

River Worth Restoration Walk

This 4.5km (3 mile) walk runs from Keighley train station to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railways Train Station at Damems.

Passing through the hidden alleys and riverside paths of Keighley. The walk largely follows the urban sections of the Worth Way National Trail, which can be used to extend the walk, to further explore the upper reaches of the River Worth and Bridgehouse Beck.

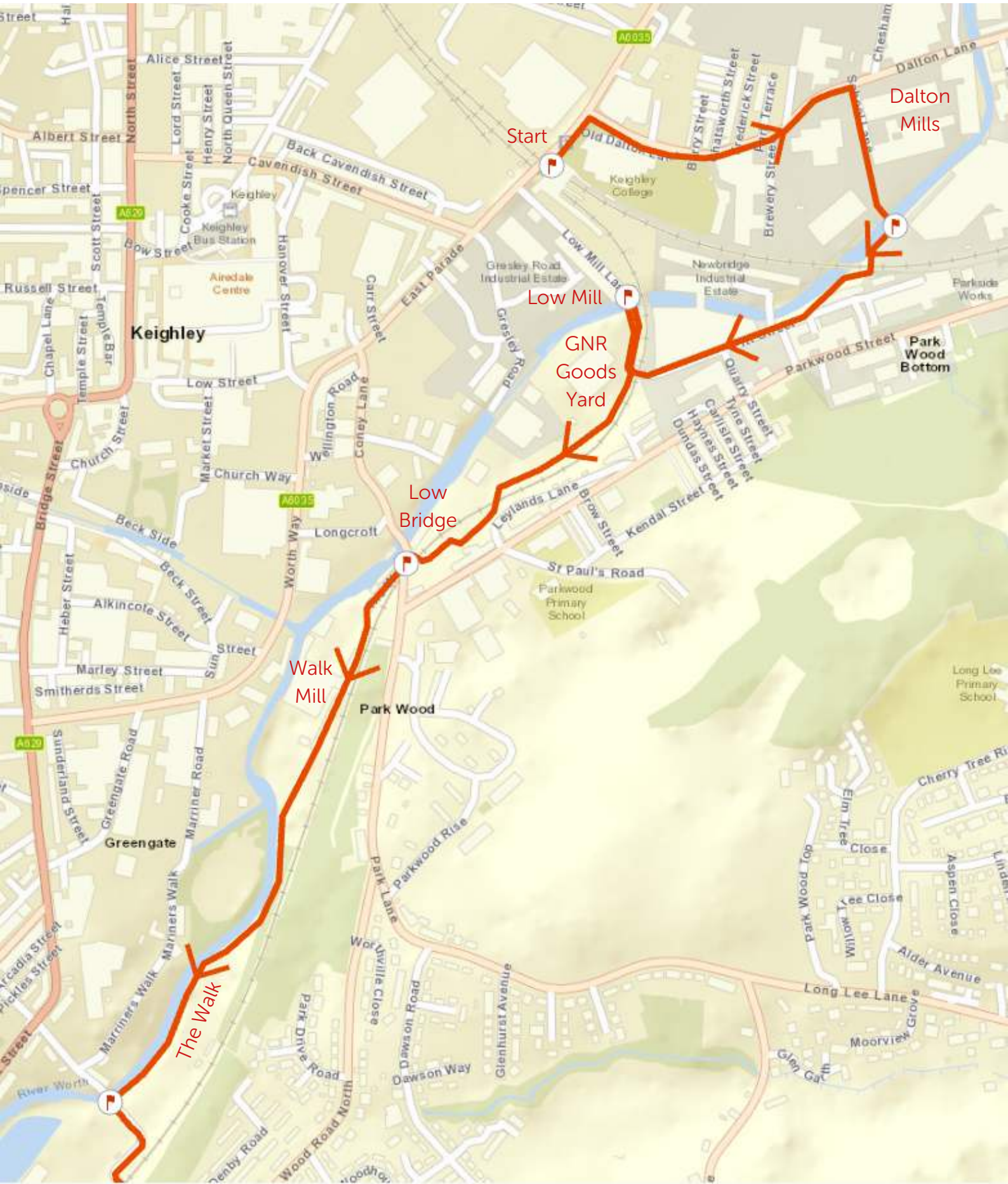
Along the way this guide will provide a little information on the work of the River Worth Project and the history of the industry that once drew its power from the waters of the River Worth.

You follow this link to view a digital map of the route:

www.app.routeyou.com/en/route/view/14899597



Map 1 of Route Keighley Station - Woodhouse Road



Map 2 of Route Woodhouse Road - Damems Lane



From Keighley train station frontage turn right on Bradford Road. towards Keighley College. Turn right again to follow Dalton Lane to Dalton Mills. Turn right on School Lane, just before the mill on a footpath, to the rear of the Mill.

Dalton Mills

Heavily damaged from several arson attacks the imposing Dalton Mills site was constructed as three separate wool spinning mills; between 1866 and 1877 for J & J Craven.

The current structures replaced the site's original building - Strong Close Mill, built by Rachel Leach of West Riddlesden Hall. An early female business pioneer who led and won a significant legal battle against Messer's Walsham & Clayton. Settling a dispute over the reduction in river water available to power Strong Close Mill, caused by the construction of Low Mill upstream of the site.

If you are observant you might just see a peregrine falcon visiting the mills chimney, where they have bred successfully for many years.



Cross the river using the green bridge then follow the footpath upstream, under the railway and onto Pitt Street. Turn right and walk under the railway bridge. Follow the cobbled Low Mill Lane to a humpbacked bridge and the rear of Low Mill.

Low Mill

From Low Mill Lane you can view a more modern extension of Low Mill. The now ruined original building of the works is located near Aldi's car park and represents one of Keighley's most important historical buildings. Built by Messer's Walsham & Clayton on land owned by Lord George Cavendish in 1779 it is thought to be one of the earliest purpose-built cotton mills in Yorkshire, which like many others later converted to woollen milling.

Downstream of the mill on Low Mill Lane the ornate, humped-back bridge hints at the once landscaped grounds that surrounded the large Georgian house associated with the Mill.

The mill drastically altered the River Worth with an imposing weir built upstream of the site. This weir now forms a significant barrier for migratory fish returning to their breeding ground in the headwaters of the Worth. Much work is needed along the Worth to adapt or remove weirs like this to improve fish populations.



The Original Low Mills Building, Gresley Rd. S. Riley-Gunn

From Low Mill return down Low Mill Lane to turn right just before the railway bridge. Follow the Worth Way National Trail alongside the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, in a deeply walled alley. Following the path under the railway and uphill to meet the end of Leylands Lane.

Improving Access to the River

This path once rang with clatter of clogs on sandstone flags, as workers streamed down from Parkwood to start their shifts in Keighley's mills and works. Keighley Towns Fund provided funding to the Aire Rivers Trust to replace the broken remnants of this path with a modern smooth surface accessible to all.

To get involved with our practical volunteer program visit:

www.aireriverstrust.org.uk/volunteer/



Follow the Worth Way under the railway and uphill to the end of Leylands Avenue and then turn right over the “Railway Children Bridge” marking the line of the now-removed Great Northern Railway. Follow the path down and under the railway to emerge on Park Lane to look at the historic Low Bridge.

The Great Northern Goods Yard

Did you know the Worth Valley once had two railway lines? The “Railway Children” bridge hints at the lost second railway of the Worth Valley. Underneath this bridge once ran a siding of the lost Great Northern Railway’s Thornton to Keighley line. It led to the GNR Keighley goods yard, which sat alongside the river off Low Mill Lane. The impressive goods station building still stands, currently housing a builder’s merchant. The Railway Children mural on the bridge celebrates the film of the same name filmed in 1970 along the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway.



Former Great Northern Railway Goods Shed, Gresley Rd. S. Riley-Gunn

Low Bridge Mill

Standing next to one of the earliest crossings on the River Worth, Low Bridge Mill was built as a cotton mill and was reputedly the first steam-powered works in Keighley. Following the decline in Yorkshire cotton milling in the 1820's the building was converted into a corn mill and malt house.

Serving as a brewery for many years. The mill is known locally for the whimsical gargoyles on its chimney. The exact history is unclear, however many believe they depict the mill owner and his family.



Cross Park Ln. and follow the Worth Way National Trail up the track alongside the railway to the Walk Mill. After 80m veer left up the footpath that follows the Railway around The Walk Mill.

Walk Mill

This mill's unusual name stems from the site's original Tudor use as a fulling mill. Where workers "walked" on woollen cloth soaked in stale urine. This caused the cloth to shrink and the fibres to felt together. Much river water was used to clean the fulled cloth and the foul washings were flushed straight to the river. Over time walking the cloth was replaced by water-powered trip hammers that stamped the cloth. Later this water mill was converted to produce silk ribbons by Joseph Stell. Who was later found to be counterfeiting gold coins at the mill. A crime for which he was later hung in 1768.

Leading upriver from the mill is a footpath called "The Walk" taking its name from the nearby mill, this hidden green corridor at the heart of Keighley is a haven for wildlife. Keep your eyes peeled for kingfishers, grey wagtails and dippers.



Now for a longer leg. Turn left to climb Woodhouse Rd. crossing over the railway and then Turning Right onto Hainworth Wood Rd. Then follow this road to descend Haincliffe Rd. Emerging on Halifax Rd. just above Ingrow Bridge.

Gingerbread Clough & Hainworth Wood Recreation Ground

Why not divert from the route a little and explore Gingerbread Clough a short walk up a permissive path off Hainworth Wood Rd. This delightfully named woodland offers the chance to explore off the beaten track and find a hidden mill dam.

The stretch also offers the chance to rest in the Hainworth Wood Road Recreation Ground.



Turn left and walk up Halifax Rd. and use the pedestrian crossing to enter Red Holt Drive, quickly turning left onto Grove Mill Lane/Drive crossing the railway to re-join the river. At the end of the housing estate take the footpath above the river to Bradford Council's Damems Nature Reserve.

Grove Mill

The sleepy modern Grove Mill housing estate now occupies the site of what was Keighley's largest worsted yarn spinning mill complex. An immense set of work ran from the mill dam in the current Damems Nature Reserve to the bottom of the new housing estate. Water from the river was used to wash unprocessed sheep's fleeces and converted into steam to power combing machines that straightened wool and removed the shorter fibres. This processed fleece was then twisted into yarn on spinning frames and loaded onto bobbins.

The modern housing estate hides one of the largest barriers to migratory fish in the form of Ingrow Mill weir which supplied water to mills downstream of the site.



Hidden Ingrow Mill Weir, Rear of Red Holt Crescent, S. Riley-Gunn

Follow the River through the nature reserve to Join the un-made Damems Rd. (bring you waterproof boots for the puddles) and follow the Road to Damems Mill. Turn right onto Damems Lane cross the river and uphill passing the entrance to Keighley Town Council's Nature Damems Nature Reserve and then crossing the railway to end at railway station, Damems.

Damems Nature Reserves

Hidden on the upper edge of Ingrow, Damems drips with history. Likely named from the Elm trees that once grew on the edge of the many mill dams. The area is made up of two nature reserves.

Between these nature reserves Aire Rivers Trust have worked with the Wild Trout Trust to fell and pin trees into the river. We hope this will help catch small stones, eventually forming gravel banks which provide important breeding habitat for fish like brown trout to lay their eggs in.

Damems

Historic Damems Mill a former cotton and worsted woollen weaving mill. Sitting alongside the UK's smallest train station. With Keighley & Worth Valleys Environment Group working hard to improve wildlife where the river and railway meet. This hidden green corridor offers much to explore.



Tree hinging Damems Nature Reserve, S. Riley-Gunn

Finishing Your Walk

Continue on the Worth Way National Trail

From Damems train station you can keep walking up the cobbled Damems Lane, through the Bracken Bank Estate. To follow the rest of the 11-mile Worth Way national trail in reverse. Visiting, Oakworth, Haworth, Oxenhope then returning along the moorland edge along the top of the Worth Valley to the start at Keighley train station. To see the Worth Way National Trail route please visit:

www.bradford.gov.uk/media/5678/the-worth-way.pdf

Heritage Train

To return to the start of the walk you can speak to a volunteer at the Damems train station to request a heritage train stop and return you to Keighley station. See the Keighley & Worth Valley Railways timetables and fares on their website www.kwvr.co.uk

Public Bus

Ascend the opposite side of Damems Lane to the train station, climbing to Halifax Road. From here you will be able to catch a bus to the town centre from the bus stop at the top of Damems Lane.



Ives Bridge on the Worth Way, S. Riley-Gunn

River Worth Restoration Project

The River Worth Restoration Project is lead by a partnership who seek to highlight the value of the River Worth to Keighley. In terms of its value as a public recreation space, wildlife habitat and asset for development of the town.

The project has delivered a number improvements to the river across Keighley including improvements to riverside footpath surfaces and way marking. Creation of in river habitat improvements such as installing woody matter to create fish breeding habitat. Litter picks and the establishment of a Citizen Science Hub along the River Worth.

To find out more visit:

www.aireriverstrust.org.uk/river-worth-restoration/



Thank you to our contributors and funders:

Robin Long Bottom

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway Environment
Group



River Worth
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