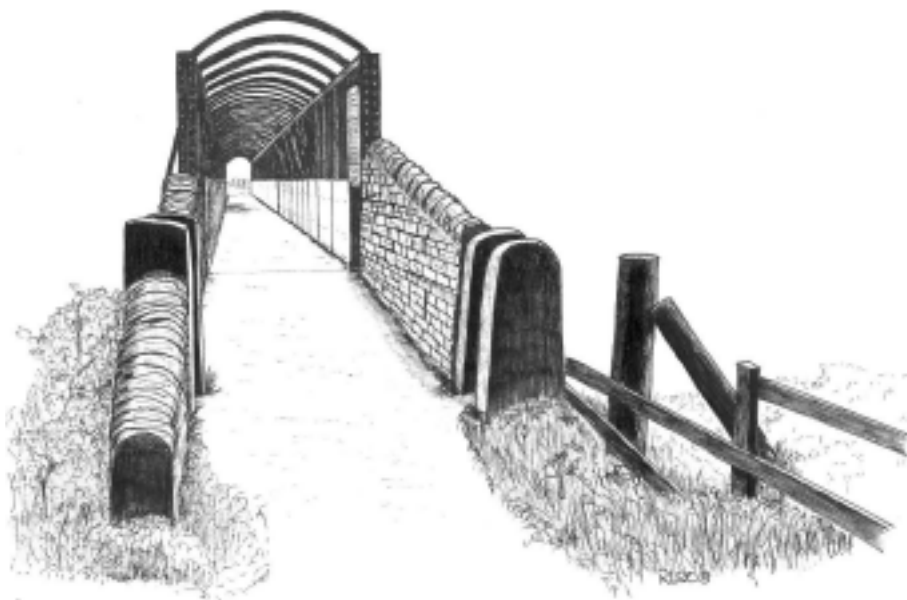


BAILDON HERITAGE TRAILS

Riverside Walk



Produced by Baildon Local History Society ©
Commissioned by Baildon Parish Council

2009

First edition - 2009

This booklet is one of several created by Baildon Local History Society and commissioned by Baildon Parish Council. Please see inside the back cover for a list of some of the other booklets that are, or soon will be, available.

The walks are also available for download from the Documents section of the Baildon Parish Council web site - www.baildonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Countryside Code and Privacy

Several of these walks use public rights of way over farm land and others go close to houses.

Please help keep Baildon the beautiful place it is.

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs

Leave gates and property as you find them

Protect plants and animals and take your litter home

Keep dogs under close control

Respect other people and their property

How to get there

Bus: Services 653 (Otley) and 737 (Airport) run along Otley Road, and some others.

Rail: Wharfedale Line trains run from Shipley and Ilkley to Baildon.

From Baildon station, cross over the footbridge and turn left along a path which leads into a residential drive. Turn right down Roundwood Road to meet Otley Road at the bottom of the hill. (Distance from station 0.3mi/0.5km.)

For details of buses and trains, check with MetroLine (0113 245 7676 or www.wymetro.com)

If coming by car, park in nearby streets.

See the back cover for a map of the walk.

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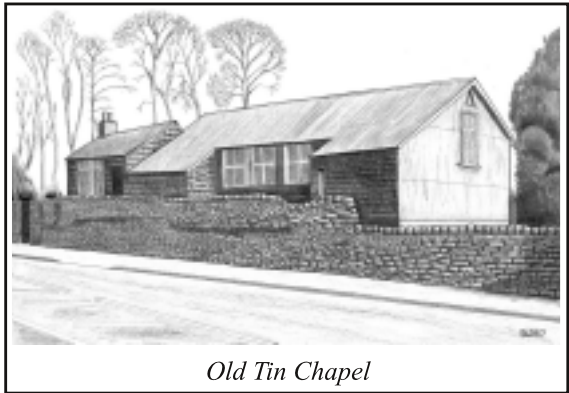
The Riverside Walk

(approx. 1.7 miles or 2.7 km)

The walk starts at the old ‘tin chapel’, at the junction of Roundwood Road with Otley Road (the A6038), goes down Buck Lane to the River Aire, upstream along the riverside to Acorn Park industrial estate and the centre of Charlestown, and back by Otley Road.

From Otley Road to Buck Lane Bridge

The so-called ‘tin chapel’, with its corrugated iron roof and shingle sides, stands on the corner where Buck Lane meets Otley Road – immediately opposite Roundwood Road. This chapel has had many uses in its lifetime: constructed in 1869 and licensed by the Bishop of Ripon, funded by public subscription, it was used for services and Sunday school as well as dances and concerts before the coming of St. James’s church and hall on Kirklands Lane (the white wooden church). A kitchen was added and in 1887 the Baildon Local Board approved a plan for a vestry or classroom. It was called St James Mission Church and seated 200. In 1888 Baildon Board minutes record that it was charged 8s (40p) per annum for water. The Sunday School was held here up to the mid 1950s when it switched to the church at Kirklands Lane. By the 1980s it had become the Chapel China Works where china was made and stored for the ‘Flying Saucer’ shop in Westgate which closed down several years ago.



Old Tin Chapel

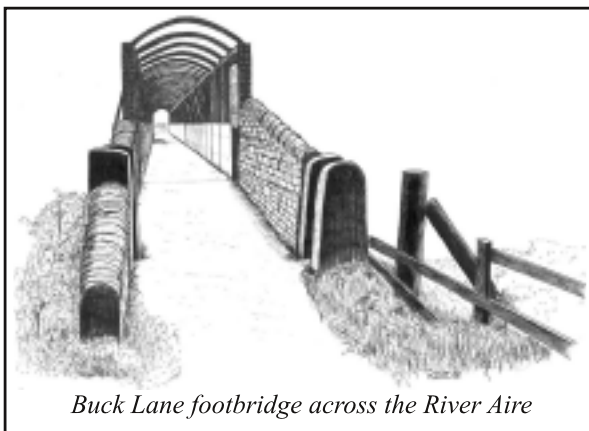
In the same triangle of land, behind the chapel, there has been industry since an ammonia works was started in the early 1870s by Messrs W W Wright & Co (it later became Baildon Chemical Company). In 1888 a cottage was built at the chemical works: this could be the white building next to the old chapel.

From the chapel, walk down Buck Lane, from which you gain additional view of both chapel and works. On the other side of Buck Lane, the field at the junction of Otley Road was the first cricket field used by Tong Park when it started in 1880

according to the late Sidney Jackson. It was levelled by using debris from the glacial moraine in the second field down the lane. (The second cricket ground was close to Tong Park Hall followed by the present third ground, which you can see in the Railway Walk). When you come to Ford House Farm – it's the red brick building, which is unusual for this area – keep down Buck Lane to the right.

Before the 'New Line' (as Otley Road was first called) was built, Buck Lane continued up Roundwood Lane (its former name) and then along Low Baildon Road (the former name of Station Road before the coming of the Railway in 1876). This was part of Idlegate, a medieval route from Baildon to Idle across the River Aire.

Continue down the lane to the green metal footbridge across the River Aire. There was an old ford here in times past, but the bridge was built in 1889 to replace old stepping stones which had got into a bad state of repair. In 1877 Baildon Board gave William Illingworth permission to land passengers from his boat at Charlestown on the Board's land on payment of 6d (2½p) per annum. The Board borrowed £450 to pay for its share of the bridge: plaques on either end give some further details. (Distance from start 0.2 mi / 0.3 km.)



Buck Lane footbridge across the River Aire

The River Aire is the southern boundary of Baildon, and thus of Charlestown. From this point our walk turns right through the stile and up the river, but if you have time, two detours are possible. The first is very short: it will add about 0.5mi / 0.8km to your walk.

Detour 1: Across the river

Cross the bridge and make your way up the lane to the Leeds-Liverpool canal. Look out for the mill race just before the end of Buck Mill Bridge. Buck mill was situated on the left hand side of the path near the electricity pylon. It was demolished in the 1920s, but when the undergrowth is low the ruined remains of the mill can still be seen.

In Elizabethan times the mill and lane got their name from the Buck brothers, William and John, who worked a water powered corn and fulling mill beside the

river in the 16th century. (Fulling was a process in the cloth making industry when the woollen cloth was beaten with wooden hammers to scour it). Buck Mill was the manorial mill for Idle, built on the Idle side of the river. In the 19th century it became a large steam-driven woollen textile mill. In 1876 it was Benjamin Thornton's wool textile mill, driven by steam power and greatly enlarged. Workers came to work in the Mill from Tarn and Park (the earliest houses in Tong Park were built there). On the right side of the lane opposite the ruins you can still see the shape of the hollow which was a mill pond to supply water for a steam engine in the 19th century when the mill was extended.

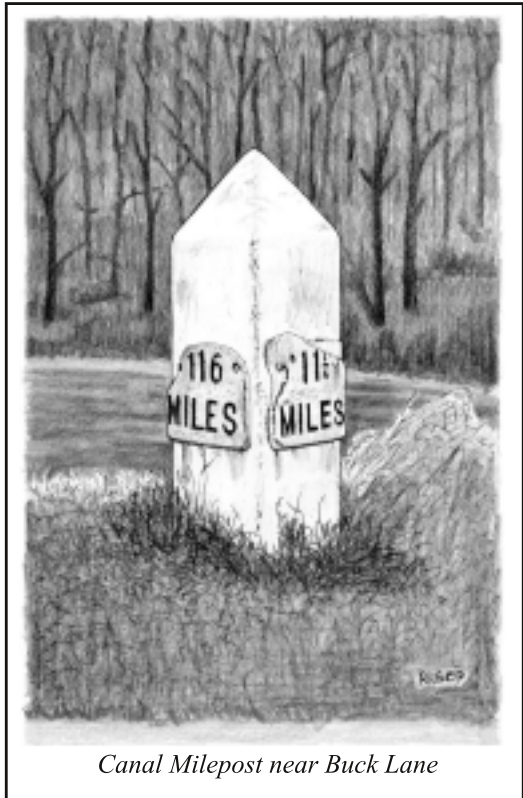


The view to Baildon across the River Aire from Buck Wood

A short distance further up the track is the swing bridge over the Canal. There by the towpath you'll find a notice board erected by the Friends of Buck Wood with (at the time of writing) more information about the mill. The canal towpath provides excellent level walking: left to Apperley Bridge and Leeds, and right to Shipley and Saltaire (and far beyond). This stretch of the canal was built in 1774. Barges brought limestone and agricultural produce from the Craven area, and coal was transported out from Bradford along the Bradford canal which met the Leeds-Liverpool canal at Dockfield in Shipley. The Baildon Local Board minutes in the 1870s and 80s record that they sometimes bought their limestone for repairing roads from Craven area to be delivered by barge to Junction Staith, Shipley. One of the suppliers was James Fyfe, the head of the family after whom Fyfe Lane is named (see below). The cost in 1875 was 3s 7½d (18p) per ton.

A few yards along the canal to the right is a mile post, giving distances to Leeds (11¼ miles) and Liverpool (116 miles). Many such signs were removed during the war, as on the roads, and the replacements are wearing out. There is an active programme of renewal, thanks to dedicated local community initiatives. There is said to be disagreement across the Pennines about whether the mileage should be shown on the destination side, or the side you see when you're heading there! The new signs are locally made.

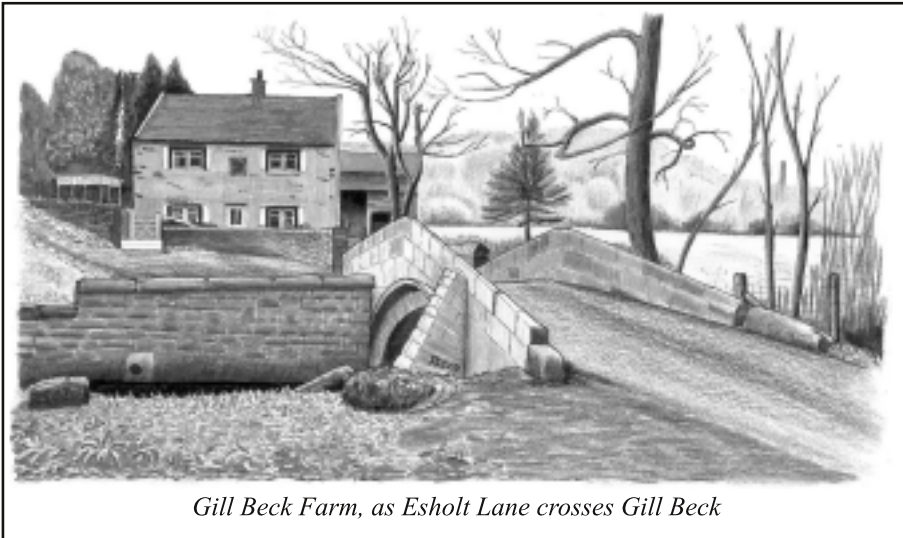
On the far side of the canal is Buck Wood, with its wide range of flora and fauna and a network of lovely walks. The Friends of Buck Wood organise guided walks and other activities – see their notice board by the swing bridge. From further up the track by the wood, past the old stone house, you can look back for a view to Buck Lane and the old tin chapel and Charlestown Meadows down by the riverside. To rejoin the main walk, go back down the track and across the river bridge.



Canal Milepost near Buck Lane

Detour 2: Down the river to Gill Beck and Esholt

You can if you wish take the downstream path along the riverside – the path is charming but rough in places, and impassable when the river floods – past the rifle range to Gill Beck (another boundary of Baildon) – turn right when you reach Esholt Lane at The Old Barn, which offers meals. This detour will add about 1.1 mi / 1.8 km, but you can even walk just over half a mile further along the road by the river to the picturesque old village of Esholt, of Emmerdale fame. There is no footpath, but the road is quiet. (Walking all the way to Esholt and back from Buck Lane Bridge will add about 2.5 mi / 4.0 km to your walk – plus any walking around Esholt of course.)



Gill Beck Farm, as Esholt Lane crosses Gill Beck

Return by the way you came, back upstream, up the steps at the double stile and thus back to Buck Lane beside the metal bridge.



Stiles on the riverside path at Buck Lane

Rejoining the main walk

From the metal bridge take the upstream stile (it was on your right when you first reached the bridge). Head upstream (with the river on your left) and follow the riverside path through what remains of Charlestown Meadows. A short distance up river one can see, if the water level is not too high, the remains of the weir slanting across the river to the far side, which helped channel water to the mill race to power Buck Mill.

There are signs of otter activity on the River Aire not far from here, and work to encourage their return to this part is ongoing – so keep alert as you walk. And keep your eyes open also in the meadows. In the 1940s and 50s Cecil

Woodward discovered stone age flints (chert) in these fields, like the one shown in the photograph. Who knows what an inspection of the many molehills might not yield even now! The one shown is about an inch high (2.5 cm). Cecil's notebook shows us that in fields at Briar Rhydding (the other side of Charlestown Meadows, off Otley Road – you'll pass it on the way home) in 1951 potatoes were being grown.



Flint Arrow Head (Chert)

Continue up the river to the hedge and small woodland (about 300 yards / 450 metres) where there are two gates: a metal pedestrian gate straight ahead into the woodland, and to the right a wooden kissing gate.

Shortcut home

If you've already had enough, leave the river through the wooden gate on the right and return to Otley Road by the metallated pathway. On reaching Otley Road, turn right to return to your starting point. (Distance back to start from riverside gate 0.4 mi / 0.7 km.)

Completing the walk

Go through the metal gate into Denso Marston Nature Reserve, where there are trees, ponds, bird observation stations, and seats to rest on.

There are also boards close to the downstream and upstream entrances, and by the larger pond, which tell you what you can see.

Leave the nature reserve by following the riverside path upstream. This exit is



Sun-dappled bench



The stone seat

about 0.4 mi / 0.7 km from the downstream entrance, plus whatever strolling about the reserve you may have added. As you leave you may see a timber yard on the right (only just visible behind the concrete piles), and about 50 yards further on, as the path comes to what was once a cinder tip, there are rather more obvious modern brick-built buildings up on the right behind the trees. Beyond these buildings, about 200 yards after leaving the nature reserve, turn up right, away from the river. You'll see a couple of large industrial gas cylinders in an enclosure at the end of the building. Walk along the grass between the two wire mesh fences round the corner of the car park. When you reach the road (Acorn Park), turn right and follow it through the industrial estate to the main Otley Road. (Distance from the riverside to Otley Road: 0.2 mi / 0.3 km.)

The centre of Charlestown is to your left by the pedestrian crossing, and immediately opposite you is Fyfe Lane – named after the family of James Fyfe, the limestone merchant mentioned earlier – but to return to your starting point on this walk turn right along Otley Road, past the New Inn, and the Halfway House a little further on, both of which serve meals. Beyond these you will be able to look over Charlestown Meadows again from the road (on your right). Other Charlestown Walks describe what you can see in the centre of Charlestown and further along towards Woodbottom, and also some of the points of interest on your way back to the starting point of this walk. (Distance back to the start along Otley Road 0.7 mi / 1.1 km.)

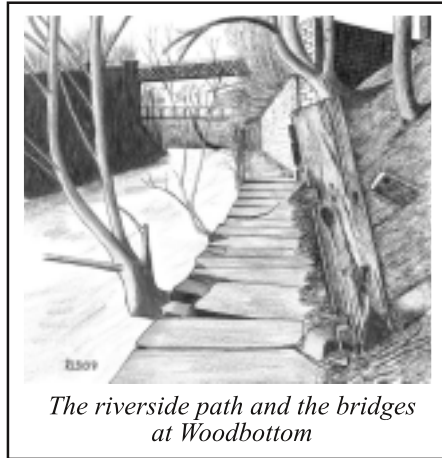
Possible extension up the riverside

You can walk about half a mile (0.8km) further along the river before you return to your starting point, if you wish, over a once picturesque but now much dilapidated stone stile below Charlestown cemetery, to Woodbottom where again you can rejoin Otley Road. The picture here shows how it looked in about 1996.



The riverside path below Charlestown cemetery

Warning: Over the years this path has been both eroded and heavily vandalised, making some parts of it very rough. Don't attempt it if you are at all unsteady on your feet. It is also quite impassable when the river is in flood. But otherwise, and with care, the path is still walkable. It's a quiet place, with parts still paved with gritstone slabs, and sometimes dippers and kingfishers and other wildlife can be seen on this stretch of the river.



Immediately after walking under the railway bridge and footbridge take the path away from the river up to the right and back to Otley Road. Turn right along Otley Road to return to your starting point, but before you go, cross the road to see the local information board about Charlestown and Low Baildon, situated between the car park and bus stop.

If you have the energy, or you don't need to return to your starting point, you can continue up the river as far as Baildon Bridge, and beyond. However, to return to your starting point, walk back along Otley Road, past Charlestown Centre (St John's Court), the New Inn and the Halfway House, both of which serve meals. Beyond these you will be able to look over Charlestown Meadows again from the road (on your right). (Distance back to start from Woodbottom along Otley Road 1.4 mi / 2.3 km.)

Other Charlestown Walks describe what you can see on the walk back to your starting point (see list).

Summary of distances

Short walk excluding nature reserve	0.8 mi	1.3 km
Standard walk through nature reserve	1.7 mi	2.7 km
Extended walk to Woodbottom	2.7 mi	4.4 km

Additional detours

Detour 1	Across canal for view	0.5 mi	0.8 km
Detour 2	Down to Gill Beck bridge	1.1 mi	1.8 km
	Down to Esholt (total)	2.5 mi	4.0 km

Note: All distances are approximate. They don't include any additional explorations you may choose to make.

List of the Baildon Heritage Trails

1. **The Baildon Village Walk:** visits the old lanes, folds and corners around the centre of Baildon.
2. **Coach Road to Shipley Glen:** [ask Mike and Tish for a summary] Planned for 2010
3. **The Charlie Thompson Walk:** takes you round the places of interest around the St John's Court area of Charlestown.
4. **The Turnpike Walk:** takes you between the two old turnpike road milestones on Otley Road.
5. **The Kirklands Walk:** St John's Court to St James's, Kirklands and Hoyle Court.
6. **The Riverside Walk:** will take you from Roundwood Road to Charlestown centre along the River Aire.
7. **The Railway Walk:** the Arches at Woodbottom to the great Viaduct at Tong Park.
8. **The Threshfield and Brookhill:** Walk Based on Station Road, with glimpses of clothiers cottages and grand houses of later mill owners.
9. **The Lost Hamlets of Baildon Moor:** A walk looking at the remains of Moorside, Low Hill and Sconce, and the archeology of the moor.
10. **Ferniehurst and Baildon Green:** A walk looking principally at the sites of two Victorian mansions with Salt family connections.
11. **The Baildon Boundary Walk:** [subject to agreement with Frank Baildon] Planned for 2010

The information for this walk was researched and gathered by
Mike Lawson, Tish Lawson, Stewart Main and Marian Taylor.

Drawings by Roy Lorrain-Smith. ©

Map by Vic McLindon.

Photo of arrow head by Dr Keith Boughey

Help from many people and sources is gratefully acknowledged, especially members of the Charlestown and Low Baildon Local History Group.

Comments on this walk are welcome and should be sent to the Clerk of Baildon Parish Council, Baildon Link, Cliffe Avenue, BD17 6NX.
clerk@baildonparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Riverside Walk

