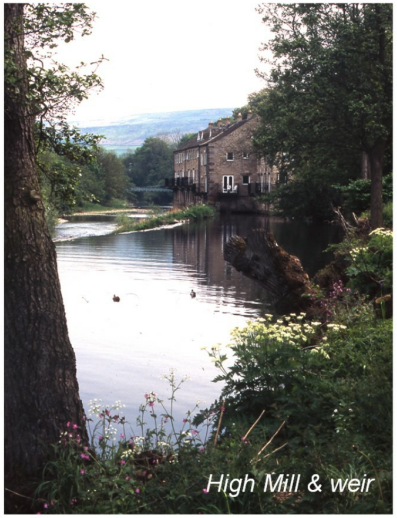
The riverside path leads to the **caravan site** and **High Mill** (photograph right), which stands on the river beyond its long weir. In medieval times, the Lord of the Manor's water-powered corn mill stood here. Cloth fulling probably also once took place since the small field, now a car park, is called 'tenterlands', indicating the place where woven and fulled woollen cloth was stretched to dry on tenter hooks. The present mill buildings date from the late 18th and early 19th century when the old 17th century corn mill was extended for worsted, and later for silk spinning. Leaving the caravan site turn right up **High Mill Lane**, past cottages and a row of houses at the top. The last house has a classical design datestone of 1812; the houses were probably built for the mill manager and workers.


High Mill & weir

Keep left onto Bolton Road, passing on the right the lofty Victorian dwellings of **Springfield Mount** and the **Manse** (c.1885) and **Addingham Primary School**, much acclaimed for its design in 1979. After the school, bear right onto the track over the cattle grid and across **Manor Garth** with, to the left, the **Rookery** (c.1805), a double row of early 19th century weavers' cottages with a hand loom shop at the end (photograph below). Ahead to the right is another row of cottages, two of which were originally used for weaving but subsequently housed the **Mechanics' Institute** and **Library**. Straight ahead is the **Manor House**, parts of which date back to around 1500. The converted **Manor House barns** are on the left of the track. The walk finishes here, back on **Main Street**.

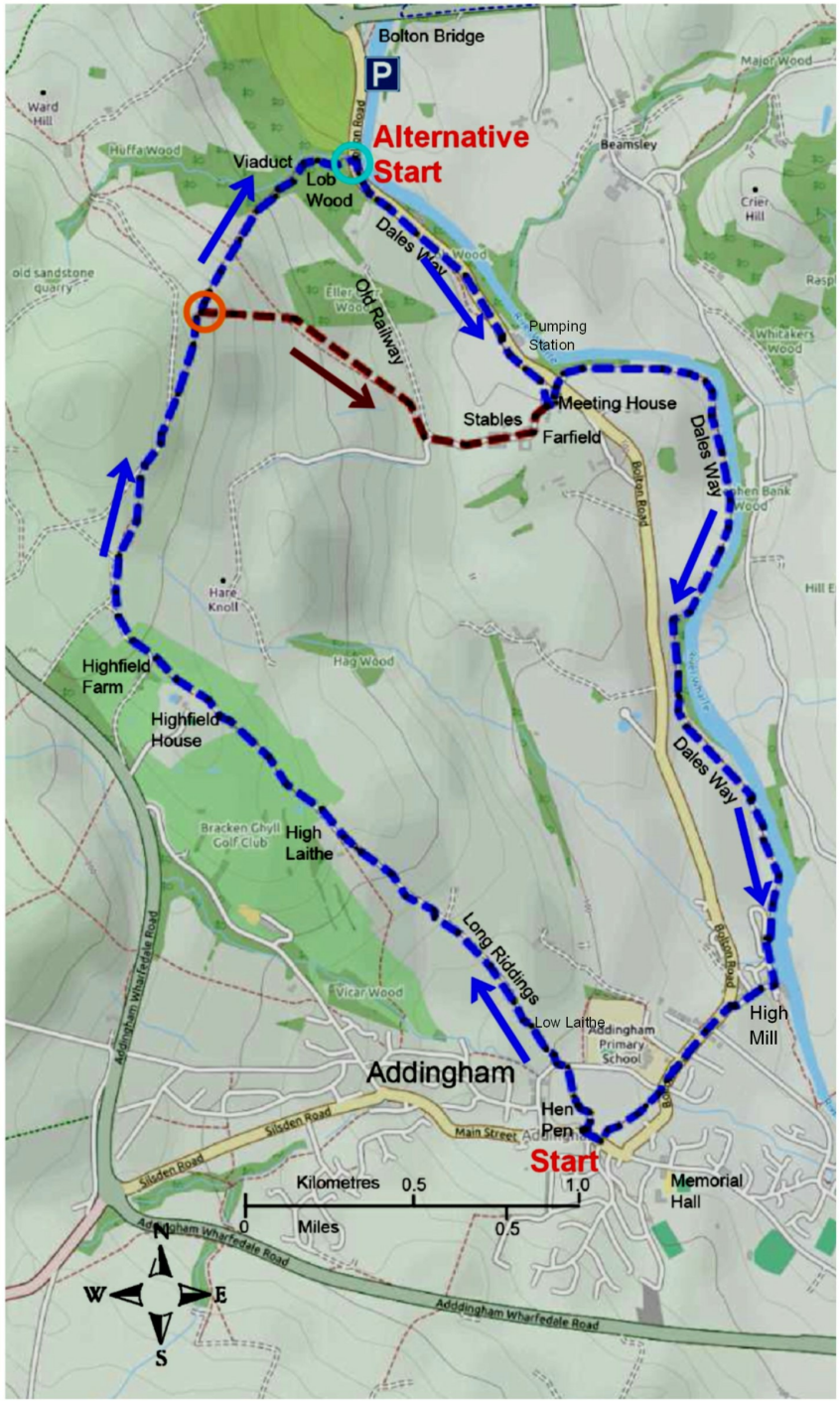
The Rookery with loom shop on right

Walk 1: Highfield, Lob Wood and The River Wharfe

Start – The Hen Pen Garden, Main Street, Addingham.
Alternative Start – Near Bolton Bridge (see page 6).
Full walk – 4.5 miles (7.2km), height gain 584ft (190m).
Shorter walk – 4 miles (6.4km), height gain 584ft (190m).
Ordnance Survey Map – OS Explorer 297 - Lower Wharfedale and the Washburn Valley.

Introduction

This is a fairly easy walk with lots of interesting features along the way, including fine views across to Beamsley Beacon and up Wharfedale to Bolton Abbey and beyond (photograph below), the dramatic (but almost hidden) Lob Wood railway viaduct, the ancient Farfield Friends' Meeting House, abundant wildlife and a lovely Dales Way river walk to finish. The route description includes an optional shorter link and an alternative start point near Bolton Bridge. You should carry appropriate outdoor clothing. The ground may be muddy in places so good footwear is essential.



The path continues along this delightful stretch of river, popular with anglers, still following the **Dales Way**. Birds that may be seen along the river include those shown above (clockwise from top left: dipper, grey heron, mandarin duck and kingfisher) plus goosander, oystercatcher and cormorant. The exotic mandarin duck is now well established around Bolton Abbey. Other river wildlife includes otter, signal crayfish (which has now almost replaced the native white-clawed crayfish), brown trout and grayling.

A conspicuous landscape feature is the flat-topped gravel terraces which form steep bluffs along the river. Towards the end of the last glacial period, about 15,000 years ago, the river flowed at a higher level than today, carrying large volumes of meltwater to Glacial Lake Humber, a huge lake dammed by ice in the North Sea. As the ice melted, the lake was drained and the river cut down through previously deposited layers of gravel, leaving them standing as terraces above the present day level of the river. White limestone pebbles, carried by ice from higher up the valley, may be found where the river has eroded these terraces. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, limestone boulders were gathered from the river and burnt to make lime which is an important agricultural soil treatment and also used to make mortar for building. When the river is low, it is noticeable how the sandstone rocks in the river bed stand on end towards Farfield but are nearly horizontal as **High Mill** is approached. These rocks were pushed up into a huge fold by movements in the earth's crust 270 million years ago. The top of this fold has now been eroded away, exposing Carboniferous limestone at its core. The limestone core extends from Bolton Abbey to nearby Haw Pike.

*This makes a good **alternative start** point for the walk; there is limited parking nearby and on the other side of the roundabout. If starting from here, Addingham provides ample places for refreshment at the halfway point of the walk.*

The path now follows the **Dales Way** (the popular long distance footpath which links Ilkley and Bowness) and leaves the road on the right about 150 metres up the hill. (Take extra care on this steep, narrow, and busy stretch of road!)

After leaving the road, follow the wall all the way to **Farfield**. Visible on the river bank across the road is the drab, but award winning, **Lob Wood Pumping Station** which pumps water from the Barden reservoirs, and the Wharfe, up to Chelker Reservoir until needed to provide water for the Bradford area. The path leaves the field and joins the farm track behind **Farfield Cottages**.

The shorter walk re-joins the longer walk here.

Behind the stone wall on the left is the ancient **Friends' Meeting House** (below), built in 1689; the year the Act of Toleration first permitted free worship. Anthony Myers, who resided at nearby Farfield Hall and was a Quaker, gave the land and is buried in the graveyard. The path goes behind the Meeting House, which is

Drawing by Alison Arnstrong

usually open and is well worth visiting, before reaching and crossing **Bolton Road** (take care!) and going down steps to join the river bank.

At the top of the first field is **Paradise Laithe,** formerly an 18th century aisled barn with its cart entrance leading to the grain threshing floor. The barn has now been converted into a dwelling.

The Route:

The walk begins at the **Hen Pen Garden**, where Main Street bends in the middle of Addingham village. It is usually possible to park on Old Station Way opposite. After admiring the flowers in the garden, the route goes up the adjacent **Sugar Hill** and left on to **Back Beck Lane**. Then turn almost immediately right (north) up **Long Riddings Lane**.

If you wish to look at the former **Wesleyan Methodist Chapel** continue to the next corner on Back Beck Lane. The chapel (on the left) was built in 1778 and enlarged in 1834. Note how the two earlier doors are now windows and a single door was made during the enlargement.

Back on **Long Riddings Lane**, on the end of the second house it is possible to see where there was a 'taking-in' door on the first floor which indicates that the occupants were once in the domestic textile industry. Here yarn and cloth could be winched in and out of the loomshop above the living accommodation. After a short distance the path leaves the lane through a gate by a tree on the left, just after the ruin of **Low Laithe** (previously called New Laithe). 'Laithe' means barn or granary and this small barn had a threshing floor and mistal for six cows.

The path goes uphill across meadowland beside the overgrown Long Riddings Lane which was probably the road to the medieval open field 'High Field'. The lane is rich in tree species. It is also a haven for wildlife and sometimes, a tawny owl or hare may be seen. There are fine views back over Addingham and up to Addingham Moorside and Rombald's Moor.

High Laithe & gate posts

After three fields, **High Laithe** (18th century) is on the left of the path (photograph previous page). This barn, like many in Addingham, was enlarged to provide extra accommodation for cattle and for hay in winter. The interesting stone gate posts nearby may be older as the square holes in them held crooks of timber which hinged the gate when iron was in short supply.

The path now crosses the golf course (Bracken Ghyll Golf Club) and is marked by coloured posts, passing **Highfield House**, with its unusual large windows, which dates from about 1780. There are fine views of Beamsley Beacon across the valley (see photograph on page 1).

After leaving the golf course cross the field keeping right in front of **Highfield Farm** (formally called Hag Head). This laithe-house farm, a house and barn joined in one long-house, dates from about 1800. The name 'Highfield' probably also refers to the medieval open field on this side of the village.

The serpentine medieval boundary wall of Addingham parish is crossed by a stile and the boundary ditch and bank are still visible. Remains of ancient field barns can be seen at this high point of the walk. The route then joins a farm track but after the metal gate the route leaves the track and follows the wall on the right to a stile in the corner of the field (marked ○ on map).

Take time to enjoy a fine view (photograph below) of Bolton Priory and the narrow old Bolton Bridge (beyond the modern road bridge), beneath the rocky summit of Simon's Seat. Medieval plough strips

Bolton Priory (centre-left) & Bolton Bridge from the walk

can be seen in the fields below. The curious 'nicks' in the hillside at Storiths across the valley, are deep channels cut across the spur of the hill by meltwater flowing beneath the retreating ice at the end of the last ice age.

*For the **shorter walk** turn right here, steeply down the field, passing small delfs, where Millstone Grit sandstone has been quarried, probably for wallstones. Go right again through a stile in the wall near the corner of Eller Carr Wood. Keep diagonally downhill across another field, through a gate and along the track towards the **Farfield Livery stables**, passing through a gap where the old railway line once crossed. The rear of **Farfield Hall** may be seen from the path, over to the right. It was enlarged about 1728 by Anthony Myers with the old 17th century house now incorporated at the west end. After walking through the stables, the route goes right, down the track closed to vehicles by large stones, to join the route of the longer walk at the metal gate (see page 6).*

The **longer walk** continues diagonally down the pastures in the direction of Bolton Bridge to another stile near the bottom corner of the field and into **Lob Wood**. These upland meadows are inhabited by lapwing (peewit) and curlew in summer.

In the wood, the path initially follows the wall (right) but then turns left down steep steps before revealing the spectacular **Lob Ghyll Viaduct** (Bridge No.47) (photograph below) which took the Ilkley to Skipton railway (built in 1888). After going under the viaduct, the path bears **right and down** through the woodland (a rarity around Addingham) to steps on to the road near Bolton Bridge, marked on the map by ○.

Lob Ghyll Viaduct