

W1 Goytside Meadows

Distance: **1¾ miles / 1 hour**

Terrain: An easy ramble with one short steep climb and two steep flights of steps.

Parking: Town centre.

Start and Finish: New Mills Heritage and Information Centre, Rock Mill Lane, New Mills SK22 3BN

A ramble through New Mill's Goytside lovely meadows.

- 1 Turn left from the Heritage Centre and go down the steps. On reaching the bottom of the steps, turn left.
- 2 Pass under the Union Road Bridge. The path brings you to the remnants of Torr Mill, within which is the Community Hydro Scheme. Walk beside this to the wooden bridge – the Millward Memorial Bridge – which will take you over the River Sett.
- 3 Follow the path, keeping to the path beside the River Goyt, and pass under the Queens Bridge and the railway viaduct in turn. This brings Goytside Farm into view.
- 4 At Goytside Farm, there are three possible tracks to follow. Just beyond the farm buildings, turn right, signed as Goyt Way by the red sign on the post to the left of the track. Follow the path until it brings you to the metal bridge across the River Goyt.
- 5 Cross the river and Goytside Meadows is beyond the fence on your right. Enter the nature reserve through the gate. The Pasture Path takes you up the hillside on your left. (If the weather has been wet, the Meadow Path, which lies ahead of the gate across the meadow, might be slightly less muddy.)
- 6 Follow the path uphill to the gate. Through the gate, the path threads its way across the side of the hill. Reaching the top of the hill, you have a choice. The more obvious gate will continue the Pasture Walk.

Alternatively, slightly above and to the left lies another gate which will bring you out onto the canal towpath. If you choose this option, turn right out of the gate.

- 7 Continuing the Pasture Path brings you to another gate which lies at the top of the hill and also brings you onto the canal towpath. Turn right.

Walk along the canal until you have nearly passed the marina. (You will pass a bench by the side of the towpath, and ahead of you a bridge crosses the canal by the Swizzels Matlow works – breathe in and you may just detect the sweet smell of their products.) Turn right.

- 8 A short stretch of road brings you to Albion Road. Your way lies directly ahead, but for the sake of safety, use the pelican crossing which you will find a few metres from the junction on your left.
- 9 After crossing Albion Road, follow Wirksmoor Road, veering right at the junction with the private road and continuing on until you reach the Rock Tavern and garage.
- 10 Again, you have a choice. You can take the track down into the Torrs again. Or, if energy is running low, take the footpath (Hurst Lea Road) which runs along the top of the Torrs and brings you out beside the former police station on Union Road. If this is your choice, turn left on Union Road and proceed uphill to the centre of town again.
- 11 Going down the track brings you back into the Torrs. The bridge at the bottom crosses the River Goyt. Turn left once you've crossed the river, and the steps back up to the Heritage Centre are 50 metres away on your right-hand side.

Climb the steps and reward yourself with a cup of tea or coffee in the Heritage Centre or town centre café.

W2 Historic New Mills

Distance: **1 mile / ½ hour**

Terrain: Surfaced paths and roads throughout, and can be completed in ordinary footwear

Start: New Mills Heritage & Information Centre, Rock Mill Lane, New Mills SK22 3BN

Finish: Spring Bank Arts Centre, Spring Bank, New Mills SK22 4BH

Parking: Town centre and Thornbrook Road.

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.



- 1 Having left the Heritage and Information Centre, take a few moments to look out over Torr Vale Mill and the Millennium Walkway alongside the River Goyt. The oldest part of the mill complex is the Old Mill facing you, built around 1790. Torr Vale Mill is the only building in New Mills to be listed at the second highest grade, II* due to its national significance; being an important example of the complete evolution of the cotton spinning industry.
- 2 Now turn right and walk along Rock Mill Lane behind the bus station, the location of Torr Top Hall, 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.
- 3 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. 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 were all 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.
- 4 Reversing your steps up the cobbled path, note the former weavers' cottages on your left hand. Turn right onto Torr Top Street, noting the plaque 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.
- 5 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. 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 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, also known as 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.
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- 9 Turn left along Meal Street where you will pass the rear entrance of the George Hotel. 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 on the rear wall of the car park was once mounted above the pub's front door.
- 11 As you walk downhill, you pass the Christian Revival Methodist Chapel 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.
- 12 At the bottom of the hill, stop and look around. The bridge over the River Sett conceals the remains of a medieval packhorse bridge, the arches of which can still be seen from certain angles.
- 13 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) 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 been rebuilt in 1391. The town's name can be traced back to this first mill.
- 14 Slightly to the right, a ridge overlooks the river, and the Methodists built St George's Chapel 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, the end house in the row with a plaque explaining the name.
- 16 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 which is prominent on the corner, and the Bridge Tavern which is now a private residence.
- 17 Turn left onto Spring Bank, walking up the hill past the Sunday School now a private house and the location of Spring Mount Chapel now a pair of semi-detached houses to Spring Bank Arts. 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.
- 18 Walking on you will pass the Adult Education Centre, formerly Spring Bank Board School and Mackie Library. The views here 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.

