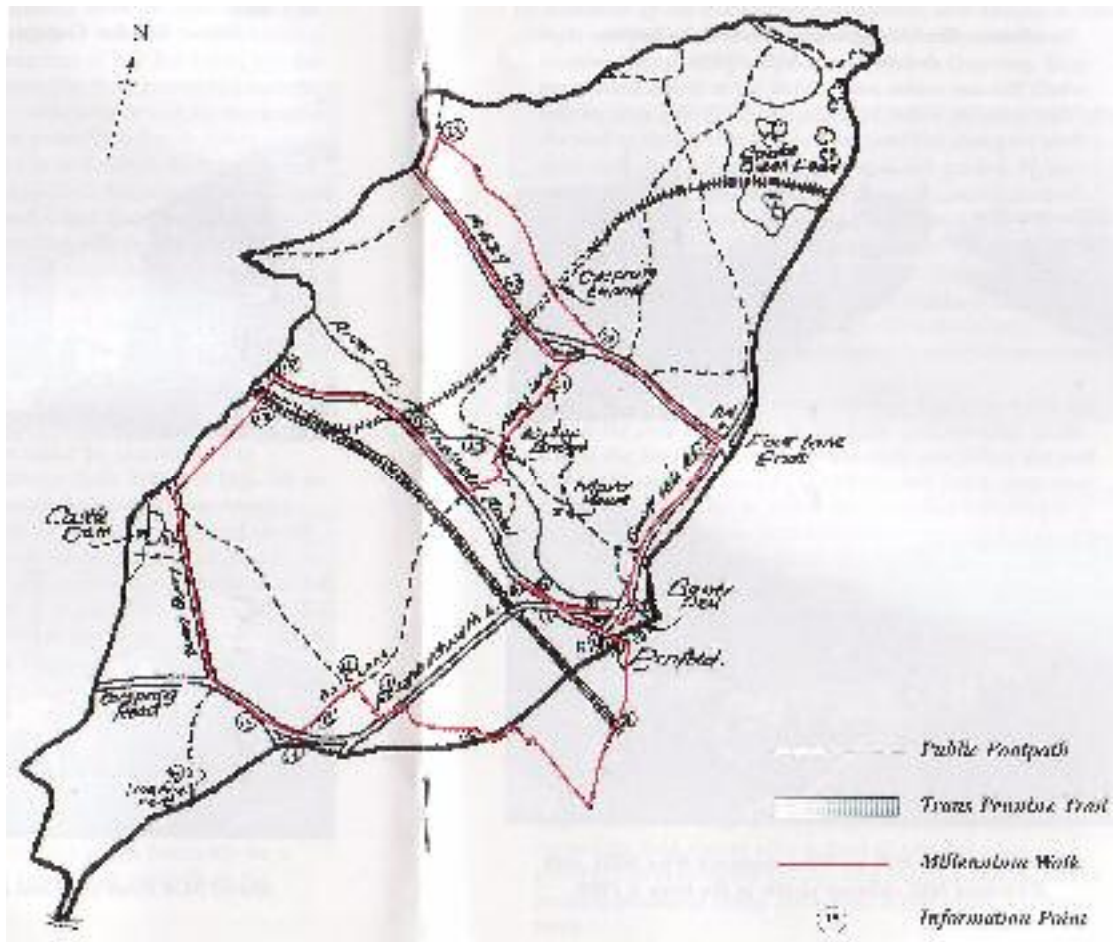


OXSPRING PARISH – MILLENIUM WALK



- 1. On Oxspring Bridge, face towards the village.** To your right is the site of the water driven Oxspring Mill. The last mill on the site finished working in the late 1950s when its owners were the Webb family who lived in Oxspring House situated in the trees above the estate called Millstones, which has been built on the site of the millpond. This is probably the site of the manor of Oxspring's mill, and the River Don marks the boundary between the two manors of Roughbitchworth and Oxspring, which made up the township of Oxspring, defined today as the Parish of Oxspring. Behind you, running down Bower Hill is the brook known as Nellie Bottom, the dividing boundary between the Oxspring and Thurgoland Parishes.
- 2. From Oxspring Bridge head towards the village.** On your right is the new road-bridge built in 1964 to straighten out and widen the road and avoid the old bridge, now a listed building. When this new bridge was built, the last of the old mill buildings were demolished. To your left is Bower Dell, a new public picnic site, but originally the site of the village sewage farm, reclaimed by public use by the Parish Council. The culvert emerging in the dell is the boundary marker between Oxspring and Hunshelf Parishes.
- 3. Cross over Bower Hill to your right, and go up Roughbitchworth Lane.** The row of cottages to the left are built on the site of an old mill or factory powered by steam, from water that was fed from a pond in the playing fields by the Waggon and Horses public house, and requiring a tall chimney stack. This mill was built by J.Rolling, then owned by the Dransfield family and let out to others. The cottages are said to have been built from the stone from the original mill on the same site by a Mr Gittus who had a wagon works in Springvale.

4. **Turn right through the gap in the wall into the dog exercising area at the bottom of the village green. Follow the track carefully down the slippery steps to the river.** This was the access lane into a large stone quarry now in-filled with furnace debris from the Camell Laird site in Penistone. The quarry was quite extensive and occupied what are now the Green, the new houses that stand where Wood's garage used to be, and the area opposite the school. By the river on your right is a deep cool trough, fed by a spring from the bedrock.
5. **Retrace your steps and walk up through the village green and past the new houses, where Wood's garage previously stood.** The garage was built in 1960 to replace a wooden structure, which stood right against the pavement. The pumps were on the pavement and worked by hand whilst machinery and vehicles were repaired in what used to be a little green hut.
6. **Cross the road to the school and go along the pavement to the right-hand boundary of the school.** Here beneath the Oxspring sign is a stone-topped trough. This is now dry but was once spring fed from Roughbitchworth above the railway line. When the railway cutting was built it disrupted the flow so a cast iron pipe bridged the line to maintain the flow. When the line was electrified, the pipe was removed to make room for the overhead cables, and the trough has been dry ever since. Today much of the water finds its way into the cutting alongside the Trans Pennine Trail.
7. **Go back past the school and the shop until you come to the junction with Roughbitchworth Lane.** This junction was remodelled for better visibility in the 1960s. The rose garden marks where a green wooden hut, once used as a shop, and the stone built toll keeper's cottage, with its little stone bay window sticking out into the pavement, were removed. Sheffield Road was a turnpike road constructed to link Thurgoland to Penistone, and the toll bar, a gate or chain across the road, was the place where tolls were collected from the road users.
8. **Cross the road junction continuing down the main road.** The building to the right at the junction is now two homes, but also the home to the cobbler at one time. The Waggon and Horses pub was originally a farm with a public room to sell its own beer to villagers and travellers. It was owned by a family called Atkinson, the area at the junction was named Warehouse Flat on maps, but locals said "Acky's flat". Railway builders who camped on Black Moor also used it, and at that time was called The Navigation after these workers. Just past the pub on the main road is a long stone trough behind which is a stone covered cistern and stone pipe feed. This would refresh the horse drawn transport, animals on their way to and from Penistone market, and the steam traction engines using this turnpike road. Opposite is the building that once housed the village blacksmith and smithy. Over the wall behind the trough was the site of the previously mentioned millpond. A little further along you cross the culvert as it emerges from under the playing field to disappear under the road, to emerge again in Bower Dell. We are now in Hunshelf Parish, although the boundary stone says Thurgoland. This was found in the culvert recently on should be on the bridge over the Don at the bottom of Thurgoland Bank. Behind is the Pinfold, used to collect together animals for treatment or to take to market, or to park them safely whilst their drover was visiting the pub. Strays were rounded up and placed here for their owners to pay a fine to the Parish to retrieve them. This is now a public quiet garden.
9. **Continue down the main road towards Thurgoland and after the playingfield car park, take the track off to your right. Follow the track across the field and under the bridge.** It is possible to join the Trans Pennine Trail at this bridge and walk back into Oxspring, or alternatively towards Rumtickle for a spectacular view of the River Don and its valley from the viaduct.
10. **Continue up the track to the field corner, turn sharply to your right and follow the footpath alongside the dry-stone wall, keeping it on your left as you head towards Oxspring. Keep going until nearly at the field corner, where you will find a stile on your left. Cross this stile and follow the other side of the wall to**

the right into the corner and left along the wall to a stone stile on the right, into the bungalow's garden. Please follow the little signs guiding you along the public footpath. This is "Kontiki", but was the site of Dawson's Mill. The pond providing the power for the mill and some of the mill's walls can still be seen. Fertiliser was made here, by grinding up animal bones. There are references to it also having been a woollen and wire mill owned by a family called Camm, but was probably the manor of Roughbirchworth's corn mill originally.

- 11. Leave the garden by the stone stile and head diagonally left across the field to the stile in the stone wall running up the side of the field. Over the stile turn right and follow the wall side to the stile over into Roughbirchworth Lane, cross over the road and turn left to follow the pavement.** Opposite is Sycamore Farm, and the farm building on the right is a modern equivalent of the building which stood there in the 1970s, a cruck framed barn. The original was a wooden A-frame clad round with stone. Now, the frame is concrete with stone in-fill. The next farm is Middle Farm, built out of stone under a stone slab roof in a common local style of one long building housing the dwelling, barn and byres.
- 12. Turn right up the lane alongside Middle Farm to the top of the lane.** We are joining Back Lane, an occupation lane created at the enclosure of this common open land in 1818 to allow farmers access to their fields. The land enclosure movement created the field system seen in front of you, but it has preserved an even earlier system, long narrow strips indicating possible mediaeval origin. Back Lane is part of the packhorse route.
- 13. Turn left and follow the lane until it reaches the road.** The lane was a possible line of the packhorse route from the top of Underbank down Roughbirchworth to cross the Don at Willow Bridge. The route went from the Peak District wool and lead mining area on into the West Riding industrial area. Two farms sit together on the left of the lane, the first called Root House Farm. It has an interesting pigeon loft with holes and stone ledges set into the gable of the barn as you approach it. The second has some very old architectural features built into it. You can see the hipped chimney stack, the fancy corners to the gable, and the stone lintels and mullions as you pass. Next on your left the farmstead across the field fronting onto the road is Manor Farm dated 1576, probably the centre of the old agricultural manor of Roughbirchworth, half of the original Oxspring Parish.
- 14. At the road turn right past Tanyard Farm.** The name tells you what went on there, but in the field behind the farm, you can see a solitary boundary stone marking the boundary between the Oxspring and Hunshelf Parishes. The boundary runs up the culvert from the main road to Dawson's Mill and follows the little stream feeding the mill pond as far as the road to Underbank. There was a dispute over the boundary from there, and with no obvious landform to mark it; the dispute was resolved by agreeing the positions of three stones in 1756. On the Oxspring side are the initials GB, and EW on the Hunshelf side. These almost certainly refer to Geoffrey Bosville and the Wortley family name of the Earls of Wharnccliffe. Another boundary stone is set into the left-hand wall, near the top of the little lane, up the site of the Tanyard Farm, and worth a few minutes detour to search it out. In the field wall just past this lane entrance, you can see a mediaeval relic, the field gateway. Its narrowness was standard of the time, and the gateposts are probably original. The right hand post has chiselled into it the bar holes and sneck groove used to hand and fasten the gate.
- 15. Continue along the road towards Penistone.** This would be the main route before the turnpike road through Oxspring, and accounts for the name of the next road on your left being called Oxspring Road. On your left you come to the kennels and cattery on the site of the demolished isolation hospital or 'red hospital' where scarlet fever or small pox victims were sent in isolation, but never used. Outside the main gate to the right in the grass verge you will find a spring fed double trough, probably the hospital's water source, and for the horses who would have just pulled carts up from Penistone.

- 16. Follow the road taking the right hand fork down the hill towards Castle Green Dam.** There was never a castle in the area, but in the fields towards the top of the hill behind the kennels there is evidence of there having been an Iron Age Fort, although some maps refer to it as a Roman Fort. Castle Green dam is the headwater for Kirkwood Mill further down the little valley. This little stream marks Oxspring's boundary with Penistone. There is a market stone on the road-bridge.
- 17. Turn right over the stile just before the bridge, and follow the footpath along the ridge above the stream over several stiles crossing the edges of the long narrow mediaeval fields seen from Back Lane.** The last stile brings you to Berrywell and the path takes you down under the old railway line to the main road. The line was the main route linking Sheffield to Manchester through the famous Woodhead Tunnel. Joseph Locke was the engineer in charge of completing it by 1845. His name was given to Locke Park in Barnsley. Oxspring did have a station, but just for goods and situated behind Toll Bar Close and accessed from the railway-bridge in Roughbirchworth Lane. The line was closed in 1983. You have the chance to join the Trans Pennine Trail here, going right back to Oxspring, or left to Penistone. But:-
- 18. At the main road turn right and cross the road to follow the pavement alongside the main road to Oxspring.** To your left you can see the boundary stream and Kirkwood Mill, once the only building between Oxspring and Penistone. This was water powered, then steam powered, and the base of the tall stone chimney stack can just be seen looking back at the mill from along the road. It is a corn mill still dealing in animal feeds but was once a woollen mill.
- 19. Follow the road under the railway-bridge into Oxspring.** On your left looking back down into the valley through the arches of the railway viaduct, you can see Winterbottom's Wire Works. Here, they draw stainless steel into finer and finer wire to make into hooks and needles for domestic and industrial uses. This was originally known as the Walk Mill and was a fulling mill, where woollen cloth was washed. This was carried out from the Middle Ages until 1888. The wooded hillside behind the mill is called Walk Mill Bank. To your right is Eddyfield, the estate was laid out from the bridge to St Aidan's Church as a speculative venture by a local builder named Eddy in the 1930s, but not completed due to the depression. The whole site was not completed until the 1960s and 80s when the Willows and then the Omega Homes were built.
- 20. Follow along the pavement until you come to the kissing gate on your left after the terrace. Follow the footpath through the gate down the hill to the stile and steps into Willow Lane. Turn left to go over Willow Bridge and up the causey stones to the stile on your left in the corner.** The building in front of you was several cottages, built on the site of the Earl of Shrewsbury's bloomery. Here, iron was made from local ore to be used in the local cottage of industries of nail or chain making. Later, it supplied the hammers of Wortley Forges, but no evidence can be seen for this today. From here you can return back to Oxspring following part of the packhorse route. But:-
- 21. Continue up the footpath round the corner to the steep straight holly-hedged pathway going up the hillside.** This is known locally as "Holly Lane", a "Holloway" formed by heavy use and was originally paved the full length with large flat "causey stones". You can see a section of them to the right, half way up. Causey stones enabled the packhorse route to be used all year round and arrested the further wearing away of the track into an even deeper Holloway. It is thought these might have been put in place when the whole route was upgraded in 1734 and Willow Bridge built to replace a wooden structure. The holly would form a shelter from the weather on the exposed hillside right through the year. At the top you can take a detour to your right over the stile to see the site of the Manor at the end of the first field by the sycamore tree, and then on into Manor Lane and right down Bower Hill back to our start. But:-

- 22. Follow the footpath round the farm buildings onto the lane and to your left to the main road. Cross the road, turn left and follow the pavement by the road.** The road was constructed during the depression years of the 1930s as a job-creation scheme for local men who would work on the scheme for six months to provide some income for the family. It is known locally as the "top road" and "Penistone by-pass". The railway line was a branch line to serve local collieries between Barnsley and Penistone with another branch leaving it at Silkstone Common to go down towards Doncaster. This branch and the main Sheffield to Manchester line through Oxspring have become part of the national footpath system and the Trans Pennine Trail to Liverpool or Hull. The gradient from Silkstone Common through the tunnel was so steep a special locomotive was built to double-head the coal trains. It was called "The Garret", and can be seen in a Manchester museum. Opposite the farm is another trough fed from a spring through the wall. This very rarely dries up, and at times of drought locals have been seen washing their cars here.
- 23. Continue up the road until you come to a footpath down steps on your right. The footpath heads towards the left corner of the field where a stile takes you into the next field. From here, head across the field towards the tree on the hilltop. To the left of it is a triple stile, climb it and pause.** From here you have a wonderful view. A 360-degree panorama of the Oxspring parish with the highest point to the south at Throstle Nest on the ridge. The Don Valley cuts the parish in half. In the west are the moors, Thurlstone's windmills and Penistone, to the north is Emley Moor TV mast, and to the north-east the rest of the parish drops down towards Silkstone. On crisp clear days views from the Pennines to the power stations in lowland Yorkshire and Lincolnshire can easily be seen.
- 24. From the top of the stile turn right and follow the hedge along the field side to the next stile ahead of you. Cross the next big field, dropping downhill and heading between the trees to the wall, which crosses the field to the left of the farm. Continue in this line across the field to the stone wall where a stile takes you into a rough bushy area. Exit diagonally right through a gateway, then left along the side of the wall on your left to the stile in the field corner. Go over the stile and up the middle of the field, through the gap in the wire fence to the stile by the gate onto the main road.** You can cross the road and follow the Trans Pennine Trail down Willow Lane with its shelterbelt of holly and causey stones to Willow Bridge and back to Oxspring following the packhorse route. Or detour off Willow Lane to pass the site of Oxspring Manor built 1580 by Godfrey de Bosville as a hunting lodge, and down Manor Lane to Bower Hill. The Trans Pennine Trail can be followed east towards Barnsley by taking the footpath off to the left after the second lane from the main road. This will take you down Blacker Green Lane running parallel to Oxspring's boundary, to join the section called the Dove Trail. But:-
- 25. At the stile turn left and follow the main road down to the Travellers Inn crossroads where you cross the road to the right and follow Bower Hill back down to the old road bridge and the starting point.** Immediately to your left is the Jockey House, formerly a public house called the Horse and Jockey and marked on the enclosure map of 1826. This pub sat on the junction of Huddersfield to Sheffield Road and the packhorse route from Bradfield via Bolsterstone, Underbank, Dyson Cote, Back Lane, Willow Lane and Willow Bridge. This route was improved with several guide stones and a new bridge at Ewden in 1734, and this is the likely date of Willow Bridge. On your right at the top of Bower Hill beside the gateway to the Clays Green allotments is another stone trough. This is now dry following successive raising of the road level. Just imagine the heavy horse drawn carts loaded with sacks of flour or stone from the quarries reaching the top of this steep climb. This trough would be welcome after such toil!