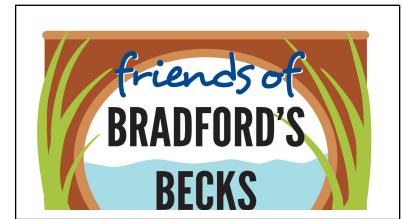


BRADFORD TO SHIPLEY ALONG BRADFORD BECK



Because Bradford Beck runs underground in Bradford city centre, you have to walk for a while before getting the chance to see it. This linear walk takes you on an interesting route out of the city centre before joining the Canal Road Greenway beside the Beck. There is a short optional extension to the River Aire at the end of the walk.

LENGTH: 5.7km (3.5 miles). Optional extension 30 minutes return.

TERRAIN: A short climb at the beginning and one in the middle, otherwise easy going. Some road walking. Overall ascent 96m. OS map 288.

START: The junction of Bolton Road and Lower Kirkgate, by the flight of stone steps near the entrance to Bradford Cathedral, BD1 4DA. Signposted Dalesway Link Path. [w3w //layers.nets.necks](http://w3w.//layers.nets.necks)

PARKING: There are several car parks in Bradford city centre.

BUS / TRAIN: Bradford Interchange ten minutes walk, Forster Square Station five minutes.

1. Go up the flight of stone steps, continue uphill and emerge onto a road. Turn left, then fork right into a cobbled road (Captain Street). Go forward, crossing Priestley Street, and at the next junction go almost straight ahead to meet Bolton Road. Cross the road and turn right to walk up to the traffic lights. Turn left to the pedestrian crossing, and cross the main road to rejoin Bolton Road on the opposite side.

2. Continue up Bolton road for 275 metres and take the first left down cobbled Lawson Street. At the bottom turn right and walk forward to enter the Boar's Well nature reserve. Follow the level path straight ahead through the reserve, ignoring any side paths. Look out for two wells on the right. The first is Spinkwell, a stone well which fed a spa in the 18th century. The second is a pond fed by a small stream: this is called Boar's Well and is associated with the famous Bradford Boar which reputedly terrorised local inhabitants in the 14th century. Eventually you descend to emerge onto busy King's Road.



3. Turn right up King's Road to the traffic lights. Carefully cross the roads so that you continue walking up Kings Road on the left hand side. Take the first left down Bolton Lane, then the second right along Hollin Close Lane. Follow this unmade road until you reach the last house on the right, and take the narrow footpath on the right of the house. Go through the metal bollards and continue straight ahead, climbing uphill. At the end, turn left and follow a tarmac path between fences. At the end, follow the path left to meet a road (Poplars Park Road).

4. Turn left and walk down the road to the end. Go left, and where the road bends left, take the clearly marked path on the right – this is the Canal Road Greenway. Walk down the path to meet Bradford Beck. The Beck here is constrained in a straight, brick-lined channel with a curved base. In 1873 Bradford Beck was straightened and this channel was built to carry effluent away from the new Frizinghall Sewage Works as fast as possible.

As well as the sewage works, in the 19th and early 20th centuries this valley was a busy industrial place, with mills and dyeworks strung along the Beck's route from Bradford to Shipley.

5. Turn right and follow the Greenway, with the Beck on your left. The Beck is mainly hidden by undergrowth behind a high metal fence. Cross two roads. At the second road (Poplar Road) go to the bridge and look back – you can clearly see the straight brick channel. Now look on the other side of the bridge to see the contrast: the Beck, released from the channel, is now running a more naturalised course.



Carry on along the Greenway. This next section is running parallel with the route of the old Bradford Canal, to the right of the path. The canal opened in 1774 to take iron, coal and stone to Liverpool but had problems from the beginning. It was difficult to supply sufficient water and the canal quickly became polluted. It gradually became unused and was closed in 1922 under an Act of Abandonment.



Soon you can see the Beck going into a concrete culvert. This short section was covered over in the 1930s, possibly for a road that was never built. Bradford Council is hoping to open it up again sometime in the future – a process known as daylighting. Just before the culvert you may be able to spot a fig tree behind the wall on the left



At the end of the grassy section, turn left by the information board to reach Valley Road. Turn right, cross Briggate with care and walk forward with a wall on your right.



You can make a pleasant diversion by going through the wooden gate on the corner. There's a seat for walkers to have a rest as you descend the short steep path. Bradford Council has planted trees and shrubs and installed bat and bird boxes to improve the habitat of this surprisingly quiet area. There is a lovely old cobbled weir at the bottom. Returning back to the gate, go right around the corner to rejoin the walk.

At the gap in the wall before the railway bridge, take a path on the right. Follow this through woodland and meadow, going right at the first junction and left at the second, to arrive at the entrance road to Shipley Station. Always keep the Beck on your right. This path can sometimes be very overgrown, in which case you can retrace your steps back to the Greenway and follow it until it emerges onto Leeds Road. Turn left there for the station.

The Wild Trout Trust has installed a number of fish passes along this stretch of the Beck. Where water is shallow and fast, or where there's a step or a weir, it's difficult for fish to swim past. The fish passes are made of wooden sleepers which force the water to flow round the side, making it deeper and easier for fish to swim or jump up. There is a fish pass underneath this bridge at the end of the walk, before turning left for Shipley Station.

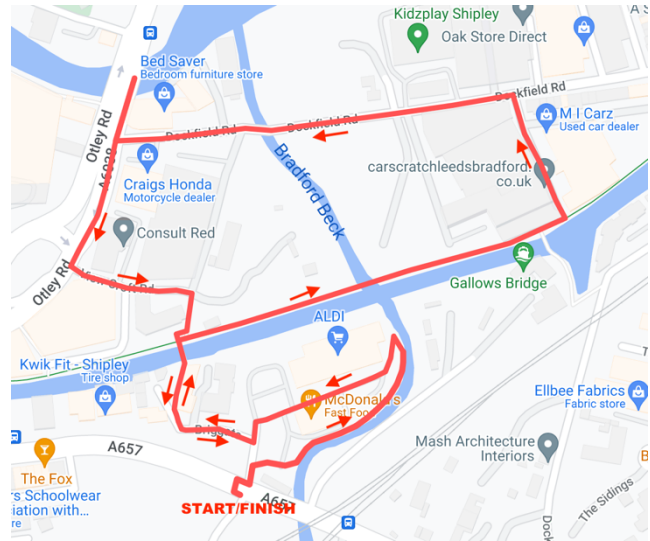


WALK EXTENSION TO THE RIVER AIRE

Approximately 30 minutes return.

From Shipley Station it's difficult to follow Bradford Beck to its meeting point with the River Aire. This short extension gives some glimpses along the route.

Instead of turning left to Shipley Station, turn right to Leeds Road. Then go left and cross the road at the pelican crossing. Turn right and go into the supermarket car park, where the Beck runs along the perimeter on the right. If you follow it round to the very back of the Aldi building and peer over the wall, you can see the Beck going towards a bridge. This is where it flows underneath the Leeds and Liverpool canal.



Walk back towards Leeds Road, but turn right before reaching it. Walk uphill for about 90m until you see six concrete bollards on the left. Turn right here and take a narrow signposted footpath between buildings. At the end cross the footbridge over the Leeds and Liverpool canal. This is called Gallows Bridge and is on the route of an ancient right of way. Go down the steps at the end and join the canal towpath, turning left.



As you walk along the towpath, look out for a wall denoting a bridge. Look over the wall to see the Beck flowing underneath the canal. This is the point you saw from the car park earlier. Shortly afterwards you come to Junction Bridge, which dates back to 1774 and is Grade 2 Listed. This was where the former Bradford Canal once joined the Leeds and Liverpool canal, hence its name. Do not cross the bridge, instead carry on down the cobbled path and take a footpath on the left which leads to Dockfield Road. Turn left along Dockfield Road.

Where the green wire netting behind the wall on either side of the road comes to an end, cross over the road and look over the bridge. Depending on the time of year and the degree of foliage you may be able to see where the Beck flows into the River Aire at the far end.

Continue along Dockfield Road towards the traffic lights. If you want to see the River Aire, turn right and walk down to the bridge. Otherwise, turn left, and at the next set of traffic lights turn left into View Croft Road. At the end turn right up a path which leads to the canal. Climb the steps on the right to cross back over Gallows Bridge and retrace your steps to Shipley Station.



