

This booklet has been produced by the  
Don Gorge Community Group



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# Walks Near Warmsworth



## THE DON GORGE – AN INTRODUCTION

The Don Gorge is an area of outstanding natural beauty stretching from Conisbrough viaduct in the west to the A1(M) motorway in the east.

As the name implies, the river is bordered on either side by steep limestone cliffs which were carved out over thousands of years by the receding ice flows of the last ice age. Quarrying has played a great part in the reshaping of the landscape and continues to do so even today. However, the area is still home to a variety of species of flora and fauna and contains a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It also contains some agricultural land and a nature reserve owned and wardened by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

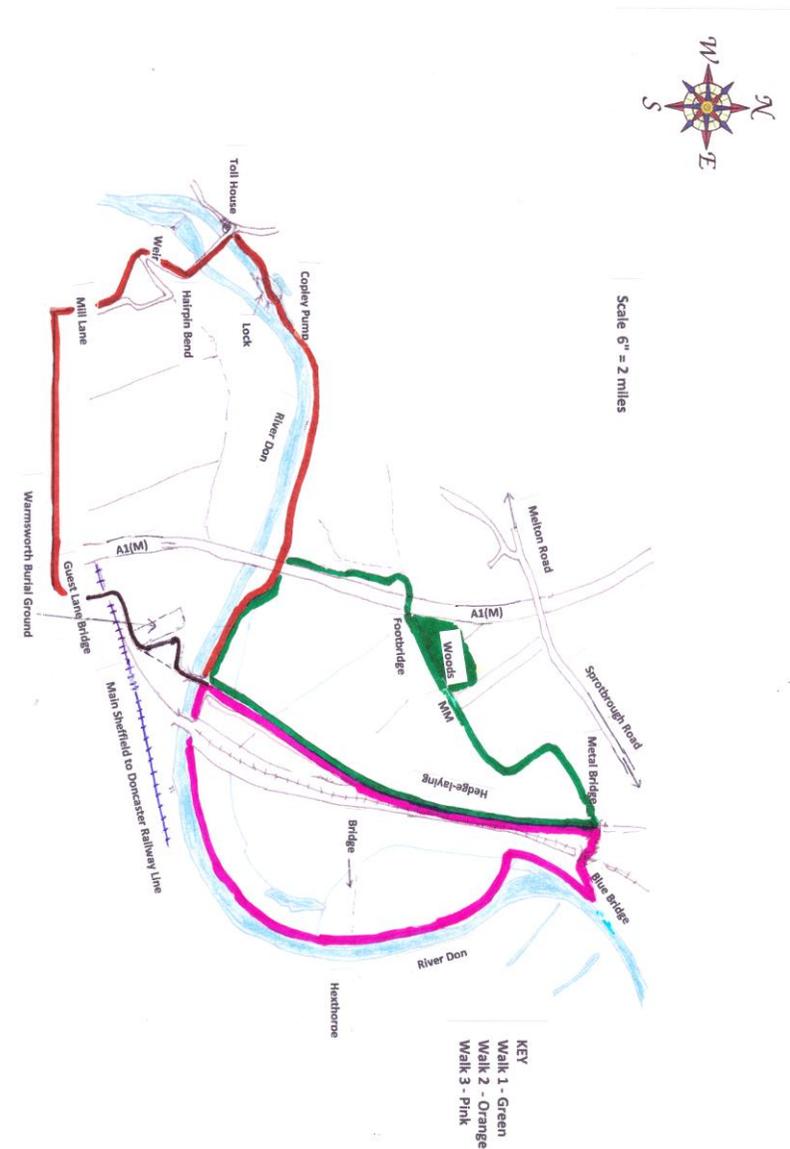
Access to the Gorge at Lower Sprotborough is via Boat Lane in Sprotborough village to the north bank and Mill Lane, Warmsworth to the south bank. Road bridges across the canal and the river link both banks and allow access to the Pennine Trail which extends through the Gorge on the north bank of the river.

The area represents an opportunity for many recreational activities, such as angling and wildlife observation. Hides in the nature reserve allow viewing over a stretch of water, known locally as ‘The Flash’, which arose due to mining subsidence. Mooring facilities for water transport, both commercial and pleasure, are also available. The Pennine Trail passes through the nature reserve and accommodates both cyclists and pedestrians. There are numerous woodland paths to explore on both sides of the river.

Limestone was used extensively in the area and Conisbrough Castle, which has one of the best preserved keeps in the country, is one of the remaining buildings. On the south bank, the small village of Levitt Hagg was occupied by quarrymen and their families, but due to mechanisation and the ever-growing frequency of flooding, the cottages were demolished in the 1940s and 50s and the only surviving evidence of the activity are lime kilns, the upper portions of which are still visible. The quarry has since been land-filled.

Sprotborough Hall, which was built by Sir Godfrey Copley in 1685, was demolished in 1926, but the remains of the pump house and a balustrade are still visible from the river bank on the north side near the Lock. the land sold for housing development

The Boat Inn, again on the north side, has had a varied history, and Sir Walter Scott is reputed to have stayed there whilst working on his novel, ‘Ivanhoe’.



Go down the farm track towards the gate and turn right. You double back along a path down to the river bank so that the river is on your left. There are some way markers on posts and fences.

There is a short but narrow length of path on the edge of the river. Some of the river bank is quite eroded and needs careful negotiation.

Go over the next stile and walk up the beginning of the flood bank.

You will see a variety of birds on the lake on your right and you might see some river traffic, canoes, narrow boats, cruisers and possibly a big commercial barge.



The Humber Princess

(a) Instead of going left over the railway, you can turn right and cross the metal bridge. Turn left at the end and follow the path round the ends of the gardens. It leads you to the Millennium Trail across the fields to the motorway footbridge. You then return down the side of the motorway in reverse of the start of Walk 1.

There are three walks described in this booklet. Two can be combined to make a longer one. Steps are involved and sometimes cattle are in the fields near the bottom of the steps.

Start by the Parish Noticeboard at the junction of Guest Lane, Grosvenor Crescent and Tenter Lane.

Walk up Guest Lane with the “Res” on your left. It used to be a reservoir but was filled in and is now a popular playing field.

Cross the main Doncaster to Sheffield railway line at the top where it runs in a deep cutting in the local limestone. To your left is the A1 (M) bridge and beyond, the stone arch of the Mill Lane bridge. You can just see it in the picture.

Turn right and walk down the lane to the cemetery gates. Past the cemetery bear left, across the open ground and follow the zigzag path down to the disused railway bridge over the River Don.



The Blue Bridge

Look to your left and see the A1(M) viaduct and the river turning towards Sprotborough. Look right and the river meanders past Hexthorpe on its way to Doncaster.



The Motorway Bridge

At the end of the bridge there are some steps down to the river bank, signposted as the Trans-Pennine Trail to Barnsley. From here you can take one of three routes.

### **Walk 1.**

A circular route up the side of the A1(M), Millennium footpath, the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) and back to Warmsworth.

This takes about 1 hr 15 mins.

### **Walk 2.**

The TPT to Sprotbrough Lock, the Toll House, then Mill Lane, Tenter Lane and back to Guest Lane.

This takes about 1 hr 15 mins.

### **Walk 3.**

The TPT towards Barnsley, right onto the river bank at Newton Farm and back to Warmsworth

This takes a little longer

### **Walk 3**

This walk is described as a clockwise route, but it depends on personal preference which way you decide to go.

At the bridge over the Don, do not go down the steps, but carry on along the upper part of the Trans Pennine Trail. At some point along this path, you will notice that the sound of the motorway has disappeared.

Go past the bridge on your right, through which you can see Hexthorpe.



View of Hexthorpe

Keep going with the railway on your right. It is not securely fenced here, so be careful with small children and dogs.

You will come to a metal bridge over the track and an electricity pylon on the right. Just beyond is an 'MM' sign on the ground beside a flight of wooden steps on the right.

Take the steps and turn right at the top where there is another 'MM' sign. Keep the fence on your right and then go left and over a blue railway footbridge. (a)

To return to Warmsworth, turn right, up the steps and through the car park. Turn right again, go carefully along the road past the Toll House which was built at the same time as the bridge which replaced the ferry.



The Toll House

Cross the canal and river bridges and follow the path up the hill. At the first bend, join the footpath constructed by the Volunteers, up through the trees to the very welcome seat at the top.



Seat at the top of the hairpin bend

Follow the road down to Warmsworth. The two houses on the right just before the bridge are known as, "Railway Cottages", as there used to be a station there with steps on the side of the cutting going down to the line.

Turn left along Tenter Lane if you want to return to the starting point of the walk at the notice board.

## Walk 1

Descend the steps to the river bank and then turn right towards the A1(M) along the TPT. There are lots of ducks, coots and other wildlife on the river along this stretch.

Just past the A1(M) viaduct take the path up to your right. It has a series of steps and places to stop and admire the view!

At the top, keep the motorway on your right, and follow the path up the hill to a T junction.

Turn right and cross the motorway on the footbridge.

Follow the path down to the right keeping the woods on your left and carry on straight ahead on the Millennium footpath between the fields.

At the end of the fields, the official footpath turns left between two hedges and then behind the houses to the footbridge over the TPT.

Cross the footbridge, then turn left. Walk a few yards/metres and turn left again to some steps going down onto the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT).

Turn left and follow the TPT back to Warmsworth.

The railway is close to you on your left and unfenced in places so take care with dogs and small children.

Just after some black and white posts, there is a fork in the path where you can see Hexthorpe through a railway bridge. (See picture in Walk 3)

If you follow the lower path, which is the main route of the TPT, you can see where the Don Gorge Conservation Volunteers have been doing some hedge-laying.



Hedge-laying

Through the black and white gate at the end of the path and round the bridge base to the right, you return up the steps onto the bridge.

If you take the right hand branch of the TPT you will avoid the steps up onto the bridge at the end.



The Trans-Pennine Trail



Return up the zigzag path to the cemetery and then up the lane and back over the bridge.

## Walk 2

Descend the steps to the river bank and then follow the TPT beside the river to Sprotbrough Lock. Just as the lock comes into view there are some ruins of a pumping station on your right. This is known as the Copley Pump and was used by the owner of Sprotbrough Hall to pump water up to the roof of the Hall to power a fountain and to fill a swimming pool.

The Hall stood at the top of the escarpment on your right, but was sold to cover debts and was demolished in 1926. You can just see the balustrade of the Hall gardens. The Don Gorge Volunteers have cleared the site of the pump and found parts of the mechanism.



The Pump House

Further along you can see where the remains of the old cut of the canal ran before the new deep lock was created to enable bigger vessels to reach Sheffield. Continue past the lock to the landing stage below the car park. Beyond the lock and landing area is the Boat Inn which is reputed to be the place where Sir Walter Scott wrote his novel, "Ivanhoe". Further along is the access to Sprotbrough Flash Nature Reserve.



Sprotbrough Flash