

The impressive Copley House, to your left, was formerly occupied by the Childs family, textile manufacturers, and more recently was a farmhouse.

Shortly after Hardingley Farm entrance, and some 100m before the railway bridge, turn right over a stone stile onto a footpath which leads onto a track over the Penistone Line. The route now runs alongside the Whistlestop Valley Light Railway for a couple of miles from Shelley Station almost back to Skelmanthorpe.

When Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip visited Yorkshire in 1954 the royal train was parked up at Shelley Station and where the royal couple stayed overnight.

The Whistlestop Valley Light Railway follows the route of the former Clayton West branch line, which left the Penistone Line near Shepley Station and ran for just over 3 miles through Skelmanthorpe to Clayton West. The first sod was cut in November, 1872 but the line did not open until 1st September, 1879. It closed on 22nd January, 1983.



Continue straight across Long Moor Lane and on as far as Shelley Woodhouse Lane. This is part of the Shelley Welly Walk.

Here turn right then almost immediately left onto a path alongside the grounds of Shelley College. Cross Huddersfield Road (B6116) straight ahead onto a path through woodland to follow the embankment-top of the railway cutting. Do not cross the footbridge over the railway. Instead bear left across the field to reach Strike Lane. Go straight across the lane, through the gate, onto a track which descends to cross Baildon Dike.

Turn right over first stile and continue on to emerge at a cluster of houses on Station Rd at Park Gate.

In the 13th century the lord of the manor granted a right for a road to be built to mark the boundary at the west of Emley Park. A farm stood here at the park gate.

Cross the road (care here!) and turn left. Shortly turn right onto the access track to Blacker Farm, the home of the Rockwood hounds. Before you reach the farm take the path on your right which leads down and across Park Gate Dike and into the edge of Blacker Wood.

Blacker Wood is ancient woodland, originally part of a larger wooded area known as Scissett Wood, and most likely used for timber rather than as a hunting park.



Follow the wood edge then bear right across the field path. Go under the railway and up the narrow path to meet Pilling Lane once again. Turn right and retrace your earlier footsteps along Elm Street, Queen Street and Commercial Road, back to the Council Offices.

Historic photos from the Leslie Robinson collection. The trail was devised by Denby Dale Walkers are Welcome in 2010 and revised in 2024.

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## Skelmanthorpe Circular Trail



### Getting Here

Skelmanthorpe is served by buses from Huddersfield, Wakefield and Holmfirth. Car parking is also available at the Savoy Community Centre, as are all day toilet facilities and a community café, mornings only (Monday to Friday, some Saturdays).



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.



### Walking in The East Peak



Walking in and around Denby Dale

# Skelmanthorpe Circular Trail



A scenic 9.2 mile walk (easily split into two parts) around the historic village of Skelmanthorpe and surrounding area. It takes in parts of the Deame and Kirklees Way and follows the route of the Whistlestop Valley Light Railway. There are some stiles on route, stout footwear is



## Skelmanthorpe Circular Trail

The village of Skelmanthorpe and the surrounding area has a rich and varied history. The first place of interest is No.6 Queen Street. It houses the Skelmanthorpe Textile Heritage Museum, a small but fascinating private museum in an original weaver's cottage, with visits by arrangement.



### Start: Council Offices/Library New Street

At the bottom of New Street turn right past Co-op and cross Commercial Road at pelican crossing. Continue and turn left down Queen Street, at the bottom turn right into Elm Street and then straight ahead onto Pilling Lane, which eventually becomes a broad track.



1879 The first train on the Clayton West Branch Line, taken from Pilling Lane

“Pilling” means the removal of bark for leather-work and it is thought there may have been a tannery in this vicinity. You will eventually see the Whistlestop Valley Railway on your left, with Cuckoo Nest Halt nearby.

Continue down Pilling Lane, which eventually becomes a metalled road serving houses. At the end of the houses follow the footpath straight ahead along the edge of a recreation ground which leads to a metalled track. Turn right here and follow the track to the main A636 Wakefield Road.

Wakefield Road was originally a turnpike road with tolls at Park Mill, Bar Houses at Highbridge Lane Scissett and Catch Bar west of Denby Dale.

Turn right, cross the main road at Scissett Baths using the pelican

crossing, continue briefly to the right before taking the narrow footpath to the left which crosses the River Dearne.

Here you are on part of the Dearne Way, a 30- mile route following the course of the river from its source west of Birdsedge to its confluence with the River Don at Mexborough.



The path leads up to the road. Turn right and then first left onto Lower Common Lane. Follow the length of Lower Common Lane to the road junction. Here take the track straight ahead of you to follow the woodland edge down to a pond. Bear slightly right and cross straight over a track and into the grounds of Bagden Hall.

Bagden Hall was built by George Norton of Cuttlehurst Mills in the 1830s. His brother Joseph built an identical mansion, Nortonthorpe Hall (now demolished) on the other side of the Dearne. Their great houses reflected the wealth derived from mills developed along the river with water-powered machines producing yarns to supply local weavers. Bagden Hall is now a hotel and restaurant.

Follow the waymarked path going uphill and through a metal kissing gate into a lane. Walk straight ahead along the lane to a small group of houses. Turn right through another metal kissing gate, towards a white house, and follow a field path to another. Here turn down to the right past a pond towards Lower Clough House. Follow the tarmac drive down and across the River Dearne once more, then immediately left and up the short grassy bank to Wakefield Road.

Cross the road with care, bear briefly right and very shortly take the bridle path to the left up to Perch House Farm. Cross a stile and bear left to a green lane between woodland and the screen bank to Hen Perch clay quarry.

You are on the Kirklees Way, a 72 mile circular walk around Kirklees, which our route follows for the next three miles or so. Cross out of the green lane and turn right onto an ancient stone-flagged path. This atmospheric path descends to cross Thorpe Dike then climbs to the Cross Lane recreation ground, Skelmanthorpe.



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Map and directions



At point A you will have now completed approximately half of the full route. To return to the starting-point walk down Smithy Lane and turn left along Commercial Road back to the Council Offices.

Otherwise walk obliquely left across the recreation ground to field paths and out onto the Giltwaites Lane bridle path. Bear left, cross Thorpe Dike once more, then immediately turn right through a metal gate. The path follows the dike westward, through 2 metal gates, and then via a left turn then a right enters Lane Hackings Green which leads on to Lower Cumberworth.

At the end of the lane is the Foresters public house. Continue straight ahead onto Cumberworth Lane and, at the end of the cricket field, turn right into the field and walk past the front of the pavilion.

The earthwork behind the pavilion (“Cumberworth Steppes”, by Abigail Downer) is one of the Kirklees Way artworks. It also marks the route of the Penistone Line railway, here in tunnel far below.

Leave by the timber stile to cross fields and further stiles/gates going downhill to where the railway emerges from tunnel into cutting. Here, bear left across fields to climb gently through a small area of woodland. Cross a further field, then left through a gate to walk along the field edge past the recently restored house at Long Royd. Go over a stone stile and right into the access lane. Follow this track and past cottages on right, at last property turn right leaving the Kirklees Way. Go up drive and then left over stile and follow footpath at side of field to Copley Lane. Turn right down Copley Lane towards Hardlingley Farm entrance.