

## Meltham Way

A circular route that follows paths and tracks around the perimeter of Meltham which can be shortened at a number of points.

Distance - 14km miles      Time – 6 hour      Route Type – Challenging

Toilets and Refreshments:

Parking: Free parking in Meltham car parks

Bus Routes to Meltham – From Huddersfield 324;

From the centre of Meltham walk 150 metres along Holmfirth Road then turn right to walk up Tinker Lane until it bends sharply right. Turn left and follow a footpath, across an estate road then up the left side of a field (now allotments) to emerge onto Calmlands Road, having passed through 3 kissing gates. Turn right up this road and you are now on the Meltham Way. (0km)

Walk ahead now on a track passing a public footpath on a track to the right. Turn right at the next track to follow it over the brow, down to the catchwater on your left opposite the farm entrance. Through the gate stile onto the catchwater path, cross a bridge, cross Wessenden Head Road and onto the next catchwater passing three more bridges all with two stiles. Cross a stile to Brown Grains Road track (2km).

Turn left, cross the bridge and through a gate, walk ahead then shortly turn right to follow a path parallel to the catchwater, crossing a small stream and the stepping stones at Muddy Brook. Bear right to a small gate, go down the steps, cross above one set of Watergates and walk ahead, back on the catchwater path. Follow this past many bridges, crossing Hassocks Road track, Slaithwaite Road, Blackmoorfoot Road and Slades Lane, crossing 2 stiles at each bridge. At the end of the catchwater path, cross the stile and turn right (5km) onto the reservoir embankment.

*For a better reservoir view you can go through a stile near the gate onto the waterside path then over a stile back onto the track at the far end, near the detached house.*

Cross the embankment, turn right at the end, walk down between the houses and bear slightly left into a walled track. Bear right on the track where a footpath veers off up to the left, to arrive at Harrison Lane. Turn right down the narrow fast road taking care (particularly at the bends) and where the road bends right, walk straight ahead on the tarmac lane. Past the houses continue on the middle lane, between a track off up to the left and a drive to the right.

Where the lane starts to bear down to the right, take the footpath over the wooden stile up to the left. Cross a stone stile and walk diagonally across the field, passing 30m to the right of an agricultural building, to reach the gateway to Far Fields Lane in the far corner. Bear right and follow this walled green track to a widening with a number of gates and a stone stile to the right. Cross the stile and walk ahead down the fields crossing 2 stiles to arrive at the top of a wood. Take the path ahead down the wood to Huddersfield Road (8km).

Carefully cross the road, turn right and very shortly turn back left down to Crosland Factory Lane. Turn right down this road past the industrial buildings following it round to the right, over a bridge and up past a public footpath off to the right. On arriving at a bend to the left, with a public footpath signed ahead, take the track to the right for 200 metres.

Cross the stone stile, taking the inclined footpath sharply back to the left, to climb to a path junction at the top. Turn right to follow the narrow path along the edge, walking ahead where the fence and main path turns left and also where 2 minor paths come in from the left. Cross the quarry/tip access road to walk at the left of a metal fence to arrive at a path by the side of a wall. Turn right to follow the path, then turn left along the narrow tarmac quarry/tip access road (taking care). Turn right at the main road to very shortly cross it and over a walled stile (10km).

Walk diagonally across the field to a stile in the far right hand corner. Do not cross it but turn back left along the field edge to a stile over the wall to the right, semi hidden under the bushes. Walk ahead along the left side of a field, over a stile and down another field to a path junction. Cross the wall stile ahead and immediately turn right to cross to another wall stile. Cross it into the wood walking ahead on the right hand path where a path drops off straight down to the left. Follow this path inclining down the wood to arrive at the reservoir corner. Take the track ahead to a road, passing to the side of a locked gate on the way. Turn left down Knowl Lane then carefully cross the road at the bottom to arrive at the Pleasure Grounds. (12km).

Walk ahead up the length of the grounds, passing a path to the right over a bridge. At the main road, cross onto the tarmac lane ahead and follow this for 750 metres, passing a bridleway to the left and a public footpath to the right on the way.

At the next public footpath to the right, turn right down the track, passing the access to the new Royd Wood on the left where around 6000 trees have been planted. Follow the track down past the house to a walled path. Drop down, cross a bridge and bear right uphill on a track. After passing the barrier, bear left up the cobbled lane to arrive back at Calmlands (14km).

From here either retrace your steps (through the stile opposite, across the field, through the stile across Heather Road, along the path, through the stile to turn right down Tinker Lane and left at the bottom to arrive back at Meltham centre. Or go down Calmlands to the main road and turn left to follow this road back to Meltham centre.

*History: (see also Meltham Historical Town Trail leftlet)*

*The regular field and track boundaries of local stone date from the early 1800's Enclosure Acts. These and the new mills caused the main employer to change from farming to industry. The Brook family came to Meltham Mills in 1774 setting up a very successful cotton and silk business there. They provided Meltham Town Hall, Meltham Hall and Park, workers homes, schools, churches, the Pleasure Grounds and the Convalescent Home (now The Woodlands). David Brown Tractors took over their main mills in 1939, closing down (as Case Tractors) in 1988. Deer Hill and Blackmoorfoot reservoirs plus catchwaters and conduits were all built in the 1870's for Huddersfield's benefit. The weir works at Brown Grains provided compensation water, during dry periods to Melthams mills which before steam, were water powered, mainly by Meltham Dike. The mills that gave Meltham Mills its name used that valley's river and water from the reservoir in Slate Pits Wood. All needed water for processing as well as power. Meltham Mills Co-Op was founded in 1827, 18 years before the Rochdale Pioneers.*

*Flora:*

*The first part of the walk, from the town centre round to Blackmoorfoot Road passes along moorland edge, through pasture land. Young native trees can be seen in copses and lining the path. Birch, Beech, Oak, Hawthorn and particularly Rowan have been planted. Bilberry, gorse, heather and bramble cover the steeper banks along the walls. The catchwater shows water crowfoot flowers in April and May. The large leaves of foxgloves sprout from walls and shady spots. The second 7km holds woods of mixed oak, beech, birch and sycamore above holly and elder. Bilberry, bluebell and bramble provide ground cover on the dry slopes and celandine, wood-sorrel and pink purslane in wetter places. Take care to avoid the nettles and thistles found*

*around some stiles. In the Pleasure Grounds, ferns, mosses and liverworts cover the rocks throughout the year. The path is lined with holly, yew trees and Rhododendron, planted over a hundred years ago to provide a delightful year round variety of colour and texture.*

**Birds:**

*The great variety of habitats for birds means that all seasons will provide interest, with summer and winter migrants swelling the resident population. In the upland areas the return of curlews and lapwings is welcomed in spring; also wheatears from tropical Africa. Easily overlooked are the meadow pipits, which are common in many places. Along the catchwater pied wagtails breed and in spring skylarks sing in the lower fields. Blackmoorfoot reservoir provides year round interest, especially the large winter gull roost, great crested grebes and a variety of ducks. In spring birdsong is at its peak; robins, wrens and linnets are joined by migrants such as willow warbler, chiffchaff and blackcap. Later still come swallows, house martins and finally swifts. Woodlands tend to become quieter after the breeding season but woodpeckers are common and nuthatches have increased significantly in our area.*

Please take care following the route, particularly on private land.

Please follow the Countryside Code at all times and keep dogs on leads near livestock.

Recommended OS map:- Explorer 288

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