

Thurgoland, a rural village five miles from Barnsley, is steeped in history. It was an important centre for the early iron-making and wire-drawing industries from the 17th century onwards. Key to the development of the village were Wortley Top and Low Forges, and the three wire mills on Old Mill Lane, all powered by water from the River Don.

The village has changed greatly in recent years, as once historic buildings have been renovated as private residences. This circular trail of three miles is a pleasant walk, with lovely views of the Don valley, and interprets the sites of our industrial and social heritage. The trail provides an option for an easy access route along tarmac lanes and footpaths.

Parking is restricted in Thurgoland village and limited parking is available at the village hall on Roper Lane, at the start of the walk. Information on local transport is available from Travel South Yorkshire on 01709 515151 and online at www.travelsouthyorkshire.com.

When following this trail, you are requested to follow the public footpaths at all times, and to respect both the privacy and property of the residents of the area.

Exploring local heritage

Thurgoland in times past

The archive photographs that illustrate this trail guide are a small selection of a collection of over 1,000 glass plate photographs taken around Thurgoland by local photographer, Frank Downing, between 1898 and 1948.

Thurgoland Local History Group has published a book containing many of Downing's photographs, together with others that have been donated to the group.

The group has also produced an entertaining DVD of the collection, narrated by Ian McMillan.

Copies of both the book and the DVD are available from local bookshops or by visiting www.thurgolandhistory.org.uk



THURGOLAND

in times past



THURGOLAND HERITAGE TRAIL

1 The trail starts in the centre of Thurgoland village at the village hall, opposite the Horse and Jockey pub on Roper Lane.

The Horse and Jockey is one of three pubs in the village, but at its height as a busy industrial centre there were ten pubs in the parish.

2 At the village hall, turn left and walk up Roper Lane.

The lane crosses the busy A629 Halifax Road. Take particular care crossing this road. Continue down the short stretch of Roper Lane, and again take care to cross Thurgoland Bank. Take the first lane on the left and head off down Roper House Lane.

3 The trail will now follow Roper House Lane for the next three-quarters of a mile.

On the right is Roper House Farm. Built in 1742, this fine listed building features the stone mullioned windows typical of local 18th century buildings. Sometime in the distant past it was a pub known as The Star Inn.

4 Continue down the lane for a quarter of a mile.

There is a lovely view over the Don valley, with the River Don in the valley bottom. The hedgerows that line the lane are flush with May blossom in spring and provide valuable nesting sites for birds such as greenfinch, chaffinch, linnet and yellowhammer.



Rompticle Viaduct

5 Pause a while to take in the view of Rompticle Viaduct in the valley below.

The viaduct was built in 1844, and the Sheffield to Manchester trans-Pennine railway line completed in 1845, under the direction of Barnsley engineer, Joseph Locke.

6 Continue to the bottom of Roper House Lane.

There are three private residences at the bottom of the lane, Jeph Royd, Jeph Cote and Rompticle House. Rompticle House was formerly six cottages, one of which was the Romping Kittling Inn.

7 Carry on along the lane for a few yards and you will shortly come to a bridge over the old railway line, which now forms part of the Trans-Pennine Trail from Southport to Hornsea.

At this point there is a choice of route.

Route A – you may continue along the lane, and this route is suitable for people with limited mobility (go to **11**). This quarter of a mile stretch is known locally as Jubb Hill.

Route B – to follow the alternative route turn right onto the Trans-Pennine Trail. After a short distance, take the footpath on the right (over the stile) and continue for about two hundred yards down to the River Don.

8 At this point, go over the stile on the left. To go to Cheesebottom, bear right and then retrace your steps. The main trail continues along the riverside, towards the viaduct.

Rompticle Viaduct is an impressive structure made from dressed local ashlar stone. Stand under the viaduct and look up to see an inscription stone dedicated to William Crawshaw, a navy killed by a falling stone whilst building the viaduct in 1844.

9 Go under the viaduct and continue along the riverside. Go through a gate and take the stile on the right.

The Upper Don is a haven for riverside wildlife, with kingfisher, grey wagtail, coot, moorhen and mallard.

10 The path now leaves the riverside and follows the side of the dam.

On your right is the weir that provided water power to the water-wheel at the Old Wire Mill. There is a replica water-wheel on the side of the building, which is now a private house. This site was once a hive of industry, operating as a wire-drawing mill for 300 years from 1624 to 1926.



Old Mill

11 Go over the stile to rejoin Old Mill Lane and turn right along the lane.

The house on the right after the Old Mill is Old Mill House, where the photographer, Frank Downing, lived for most of his life. The next properties, Old Mill Cottages, were once eight small 'back-to-back' houses. The large, detached Don House was once owned by the Jagger family, who operated the Old Wire Mill for almost a hundred years, until its closure in 1926.

12 Stretch out and push on for half a mile or so.

On the left you pass several old properties. Woodview Cottage was formerly two cottages, Wood View and Don View, with a one-roomed dwelling at the back known as Back o' Moon. Woodman Cottages are next, the first of which was formerly the Woodman Inn, which closed in the 1930s. On the right there is a concrete bridge over the River Don, and the path over it goes to Green Moor, past Trunce Farm and the former California Quarry. The large field in front of the Woodman was the main area for playing Knur and spell.

15 Continue along the lane, and after about a quarter of a mile you come to Tilt Mill Cottage, an old cottage tucked up against the roadside.

This was the site of the third mill on Old Mill Lane, known as the Tilt Mill. The mill was powered by two water-wheels, operating a tilt hammer to shape iron rods. The site was closed in the early 1900s.



Tilt Mill

16 Continue to the end of the lane, past several new properties that have been built here over the last thirty years.

At the end of Old Mill Lane, a five minute walk to the right will take you to Wortley Top Forge. With a history dating from the 12th century, this interesting working iron forge is the oldest operating forge in the country and is open to the public on Sundays and Bank Holidays.



Huthwaite Hall

19 Just after Huthwaite Lodge, take the public footpath through a stile on your right.

In front of you is Huthwaite Hall, built in 1748 for John Cockshutt, a central figure in the development of the local iron-making and wire-drawing industries. The house was designed by York architect, John Carr. Behind the Hall the complex of buildings includes Huthwaite Farm and a former brewhouse.

20 Go over the next stone stile and continue alongside the high wall to a second stone stile at the corner, by Huthwaite Farm. After this turn right, and then go over a small wooden stile onto the farm track. Climb up the hill along the wall side, back towards Thurgoland village.

The path was the original road to Huthwaite Hall before Huthwaite Lane was made and affords fine views of the surrounding area. To the left is a view back towards Rompticle Viaduct, with Penistone and the moors beyond. To the right is Wortley village, with the church tower visible above the trees. Straight ahead is Thurgoland village.



Holy Trinity Church

21 The path emerges at Halifax Road and the school is on the left. Turn right and walk downhill to the crossroads.

On your right is Holy Trinity Church, which was built in 1842. It was thought to have been damaged in a fire and rebuilt in 1871.



22 At the crossroads, take care when crossing the busy Halifax Road.

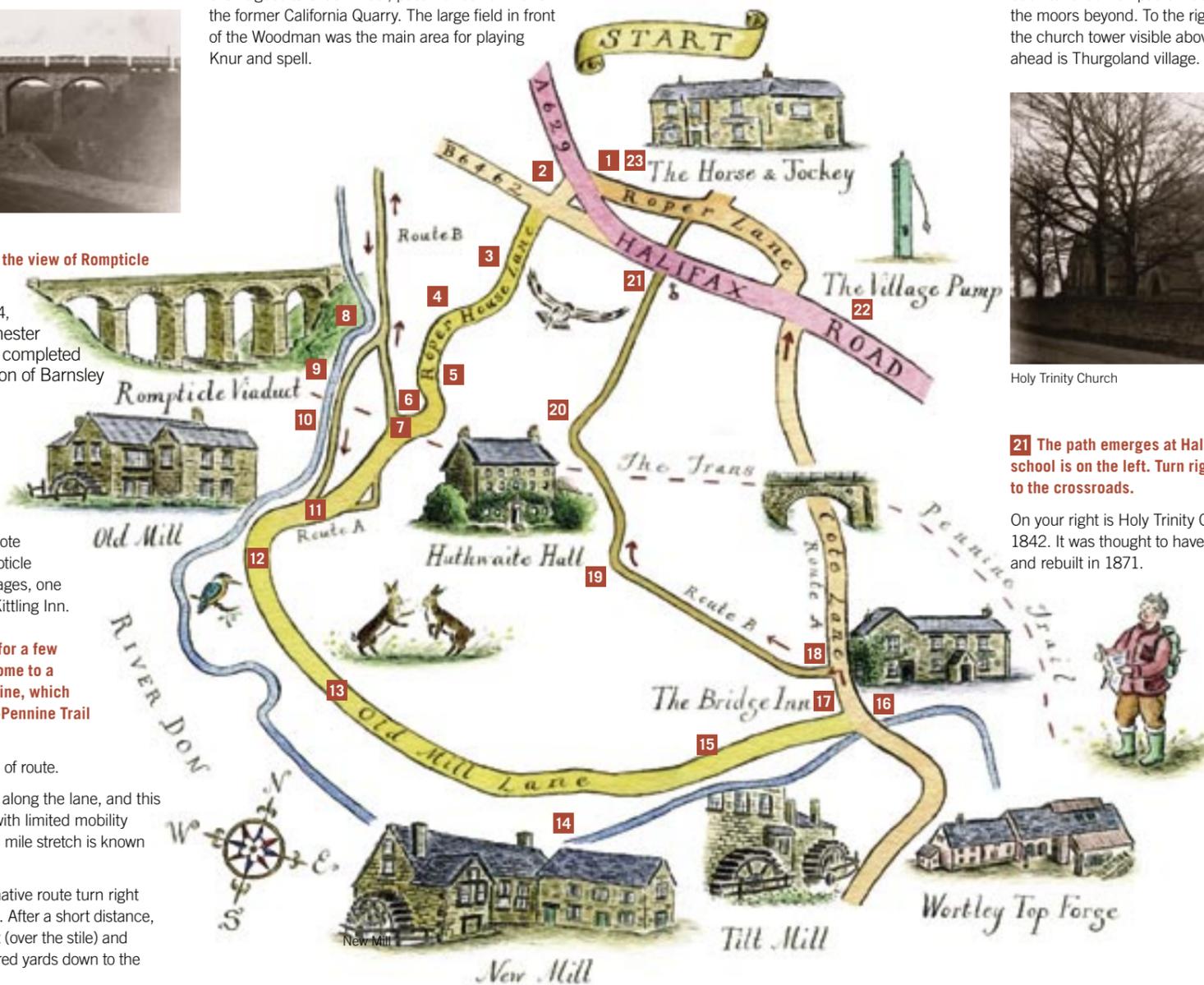
A short detour here along Halifax Road will take you to the newly restored village pump. From the crossroads go up Smithy Hill and continue into Roper Lane.

On the right is the War Memorial, erected in 1921. Two hundred yards further up on the left is the Old School House, originally the school, which was built in 1742.



Old School House

23 Arrive back at the village hall.



13 Continue along the lane and enjoy the view across the valley towards Green Moor.

This wooded valley is now a quiet habitat for wildlife, with attractive bluebell woods and a rich birdlife, with sparrowhawk, tawny owl and three types of woodpecker. On the left-hand side, up on the hill, is Fiddler Farm, once the home of John Dyson of Tilt Wire Mill.

14 In a short distance, a group of private residences come into view on the right-hand side of the lane.

This group of buildings was originally the New Wire Mill, the second wire-drawing mill on Old Mill Lane. The mill was built in 1717 and finally closed in the 1980s. The public footpath on the right takes you down to the old stepping stones over the river, from where you can get a good view of the original mill buildings or take the footpath up to Green Moor.



New Mill



Villagers outside the Bridge Inn

17 Turn left and head up the hill, past the Bridge Inn.

The Bridge Inn is a well-known local landmark and was one of several pubs that at one time quenched the thirsts of the workers at the wire mills and forges. On the right is Huthwaite View, the former Huthwaite Post Office and general stores, now a private house.

18 At this point there is a choice of route.

Route A – carry on up Cote Lane for about three-quarters of a mile to reach Thurgoland crossroads, this route being suitable for people with limited mobility.

Route B – take Huthwaite Lane on the left and return to Thurgoland along a public footpath.