

The Holme Valley Circular Walk

BY E. S. BOOCOCK



HOLME VALLEY
CIVIC SOCIETY

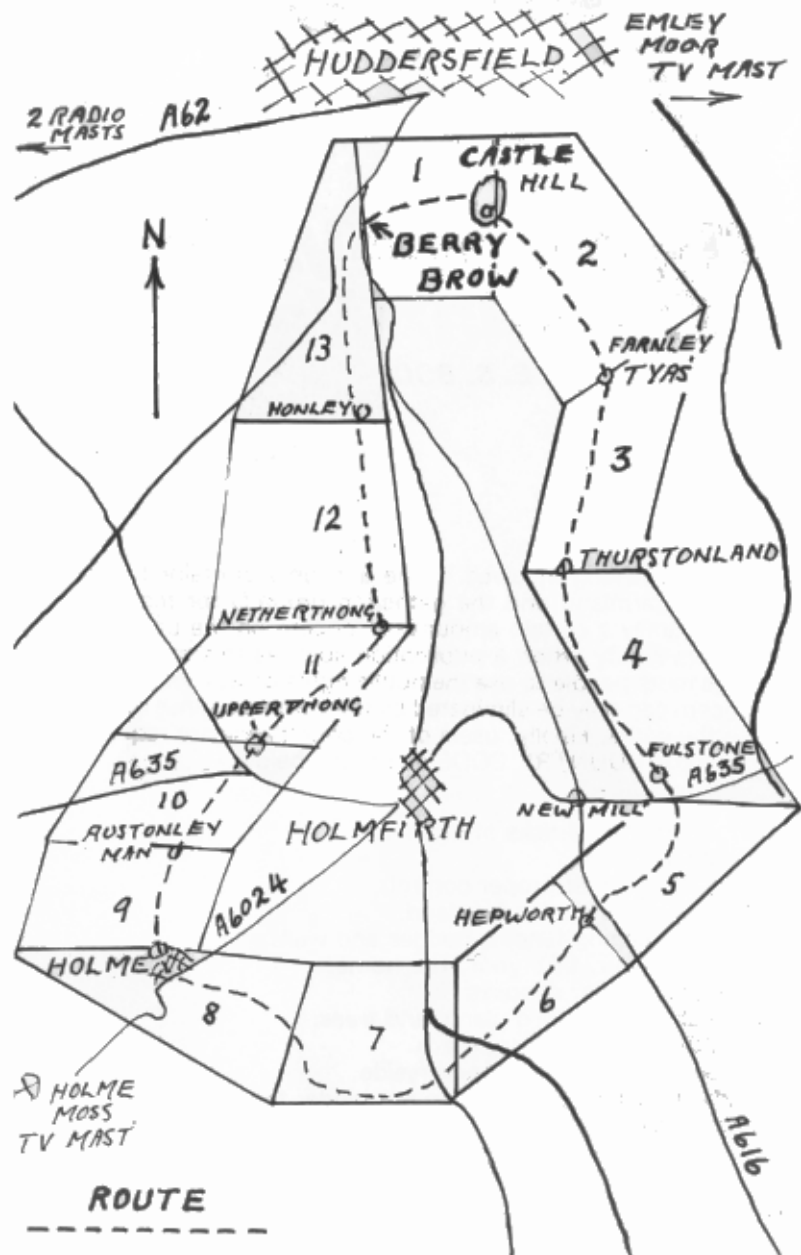
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Note

Much of the walking involved in the accounts contained in this book is over farmland and the gathering grounds for reservoirs. There is naturally a certain amount of concern on the part of the farming community when a publication such as this attempts to encourage more people to use the public rights of way which exist. This concern can only be eliminated by the common sense of those who use the paths. Finally, users of the countryside are requested to observe the COUNTRY CODE as printed below.

- Guard against all risks of fire.
- Fasten all gates.
- Keep dogs under proper control.
- Keep to paths across farmland.
- Avoid damaging fences, hedges and walls.
- Leave no litter, take your litter home.
- Safeguard water supplies.
- Protect wild life, wild plants and trees.
- Go carefully on country roads.
- Respect the life of the countryside.
- Enjoy the countryside but do not hinder the work of the countryman.



FOREWORD

This booklet describes a circular walk of the Holme Valley almost entirely on footpaths and covers in all about 24 miles. It is divided into 13 sections of approximately two miles each and any one or more sections may be walked with easy access from the Holme Valley.

It covers a wide variety of scenery, taking in many vantage points which offer wide panoramic views and those walkers pondering on their ultimate destination will make fleeting visits to Hades and Elysium.

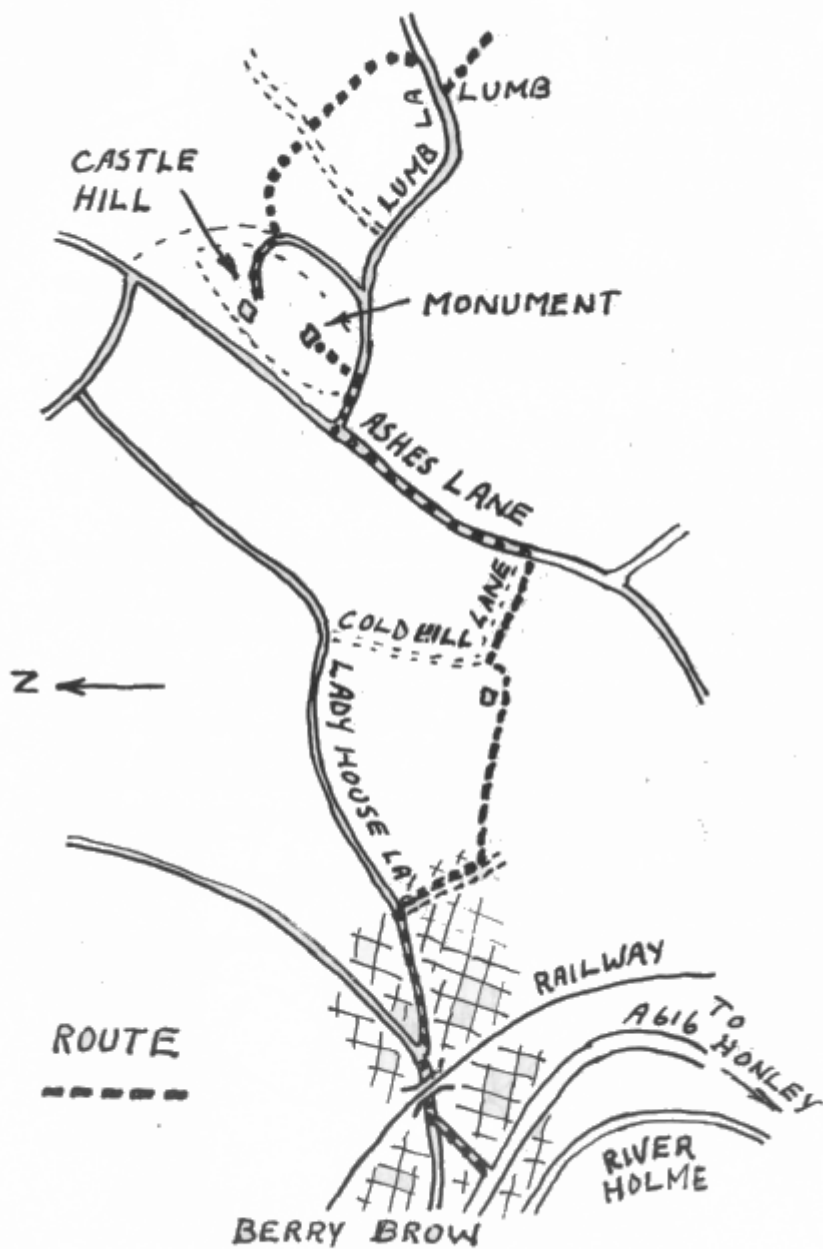
To make the instructions easy to follow when walking, they are given in short paragraphs in ordinary print, and take one from a point at the bottom of the map to a point at the top. Other information which may be interesting is printed in *italic type*.

Compass directions are used, sometimes merely as a check, but chiefly because there are places where there is no permanent feature to use in the description of the route. The O.S. maps covering the area are 1-25000 Sheets SE 10 (Holmfirth), SE 11 (Huddersfield) and 1-50000 Sheet 110 (Sheffield and Huddersfield).

All paths have been checked with a definitive rights of way map kept by the Metropolitan County Council.

Good strong footwear is essential (preferably waterproof boots) and waterproof clothing is advisable.

It is hoped that all ramblers will respect the country code given on the first page.



Section 1

BERRY BROW— CASTLE HILL

Go NE up Waingate, under the railway bridge and after 100 yards turn right up Lady House Lane which is signposted to Hall Bower.

250 yards up the lane where the road bears left, turn right along a cart track and after 150 yards, just before the track ends in a field, turn left over a stile which is near to a white gate post.

Turn right along the hedgerow and make for a low gas main signpost with a white label. Go up the hill, through a stile on your right and up the hill with a fence on your right.

Keep to the left of a small dam, to the right of the farm and turn left over a stile on to Cold Hill Lane.

Turn right up a rising track to Ashes Lane (which can be a very busy road), turn left and after 250 yards turn right up Lumb Lane. You will see a layby on your right and on the opposite side of the road you will find steps and a path which will take you to the top of Castle Hill.

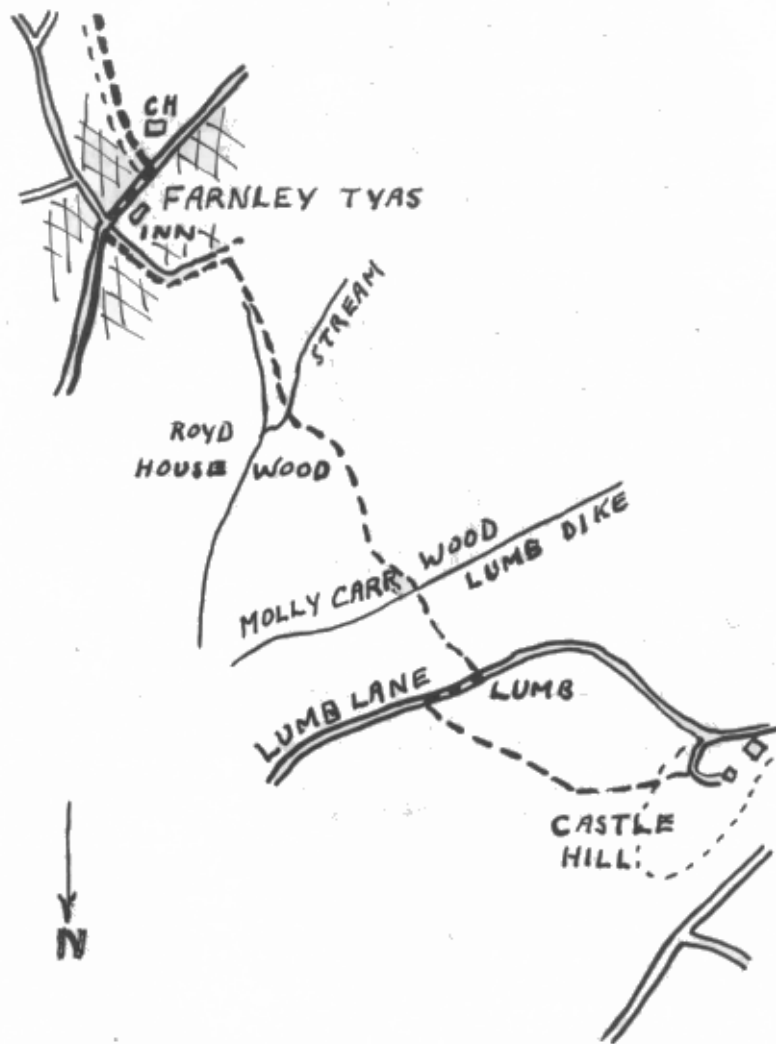
It is known that the hill was occupied over 4000 years ago and has been occupied at various periods down through the ages chiefly because it could be fortified and easily defended.

Evidence from several periods has been found during excavations and further excavations have been planned.

The monument was built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897) and was finished in 1900. However 20 years later it was found that the structure had been built over an old well. Much work was done on the foundations to make it safe and a 6 foot portion was removed from the top of the tower as an added safety measure.

The hill has been used as a site for lighting signalling beacons and later for beacons to commemorate various important events.

From here one can see Emley Moor TV mast (1000 ft) and Holme Moss TV mast (750 ft). These and Castle Hill provide three marvellous land marks for walkers.



Section 2

CASTLE HILL—FARNLEY TYAS

Take the metalled road which leads from the hotel down the East side of the hill to a sharp right bend where you will find a path leading to the left, more or less on the contour of the hill. At this point you must follow a rather indistinct path which leads down the hill in a NE direction.

Go down a field, cross a cart track and down another field to Lumb Lane.

Turn right up the lane and left just before the buildings on your left. Your path keeps to the left of the wall and over a stile to Lumb Dike in the bottom.

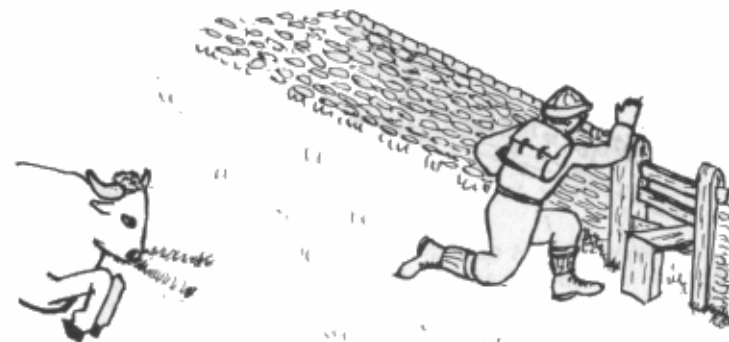
Cross the stream, and bear slightly left and up through a copse which is part of Molly Carr Wood.

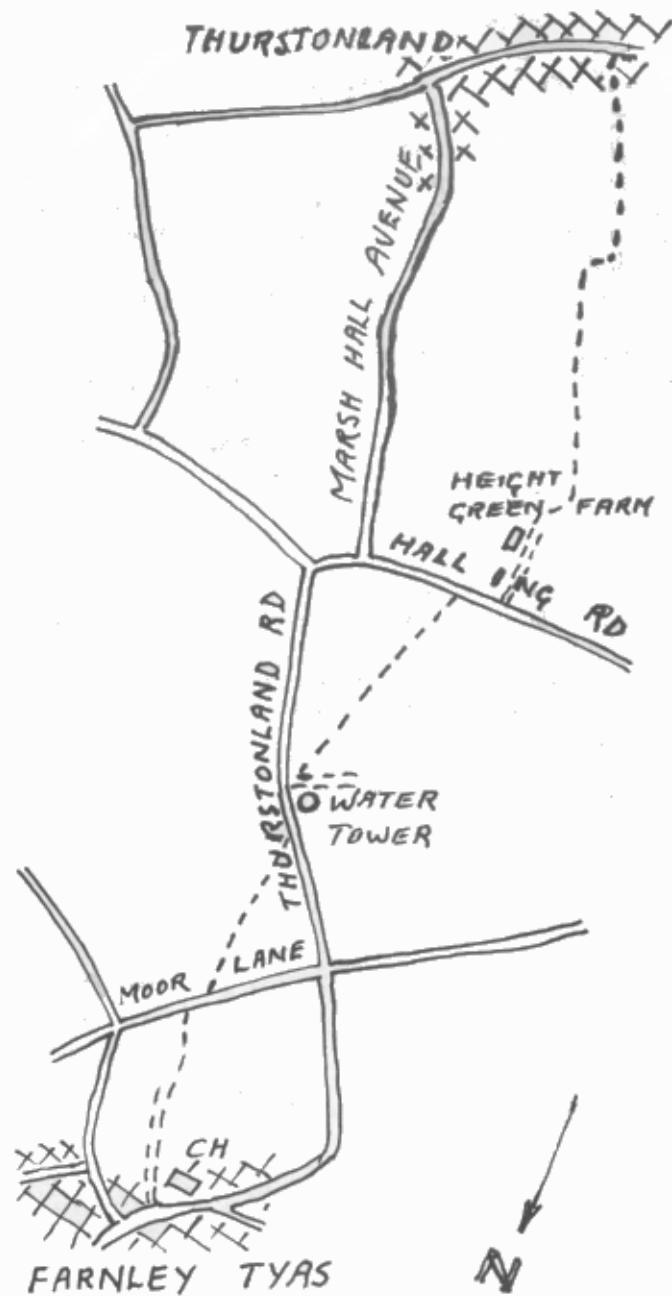
Cross a field in a SSE direction to a stile in the opposite corner, cross another stream, through three stiles and out of Royd House Wood.

Keep to the right of the gully, and up the hill, through a gate, to the left along a farm track which is level for a few yards but then bends to the right up the hill to Woodsome Road.

Turn right and in a few yards you will come to the centre of Farnley Tyas and the Golden Cock Inn.

Farnley Tyas in the 19th century was very industrialised having a mill, a tannery, a brewery and a dyehouse but until 1840 when the present church was built the nearest church was at Almondbury.





Section 3

FARNLEY TYAS — THURSTONLAND

Pass in front of the Golden Cock Inn on the road leading SW and just before the church turn left on to a cart track, through a stile, cross a field and through a stile on to Moor Lane.

Turn right, then after 20 yards, left through a stile and cross the field to a stile in the opposite wall. Go through another stile (broken down) and make for the corner of the field slightly left of the water tower, through a stile, head for the water tower and so on to Thurstonland Road.

Keep left and in 25 yards turn right on to a cart track. After a further 25 yards turn left through a stile into a field. Maintain a SSW direction through three more stiles and down the hill to a footpath sign on Hall Ing Road.

Turn right and after 30 yards, left, passing to the right of Height Green Farm. Go through a stile marked FP in white paint into the field to the right of the old lane, keep alongside the fence and on to a cart track.

Here you must go right, through a broken down gate, left and after 100 yards through a wooden gate.

Proceed SSE to the right of the wall and you will find a single stone gatepost with a white arrow pointing back the way you have come. At this point leave the wall, turn S over a field and make for some holly trees.

After going through a stile keep right of the wall and along a path to a gate through on to Thurstonland Bank Road.

Thurstonland is not a large place but there are one or two interesting facts about the place.

There is an old crucked barn about which there is talk of restoration.

When a faithful old horse belonging to a local resident died he provided it with a grave and an inscribed headstone though this is a little way off our route.

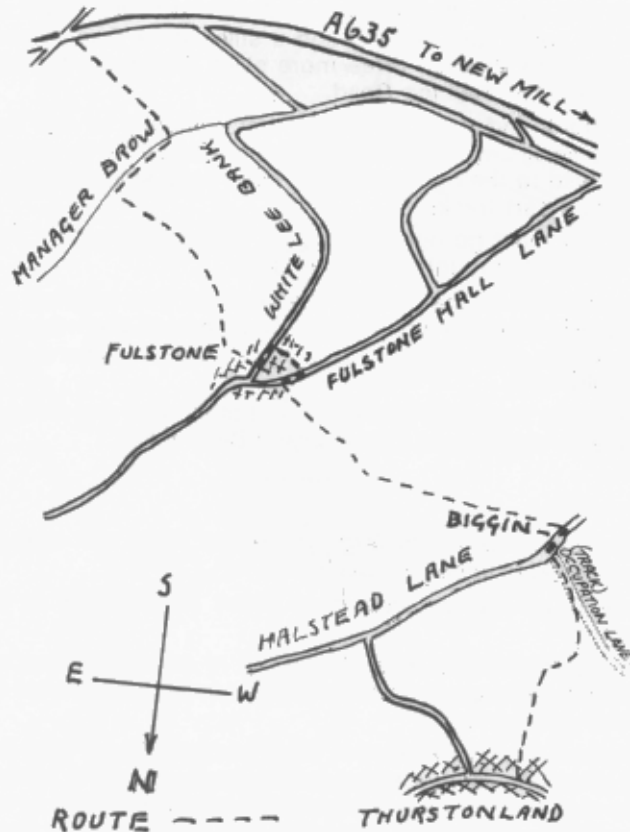
A former vicar of Holmfirth lived at Bank End a few hundred yards down the road. He was known to be spending much more money than the church was providing and was found to be clipping gold guineas and making them into new coins. He was hanged at York.

Section 4

THURSTONLAND—A 635

Cross Thurstonland Bank Road and turn right along a farm track. After 25 yards turn up steps on your left where the overgrown path keeps to the right of a wall. Go through a broken-down stile and still right of the wall continue climbing to the top of the hill from where you will (weather permitting) be able to see a considerable distance in the direction of New Mill.

Go through another broken down stile by a gate and down the hill to the next stile.



Bear left towards a white house at Biggin. Pass through a stile on to Occupation Lane and turn left to Halstead Lane, (metalled).

Turn right and after 130 yards turn left over a stile into a field. Follow path left of the wall passing a stile on your right and keep left of the wall almost to the corner of the field.

Cross the corner of the field, go over a stile and keep to the right of a wall. Go over another stile still keeping to the right of a wall, past a small colliery spoil heap and through a stile on your left.

Follow the path with the wall on your right to the corner and go straight up the field past the pole of a high voltage power line to Fulstone Hall Lane in Fulstone village.

Fulstone is an old village mentioned in the Domesday Book. At one time it had the only shop on the main route between Birton (Kirkburton) and Wakefield, two of the most important centres of habitation in the area. New Mill was originally an extension of Fulstone but is now a much larger place than Fulstone which is now completely off all main routes.

It had a quarry and two coal pits, evidence of which we have passed on the approach to the village. The pits were only small and the shafts were capped over about 1948.

Turn right and after 15 yards turn left through a gap in the wall and continue up the hill to the right of a wall. Bear right behind a house and then pass between the houses to White Lee Bank.

Turn left and after 30 yards turn right between Fulstone Croft and Moor View Farm.

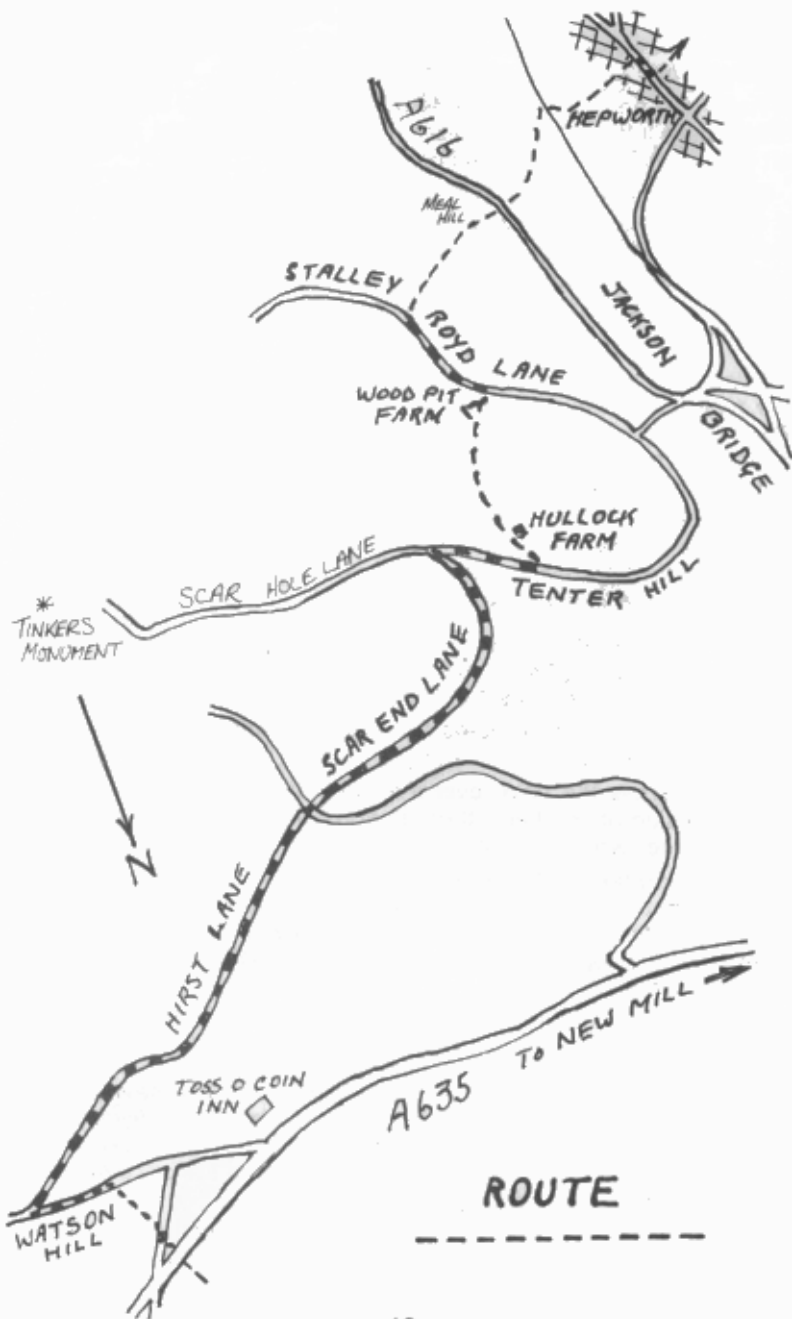
Go SE across the field, over a stile in the wall about half way down the side of the field, then downhill and through the gate in the far corner where it is often very muddy.

Proceed up the gentle slope, gradually leaving the wall and head for a gate in the left corner of the wall bounding a small field within the larger field. Pass through the gate and carry on up the hill to a point near the top right hand corner of the field where you can enter the wood.

Turn right along the wood and up the slope to a track along the edge of the hill known locally as Manager Brow.

Now take a look across the valley from where you have come. You will see several long narrow fields which were divided for cultivation under the Saxon strip farming system. However, some of the walls have recently been removed allowing easier cultivation with modern farm machinery.

Continue in the same direction for 25 yards and just before a gate go over a stile in the wall on your left. Keep left of the wall and over two more stiles to Penistone Road (A635).



Section 5

PENISTONE ROAD (A635) — HEPWORTH

Cross Penistone Road and go up a ginnel between two houses. Turn right up the lane and after 12 yards go over a stile on your left, up the hill, over another stile and bear right to Watson Hill.

Turn left up the road and after 100 yards turn right on to Hirst Lane (cart track).

From this lane you will have a good view of the valley. The BBC have used panoramic shots from here in their series 'Last of the Summer Wine'.

After almost half a mile the road becomes metalled and you will eventually reach a cross roads where the metalled road turns to the left, but you must keep straight forward on a cart track called Scar End Lane which will take you to Scar Hole Lane (metalled).

A short distance up the hill there was at one time a well known land mark called Tinker's Monument but this has now been demolished. (see page 15).

Turn right and at the HV power line 200 yards down the hill turn left over a stile only recognisable by the well worn stones.

Pass to the left of Hullock Farm through a stile, down the field diagonally and over a stile between a large gatepost and a tree. Go over a rather indistinct stile in the wall on your left and round the back of Wood Pit Farm to Stalley Royd Lane.

At the bottom of the house wall notice the entrance to the old pit which goes right through the hill to another disused pit at Sally Wood on Penistone Road.

Turn left up the lane and at the point where the metalled road turns to the left you must turn right between two large gateposts on to Meal Hill Lane and down Meal Hill.

Cross the main road (A616), down Half Acre Wood, through a stile and down to a cart track along the lower hillside. Maintain the same direction and after a few yards turn right over a footbridge.

Go up the field diagonally, over a stile, up the hill on the right of a wall, then up the steps to Town Gate in Hepworth.

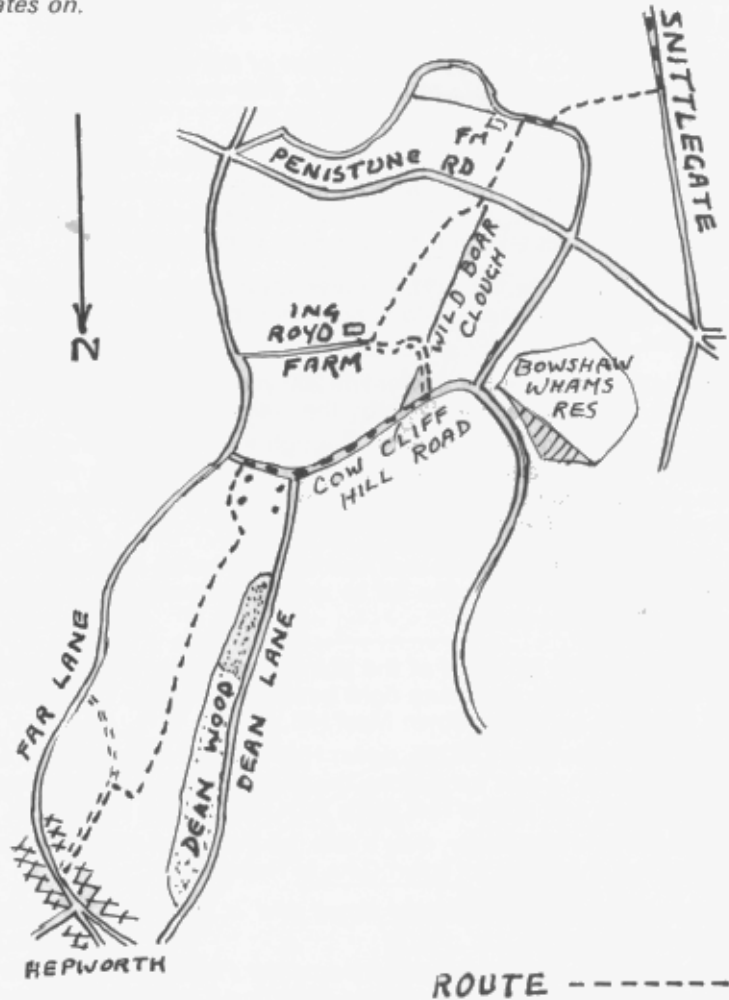
Hepworth dates from Saxon times and is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

An interesting historical fact concerns the Plague of 1665. The disease struck in the SE of the village, infection it is thought, having

been brought to a house in Foster Place in a bundle of clothes. To prevent its spread to the main part of the village, a barricade was erected up what is now called Barracks Fold.

As the churchyard would be inaccessible to the people of the infected area we assume that the dead were buried elsewhere, a theory which seems to be substantiated by the unearthing of many human bones when the foundations for some cottages were dug in the early part of the 19th Century.

As you walk up Barracks Fold notice the old houses, some with dates on.



Section 6

HEPWORTH—SNITTELEGATE

At the top of the steps turn right and after a few yards turn left up Barracks Fold and for a short distance up Mugup Lane. At a left bend in the lane turn right over a stile and 20 yards further on go through a stile on your left.

Maintaining a SSW direction for half a mile, you will go through a stile 30 yards to the right of a gate, then through a stile to the left of a wooden gate.

Proceed, keeping the wall on your left for some distance, then through a stile on your left enter a field sometimes used for football. If the posts are there go behind them with a wall on your left.

Your direction should now be South through two stiles and on to Cowcliff Hill Road.

Turn right and proceed, passing the end of Dean Lane to a dip in the road where the bridge will carry you across Wild Boar Clough. Take the next turn left along a track to Ing Royd Farm.

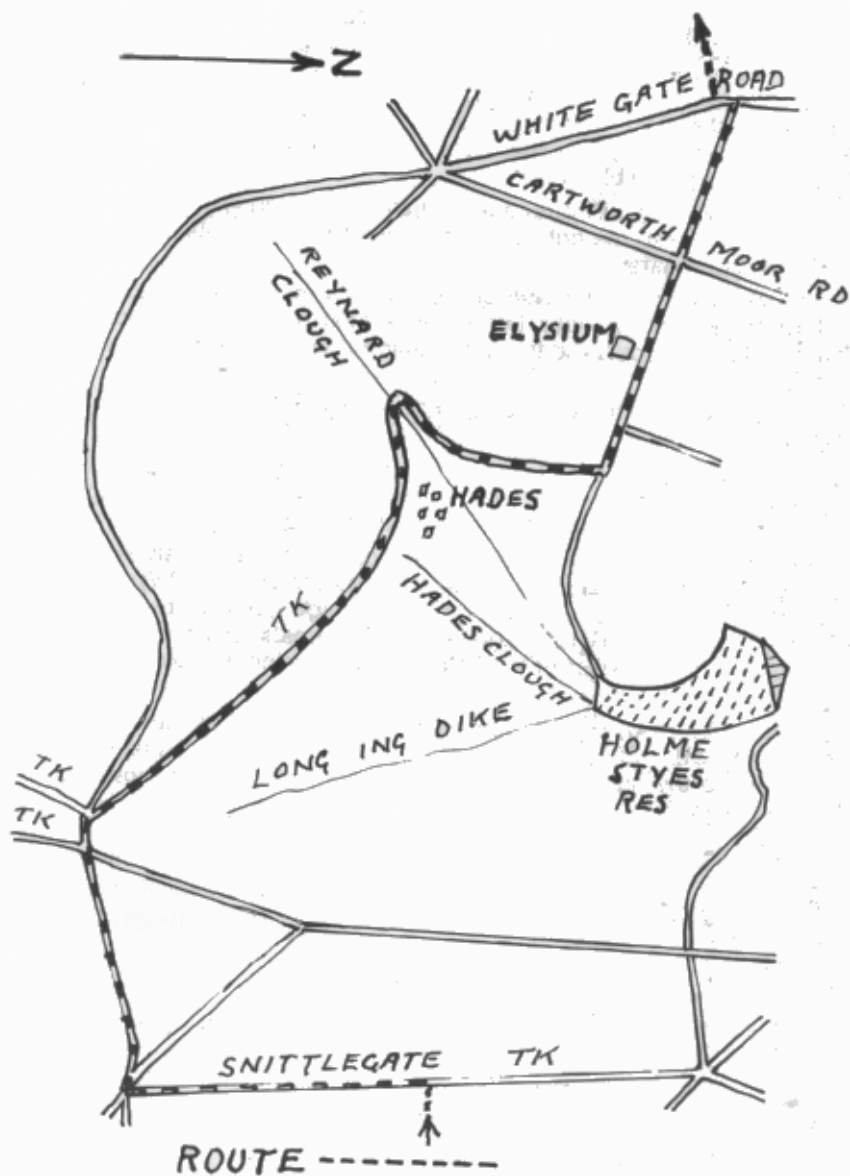
At the near corner of the farm buildings turn through a small gate on your right and follow the wall on your left parallel to Wild Boar Clough. Go over the next two stiles until you come to two stone gateposts on your right. Pass between the posts, cross Wild Boar Clough and the corner of the field to a gate which will take you on to Penistone Road.

Cross the road, go through two gates to Daisy Lee Farm, then right and after 30 yards turn left through a stile. Go due West keeping to the right of the wall and you will see Holme Moss TV mast ahead.

Keep the same direction, go over a stile and turn left up the unmetalled lane called Snittlegate.



TINKER'S MONUMENT



Section 7

SNITTLEGATE— WHITEGATE ROAD

Carry on up Snittlegate to a five-road junction, cross the main road and bear right along a rising metalled road for 600 yards. (As a check, your direction from the junction should be NW shortly changing to W and as soon as you reach the top of the rise you will see Holme Moss TV mast ahead).

Pass the point where a cart track crosses the road and almost immediately turn right on to a track down the hill. You will see Holme Styes reservoir on your right and will pass through an area which is now being replanted by the Forestry Commission.

Maintain this direction for a quarter of a mile to a track junction, keep left, pass the ruins of Hades and follow the track over Reynard Clough.

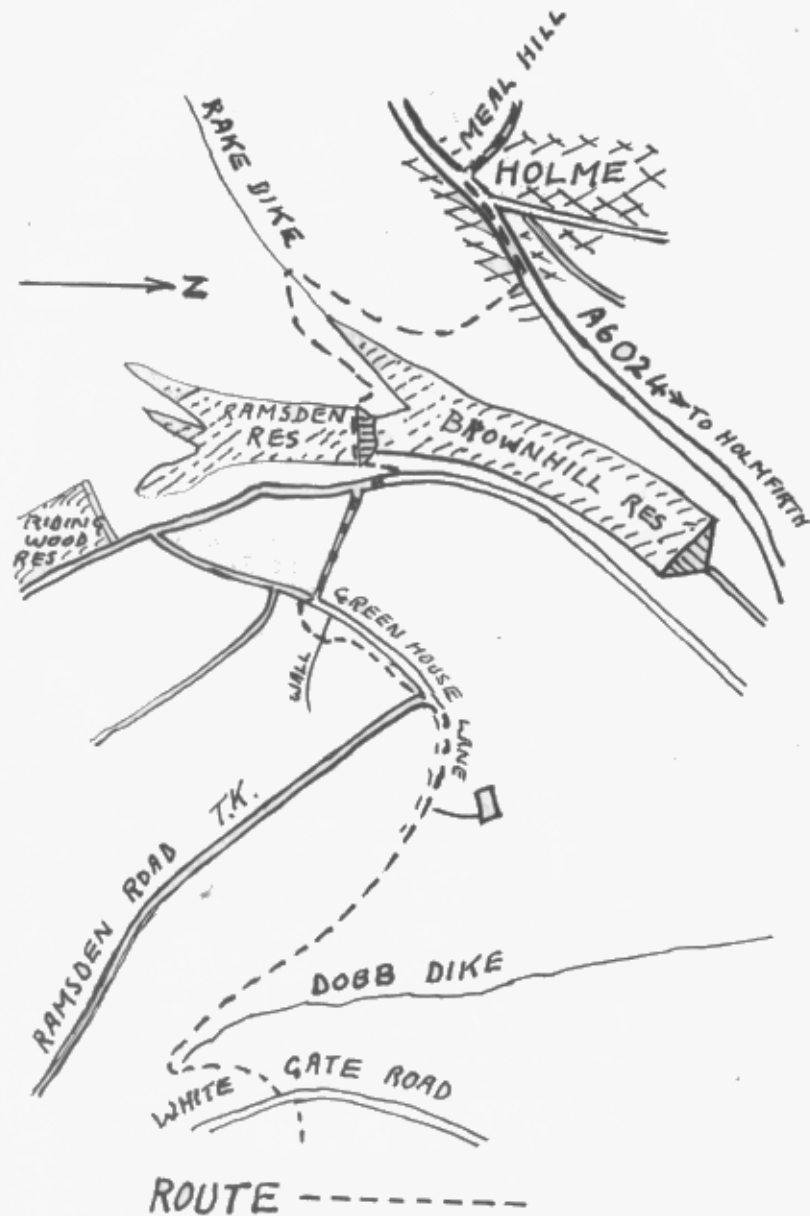
You will eventually come to a crossing of tracks where you must turn left (West) along the track called Copthurst Road and will soon pass an uninhabited farm on your left called Elysium.

After crossing the track called Cartworth Moor Road you will come to White Gate Road (metalled).

Hades was a small moorland village and because of its isolated position escaped the effects of the plague. The men of Hades were quarrymen, weavers and farmers and had the reputation of being rather wild characters. At one Rushbearing ceremony in Holmfirth the men from Hades arrived at the church but were locked out because of their noisy inebriated behaviour. However they were eventually allowed in. It is not known how the village came to get its name.

Not much is known about Elysium but it was a farm much larger than any other in the area and was probably occupied by an important landowner. However the choosing of names like Hades and Elysium seems to suggest that the people of this area had a sense of humour.

A few hundred yards up the road was another well known land mark called Cook's Study which was a favourite place for Summer picnics. This eventually became a ruin and was finally demolished. The site is now private land. See page 29.



Section 8

WHITE GATE ROAD—HOLME

Turn left on White Gate Road and immediately right at the footpath sign and stile. Keep to the wall side then round the top of a gully called Dobb Dike.

Follow the side of the gully, pass through an iron gate, then through a double gate (one wooden and one iron) and continue on the left of a wall.

Keep more or less on the contour for a short distance, over a slight rise and down a long straight farm track. You will come to two thick stone gateposts, the left having a square hole through it.

The gully straight ahead was Green House Lane but is now quite impassable. Follow the footpath signs to the left of the gully. Pass through the gap in the wall 15 yards to the left of the corner of the field and bear right to the stile which will take you on to the lower part of Green House Lane.

It should be pointed out that the above section of the recommended route is a permissive path by courtesy of the West Yorkshire Water Authority and is not a definitive right of way.

Turn right down the hill to Brownhill Lane where you will find a good picnic area.

Cross the road, turn right and after about 80 yards take a sharp left turn down to the dam wall of Ramsden reservoir.

All the reservoirs in this valley were built to supply Batley Corporation with water but have now been taken over by the Yorkshire Water Authority.

Cross the dam wall, turn right and after about 100 yards your path bends round to the left and rises up the left side of a clough. Cross Rake Dike and climb the hill back along the other side of the clough.

Continue along the path, over a stile and cross the next field diagonally to a stile in the far wall near the top of the field. Go through the stile and immediately turn left through another stile.

Continue up the hill on the right of the wall, through a stile in the wall and up the left side of the wall.

On your left you will see a very unusual house. It was built by an architect for his own use and was designated 'House of the Year' at the time. It is entirely under-ground.

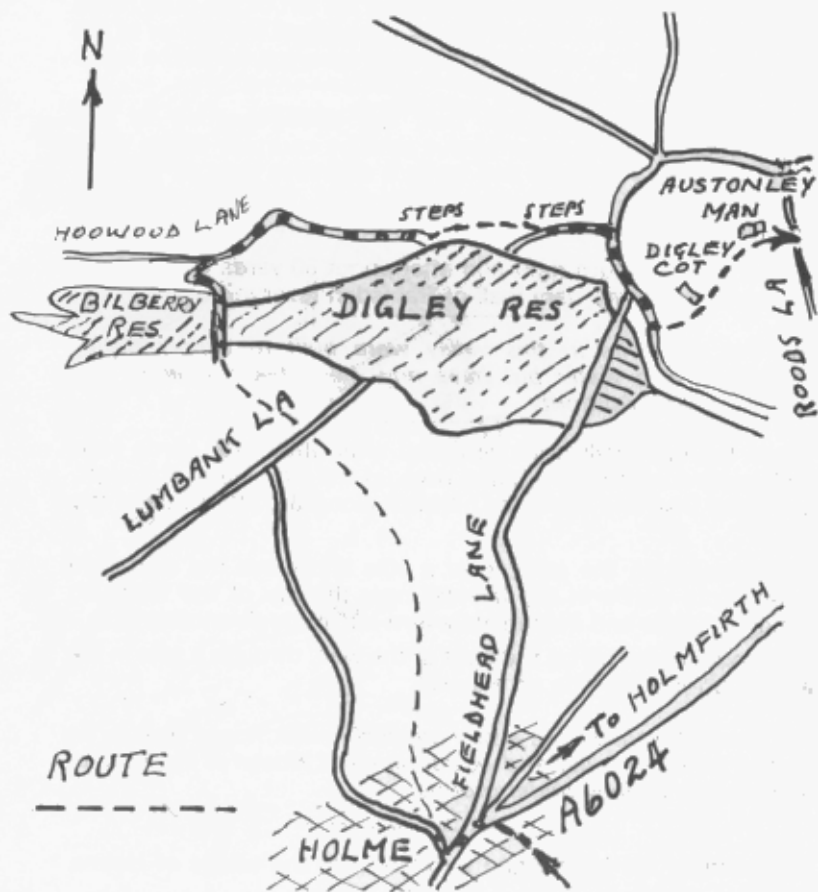
On reaching the Main Road turn left in to the village of Holme.

Holme is an old established village dating back at least to Saxon times. The Normans found a strong resistance in this area and there was much devastation. After this we know nothing of the area for about 200 years.

At a later date the village was administered under Birton (Kirkburton) where minor offences were tried but serious cases were taken to Wakefield.

Holme more recently came into prominence when Holme Moss TV station was built on the moor above the village.

Prior to the building of the M62, the road through the village was one of the main routes over the Pennines. It has hairpin bends, severe gradients and in Winter it is sometimes blocked by deep snow drifts.



Section 9

HOLME—AUSTONLEY MANOR

At the road junction turn right up Meal Hill Road. After 100 yards turn right through an iron gate, continue between walls to a wood gate and follow the track diagonally across a field to a stile in the corner.

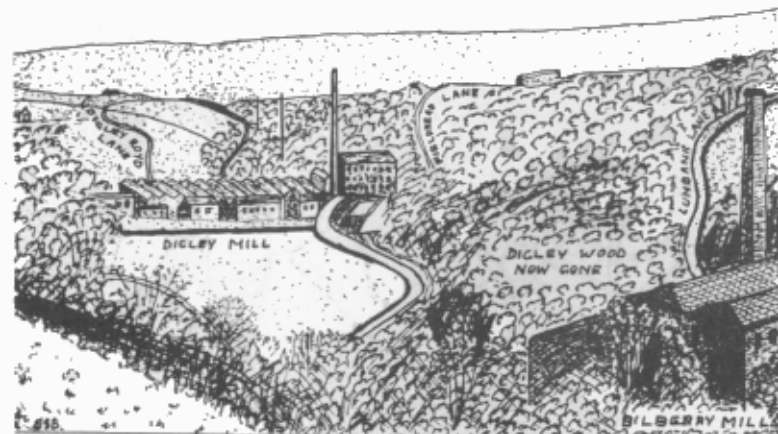
Keep to the wall and you will see Digley reservoir. Your path more or less follows the contour towards the head of the reservoir. Cross the track Lumbank Lane (a much used route until the reservoir was built cutting the road) and down a rough stony path to the dam wall of Bilberry reservoir.

Cloudbursts on the moors above the steep sided Holme Valley have caused severe floods from time to time. The worst one was in 1852 when the dam wall of Bilberry reservoir burst under pressure adding tons of water to the already swollen river and taking with it mills, shops, houses and livestock etc. as it swept down the valley.

A similar flood occurred in 1944 but fortunately the sudden rise in the river level happened during the day and although much property was lost and damaged the loss of life was not so serious.

Cross the dam wall, turn left up the hill, right up to Hoowood Lane* and keep right along Hoowood Lane. Skirt round the top of a small clough and continue along the North side of Digley Reservoir.

Pass through a white iron gate, then climb a flight of steps. Go alongside the fence, through a wooden gate and down some rather

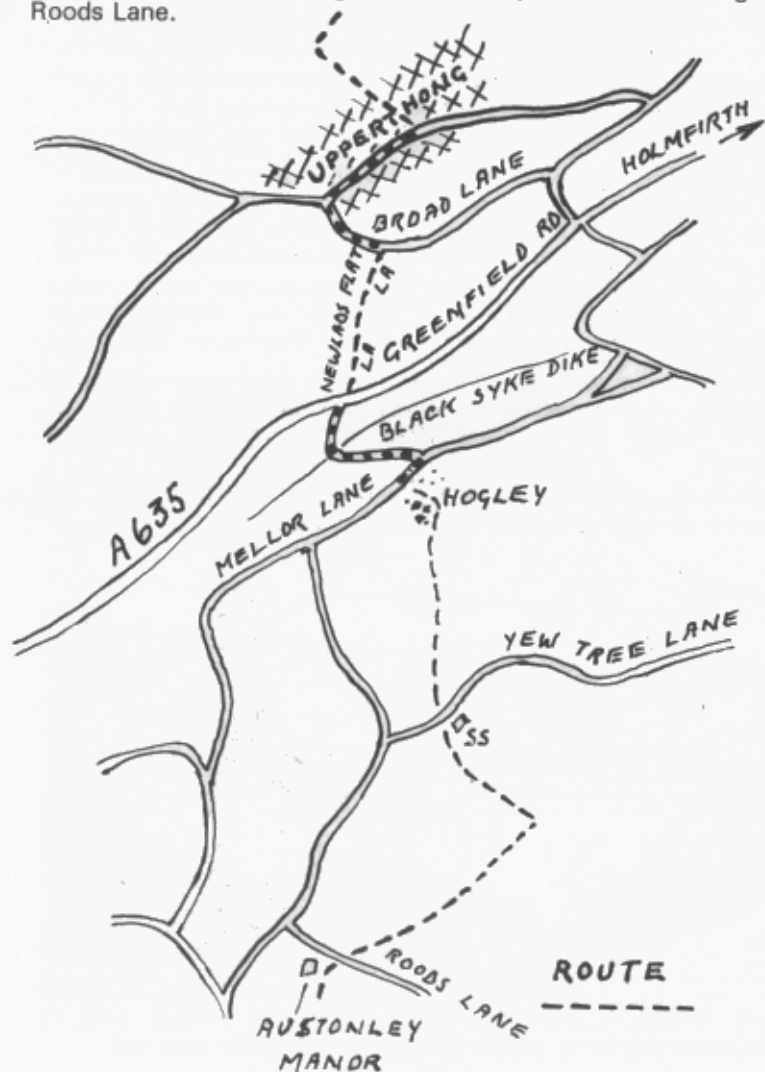


VIEW FROM HOOWOOD LANE LOOKING DOWN DIGLEY VALLEY OVER THE AREA NOW COVERED BY WATER

awkward steps, up Gibridding Lane and over the hump to Digley Royd Lane where you will find a convenient picnic point.

Turn right down Digley Royd Lane, pass the end of the dam wall to steps and a footpath sign on your left.

Go up the steps and keep to the right of Digley Cottages. Climb to the highest corner of the field, along a muddy lane to an iron gate but take the stile on the right to Austonley Manor and through to Roods Lane.



Section 10

AUSTONLEY MANOR — UPPERTHONG

Cross Roods Lane to a farm track called Kiln Acre Lane on the top side of the farm. At the end of the track go over the stile and keeping the same direction with the wall on your right, go through three more stiles then turn left between two walls and go on through an iron turnstile.

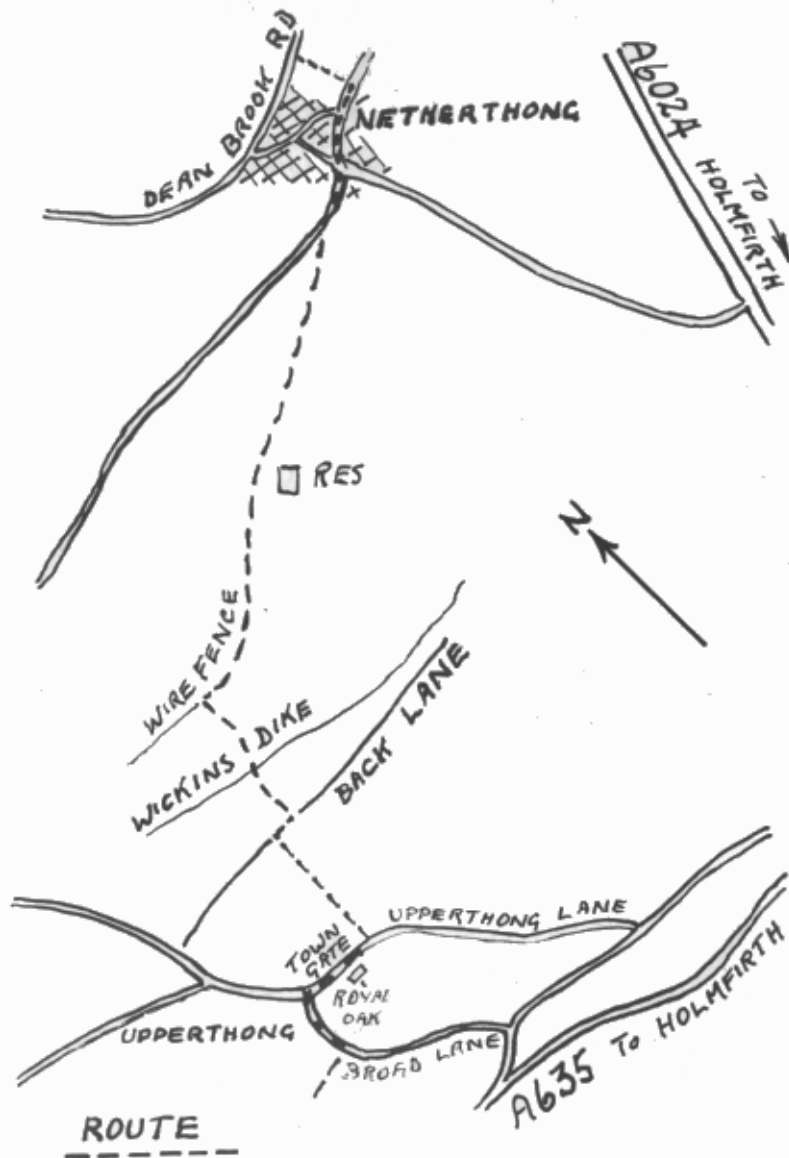
Maintain your present direction with the wall on your right, through two stiles, two white iron gates and up a farm track to an old Sunday School now converted to living accommodation.

Turn right down Yew Tree Lane and after 50 yards turn left through a rather awkward stile, along the top of the field, through two stiles and along the low side of a wall to Hogley.

Turn left on to Mellor Lane, then turn right down the road for a short distance. Take the left fork and after crossing the bridge over Black Syke Dike continue up the lane to Greenfield Road.

Cross the main road, go up Newlands Lane and along Flat Lane to Uppertthong. Turn left up Broad Lane and keep right along Town Gate (the main street of the village).





Section 11

UPPERTHONG—NETHERTHONG

Pass the Royal Oak Inn and after 100 yards turn left along a metalled road signed 'Lydgetts'. Keep the same direction over a stile and follow the wall till you come to a cart track called Back Lane.

Turn right and after a few yards go over a stile on your left, then follow the path down the field on the left of a wall.

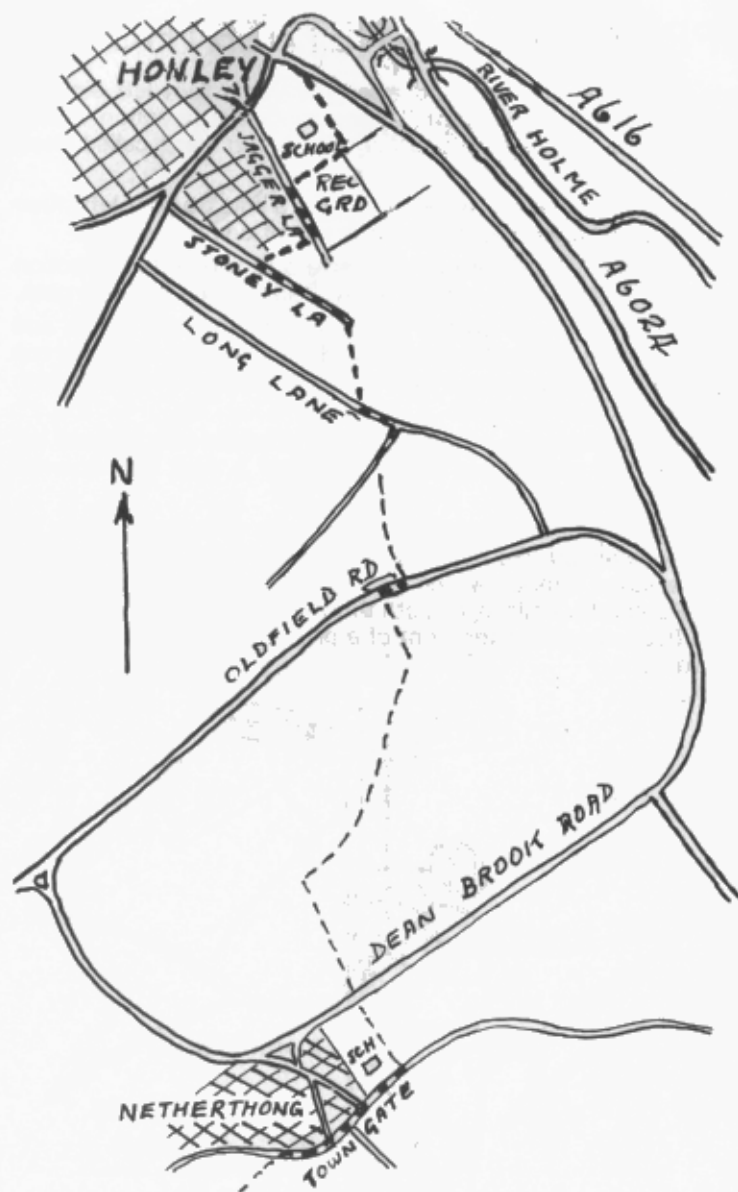
Cross Wickins Dike, through the stile and follow the direction indicated by the footpath sign to a small signposted wooden gate.

Keep left of the wall up the hill, turn right through a stile and along the low side of a wire fence. Go through a stile, keep the top side of the farm and cross a farm track to a rather indistinct path leading to a stile in the wall.

Go along the top side of the field, over a ladder stile on your left and follow the path along the top side of a wall with a small reservoir on your right.

Maintain your direction down several fields with Emley Moor TV mast directly ahead. Go over a stile to the left of a gateway, keep right of a stone bungalow and turn left over a stile in the corner signed 'Footpath'. Follow the path through the fence on your right, along a flagged path to the right of a private garage to Moor Lane and turn right.





Section 12

NETHERTHONG—HONLEY

Go along Town Gate, the main village street, to a point where the main road bends to the right and changes its name to New Road. Go straight ahead along Thong Lane.

Pass the Clothiers Arms and turn left down Ryecroft, a steep paved path to the right of the school. Cross the road and the stream Dean Brook.

Proceed up the hill between the buildings, passing the 'Cricketers' on your left to where the path takes a sharp right turn. Go through a stile and straight forward climbing slightly to a stile at the top of the field.

You can now see Castle Hill and should head for the slight hump to the left of Castle Hill. Keep the same direction through two stiles, cross a cart track, through two more stiles and an iron gate, then turn left on to Oldfield Road.

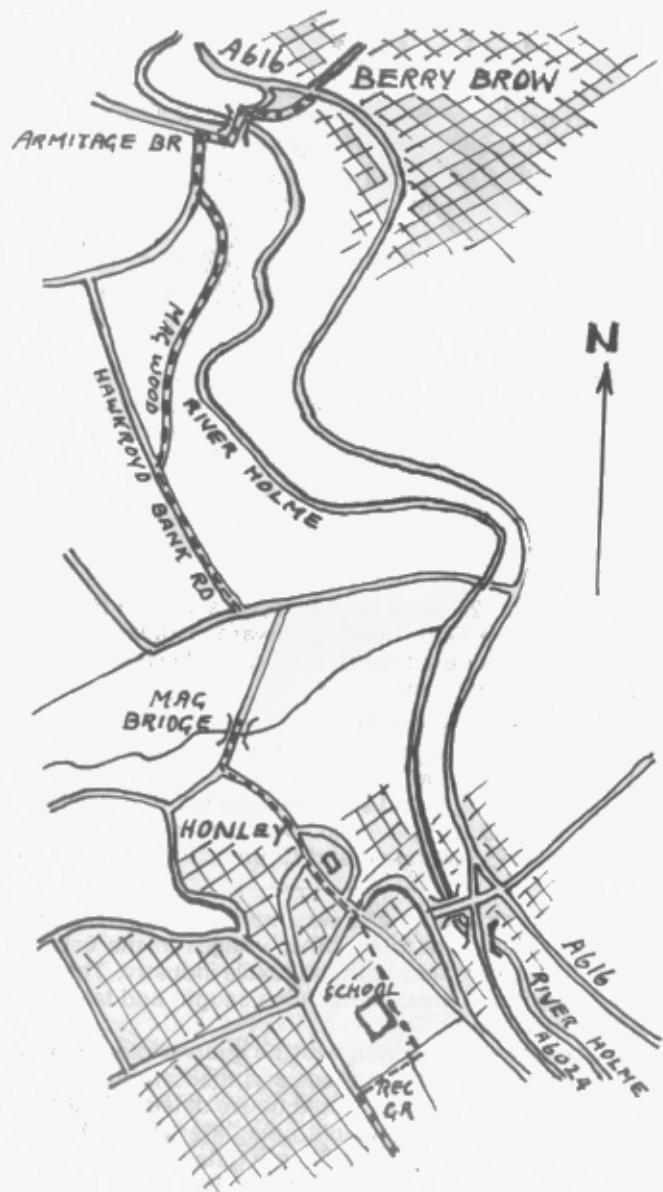
Turn right and almost immediately left past the end of some poultry houses to a stile about the centre of the field wall. Cross the field to the opposite wall at an angle, along the wall side to the corner of the field and through a stile on to Long Lane.

Turn left and after 20 yards pass through a stile on the right. Go diagonally across the field, heading towards Honley Church (the old church with the square tower), through a stile and along a path bringing you to Stoney Lane.

After about 50 yards along Stoney Lane turn right, through the houses and left on to Jagger Lane. Pass the recreation ground, turn right along the recreation ground wall and left along the low side of the school. A right and an immediate left turn will then take you through to one of the main junctions of old Honley (ie Eastgate, Westgate, Southgate and Church Street).

Honley has a long history and was mentioned in the Domesday Book. More recently, like many other villages in the valley it has had and still has strong links with the textile industry. The Luddites were very active in the area, some being caught and taken to York to be tried for murder.

The old part of Honley is well worth a short exploration. Notice the Town Wells near the cross roads and their inscription. As you walk up Church Street look for an old house dated 1751 which was the Wool Exchange for the whole area, the Manor House, the stocks and an old font inside the Church gate and many charming little folds. The Church is interesting and has some nice stained glass.



Section 13

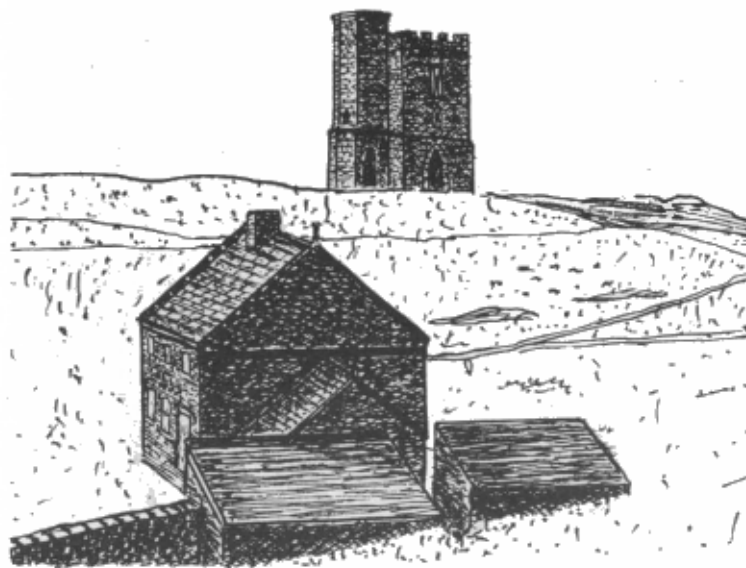
HONLEY – BERRY BROW

With the Post Office on your right, go up Church Street through the oldest part of Honley, pass the church and down the hill called Green Cliff. Bear right and still on the road cross Mag Brook at Mag Bridge.

Turn left immediately on a path to the right of a wall; 25 yards after the end of the wall you will come to a point where two paths cross. Turn right up the hill with a wall on your right and follow path through to Sandbeds (a metalled road).

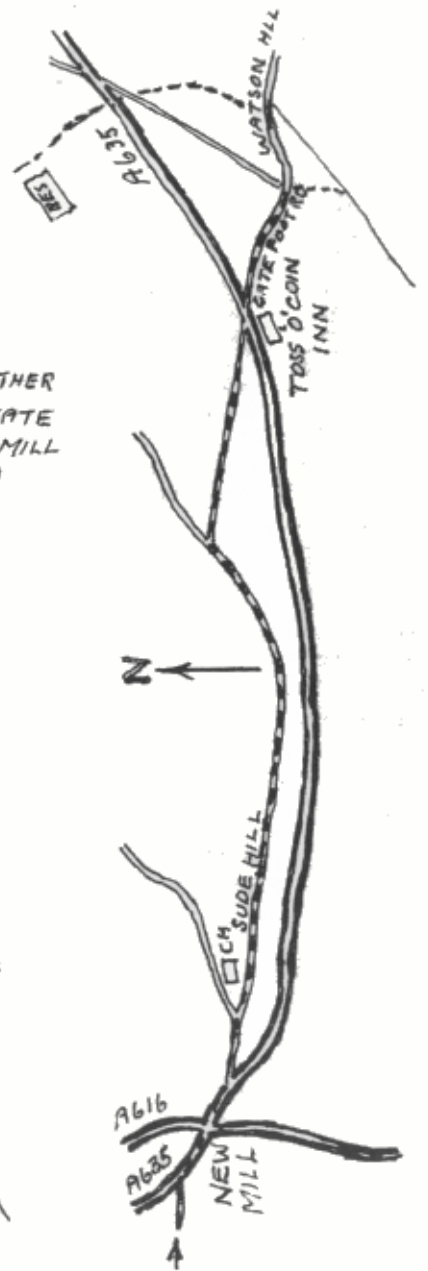
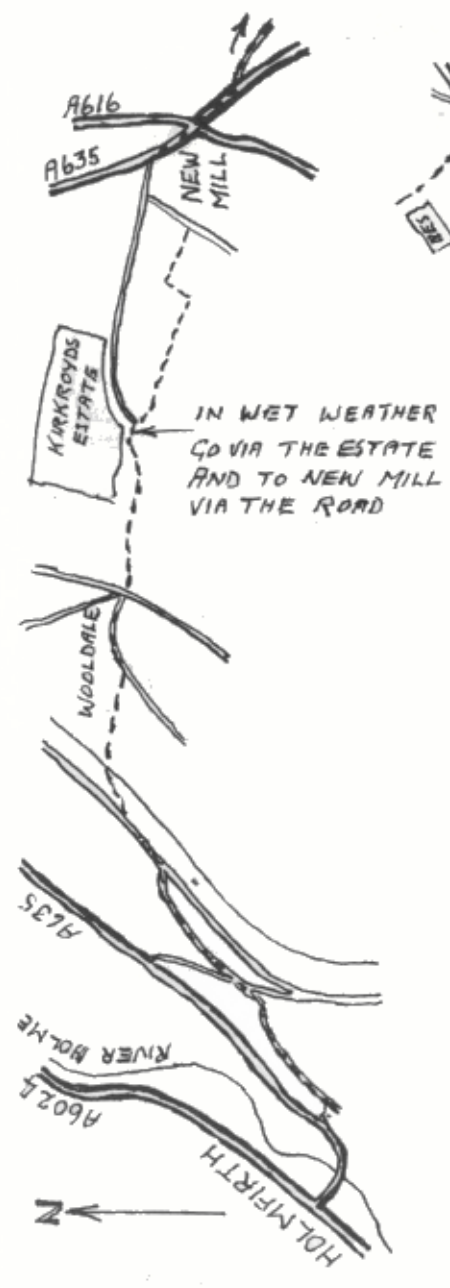
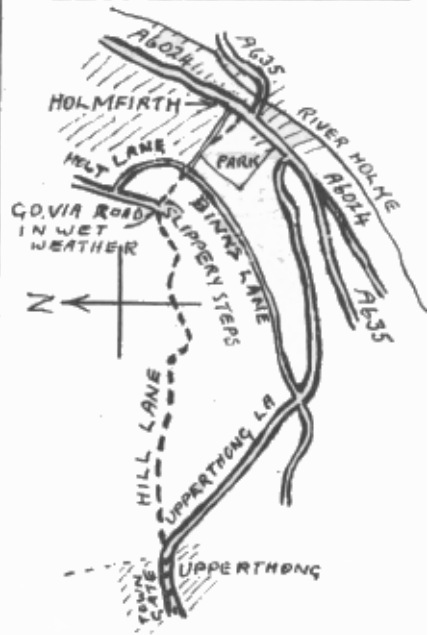
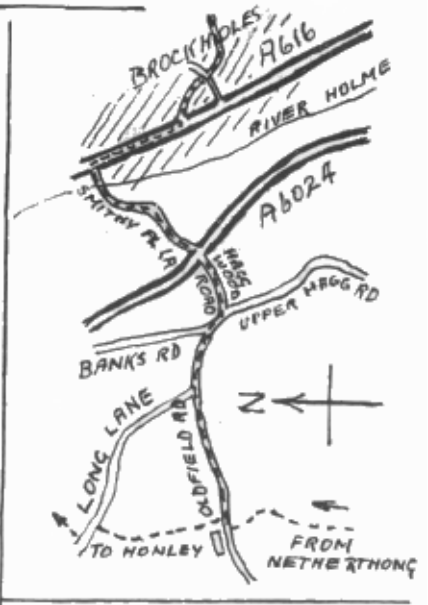
Turn right and after 200 yards turn left up Hawkroyd Bank Road. Just after passing a seat on your left, turn right on to a path between two walls and down through Mag Wood to the River Holme.

Here your path follows the river downstream but well above it. Turn right on to a metalled road, right again, over Armitage Bridge and up Stockwell Hill to the main road at Berry Brow where the walk began.



COOK'S STUDY AND GAMEKEEPER'S COTTAGE

LINK ROUTES



We hope you like our area and have enjoyed the walk. It will make us feel that our efforts in the preparation of this booklet have been worth while.

Several other booklets are available for those wishing to know more about our area. They cover much of the history and many shorter walks.

While every effort has been made to ensure that all the facts in this book are correct, the publishers cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies that may appear; we say this in sincere hope that there are none.

Published by
HOLME VALLEY CIVIC SOCIETY
Paths Committee

This electronic edition is provided for historical interest only. It was produced in response to a request to the Holmfirth Local History Group's website asking if the original was still available but it had been out of print for many years.. It was originally produced some decades ago. This version is simply a scan of an old copy.

We have no knowledge as to whether the landmarks are still in place; perhaps the broken stile and gate on page 9 have been repaired and others broken. We do not even know if all the footpaths still exist. Best treat it as if it started off with the words "When I worr nobut a lad..."