

Carry on straight ahead and cross more stiles. At the second metalled track turn right along the drive, between house and garden, and continue straight ahead over further stiles to descend to Strines Lodge.

The Strines has a fascinating history. This was previously the site of old cottages, demolished in the early 20th century and replaced by two World War 1 army huts to become known as the Strines Guest House. It was initially a hostel for residential Quaker Gatherings.

Later it was also used as a YHA hostel. It was subsequently owned by Barnsley Council, and used during and after World War 2 as an outdoor centre. In the mid 1950s it passed into private ownership to be used as a barn and chicken hut! Only in the late 1990s were the huts replaced by the present private dwelling known as Strines Lodge.

In the woodland to your left are the overgrown remains of an old tannery.

Point C

Just before the Lodge turn left through a gate and continue along the southern boundary of the Strines garden. Over the next stile turn right again, go over a further stile to the left and descend with care a flagged path and steep 'forty steps' to cross the wooded stream.



The top of 'forty steps'

Take care – the stones can be slippery in wet weather. Over the stream climb to a “sunken” path which leads to steps and a metal gate. You are now back at Quaker Bottom, turn left and a short climb up Firth Lane will bring you back to your starting point.

Short Walk ¾ mile, from Point A to C

From here you carry straight on through the gate into a field with open access and managed for conservation benefit. Please note that this is permissive access and care must be taken to close all gates since livestock may be grazing.

It is a grand place to linger on the benches provided, enjoy the peace and quiet and admire the wonderful views north- east to the wooded surrounds of Denby Dale, its impressive railway viaduct and beyond down the Dearne Valley.

The first bench to your right was erected in the memory of Steve Robinson of Upper Denby. Steve was a former member of our group, he was very active in local matters.

Continue downhill to the path on top of the dam of a small dam. Take care when crossing the dam embankment since it can be very wet and muddy.

The pond is in an idyllic setting, is usually frequented by waterfowl and other birds and in summer is alive with the buzz of darting insects.

Walk uphill now to a gate then continue uphill to a gate, after that a further gate on your right just beyond the chalet-style house, the Strines. Pass through and rejoin the main walk at point C.

Alternative walk 1½ miles, from Point B to C

Turn right off the track to the stone stile just outside the Square Wood Reservoir enclosure. The footpath continues across to the corner of Square Wood. Continue along into wonderful semi-natural grassland with scrub. Eventually you will climb, passing the gate below Strines Lodge, a little further is another gate on your right. Pass through and rejoin the main walk at Point C.



Friends' Meeting House

The historical information in this leaflet is taken from the excellent “Plain Country Friends” by David Bower and John Knight and from the Kirklees Council “High Flatts Conservation Area Appraisal”.

Historic photos from the Leslie Robinson collection.

This trail was devised by the Denby Dale Walkers are Welcome Group. The leaflet was financed by the East Peak Innovation Partnership (EPIP) via the Rural Development Programme for England, jointly funded by Defra & the EU & managed by Yorkshire Forward and with a grant from Denby Dale Parish Council.

Plain Country Friends



View over Square Wood Reservoir



Getting Here



High Flatts is served by bus services from Huddersfield and to nearby Ingbirchworth and Upper Denby from Penistone. No Sunday service.



Local services can be found by the link to our website.



Denby Dale Walkers are Welcome

Please check out our website for further information. We are supported by Denby Dale Parish Council.



Updated January 2025



Walking in and around Denby Dale



High Flatts, Plain Country Friends



A choice of three short walks, either ¾ mile, 1½ miles or 3 miles in length, best explored at a gentle stroll. The longer you take the more you'll enjoy them! Stout footwear is advisable.

Plain Country Friends



The small settlement of High Flatts is set in an attractive landscape at the head of the Dearne Valley, high on its watershed with the River Don. Its history and present character are intimately intertwined with the story of the community of the Society of Friends at Quaker Bottom. This picturesque cluster of stone buildings, many listed as of special architectural interest, is designated a Conservation Area.



Start : High Flatts, 'Quaker Bottom' brown tourist sign

Take the road downhill, known locally as Firth Lane to Quaker Bottom.

Quaker Bottom includes several listed buildings, Green Hollows (previously Middle House), Low House and Low House Farmhouse (recognised by the 1717 date stone over the front door), and the Friends Meeting House, where Quaker meetings take place every Sunday at 10.45am. Visits can be made to the Meeting House by arrangement and toilets are available at the building. Contact Thelma Pickford on 01484 607716.



Quaker School House

By the early 1650s meetings were being held in the barn that became the present Meeting House. Its relatively remote location provided a measure of security for dissenting Quakers from persecution by the establishment of the day. In 1701 the building was handed over by its then owners into trusteeship, having been extended and modified for use by worshippers. The Meeting House was completely rebuilt in 1754. By 1800 most people living in this area were Quakers, many working in various aspects of the woollen industry as well as farming and milling, tanning and iron-founding trades.



In 1864 a new floor was added and the frontage and porch built, so that the building looked much as it does today. Quakers were strongly committed to the value of education and in the 1740s a

boarding school for about 50 boys was opened in this building. The written records of James Jenkins, an illegitimate son of Zepheniah Fry (of chocolate family fame) and a pupil at the boarding-school in the mid 1760s, provide a fascinating insight into the hardships of life at the school and hamlet.

Before the cobbled courtyard turn left into the lane which leads past the Quaker Burial Ground.

The original burials were made in front of the Meeting House. The current graveyard to the rear was adopted in 1790 when the original area was full. This is a serene, evocative place and to wander through the simple headstones and note the recurring family names gives a link back in time to the generations that lived here.

Beyond the graveyard you can look across to the impressive Mill Bank House. This listed building dates from the early 19th century. In 1886 it was converted to a "sanatorium for the restoration of inebriate women of the working and middle classes", reflecting the Quaker affinity with the temperance movement. The property subsequently reverted to a private residence.

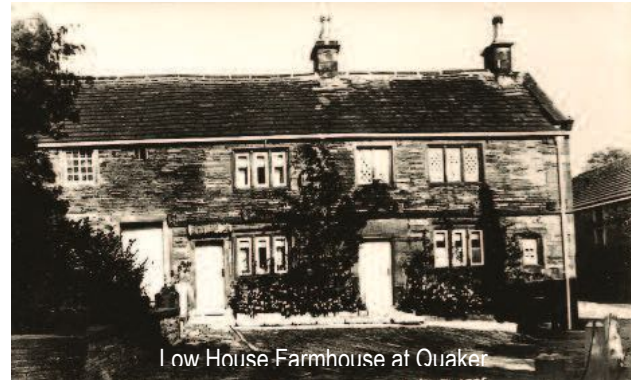
Go over the stile and turn right down the track by a stone wall leading down to the corner of a belt of trees.

Point A

Turn left and follow the path beneath the belt of trees and a dry stone wall for some 200 yards. You will discover a metal kissing-gate under a large holly bush. Go through and downhill, heading for the walled lane leading to Wood Farm. Cross the stone stile and enter the lane, at the end of which turn right. Cross the next stile and follow the track round over Toby Spout, the outfall stream from Square Wood Reservoir.

Point B

In 1932 Kitty Robson of Middle House, High Flatts, contracted typhoid and, through a leaking land drain that fed the reservoir, the water became contaminated. A severe epidemic of typhoid broke out. Within weeks 72 people in Denby Dale had contracted the disease, 11 of whom subsequently died.



Low House Farmhouse at Quaker



Continue eastwards from Square Wood Reservoir, crossing a stone stile into a short lane, and via further stiles and field edges alongside dry-stone walls to Calverley Wood. Turn left along the bottom of the wood and then into the track that climbs and turns towards Upper Denby.

At the junction of five paths bear right onto Bank Lane and turn first right onto Lemonacre then take the footpath following the green sign for High Flatts and Denby Delf. At the corner of the field go through the wooden kissing gate and continue straight ahead along the right hand side of the field to reach Denby Delf nature reserve.

Here you reach Denby Delf, a nature reserve with heather and bilberry growing on former quarried areas, known locally as Mosley Roughts, and accompanying meadows of herb-rich grassland. In summer these fields are a mass of flowering grasses, the colours of ox-eye daisy, red clover, betony, knapweed and yellow rattle, and the sounds and movement of butterflies and other insects.



Views towards Wood Farm