

Continue along the road to the bridge. Immediately in front of you now is the location of the Newmilne 6 (now Salem Mill). Now head uphill along a path that runs to the left of the cemetery. The path takes you over the old railway line that is now the Sett Valley Trail.

At the road, turn right. Reaching St George's Road, St George's Works 7 faces you.

Retrace your steps to the Sett Valley Trail, and follow it to your right. About 400 metres down the trail, you will find a footpath on your left which goes between two recent factory buildings.

Take this path, turning right in the small industrial estate to the road that runs ahead of you. Turning down hill along Watford Bridge Road, you will come to another bridge across the River Sett.

Just before the river, the building on your left is the last mill on our tour, London Place 7, which doubled as a boot factory in *The Village*, a recent BBC television drama.

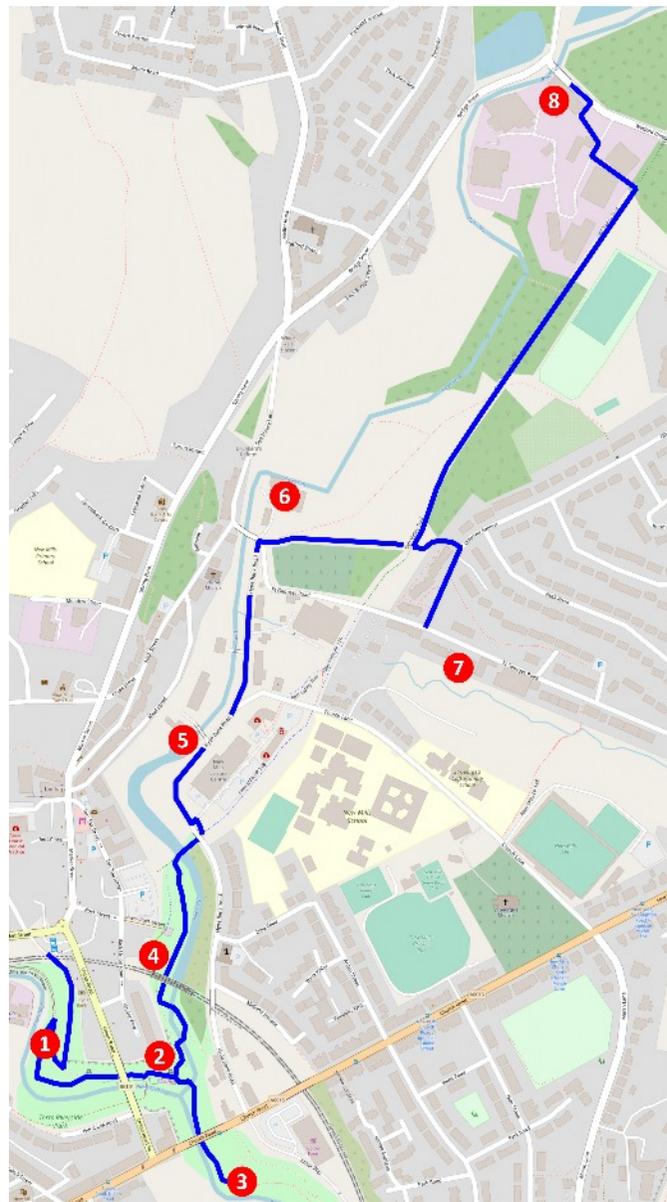
That brings our walk to an end. To return to the town centre, turn left along Bridge Street and continue along Spring Bank back to the bus station (¾ mile). You might like to try our Walk 8, which looks at the mills of Newtown, i.e., the mills of the town that lie on the other side of the River Goyt.

## Further reading

*The Mills of New Mills* by John V. Symonds, published by New Mills Local History Society ([www.nmlhs.org.uk](http://www.nmlhs.org.uk)).

*Cotton Mills and Printworks on the River Goyt and its Tributaries* by Stephen Lewis, published by Florence Publishing. ISBN 978-0993055300.

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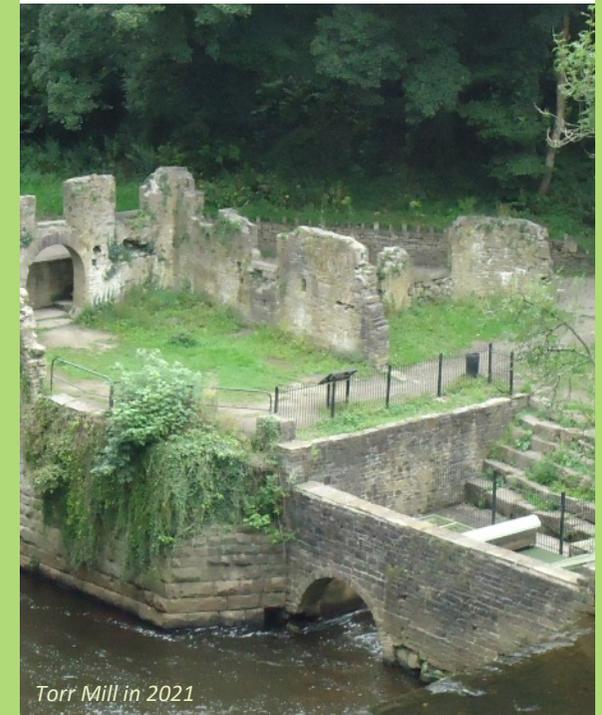
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# WALK 9 THE MILLS OF NEW MILLS

A stroll around the mills of New Mills  
as it was when the River Goyt was the  
county boundary



Torr Mill in 2021



## NEW MILLS

# Walk 9: The Mills of New Mills

2¼ MILES TOTAL – ALLOW 1½ HOURS.

*An easy stroll with a few short climbs and flights of steps.*

## About the Mills

- 1 Rock/Crowther Mill:** 1788–1896. Originally a cotton mill, later a printworks then paper makers which burned down and was rebuilt in 1846.
- 2 Torr Mill:** Owned by the Schofield family from its construction in about 1794 until it burned down in 1912. It was five storeys tall. The Community Hydro Scheme turbine sits in the old waterwheel housing. Used for cotton spinning until the 1890s when it turned to linen manufacture.
- 3 Ned Mill:** known only by being named on two maps in 1794 and 1830, with one reference in connection to the turnpike to Thornsett. Probably near the end of the leat upstream of Torr Mill.
- 4 Barnes Top Mill/Torr Top Mill/Midland Iron Works:** 1730–1899. John Barnes also owned Grove Mill. To differentiate, the mill upstream became the 'Top' mill, hence Barnes or Torr Top Mill. Originally a paper mill, then used for cotton spinning and candlewick manufacture before the Ironworks.
- 5 Beard Mill/Goddard Mill/Hyde Bank Mill:** Records exist from 1767; probably a corn mill. Thomas Beard obtained the mill in 1781 and it became a woollen mill. In 1785, it became a cotton-spinning enterprise, run by Crowder and Goddard. Converted to apartments in the 21st century.
- 6 Salem Mill:** Known as 'Newmilne,' a corn mill in 1390, from which the town became known. In 1391,

Richard Berd was the tenant. It was rebuilt in 1460 after a period of dereliction, and partially converted to a cotton mill circa 1789, though corn was milled here until 1824 at least, and there is another reference to corn milling as late as 1876. Taken over by a manufacturing chemist in 1886: Salem Chemical Works. More recently, a sheet metal works and Woodside Garage.

- 7 St George's Works, aka Wellington New Mill:** Original deeds for the mill date from c.1792. Potts, Oliver and Potts here from 1824. John Potts developed his calico printing process on engraved rollers here, first patented in 1831. Later, a cotton spinners before becoming multipurpose industrial premises.
- 8 London Place Mill/Watford Bridge Printworks:** Original lease in 1804. Calico printers to start and from 1904 housed the Calico Printers Association for many years before becoming a joiners shop in 1973 after years of disuse.

Further mills can be found at **Bate Mill**, **Garrison Works** and **Birch Vale Printworks**, but these are not including in this walk, being further out of town.

## The Walk

We start our walk on Rock Mill Road, behind New Mills Bus Station. Take the cobbled path down into the Torrs via the flight of steps. At the bottom, turn right, stopping by the ruins that you meet before the Millennium Walkway.

These ruins are from Rock Mill **1** whose derelict remains were made safe in the 1970s. Turn down towards the river, walking along the path that runs by the river. Taking the first path on the left, as you walk up the slight incline, you can find the well that used to serve some of the houses that existed in the Torrs as late as the 1950s.

Continue onwards, and you will find yourself at the foot of the steps you recently descended. Continue under the Union Road Bridge, the high-level bridge ahead of you, which brings you to the remnants of Torr Mill **2**. On your left you can see the base of the mill chimney which once reached into the sky above the level of the Torrs cliff face. Here you will also find the Torrs Hydro community hydro-electric scheme, the first of its type in the country.

Continue over the Millward Memorial Bridge across the River Sett where it joins the River Goyt. The path now follows the old leat for Torr Mill under the Church Road Bridge, built to take the Thornsett Turnpike Road in 1834. At the end of the leat, Ned Mill **3** once stood.

Now retrace your steps before taking the path up the River Sett. This means recrossing the wooden bridge you used to cross the Sett before. Walking up river, the footpath is now closed by a rockfall, so you have to cross the river twice more, once by a stone bridge and then by the Torr Top wooden bridge and on under the arches of the Midland Railway bridge.

Immediately beyond this bridge, there are a few reminders of the mill from which the bridge takes its name, Barnes or Torr Top **4**. (There is a viewing platform which you can reach by going up the cobbled path under the bridge. This platform used to be the stables for the horses that raised and lowered goods and materials to the mill by use of chains.)

Whether or not you climbed up to the platform, your way continues upstream along the River Sett. From the river's side you climb a flight of steps where the path from the viewing platform joins from the left. After going under Hyde Bank Road, take the steps on your left. Reaching the road, turn left, then almost immediately right along Hyde Bank Road. Turning the corner, you will see the apartments that were once the mill named after the road **5**.