

Down the River and Back Via the Hills

Distance: approx 3 miles / 5 Km

Time: approx 1.5 hours

Some areas may be wet or slippery, strong footwear is recommended.

From the Robin Hood Inn, **go** left, up the road for 150 yards, then take the fork to the right, up a narrow lane, and at the first house on the right, turn right again through the bushes to double back on yourself. Follow the track down through the bushes to descend to a clearing where the remnants of the old paper mill still stand as a reminder of the industrial heritage of the area. Cross the bridge and to your left, the Heritage Trail storyboard and the old water wheel provide an insight into the importance of the river to the business of the area.

Go through the metal gate on the right, heading upwards into the woods. Follow this track, high above the river, until it levels off, then when you reach the waymarker, take the right fork to descend through to a paddock with stables (dogs on leads, please). The route then emerges onto the tarmac drive for Spa Laithe farm. Go down the drive, and just before the bridge on your right is the Cragg Vale spa where for hundreds of years, people have come to partake of the (alleged) healing powers of the spa waters. After this brief pause, hop over the stile to take a permissive path, signed to Clough Foot Bridge, still following the beck down the valley.

After about a quarter of a mile, the path emerges with a stables on your left and Clough Foot Bridge to your right. Go left up the lane for around 20 yards then go through the gate or stile on the right, signed for Dauber Bridge. The path soon enters a wood and then finally bears left to cross a small footbridge over a side stream before climbing some wooden steps to reach a woodland path which goes upwards and to the right, to reach a concreted farm track. Turn right and walk down the track, overlooking the caravan park, until it meets the main road, where you will find another of the Heritage Trail storyboards. At the main road, turn right and after approx 50 yards you will see the Cragg Vale Dragon on your left. Immediately on your left you will see some stone steps. Go up these to a gate then turn left, following the path towards the business park. As the path meets the tarmac drive, turn right and head up the hill, past the fronts of the business units, keeping to the left of the wall.

The track eventually comes to a stile where it meets a tarmac lane. Turn right up the lane, and continue upwards for around 150 yards until you find a metal gate and stone stile on your right. Go through the stile and follow the track until you see a waymarker post, then bear left up the hill. Follow this track until you come to a gate to field. Instead of going through the gate, take the path to the right of it which takes you along the top edge of the woods. Follow this trail, keeping the wall and farm lands to your left, until you reach a bench where you can pause to enjoy some spectacular views over Broadhead Clough and up onto Bell House Moor. After this interlude, keep to the path as it descends back down through the woods, ignoring the optional tracks heading off to the left, until you reach a stone wall and the path turns left towards a red metal gate. Go through the stone stile beside the gate and walk down the green lane between the two stone walls where you reach a small hamlet of lovely stone cottages. After the first property, turn right and follow the lane downwards as it weaves its way through the cottages and eventually emerges onto the main road. Turn left and after approximately 200 yards, return to the **Robin Hood Inn.**