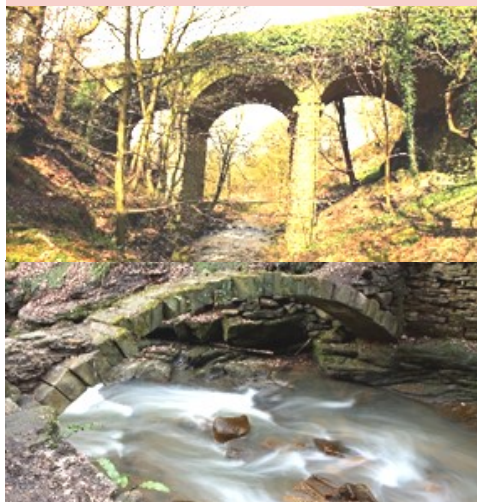


# Healey Dell Heritage Centre & Tea rooms “Trail Map”



## Healey Dell Heritage Trail: Start at Healey Dell Heritage Centre and Tea Rooms, Dell Road, Rochdale OL12 8TT. Tel: 01706350459



Trail Point 1: Map Ref TP1

Located at the Healey Dell Heritage Centre & Tea rooms, Trail Point 1 is on the edge of the industrial complex - Healey Hall Mills. This area has had a chequered industrial past, from colliery, woollen and cotton mills, even a Second World War

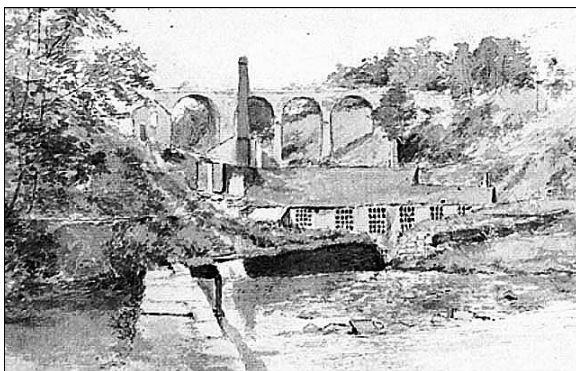
munitions factory, through to its present-day use by small businesses and housing.

Despite the prevalence of industry, wildlife has a strong hold here. The buildings provide nesting sites for many birds and strategically placed feeding sites attract many woodland birds in Winter. Follow Dell Road through the mill complex and begin to climb up the valley side. To your right just behind the buildings stands a mill lodge that once provided the mills with water for their manufacturing processes and engines.

**>>Continue up Dell Road to the Viaduct. Here, take the path down to the left and to Trail Point 2.**

TRAIL POINT 2: Map Ref TP2

Spanning the river are two stone arches, the remains of "Th' Owd Mill I' T' Thrutch". A textile mill, probably built in the 17th Century to process wool fleeces from local farms, once stood on these arches - its weight helping to keep their structures solid. On the riverbank an old waterwheel pit, derelict stone fulling tanks and the remains of the 'sulphur cellars' may be seen. Possibly a Saxon Corn Mill was situated here, although no evidence can be seen remaining today. Looking downstream, the valley is dominated by the 105 foot high, 200 foot long Viaduct. Built in 1866, using locally quarried stone, the Viaduct was constructed by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company to carry the Rochdale - Bacup line over the River Spodden.



**>>Follow the path along the river and climb the steps to Trail Point 3.**

### **TRAIL POINT 3: Map Ref TP3**

As the river flows over a band of resistant sandstone set amongst softer shale rocks, a deep gorge – known locally as a Thrutch', and waterfalls have been formed. This area is known as 'Healey Dell', two Viaducts mark its northern and southern boundaries. A sheltered and damp atmosphere prevails, creating ideal conditions for moisture loving plants such as Ferns and Mosses. The woodland here is rich in Oak, Birch and Beech trees and the rock ledges are colonised by a heath vegetation of Heather and Bilberry. The man - made weir below was constructed in order to provide a head of water for the mill downstream.

**>> Continue along the riverside path to Trail Point 4.**

### **TRAIL POINT 4: Map Ref TP4**

In the gorge below lies the 'Fairies Chapel', the strange rock shapes and misty atmosphere make its folklore history, involving wicked fairies, witches and Robin Hood seem almost plausible.

**>> The Fairies Chapel can be reached by descending the steps to the left of the path, however, it is necessary to come back the same way.**

The Viaduct upstream of the Fairies Chapel carries Station Road over the river. The bridge is clothed Ivy, a most unusual plant that produces two shapes of leaf and flowers in December. The black berries of the Ivy provide a valuable food source for birds in the depths of Winter. Along the length of the river, and in this area in particular, a small, dark brown bird with a white 'bib' can often be seen diving into the water from rocks and boulders, disappearing from sight underwater, to emerge on the rocks again slightly further along the river. This is the Dipper, a bird closely related to the more familiar Wren, its diet consisting of the small insects, which live on the river bed.



**>> Continue to follow the main path and climb the steps up to Station Road. Cross the road and follow the path on the right of the river, keeping left between the two fences. Here you will find Trail Point 5**



### **TRAIL POINT 5: Map Ref TP5**

This Trail Point overlooks the site of 'Broadley Mills', once owned by the Tweedale family. These mills took up sites on both sides of the river with cotton being processed on one side, and wool on the other. The circular structure on the opposite side of the river is thought to be the remains of a

gasometer. The gateposts, here, would once have served the house, which stood on the banks of the river to the left. A wooden bridge spanned the river providing access to the many paths which once ran through this area.

**>> Remain on this path and follow the river, passing through two gates and under the overhead pipes to the large pond at Trail Point 6.**

### **TRAIL POINT 6: Map Ref TP6**

This pond, 'Meadow Lodge', was created in 1984 on the site of a disused mill lodge. Clean water from a moorland stream is piped to the pond and overflows into the River Spodden.



This continuous flow of water is essential to keep the pond 'healthy' by preventing stagnation and silting from taking place. The pond supports a great 'diversity of wildlife - Sticklebacks, Dragonflies and water insects abound. Moorhens and Mallards breed in the marshy areas and you may be lucky enough to see a Kingfisher sitting on one of the overhanging branches

looking for a tasty meal.

**>> Follow the path around the pond, over the wooden footbridge and continue straight ahead through the grassy area of the 'Village Green'. On closer examination this 'grassy' area is made up of many species of wild flowers and grasses, whilst brightly coloured fungi, such as Wax Caps, may be found here in Autumn.**

**>> At the end of the Village Green' turn left and climb the steps leading up to the trestle footbridge. Cross over the bridge and turn right, following the path down to Trail Point 7.**

### **TRAIL POINT 7: Map Ref TP7**

The three pits here are all that remain of a once busy Stone 'Rubbing' Mill, where stone from local quarries was brought, by special tram rail, to be 'dressed' before being loaded onto waiting railway carriages.

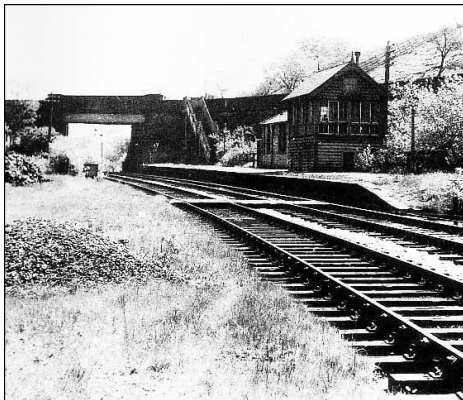
**» Leave this area by descending onto the disused railway line via the steps situated opposite the Trail Point.**

The railway line was opened to traffic in 1870, from Rochdale to Facit, and extended to Bacup in 1881. It was never financially viable and had been built by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company primarily to keep another railway company out of the district. The Rochdale - Bacup line carried stone from the large quarries of Britannia and Facit as well as passenger traffic. From the 1930's onwards, decline set inland by 1967 the line was closed completely, since when the line has been landscaped and developed throughout much of its length. The mile long stretch of railway

within Healey Dell Nature Reserve is probably the only section to remain today with most of its features intact.

**>> Turn right and follow the Track, under the trestle footbridge, down to Trail Point 8 and Broadley Station.**

### **TRAIL POINT 8: Map Ref TP8**



Broadley is the only remaining station of the original seven on the line. The gap between the two platforms once housed the signal box and closer inspection of the wall above the station will reveal the original access from Station Road. As Man and the Railway left, Nature has reclaimed the line. Willow scrub has developed on the margins providing a paradise for Warblers, Robins and Wrens whilst the clear pools beneath the trees, and around the station, are full of Frogs and Newts.

**>> From the station follow the track on your left up to Station Road, enter the woodland opposite through the stile and follow the path to Trail Point 9.**



### **TRAIL POINT 9: Map Ref TP9**

Oak and Birch trees surround you, and Heather and Bilberry grow on the woodland floor. In Autumn both edible and poisonous fungi are to be found growing here. Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Jays and even Nuthatches may be seen. Down the steep slope to your right another area of Willow and Birch scrub has developed on the former railway sidings which, during the Second World War, were used for loading ammunition, manufactured in a Munitions Factory situated further down the valley, onto Transport Trains for shipment elsewhere.

**>> Follow the path out of the woodland and re-join the railway line, turn left and continue to Trail Point 10 on the Viaduct.**



### **TRAIL POINT 10 : Map Ref TP10**

You are now standing more than 100 feet above the River Spodden, on your left lies the lower part of the 'Dell'. To your right Smallshaw and Dunishbooth Woods cloak the hillside and beneath your feet runs the Whitworth – Rochdale sewage pipe! installed along the line of the railway in the 1970's The Viaduct forms an excellent vantage point from which to observe the Summer Swifts and Martins by day, and Bats in the evening, as they feed on the rich insect life associated with the river.

**>> Cross the Viaduct and continue along the railway line towards Trail Point 11. Just beyond the Viaduct and Bee House, set back slightly from the track, on the right, is an old Whitworth -Rochdale boundary stone.**



### TRAIL POINT 11: Map Ref TP11

At Trail Point 11 you are standing on part of a 'double' bridge. The original bridge is said to have moved down the valley side during a landslip, before the line was opened, with a second bridge being built at a slightly higher level to carry the railway line. It is thought, however, that the original bridge was simply built in the wrong place! and the story of a landslip invented to provide an explanation for the 'double' bridge.

**>> Continue along the railway line until you reach the cycle access ramp. Here, take the path down to the right and Dell Road. Turn right along the road and continue for a short distance to Trail Point 12.**

### TRAIL POINT 12: Map Ref TP12



This last Trail Point is situated overlooking Green Lane Wood, so called because of the 'green' lane which can be seen crossing the road at this point. The area below, now overgrown, was once the site of Meanley Mill and cottages, with the area of the lodge still visible. Extensive evidence of Woodpecker activity can be seen in some of the dead Elm trees located

in this area. Roe deer are also known to frequent this section of the Nature Reserve, the dense undergrowth providing ideal cover for them to move around in unnoticed.

**>> Follow Dell Road downhill, returning to Healey Hall Mills and the start of the trail at the Healey Dell Heritage Centre and Tearooms.**



### Healey Dell Heritage Centre and Tea Rooms

**Tea Rooms Opening Hours:** Thursday to Sunday 10 am to 5 pm and open other days on special request or for large groups.

**Facilities include:** Disabled access, Free WIFI, Baby changing facilities, local information, Toilets, Restaurant and Licenced venue.

