



## FOUR EASY TO FOLLOW WALKS AROUND THE NEWMILLERDAM AND CHAPELTHORPE

### Green Route – 5.5 miles (8.8kms)

- 1) Turn left at lake out of the park gate, by the lodge. Cross road, go up school hill behind Fox & Hounds Public House. After 100 metres turn left between gap in wall onto limestone track. Veer left where tarmac road meets the limestone path, follow track up the hill.
- 2) At road turn left. Go straight across mini roundabout and past Bay Horse Public House. Opposite dwelling known as Hall Croft follow footpath to Seckar Wood.
- 3) Where second hedgerow crosses the path, turn right following left hedgerow towards houses. Follow field around to the left. Before field curves to left, cross over railway sleepers on right to follow alongside woodland.
- 4) After 30 metres turn left over wooden bridge, then immediately left again into woodland. Take path on the right up the hill, keeping the open field on your right. Keep on this track which bears left into the woodland. It should be well waymarked, until you come to a flight of steps.
- 5) At the top of the steps turn left to reach the main track (watch out for rabbit holes!). This leads to a wider track. Turn left down hill into woodland, continuing straight ahead past the ponds on your right. This track leads to Barnsley Road. Turn right at the road then turn left along the public bridleway through the white gate (opposite Seckar Lane).
- 6) Go over the bridge. At the junction of three paths turn left. (After about 100 metres look to the right of the track to see the disused mine shaft).
- 7) At the fork turn left towards the viaduct. Before viaduct go down steps on right. Cross wooden bridge. Turn right following stream. After 100 metres veer left up hill, following a narrow track between the conifer trees, keeping streams on your right. Cross small wooden bridge and grassy area beyond. At the main track turn left back to car park.

**For longer green route go over bridge. Turn right immediately along permissive footpath and bridleway, going through wooden fence.**

- 8) Just before bridge turn left up the steps. Turn left at the top. After 50 metres turn right down the hill and follow track ahead of the beck. Follow track around to left, keeping beck on right. After 150 metres turn right over bridge then left along field boundary, keeping the beck on your left.
- 9) After about 50 metres cross field towards white square sign (this is the right of way which crosses private farmland). Follow track straight ahead into the park. Ignore first track on left.
- 10) At the fork turn left down the hill. At the main track turn left over the bridge then right. Follow this track back to the car park.

### Blue Route – 3 miles (4.8kms)

- 1) Turn left out of the car park to Barnsley Road. Cross dam to other side of lake. Turn right into Park. After about 30 metres take the narrow track on your left up the hill. Follow track, keeping lake on your right. Go up the flight of steps, past the disused quarry. Carry on until you reach a bench. Turn left then immediately right onto bridleway.

**For shorter route of 2 miles (3.2kms) follow direction 2.**

- 2) Turn first right down hill. At main track turn left over bridge then right. Follow this track back to the car park.

**For longer route keep following the bridleway then follow direction 3 the green route direction 7.**

- 3) At the junction of four paths turn right towards the bridge with iron railings. At the junction of three paths keep going straight ahead. After 100 metres, look to the right of the track to see the disused mine shaft. Go to green route direction 7.

## Points of Interest

### **A Newmillerdam Country Park**

This beautiful area of woodland and water (95 hectares) is managed by the Wakefield Countryside and Conservation Service for the benefit of wildlife and people. It was once part of the Chevet Estate owned by the Pilkington family from 1753 to 1954. Look out for the friendly birds on the lake, which include mallard, coot, moorhen and swans.

### **B The Lodge**

West Lodge near the start of the walk is one of nine lodges built by the Pilkington family in the 1870's which were sometimes used to house the Estate's gamekeepers.

### **C Cornmill**

There has been a water powered mill at Newmillerdam since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. This mill was probably built in the 1820's. People had to have their corn ground here and pay with a portion of the flour, which in Wakefield was set at 1/16. The mill was in use until 1960. In 1979 it was converted into a restaurant and is now the Beauty Mill.

### **D Newmillerdam Colliery**

Known as Ninevah Colliery, a drift mine was sunk here in the early 1920's which closed in 1928. In 1929 Newmillerdam Colliery was opened, closing in 1981. The site was reclaimed by the Council, who have planted over 6,000 trees, as well as many wildflowers and created an extra car park for the Country Park.

### **E Charlesworth Almshouses**

These were erected by Eleanor Charlesworth of Chapelthorpe Hall, in 1984.

### **F Boyne Hill House**

Built in 1903 from stone from demolition of part of Chapelthorpe Hall. It is thought to be similar in design to the original Chapelthorpe Hall.

### **G Township Boundary**

Lawns Dyke on your right marks part of the boundary of the the Parish of St.James, Chapelthorpe. Until 1900 'beating the bounds' was an annual event, when the clergy led a procession to remind the congregation of the 12 mile boundary by 'bumping' choir boys on the boundary stones and using willow sprigs to beat hedgerows with the occasional pause for prayer.

### **H Heathland**

This is a carpet of purple in the summer. The top soil was not replaced after opencast mining in 1947. Only gorse, heather and wavy hair grass grows on the bare sandstone.

### **I Seckar Wood**

This woodland is a rare piece of the district's natural heritage. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it is only five in Wakefield. It is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). There is a mixture of woodland, wet heath and dry heathland here, which include some rare plants. This site was originally part of the Woolley Hall Estate from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the 1920's when a photographer, Warner Gothard bought the wood. Today it is managed by the Wakefield Countryside and Conservation Service.

### **J The Ponds**

The ponds and the remains of a summer house were built by Warner Gothard, planned as a part of a landscaped garden which was never completed. The adjacent open water areas have been opened up more recently, to attract amphibians and dragonflies to the woodland.

### **K Bushcliffe Farm**

Originally built in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bushcliffe House is now a grade II listed building.

### **L Chevet Branch Line and Lawns Viaduct**

People once travelled to London along here. The line opened to passengers in 1909 as a branch of the Midland Railway, running from Royston to Dewsbury and closed in 1968. Today the section is managed by the Wakefield Countryside and Conservation Service.

### **M Ancient Trackway**

When you reach the top of the hill look backwards towards Chevet Grange. Just to the left of the path you have walked, there is evidence of a Romano-British track which is probably over 2,000 years old. The track is more visible before the fields are ploughed.

### **N The Menagerie**

Now demolished, this is the site of two houses and a menagerie built for the Pilkington family. Notice the Yew trees which were once part of an ornamental garden.

**O Woodland**

As you approach the woodlands near the site of the menagerie look out for the bluebells here in Spring and the fruits of the horse chestnut and oak in Autumn. You may even see green woodpecker here.

**P Woodlands**

The larch and pine trees (softwoods) have been felled in this area to be replaced by oak, ash, birch and hazel which are more beneficial to wildlife. The former were planted in the late 1950's to be used as pit props in the 1980's and 1990's.

**Q Boat House**

Built in the 1820's by the Pilkington family, it was used mainly as a hunting lodge for the family and friends. The grade II listed building has been restored as a unique visitor centre and meeting room.

**R Sandstone Quarry**

A deep quarry dating from the early 1900's known as Long Bank Quarry. In summer, look out for purple flowers of foxgloves here.