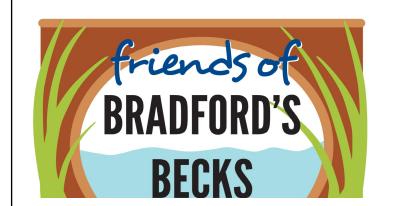


# PINCH BECK, HIGH BIRKS BECK AND HOLE BOTTOM BECK



This is a switchback walk between three valleys, with some steep climbs. Although you don't spend much time walking by the becks, this walk gives a fine sense of the network of tributaries that flow down from the Queensbury ridge into Bradford Beck.

**This walk can be combined with the Pitty Beck and Clayton walk to make a 12.7km (7.9 miles) figure-of-eight walk.**

**LENGTH:** 5.5km (3.4 miles).

**TERRAIN:** Quite strenuous in places, with 3 steep climbs. Some road walking. One area may be boggy. Overall ascent 210m. OS map 288.

**START:** Start of the Great Northern Railway Trail next to Thornton Primary School, Thornton Road, BD13 3NN (opposite Ashfield Road). w3w ///reds.soap.bless

**PARKING:** There is some parking on Thornton Road, or park courteously in side streets.

**BUS:** From Bradford 607 to Ashfield Road, 67 to Kipping Lane. Walk forwards along Thornton Road to the Primary School.

*Before or after this walk you may wish to visit the site of the former Thornton Railway Station. This is 250m further west along Thornton Road and has an attractive seating area, with an information board.*

**1.** Take the Great Northern Railway Trail and follow it round the back of the school. At the path junction turn left to walk along Thornton Viaduct, which crosses Pinch Beck running 33 metres below. This is regarded as one of the finest viaducts in England and is Grade 2 listed. The Great Northern Railway Trail follows part of the railway line which ran between Keighley and Halifax. The line opened in 1878 and was known as the Alpine route because of its stunning scenery and sequence of tunnels and viaducts. It closed in 1965.



**2.** At the road turn right, walk up the hill for 20m and take the footpath on the left to West Scholes. Go



through the squeeze stile and walk down the field with the wall on your left. At the bottom corner pass a broken stile and follow the path right to go through a narrow gap in the wall. The path gently descends towards a gap in the wall below, with High Birks Beck meandering along the valley bottom. Go through the gap and keep in the same direction to cross the Beck by a footbridge. Go through the metal gate in the wall ahead.

**3.** Follow the path steeply uphill, go through a metal gate at the top of the field and bear left to climb on a clear path through rough ground. Enter a walled track, pass by the side of a wooden gate and keep forward to emerge onto a track. Turn left along the track. After about 100m take the footpath on the right signposted Marley Lane. At the end, cross the road and turn left. Follow the road round to the

right, and where the road curves left keep forward along Brow Lane for 320m until you reach a former railway bridge. (You can shorten the walk here, by taking the signposted footpath on the right just before the bridge. At the top turn left to follow the Great Northern Trail back to the beginning).

**4.** When you are underneath the bridge, take the drive on the left which leads through a metal gate to Hole Bottom Farm. Just before the wooden gates, take the footpath on the left by an old stile and follow a grassy footpath above the buildings. The elaborate chimney on the other side of the valley is all that remains of the Clayton Fireclay Brickworks.



The Clayton Fireclay Brickworks exploited a rich seam of clay along Hole Bottom Beck valley. It was built in 1880 by Julius Whitehead to produce sanitary ware, chimneys and glazed bricks. The chimney was built in 1907 by Whitehead's son, Claude, when the works were enlarged and is Grade 2 listed. The company closed in 1970.

Depending on the time of year, behind the chimney to the left you may be able to see the white dome of an observatory on the roof of the Whitehead family home, called the Towers. The observatory was built in the 1970s by two descendants of Julius Whitehead, one of whom hand-ground the lens for the telescope.

After going through a squeeze stile, keep straight ahead, looking right to see Hole Bottom Beck running along the valley bottom. Go through another stile and continue forward with the wall on your right. When you reach the buildings, go over a stile next to a gate. Go straight ahead, through a large wooden gate, and walk through the yard to an electric gate, which opens by pushing the green button on the right (closes automatically). Walk down the track to the road (Cockin Lane).

**5.** Turn right and walk with great care down the road for 225m. After crossing Low Lane cross the road to enter Corn Mill Lane (s.p. Bronte Way). Where the path bends right go over a stile next to a metal gate on the left. Keep straight on, heading towards the right end of the wall ahead. Below on your right Pinch Beck goes over a weir and meanders along the valley. At the end of the wall, go through the metal gate and follow the fence and wall on your right to go through another gate. Keep following the fence line, heading for agate in the wall ahead. Warning! – the area round this gate can be very boggy.

Head half-right towards a wall end and walk up the field with this wall on your left – there is no obvious path. In the far left corner go through the stile, then over the stile on the left, and then turn right along an enclosed path. At the end turn right to meet the road. Turn left and follow the road steeply upwards for 320m.



**6.** Just before the Great Northern Railway Trail take the footpath on the right signposted Thornton. Go through a stile and shortly after turn right to follow a grassy walled footpath (may be muddy). At the end, go through a metal gate and steeply down the stone steps to a golf course. Go straight ahead to cross the footbridge over Pinch Beck to the left of the putting green. Follow the flagged path uphill – this path can be slippery after rain. When you come to the road, turn left along Alderscholes Lane for 150m. Before the viaduct turn right into Lane End, which soon becomes a narrow path past houses, and follow this until it emerges on to Thornton Road. Turn left to return to the beginning of the walk.

