



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

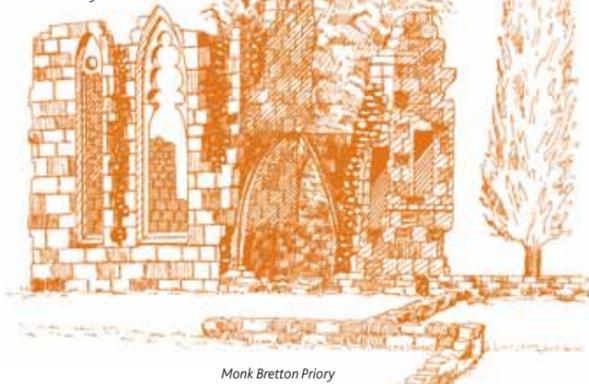
Footwear
Some sections can have wet, muddy or uneven ground. Stout shoes are recommended

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



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.

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, Dearne 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 Dearne Way.



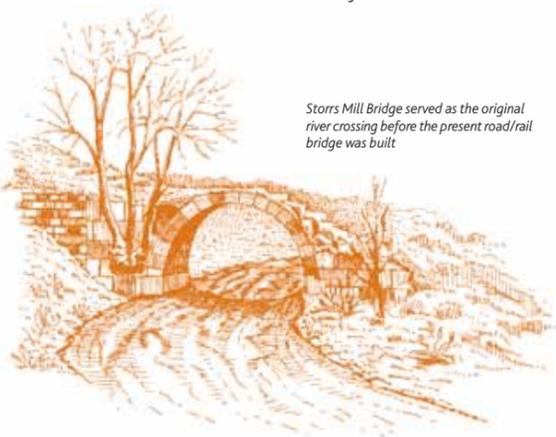
Kingfisher

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.



Reed sweet grass

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.



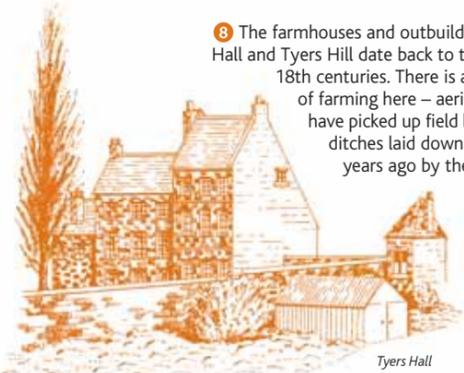
Boxing hares

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



Tyers Hall

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.

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.



Waymarked Walks

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