

# CALVERLEY LOOP bridleway

## 1 Fagley Lodge - start/finish

This is one of four lodges built in the 1850's as part of the initial works for a large, upmarket residential estate, which was intended to extend from here, through Calverley Woods towards Calverley church. In the end the estate was never built.

## 2 Ravenscliffe Woods.

Proceed along the bridleway, keeping Fagley Lodge on your right as you enter the woods, and take care not to branch off onto any of the other tracks which lead down into the valley bottom.

This track leads for around a mile before emerging at Ravenscliffe Mills on Ravenscliffe Road. Continue ahead along Ravenscliffe Road to its junction with Carr Road (A657), opposite which is the entrance to Clara Drive.

**This is a very busy road, which should be crossed with extreme caution.**

## 3 Eleanor Drive.

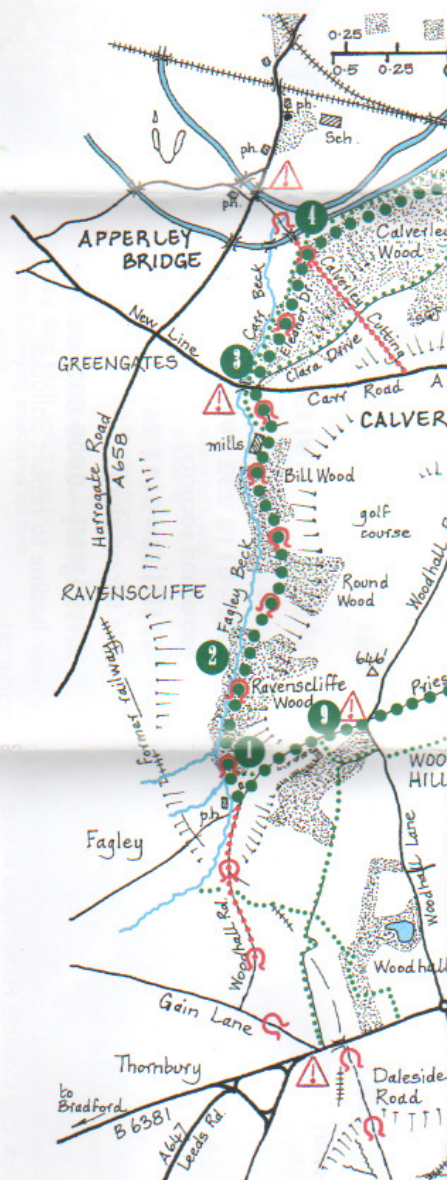
After crossing Carr Road into Clara Drive immediately bear left onto the unmade road – this is Eleanor Drive. Ferncliffe Lodge, on your left, is another of the estate lodges.

Stay on Eleanor Drive as it runs through West Wood until you reach its junction with the trackway of Calverley Cutting. Here there once stood an impressive gatehouse with an archway spanning the Cutting. Known locally as the Needles Eye, this was the third of the lodges but was demolished in the 1960s.



## 4 Thornhill Drive.

Cross the bottom of the Cutting, and enter the woods. You can see a few large houses which were intended to be built just past these, the drive enters Calverley Woods. The path can be muddy. The path runs in a straight line, bearing right and uphill where it joins up with Carr Road. At this junction turn left and continue for a short distance. South Lodge also on your left. This is the last of the lodges.





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## 5 Wood Lane.

On passing South Lodge bear right onto Wood Lane, an old track which was built to ensure Thornhill Drive, intended as the main carriageway for the estate, was not used by traffic from the nearby quarry.

## 6 Calverley village.

On reaching the far end of Wood Lane you emerge once again onto Carr Road.

**Again, please cross this busy road with great caution.** Cross into Thornhill Street, proceed up the road and turn left onto Rushton Street. Continue on crossing Woodhall Road to Capel Street. Turn right and then left onto Shell Lane.

## 7 Shell Lane.

Shell Lane is an ancient route which runs between Pudsey and Calverley via Owlcotes, and is so named because it was used to carry the lightweight coffins, or shells, from Pudsey to Calverley church before Pudsey had its own Parish church.

## 8 Priesthorpe Road.

At the end of a short incline, turn right into the unmade Priesthorpe Road, and follow this until it meets Woodhall Road on the crest of the hill.

**This is a very busy road, which should be crossed with extreme caution.**

Cross over Woodhall Road and onto the unmade section of road next to Woodhall Hills Golf Club.

## 9 Woodhall Road.

Continue down the unmade section of Woodhall Road, passing the quarries to your left, before returning to the start of our route at Fagley Lodge.



## A Potted History

For much of its length Calverley Loop follows the line of several long woodland drives which were set out in the 1850s as part of a grand housing scheme. This was conceived by the Thornhill family, who to this day still own the woodlands encircling Calverley. Although the drives and several associated lodge houses were completed, just a handful of estate houses were built.

Another part of the scheme was **Calverley Cutting**. This steep path was blasted through Calverley Wood in order to divert the original ancient packhorse trail away from the proposed development, though the steepness of the path made it deeply unpopular with the people who used it.



Calverley Cutting

**Shell Lane**, which also forms part of our trail, is part of an ancient coffin route which linked Pudsey with **St Wilfrid's**, its Parish church in Calverley. A shell was a lightweight coffin, which was easier to carry than its full sized counterpart, and following the arrival of the funeral procession at the church the shell was placed in an outer coffin for the burial.

One of the oldest buildings in Calverley is **Calverley Old Hall**, and it was here that Walter Calverley murdered his two infant sons in 1605.

Despite fleeing, Walter was caught and tried for murder at the York Assizes, and after refusing to enter a plea was pressed to death. Following his death it was said that the ghost of Walter rode on horseback through Calverley Woods before being laid to rest by the vicar of St Wilfrid's.



Calverley Old Hall



St Wilfrid's church

## Woodland Wildlife

For many hundreds of years woodland has dominated the landscape around Calverley. The name of the village, which probably dates back to the Dark Ages, is derived from the Old English meaning a *clearing in the woods where calves are grazed*. It is this maturity and the complexity of Calverley's woodlands which make them so attractive to wildlife.

One of the richest woodland habitats is that offered by old trees and fallen deadwood, in particular old standing trees, which contain many holes, cracks and crevices. These are well used by nesting birds such as woodpeckers and nuthatches, as well as roosting bats. During the spring and early summer, the woodland floor is

carpeted by wildflowers, and the presence of species such as bluebells, wood anemone and wood sorrel also hints at the age of these woodlands.

