes of the kingfisher which regularly flits along the river channel.



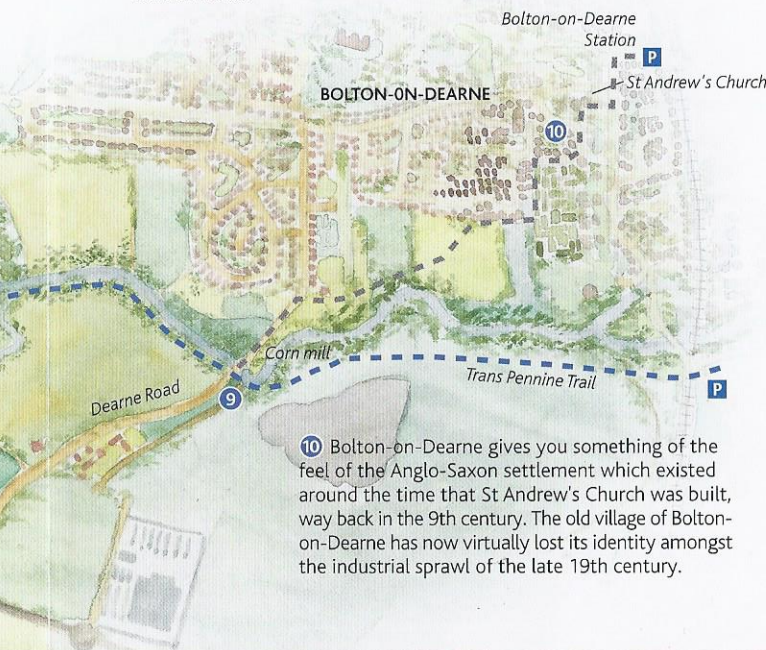
Four-spotted chaser

8 Looking over the bridge, Old Moor is on your left, the wetlands of Bolton Ings to your right, with the tree-covered former spoil heap from Manvers Colliery rising behind. Take in the scenery and wildlife from the Cormorant Hide if you have time. Follow the River Dearne along the TPT through to Dearne Road.

9 The Dearne Way and TPT continue along the river bank, but to get to Bolton railway station cross over the river and turn right next to the former corn mill building, across the fields to St Andrew's Church. Then follow the signs to the station. The route is marked with the grey line on the map.



St Andrew's Church



10 Bolton-on-Deerne gives you something of the feel of the Anglo-Saxon settlement which existed around the time that St Andrew's Church was built, way back in the 9th century. The old village of Bolton-on-Deerne has now virtually lost its identity amongst the industrial sprawl of the late 19th century.



Waymarked Walk No. 8

Bolton-on-Dearne to Mexborough

Starting point

Bolton-on-Dearne railway station or TPT car park on Mexborough Road

Distance

4 1/2 miles (7.2km)

Time

Allow yourself up to 4 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: Bolton-on-Dearne and Mexborough are served by regular bus routes from the major towns of South Yorkshire. There are also services which link up Mexborough to Bolton-on-Dearne

By Train: From Sheffield and Rotherham there is a service to Mexborough and another to Bolton-on-Dearne

By Car: There are areas for parking cars near to Bolton-on-Dearne railway station and at the TPT car park on Mexborough Road

Waterbus: If you arrive in Mexborough on a Sunday or a Bank Holiday you could take the canal trip through to Doncaster. The waterbus is signposted as you approach the town centre

Mining subsidence has helped to create large areas of open water at Denaby Ings, which is now managed as a nature reserve by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

The rights of the common people

This, the final section of the Dearne Way, takes you down the River Dearne to the River Don, near Mexborough, and to a scene of relative tranquillity which belies a chequered, barbaric and often tragic past.

In Mexborough, in the 17th century, riots against field enclosure were frequent, as the landless peasant communities were stripped of their rights over Common Lands. Enclosure involved the division of large arable and communal grazing lands into smaller fields, by private landowners. Enforced by the Enclosures Acts, this process had been going on in Mexborough since 1688. Some observers argued that the planting of so many hedgerows was destroying the traditional landscape. The same sentiment is echoed in concern over the farming community removing our hedgerows today.

Around 200 years later, when coal mining became the main industry, disputes between the miners and their employers were commonplace. Disputes were rare at Manvers Main, but at Denaby and Cadeby strikes and lock-outs were regular occurrences. The colliers gained a reputation for dogged militancy, whilst the owners were renowned as uncompromising. Tension spilled over in the winter of 1903 with the great 'bay-muck' strike, which ended when the employers evicted 720 families from company-owned cottages in Denaby.



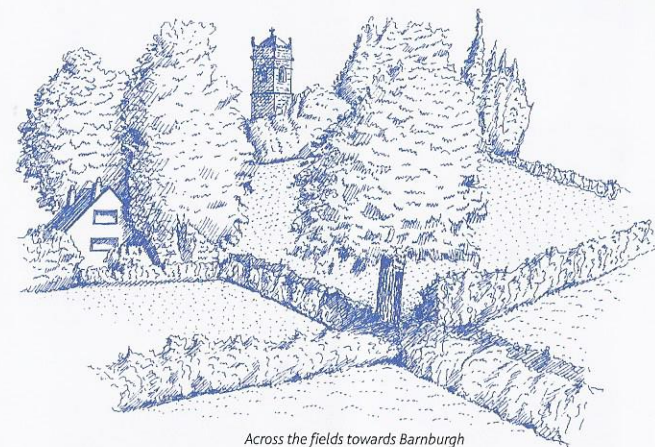
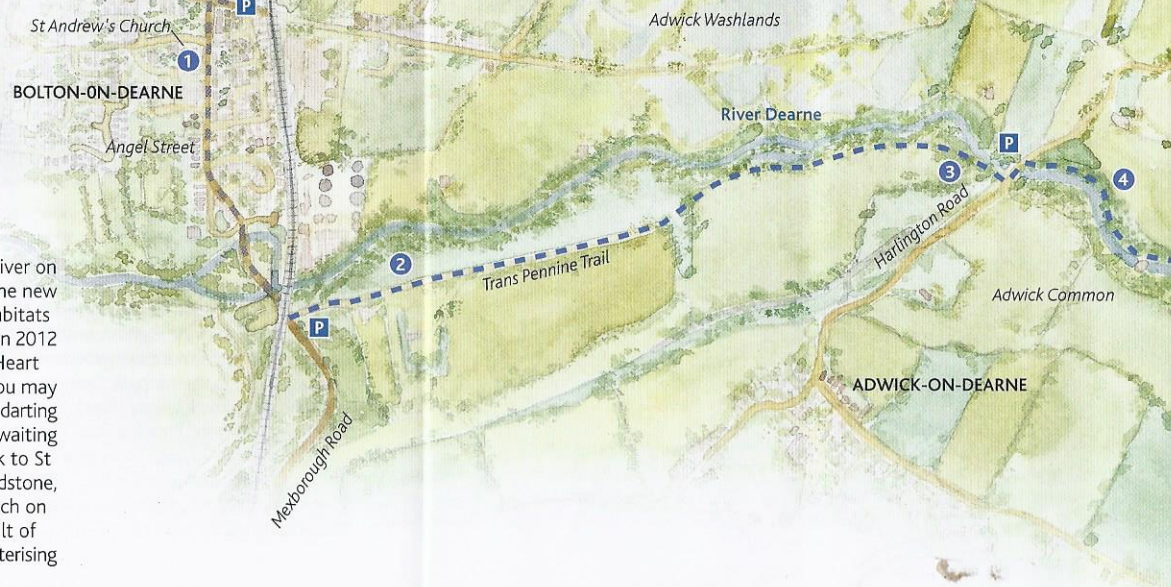
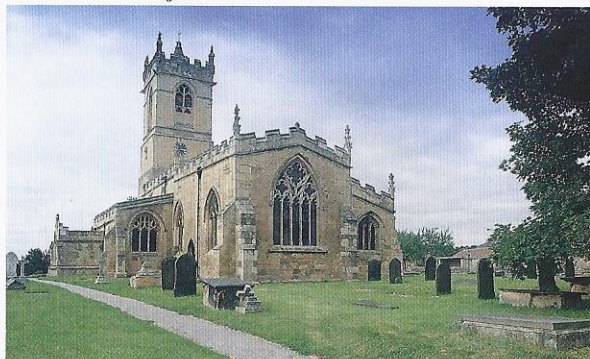
1 If starting from the railway station, walk downhill past the Saxon church of St Andrew's, with its 1000-year-old nave, down Angel Street crossing over the River Dearne to the car park. Turn left, picking up the Dearne Way and Trans Pennine Trail. The remainder of the route will be alongside the river.

Bolton-on-Dearne Station
St Andrew's Church
BOLTON-ON-DEARNE
Angel Street

2 Follow the TPT with the river on your left. Across the river is the new flood storage and wetland habitats of Adwick Washlands, created in 2012 by the Dearne Valley Green Heart Partnership. Along the river you may catch a glimpse of a kingfisher darting along the surface, or a heron waiting patiently for lunch. Look back to St Andrew's Church, built in sandstone, in contrast to St Peter's Church on the horizon in Barnburgh, built of white limestone – both characterising local geology for each site.

3 The distinctive tower of St Peter's Church at Barnburgh marks the scene of a remarkable tale. Sir Percival Cresacre – a Knight's Templar in the 15th century – whilst returning home one night by horse from Doncaster, was attacked by a wild cat. The ensuing battle, lasting several hours, ended in the death of both the cat and the man in the doorway of the church. Cross over the footbridge to Adwick car park. Carefully cross the road and follow the floodbank path, now with the river on your right.

St Peter's Church, Barnburgh



Across the fields towards Barnburgh

4 As you walk along the riverbank, note how different the landscape is on the other side of the valley. The pattern of hedgerows and trees on the Barnburgh side probably owes much to the great estate owners, the Montagues, who made sure that the pits they owned were well-hidden from their nearby residence at Melton Hall. Thus Barnburgh village remained much as it always had been, whilst industrial communities were spawned around Bolton-on-Dearne and Mexborough.

6 As you leave the bend in the river, go over the stile on your left, continue for a short distance, then take the steps up to the disused railway. Abandoned in the late 1960s, the embankment now forms part of Denaby Ings Nature Reserve and a large number of colourful plants and butterflies are worth looking out for in the spring and summer months.



7 A path bears right and drops down from the railway. Cross the wooden bridge beside the roadbridge to the main road.



8 Denaby Ings has long been known by local naturalists as an excellent area for studying wildlife. Wildfowl that can usually be seen include mallard, teal, great-crested grebe, tufted duck, mute swan, coot and moorhen. Among the winter visitors are wigeon, pintail and goldeneye.

9 The Dearne Way follows the River Dearne to the back of the hill, to meet with the River Don; then along the old canal towpath towards Mexborough. If you want to take a less scenic short cut, continue along Pastures Road towards Mexborough.

5 Back in the 17th and 18th centuries, before any mineshafts were sunk, blood was stirring here over the enclosure of Common Lands by private landowners.

11 Up the hill towards Mexborough town centre are the remains of Mexborough Castle. Built by the Normans to guard a ford across the River Don, the castle is on the site of the Battle of Maisbelly of 488.

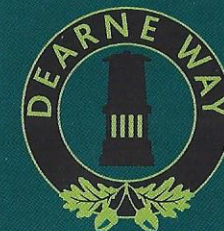


MEXBOROUGH

A6023 to Mexborough



10 From 1751, until the railways came at the end of the 19th century, the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation was to carry the industrial products of the Sheffield region to the port of Hull, for shipment around the globe.



Waymarked Walks

Darfield to Mexborough

