



## **CIRCULAR WALK: NEW MILLS - HIGH LEA – BROOKBOTTOM – HAGUE BAR - NEW MILLS**

**Walk Outline.** This walk is about 4 miles. It starts and finishes on Rock Mill Lane, just behind New Mills Bus Station. It includes High Lee Park (which has a children's playground), High Lea Road/Brookbottom Road, Hague Fold and Hague Bar (where the Waterside Park also has a children's playground). It returns via Mousley Bottom Nature Reserve and The Torrs Riverside Park. There is an option to visit The Fox Inn at Brookbottom on the way (*tel. 0161 427 1634*). See Ordnance Survey map OL1. *Some points of interest are shown in italics.*

**Difficulty.** This is a fairly easy stroll with short lengths of steep or rough tracks. Stout shoes are recommended. Please keep children & dogs under control.

**Start.** Pause to look down over the wall, or from the viewing platform on the cobbled track nearby, into The Torrs, 'The Park under the Town.' *Torr Vale Mill, a former cotton mill, its weir and the Millennium Bridge are below you in the gorge.* Turn right towards the bus station. Keeping it on your right, walk a short distance to meet Hague Bar Road, the busy road to Marple. Cross it, bear left and almost immediately bear right up St Mary's Road. Cross this road and enter High Lee Park. Immediately turn right and follow the paths up through it, passing High Lee Hall on your left to meet High Lea Road. (*The hall was formerly the home of a print mill owner.*)

**At High Lea Road**, turn left and continue along it. It becomes Brookbottom Road. *This is an ancient packhorse route between Manchester and Buxton. Across the valley to the south see ‘Swizzels’ Sweet Factory (home of “Love Hearts”), and the routes of the Peak Forest Canal and 3 railway lines: the express line between Sheffield and Manchester and the Buxton - Stockport and Sheffield - Manchester lines for trains which stop in New Mills. Along the top side of this road were coal pits driven into the hill side which produced coal to heat homes and mills in the town.*

**At the cross-roads, where unmade lanes come in from the left and right just before the road descends to The Fox at Brookbottom**, pause to admire the views west over Manchester and south to Lyme Park. Then,

Either turn left down the unmade track,

Or continue straight on to reach “The Fox” pub. *It is in a valley which is an ancient boundary and now marks the boundary of Derbyshire.* Then retrace your steps back to the crossroads to continue the walk. Bear right down the unmade track.

Whichever you do, then follow this track down through Hague Fold to the crossroads at Hague Bar. *Pause to look and listen to wildlife on this ancient hollow way, used by pedestrians, horses and carts for centuries.*

**CAUTION:** This is a steep lane with a busy road at the bottom.

**Meet the main New Mills–Marple Road at Hague Bar.** *This was originally a turnpike road. The toll house is on your right at the junction.* Carry on straight across the main road to find Waterside Park and a car park on your left within a short distance, just after crossing the bridge over the Manchester–Sheffield railway line.

**You are now about halfway through your walk.**

**At Waterside Park**, descend the path to meet the River Goyt. Turn left and walk east along the path through the Riverside Park towards New Mills. *This is part of the Midshires Way, a long-distance footpath which links the Ridgeway to the Trans-Pennine Trail and the European Long Distance Trail network.* Continue straight on keeping to the footpath closest to the river. *Note the Midshires Way and Trespass Trail signposts on the way. The path goes through Mousley Bottom Nature Reserve.*

**Meet the lane and houses at Mousley Bottom.** Turn right along Station Road. *Note the long low house to your left which was an ancient cruck barn.* Keeping the industrial buildings on your left, bear right on the track along the River Goyt, heading east towards New Mills. Carry straight on through The Torrs Riverside Park.

**Continue straight on, over the Millennium Bridge.** *Note the former Torr Vale Cotton Mill across the river and the ways in which the power of the river was used to drive it. See the remains of houses and mills. (The model in New Mills Heritage and Information Centre provides more details of this area in the late 19th century. For information tel. 01663 746904.)*

**To return direct to New Mills Bus Station**, take the steep stepped track to the left.

**To detour into the old industrial heart of New Mills**, continue under Union Road Bridge (which is about 30 metres high) to the confluence of the Rivers Sett (from Kinder and Hayfield and Goyt (from above Buxton). *See the remains of old routes and mills. At the river junction is ‘Archie’, the Archimedes Screw. It has been*

*developed by a Community Benefit Society and has generated power from the river to help run the local Co-op shop since 2008.*

**To return to New Mills Bus Station,** retrace your steps from Archie and

Either return under the Union Road bridge and take the steep stepped track to the right

Or, just before going under the Union Road Bridge, bear left over the bridge and continue up the cobbled track to The Rock Tavern pub. Turn sharp left along the footpath between the houses and the Torrs Gorge, It becomes a track. Continue until you meet the busy Union Road. Turn left and you will shortly arrive back at New Mills Bus Station.