

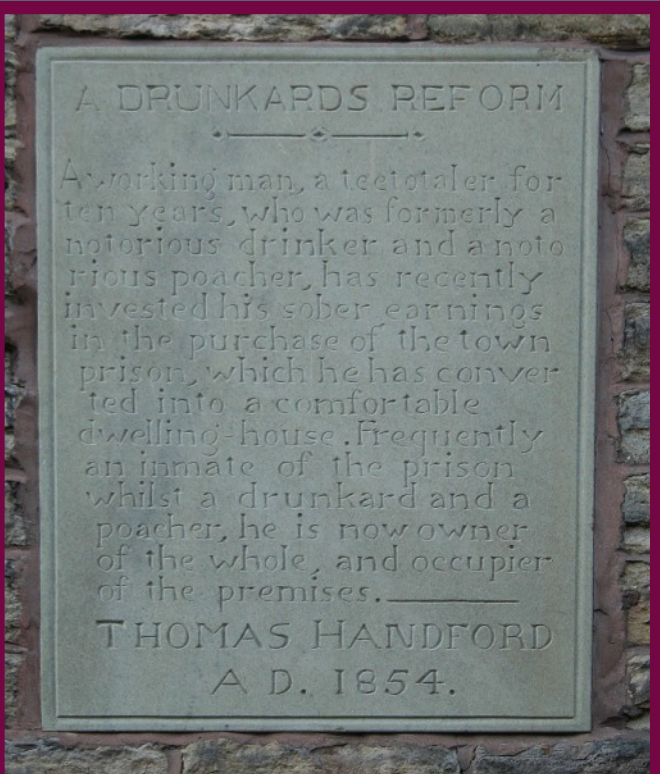
been rebuilt in 1391. The town’s name can be traced back to this first mill.

Slightly to the right, a ridge overlooks the river, and the Methodists built **St George’s Chapel 14** on the promontory as the chapel on High Street had become too small. This second chapel opened in 1808, to be followed by five more churches during the first half of the century, demonstrating the rapid growth of the town during this period. On your left hand, the junction of High Street and Dye House Lane housed a sequence of public houses – The Bulls Head, The Pineapple, The Grapes, The Cock, all now closed and best commemorated by the **Drunkard’s Reform 15** – the end house in the row with a plaque explaining the name.

Now walk up Dye House Lane to the Junction with Mellor Road, Bridge Street and Spring Bank. The location of yet more pubs can be seen from here – the **former White Hart 16** which is prominent on the corner, and the Bridge Tavern which is now a private residence.

Turn left onto Spring Bank, walking up the hill past the Sunday School – now a private house – and the location of **Spring Mount Chapel 17** – now a pair of semi-detached houses – to **Spring Bank Arts 18**. Once the Anglican Church of St James the Less, this Pugin-style building was converted into a community arts centre. Next to the building are the almshouses which, like the church, were built by Mrs Mary Mackie. If the Arts Centre is open, pop in and have a look round. The ceiling alone is worth the visit, and there are other delights inside.

Walking on, if time permits, you will pass the Adult Education Centre, formerly Spring Bank Board School and Mackie Library. The views here



The **Drunkard’s Reform** plaque on the former prison house.

are magnificent – the viewpoint tells you the names of the various hills and farms you can see with Kinder Scout, the dominant mountain.

To return to the Heritage and Information Centre, continue along Spring Bank and Market Street, passing New Mills Town Hall (built 1871, tower added 1875) along the way.

*Cover photo: detail of Christian Revival Church (1766).*

*Archive photographs reproduced courtesy of Picture New Mills [www.picturenewmills.org.uk](http://www.picturenewmills.org.uk)*



*For more information on the history and heritage of New Mills, see:*

New Mills Local History Society: [www.newmillshistory.org.uk](http://www.newmillshistory.org.uk)  
Picture New Mills: [www.picturenewmills.org.uk](http://www.picturenewmills.org.uk)  
Spring Bank Arts: [www.springbankarts.org.uk](http://www.springbankarts.org.uk)  
New Mills Heritage & Information Centre: [nmhic.webplus.net](http://nmhic.webplus.net)  
New Mills Walkers are Welcome: [www.nmwaw.org.uk](http://www.nmwaw.org.uk)  
Steve Lewis’ New Mills pages: [www.stevelewis.me.uk](http://www.stevelewis.me.uk)

A short walk round

# HISTORIC NEW MILLS



Produced by:  
**Spring Bank Arts**  
**New Mills Heritage & Information Centre**  
**New Mills Walkers are Welcome**



This short walk of around 1 mile is on surfaced paths and roads throughout, and can be completed in ordinary footwear. However, there are some uneven sections and steep steps – please take care. Although described as a linear walk, a short stroll along Market Street will return you to the starting point.

**Start:** New Mills Heritage and Information Centre, Rock Mill Lane, New Mills SK22 3BN  
**Finish:** Spring Bank Arts, Spring Bank, New Mills SK22 4BH

Start the walk at **New Mills Heritage and Information Centre** **i**, on Rock Mill Lane. The building originally housed the Co-operative Society's abattoir which serviced the Co-op Butchers on Union Road – just one of the many businesses the Co-op operated in New Mills. Inside the Centre, the diorama of the town as it was in 1884 demonstrates just how much influence The Torrs sandstone gorge had on the development of New Mills. The pulpit from which John Wesley preached, housed in the Centre, indicates the important role that religion also played in the town.

Having left the Heritage and Information Centre, take a few moments to look out over **Torr Vale Mill** **1** and the **Millennium Walkway** alongside the River Goyt. The oldest part of the mill complex is the Old Mill facing you, built around 1790.

Now turn right and walk along Rock Mill Lane behind the bus station – the location of **Torr Top Hall** **2**, the first known site of worship in New Mills when the Society of Friends held their meetings here. The Hall was dismantled to make way for the Union Road and Bridge which linked the two halves of the town – New Mills and Newtown – in 1884.

Cross directly over Union Road at the end of Rock Mill Lane and walk on to the junction with Rock Street. Here, turn right and continue downhill,

crossing Torr Top Street and down the cobbled path to the **platform** **3**. The view over the River Sett, with the Midland Railway Bridge to your right, is compelling. Railways played an integral part in the building of the town, as did the canal and the various toll roads allowing manufacturing industry wider access to the markets essential to the town's financial well-being. The viewing platform was originally the floor of the stables in which the chain horses were housed. These horses were used to control the lowering of goods into the Torrs, acting as a brake to slow the descent of wagons which would otherwise have run out of control.

Reversing your steps up the cobbled path, note the former **weavers' cottages** **4** on your left hand. Turn right onto Torr Top Street, noting the **plaque** **5** on the wall opposite which commemorates Torr Top Tunnels – WWI trenches named after Torr Top. The original sign is in New Mills Heritage and Information Centre.



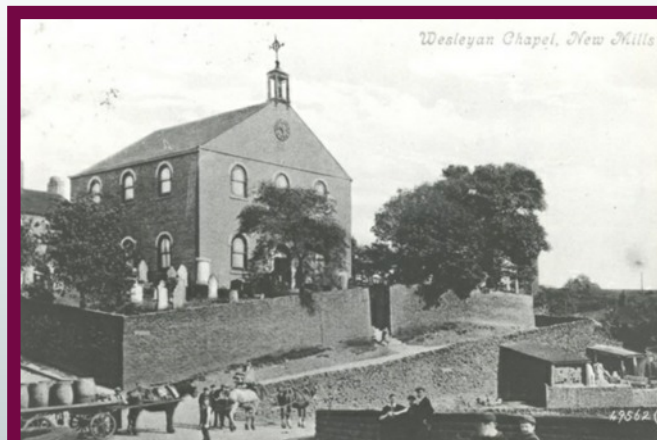
Parts of **Salem Mill**, which stands alongside the River Sett, are thought to date back to c. 1780. The mill is on the site of the 14th-century "New Mill" that gave the town its current name.

Carry on up Torr Top Street, past the old St Albans Public House and the outdoor market to Market Street. Crossing over Meal Street, almost immediately turn right again onto High Street within metres. Walking along High Street, you pass a row of late Victorian shops and then a white building (Number 24) which was formerly the **Dog and Partridge pub** **6**. Shortly after, you come to a public footpath down a flight of steps which will take you back down to Meal Street. The path leads behind the old **Manchester and County Bank building** **7**.



The moulded plasterwork either side of the door identifies the former **Dog and Partridge pub** on High Street.

The cobbles of Meal Street are uneven, and the irregularity of the roadway indicates that the road is prone to subsidence, which is why the properties on one side of the street, overlooking the River Sett, have not survived. Here, though, is a great view of **Beard Mill** **8**, also known as



This photo of **St George's Methodist Church** (now demolished) was taken in approximately 1900.

Goddard Mill and Hyde Bank Mill. Now apartments, this former cotton mill was built adjacent to a cloth or fulling mill driven by water built in 1767. The cotton mill was just one of many mills built along the rivers Sett (originally called the Kinder) and Goyt to take advantage of the power of water. During the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s Beard Mill was owned and occupied by Mariana Thornley, whose initials can be seen on the mill chimney.

Turn left along Meal Street where you will pass the rear entrance of the **George Hotel** **9**. Initially, Meal Street was called New Street, and then later was called Th'Under Road possibly because of the sound of carts on the cobbles as an easier route for horses pulling heavy loads uphill than High Street. At the end of Meal Street, turn left up High St for a few yards and pause to look at the Masons Arms public house. It was from here that the Mercury Coach to Stockport ran, twice weekly, before the advent of the railways put an end to the business. A **plaque** **10** on the rear wall of the car park was once mounted above the pub's front door.

As you walk downhill, you pass the **Christian Revival Church** **11** on the right. Originally built as a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the building was the first home of the pulpit seen at the start of the walk in the Heritage and Information Centre.

At the bottom of the hill, stop and look around. The **bridge** **12** over the River Sett conceals the remains of a medieval packhorse bridge, the arches of which can still be seen from certain angles.

To your right, and running parallel to the river, there used to be a roadway, called Brookside. On the opposite bank of the River Sett, the large building (Woodside Garage) is a former cotton mill (**Salem Mill** **13**) built in the late eighteenth century. Next to it, the flat-topped building is the site of the very first mill in New Mills. It was a corn mill owned by the Duchy of Lancaster and known as the New Mill having



This photo of the **Masons' Arms**, taken in about 1940, shows its early 18th-century plaque (now in the wall at the back of the car park) in its original position above the front door.