

ILKLEY RIVERSIDE

Alex Cockshott *Ilkley Civic Society / Ilkley Local History Hub*



Ilkley developed as a small community at the crossing of the River Wharfe. The river can be fast rising, so the village was built above the flood plain with the Anglo-Saxon Church up on the ruins of the Roman Fort. From the 1500s the Middelton family were Lords of the manor living at Myddleton Lodge on the north west hillside overlooking the village of Ilkley.

Begin at Manor House BP2. Go a few yards down the slope and turn right around the corner of the House, along the path down to Castle Rd.

On your right is a piece of exposed Roman wall, then the grassed bank over the mound of the Roman Fort AD 97 – 400.

Turn right beside the fort mound along the pedestrian Castle Rd, cross New Brook St to continue along Castle Rd to Weston Rd

On left before New Brook St is the horse trough once at the top of Brook St. Across New Brook St is Ilkley Playhouse **BP8**. On Weston Rd opposite is 1870s convalescent home [Margaret Court].

Turn left to walk over the grass and go down the steps to riverside path

Across the river you see The Holmes. This was a large flood plain field used in 1870s for Summer athletics festivals and horse races and in 3rd week of September Ilkley Feast. At the end of WW1 in 1919 there were Peace Celebrations on the Holmes. By 1900s most of Ilkley outdoor sport clubs had moved to the Holmes as former fields were built on. The Grade 2 listed outdoor bathing pool and lido opened in May 1935 to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of George V. On the East Holmes field there was a bonfire to celebrate the end of WW2: Victory in Europe on May 8th and Victory in Japan on August 18th.

Turn left to walk by the river towards the archway

Here you cross a small bridge across the stream running down in a culvert from Mill Ghyll under Brook St into the river.

Before the archway turn left to climb up the steps to the road, then turn right and walk along the pavement over the New Bridge to Denton Road

The New Bridge was needed for the new streets and houses to be built by the Wharfedale Estate Co.1899, north of the river. This bridge was opened in June 1906, later than stated on the plaque in the middle of the bridge. Next on the right is the Ilkley Rugby Club. Across Denton Road is the Ilkley Cricket Club, 1899.

At the junction cross over and walk back on the other side of the road towards the New Bridge. At the 1939 – 1945 gateway go down the steps into Riverside Gardens.

On the left on West Holmes field is a football Club with renovated changing rooms . Across the Wharfe are The Riverside Gardens, started in 1946 as a Second World War memorial. Work continued for over 10 years, removing boulders, levelling the allotments, laying pathways and gardens. There is a plaque by the flagpole.

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Walk through the Riverside Gardens

At the end of the Gardens, Bridge House [Riverside Hotel] was built in 1860 for Thomas Dove as an hotel and restaurant. In the 1890s Septimus Wray developed Wray's Pleasure Ground, renting more land around the river. In July 1900 it was damaged by the great flood from a six hour thunder storm. By 1901 the Pleasure Ground advertised concerts in the new pavilion and dancing every Saturday night, an aviary and monkey house, cycling track, gala field and shelter for 3000 persons in wet weather! By 1912 there were boats to hire from the landing on the river bank.

Walk past the Riverside Hotel on the river side path and continue over the small bridge over the stream to Paradise Park before the large bridge

Paradise Field was sold to Ilkley Council and became a small park laid out with flowerbeds and seats enclosed by iron railings. Sometimes called 'Titty-Bottle Park' from the use local Nannies and families made of it. The railings were removed towards the end of WW2 for munitions.

The original bridge across the Wharfe from around the 1620s was repaired in 1648 but washed away in the great Wharfedale flood of 1673. This - Ilkley's Old Bridge - was built in 1675. It officially closed to motor traffic in 1948. Across the bridge 3 terrace houses were built by the Dean Bros in 1899. Isaac Dean lived in Stubham Rise at the west end. Above, to the north, is Rupert Road, named in memory of Prince Rupert. In the Civil War on his way to the relief of York, before the battle of Marston Moor, Rupert marched his troops along the north side of the river.

By the garden centre is a stone seat marking the start of the Dalesway long distance footpath.

Turn back from the bridge to Bridge Lane. Look up Stockeld Road.

On the right side of Stockeld Road is a long wall, once the boundary of the grounds of the Middleton Hotel built in 1876. In World War Two it was an officer training centre. On reopening after the War it was renamed the Ilkley Moor Hotel. It caught fire in 1968. Only its Beer and Billiards Rooms remain [The Ilkley Moor Vaults].

On the opposite side of Stockeld Road is the 1878 Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church and its grounds.

Turn left along Bridge Lane

The terrace houses on the right were built in the 1890s.

Pass the Riverside Hotel and up the slope

On the right is the long boundary wall of Alexander Crescent and Alexander Place, whose houses were built in the 1870s.

Follow Bridge Lane round, then turn off left up Castle Hill and back to the Manor House