

2. Scout Rock

Moderate walk of about 2½ miles (4 km), taking 1½ hours.

Rising steeply at the start, it soon gives wonderful views across the Calder Valley to Heptonstall and Old Town. Ted Hughes, from his childhood home in Aspinall Street in Mytholmroyd, looked straight across to the grim cliff-face of Scout Rock: it provided 'both the curtain and back-drop to existence'. The return route drops back through Brearley, the remains of whose rural industrial past are still clearly visible, squashed between railway and canal.

From Mytholmroyd station, turn left; at the fork, just before the Methodist Church, turn immediately right, climbing steeply up Hall Bank Lane.

Hall Bank Lane winds steeply upwards, past the law firm Sweet and Maxwell. Initially a very steep haul up, you'll find it's worth it.

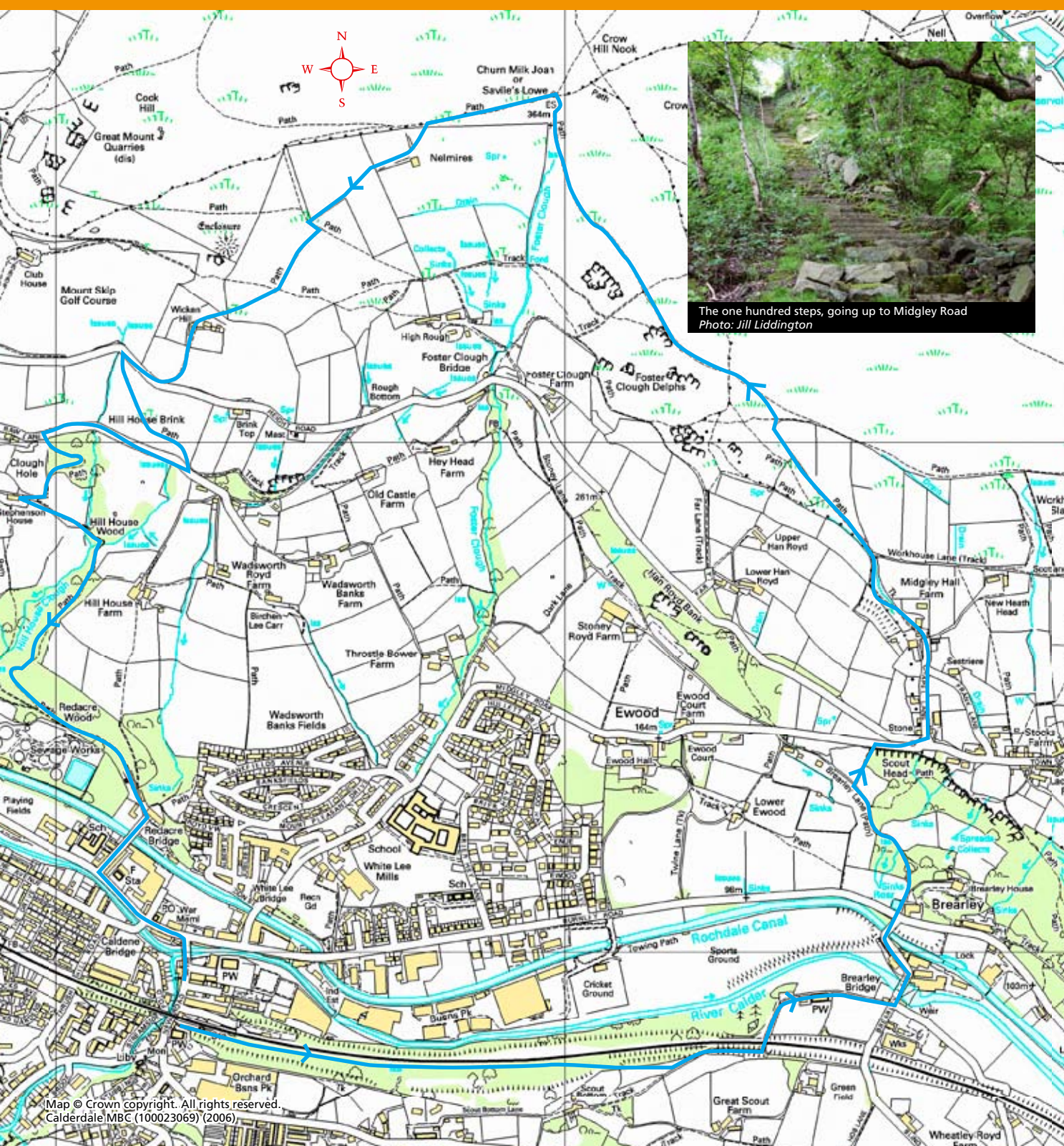
By Low Bank Farm, follow the footpath straight uphill. It continues upwards, roughly cobbled. Look ahead for views over Calder Valley towards Foster Clough and Churn Milk Joan, to your left, Heptonstall Church and Old Town mill standing on the horizon.

Above Scout Rock: when the track bends right, turn left up small steps. Follow grassy path along lie of hill, glancing left down onto Mytholmroyd, with Aspinall Street, Ted Hughes' birthplace, just visible. Skirt along the hillside: to your right across the broad field is an old house and barn, Stake, and beyond it Hathershelf. The steep cliff face of Scout Rock a massive presence during his boyhood, continued to fascinate Ted Hughes.

Down to Scout Road, following the path as it slopes gently downwards, with a small wood on your left. Turn right into Scout Road, and after 30 metres, turn left through a narrow snicket. Continue down the grassy path, descending the stone steps, and past Little Scout Farm. Join the track taking you straight downhill to Brearley.

Into Brearley Lane by crossing railway bridge, and continuing down track. Cross over River Calder at Brearley Bridge, noticing remains of weir below. Brearley, a small rural industrial hamlet, had at least three woollen mills, and is still used for business premises. Just before the second bridge, turn left along the canal; the old wall on the opposite canal bank are the remains of an old toffee factory, still working within living memory.

The Canal path returns you to Mytholmroyd. As you are now back-tracking, look up left to your original hilltop route and the view of Scout Rocks that so darkly mesmerized Ted Hughes, providing a powerful backdrop to his childhood. Follow the canal path, leaving it at White Lee Bridge to join the bottom of Midgley Road. For a detour to 1 Aspinall Street, turn uphill over the canal, then left into Zion Street and immediately right; Hughes' birthplace is on the left. To return to the station, turn right at main road, then first left.



3. Churn Milk Joan

A medium to hard walk of about 5 miles, taking about 3 hours and including some steep paths. Churn Milk Joan is a local landmark and subject of a Ted Hughes poem. Take care: the weather on the 'tops' can be much colder and wilder than at the valley bottom.

From Mytholmroyd Station on the Manchester platform, take the cycle-path to the east with the railway line on your left. Follow the path over the railway (note Coiners commemorative stone just after the bridge), and continue east, passing Brearley Chapel (1873). Turn left over the river and canal (Brearley Lane) and up to the main road. Cross straight over the road, and keep straight on.

In Brearley, follow a walled path straight up the hill, heading north-west through and then beside the wood, with causey stones some of the way. Take the second path on the right (look out for the waymark sign), after an open view below you of Brearley Chapel. Follow this up a very small flight of steps. Continue up through the woods to find a steep run of 100 stone steps which comes out nearly at the top of Midgley Road.

Towards Midgley - turn right, and as you enter the village, turn left up Chapel Lane keeping the old methodist chapel on your right. Turn left by some stables, and follow a path which runs along the side of (and above) an old sunken way. Then head north very shortly, turning left onto the Calderdale Way across Midgley Moor. A tall stone, known as Churn Milk Joan, will soon come into view.

Churn Milk Joan dates from about 1600 and was probably erected to settle a boundary dispute. Ted Hughes commemorates this stone in one of many poems reflecting on childhood folk tales. Follow the local custom for good luck by putting a coin or two in the hollow at the top of the stone, taking away coins left by earlier walkers. Continue west on the Calderdale Way across the moor for a short way, before taking the ladder stile to your left into a moorside pasture. Continue over further ladder stiles and then across open country until you arrive at the back of Wicken Hill Farm. Follow the path round the farm and down the track to Heights Road.

Hill House and Redacre Woods. On Heights Road, turn right for a short while, taking the first footpath sign on your left, which heads south east and drops down onto Raw Lane. Turn right along this track, soon picking up a footpath on the left. Head downhill through Hill House Wood, then Red Acre Wood.

Back to Mytholmroyd. At the bottom of the hillside, still in the woods, follow the path to the east, keeping the sewage works on your right. Leave the woods at Redacre Bridge and return to Mytholmroyd.



Ted Hughes and the Elmet Trust

Ted Hughes, the late poet laureate, was born at 1 Aspinall Street, Mytholmroyd in 1930. Although he moved away at the age of seven, the local landscape inspired many of his later poems, with their powerful images of animals and nature. The Elmet Trust, formed in 2006, established the Ted Hughes Project in Mytholmroyd – which includes opening up his birthplace home and organising walks plus festivals to celebrate the poet's life and work. www.themelmetrust.com

Mytholmroyd's industrial heritage

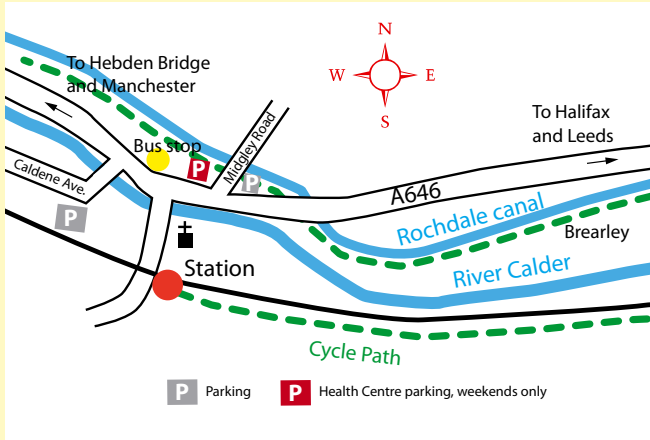
Two of the way-marked walks lead through old textile hamlets. The Scout Rock route returns through rural Brearley, which once had at least three woollen mills. The Wood Top walk's destination is an upland hamlet, once the site of an old dye-works for fustian, the hard-wearing cotton material that was key to local prosperity a century ago.

A short stroll to Brearley

From Mytholmroyd station, walk eastwards along the cycle-path, past the old shunting yards, keeping the railway line on your left. Continue on this path, over the railway bridge and past Brearley Chapel. Turn left down Brearley Lane and, just before the canal bridge, turn left again. The canal path takes you right back to Mytholmroyd. At White Lee Bridge turn left onto Midgley Road; to return to the station, turn right onto the main road, then first left.

This is a pleasant stroll on level paths, of about 1½ miles there and back.

Returning along the canal path, glance up left to Scout Rocks – a view which powerfully shaped the childhood of Ted Hughes: see Scout Rock walk for details.



Journeys

If you've enjoyed the walks in this leaflet, and would like to find out more, we recommend:

Mike Darke, *Mytholmroyd Heritage Walk*, 1987 & 2004 (£2.95); this illustrated booklet of five walks, each with full local historical background.

John Billingsley, *A Laureate's Landscape: Walks around Ted Hughes' Mytholmroyd*, Northern Earth 2007 (£4.50); one walk round Mytholmroyd and another up to Churn Milk Joan.

Elmet, poems by Ted Hughes, photographs by Fay Godwin, Faber 1979 & 1994; originally published as *Remains of Elmet*, it includes the poem 'Churn-Milk Joan'.

Ordnance Survey map, South Pennines, 1:25,000

nineteenth century, it produced fustian - hard-wearing cotton material. Its inhabitants included the Saltonstall family; John was a fustian dyer, and one of his daughters, Lavena, a fustian clothing machinist, later became the best known of the local suffragettes.

Below Wood Top: as you pass the post-box, continue downhill, keeping the mullion-windowed houses on your left. At the bottom, look up to the house with a 1657 date-stone. Turn immediately right, doubling back on yourself. After 75 yards, turn left down a track - and enjoy the hillside views across the broad field.

To Hawks Clough: at the large stone barn turn left, and continue down over railway at Carr Bridge. At the bottom, before the old clog factory, turn right up footpath, over stile and through wood. Facing the railway tunnel, turn left past the concrete plant.

To Caldene Avenue: at end, turn right and onto rough road. Left is the council's Highways depot, and above right are the new Caldene Croft houses. At the end, bear right and then left into Caldene Avenue. This suburban street takes you to Caldene Bridge. Turn right into main road, and first right back to the station.



Walkers are welcome

Mytholmroyd is a 'walkers are welcome' town. This means we try to ensure that footpaths and bridleways are in good condition, and that facilities for both local people and visitors wanting to walk in our beautiful countryside are welcoming.

Welcome to Mytholmroyd

Mytholmroyd, like other small towns of the upper Calder Valley, is increasingly attracting walkers. From the railway station, the steep hillsides can quickly be reached. This is a landscape enriched both by its dense local history, and by its intimate associations with the writings of Ted Hughes, Yorkshire's most iconic poet.

Public transport links

It is easy to reach Mytholmroyd – by leaving your car at home. The Caldervale line runs a regular train service westwards from Leeds and Bradford, and eastwards from Rochdale and Manchester.

Buses stop on the main road, a minute's walk from the station. You can download both rail and bus timetables from www.wymetro.com

Parking

If you arrive by car, please park with consideration. Easiest parking is at the Community Centre, Caldene Avenue, where is an honesty box for payment.

On the car park at the Health Centre, parking is permitted only on Saturday and Sunday. There is also a small car park next to the White Lion pub on the main road.

Eating and Drinking

There are three pubs in Mytholmroyd, including the Shoulder of Mutton, opposite the station. Alternatively there are three inexpensive cafes, including Milly's on the main road. A greengrocers and bakers sell food for a picnic.

Acknowledgements

Mytholmroyd Walkers' Action would like to thank the many local supporters who have helped make Mytholmroyd a 'walkers are welcome town'. The waymarked trails have been developed in partnership by Mytholmroyd Walkers' Action and Calderdale MBC.

Additional copies of this leaflet can be obtained from Hebden Bridge Tourist Information Centre 01422 843831
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Mytholmroyd's waymarked walks have been developed, in partnership, by Mytholmroyd Walkers Action and Calderdale MBC.



Wood Top was an old hand-loom weaving hamlet; by the late you descend, the reservoir wall rises on your left.

Spencer Lane: at junction, turn right onto concrete track, glancing left for grassed-over remains of disused reservoir. As track becomes Wood Hey Lane. If you're lucky, you may glimpse deer.

Park Lane: continue along the lane, past Park Farm (Park cottages). Continue for approximately 3/4 mile (1km); this glance immediately right along footbridge (looking down at remains of stepping-stones). Keeping to the road, turn right just before Pot Luck, then immediately left up into Nest Lane, which turns into Park Lane.

From Mytholmroyd station, turn left and cross road; glance immediately right along footbridge (looking down at remains of stepping-stones). Keeping to the road, turn right just before Pot Luck, then immediately left up into Nest Lane, which turns into Park Lane.

An easy walk of about 2½ miles (4km), taking an hour. An ideal short route avoiding steep climbs, with excellent views across to Heptonstall and Old Town. The destination is an upland textile hamlet, Wood Top, an area of fascinating traditional houses.

1. Wood Top

Map and guide

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Mytholmroyd: three waymarked walks

