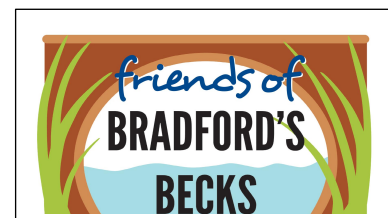


# MORTON BECK AND SUNNYDALE RESERVOIR



This walk follows Morton Beck from the Aire valley up the hillside to Sunnydale reservoir, the site of a mass trespass by ramblers in 1930. It also passes the remains of Sunnydale Mill, which produced high-class paper used for banknotes.

**LENGTH:** 5.1km (3.2 miles).

**TERRAIN:** Gradual ascent for the first half, downhill on the return. Some footpaths cross uneven rough ground and can be muddy. One section involves crossing becks and can be challenging after rain (a walking pole might be helpful) but an alternative route is given. Overall ascent 150m. OS map 297.

**START:** The bridge over the canal in Morton Lane, BD16 2EP. w3w ///bulbs.simulates.fells

**PARKING:** Park courteously in Ryshworth Crescent, Morton Lane or other streets south of the canal.

**BUS / TRAIN:** 662, 60, to Croft Road (5 minutes walk), K4 to Morton Bridge. Crossflatts Station 15 minutes walk.

**1.** From the bridge go north for 15m and go through a gap in the wall on the right. At the end of the field on the right, take the footpath on the right. Cross the footbridge and follow the path to go over a stile. Walk up the field, with Morton Beck on your left. Shortly before the gated stile in the wall ahead, take a path which forks left downhill. Follow this path, which becomes a bit tricky underfoot, until it meets a path coming down from the right. Keep forward, following the obvious path, and past an old mill pond. This is the dam for Holroyd Mill, which was built in 1810 as a cotton spinning mill. It closed in the 1920s.



Turn right over a wooden footbridge, and at the end, go over a stile and turn left to cross the Beck by a metal footbridge. Follow the path, which then goes up steps to emerge onto Cliffe Mill Fold.



**2.** Turn left, and then first right onto a cobbled drive, which becomes a path between walls. Go through the gate at the end and then straight across the yard to arrive at Otley Road. Cross with care, and go up the steps opposite to walk up Green End Road for 375m (1/4 mile). At the junction with Upwood Lane fork right, passing a Weak Bridge sign and then Morton Hall on the left. By a second Weak Bridge sign fork right into Lakeside. As you walk down, look over the wall on the right to see another mill pond.

Just before the bridge go left into a parking area and through a narrow gap in the wall ahead. Shortly before the gap in the next wall, go right and cross the Beck by stepping stones. \*

**\* See next page for alternative route if it's not possible to cross by the stepping stones.**

**\* Alternative route if the Beck is impassable**

Go through the gap in the wall ahead and turn left. After 100m look for a footpath sign on the right, by the gateway for Moorfield House. Follow this, go over a stile, and follow the wall on the left to go over a second stile. Keep following the wall on the left to reach a farm track. Turn right and follow the track to a fork just before the dam by a public footpath sign. Go right here and walk along the track below the dam for about 120m to meet the main route at **Point 4**. If you wish to see the remains of Sunnydale Mill they are a short distance down the path on the right.

**3.** Go left and follow the footpath until you meet a wall. Walk beside the wall, and when it ends keep forward (the path is less distinct here). Follow the path as it climbs through an area of gorse bushes and brambles. The path eventually curves left to go through a narrow gap with stone blocks on the ground, and descends to meet Morton Beck. Keep forward to meet Fenny Shaw Beck and cross this by stepping stones (it may be easier to cross a little further up the bank). At a junction with a path going up on the right, ignore the path ahead and turn right to climb up (it may be wet). The path then curves left to meet a wall and a metal gate. Go right through the gate and follow the path which broadens out and takes you past the ruins of Sunnydale Mill on the left. Keep forward to meet a track.



Morton Beck was once a scene of intense industry. In the 19th century there were ten mills along the river's 3.3km stretch from the River Aire to the head of the dale, mainly producing paper and worsted cloth. Sunnydale, the highest mill, was built in 1833 and produced high-quality paper for banknotes and stationery. Its powerful waterwheel was reputed to be the largest in mainland Britain. The mill closed in 1878, and was eventually demolished in the 1930s. Take great care when exploring the ruins, as there are some steep drops.

**4.** Turn right along the track. After 80m, before the track bends to the left and opposite a small cleared area, take a narrow path on the left. This climbs up to run along the top of a slope on the edge of the woods and is the highest point on the walk.

After Sunnydale Mill closed the Sunnydale estate was purchased by Bradford Corporation Waterworks, and the reservoir and surrounding woodland became a recreational area for local people. However, in 1930 the Waterworks Committee closed the site to the public because it wanted to let the grazing and shooting rights. On 16 November 1930 about 300 people, led by the West Riding Ramblers' Federation, opened up a blocked stile and trespassed on the estate. They walked through the woodland and around the reservoir, and held a protest meeting.



They may not have been immediately successful in their protest, but today the area around Sunnydale reservoir is once more a tranquil place for local people to enjoy.

After 170m turn left down some steep wooden steps to cross the dam of Sunnydale Reservoir. At the end turn left and walk down the track, keeping straight ahead for about 650m, passing two cattle grids. At the second cattle grid turn left onto a track (Upwood Lane). At the end turn right into Green End Road. Walk down Green End Rd to the end, cross over the road and retrace your route back to Cliffe Mill Fold. Turn right here, then first left into Hawthorne Way. Go forward about 70m, take the stile ahead into a field and follow this path back to the starting point

