

# Going through the Ginnels

## Northbound

If you'd like to explore historical Headingley, you can do no better than go through four of the neighbourhood's longest ginnels (and two shorter ginnels), all following centuries-old rural pathways. The walk, of about two-and-a-half miles (or two miles with a shortcut), begins at Wrangthorn (Hyde Park Corner), follows old tracks which converged on Wood Mill (Tannery Park), and ends at Weetwood Hall.

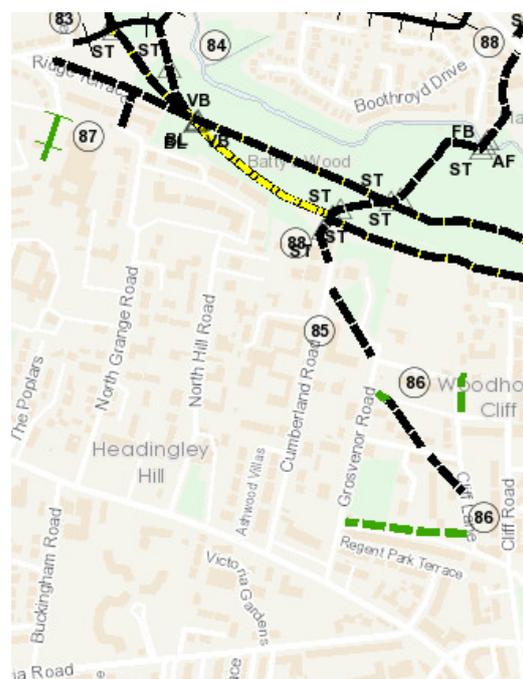
### Starting the Walk

All bus services southbound from Headingley Centre (except X84 and X85) will bring you to Hyde Park Corner, by Woodhouse Moor, where there are several cafes, to set you up before you begin the walk! [Access of course is curtailed during the coronavirus pandemic.]

*The settlement at the Corner originated as the hamlet of **Wrangthorn** (perhaps meaning 'crooked hedge'), on the edge of Woodhouse Moor, where the lane from Leeds entered Headingley township. The name survives in the local Parish of Woodhouse & Wrangthorn, and in local streets. The name 'Hyde Park Corner', it seems, was proposed early in the 19th century, doubtless intended to capitalise on the rising reputation of the area. The name was generally adopted by the end of the century, by which time, villas and terraces had developed to the north, and brick terraces had proliferated to the south, with an inn, two churches and a school on the Corner. For more info, go to [Historic Hyde Park](#).*



Ordnance Survey 1851



Leeds Public Rights Of Way Map

### Stage One, Headingley Hill

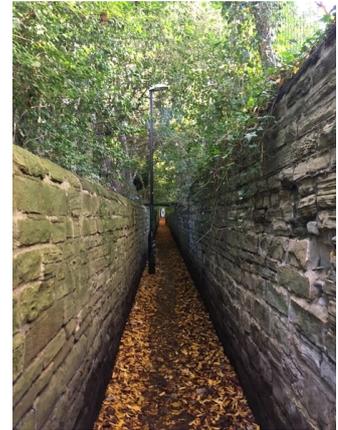
Begin the walk from Hyde Park Corner down Woodhouse Street (to the right of the Hyde Park pub). Take the first left up Cliff Road, and then left again into Cross Cliff Road. Turn right up Cliff Lane, and pass Grosvenor Park Gardens. The entrance to the Headingley Hill ginnel is on the left.

The **Headingley Hill** ginnel was made during the later nineteenth century: at the beginning, it passes the former Headingley Orphanage for Boys (now private houses), and at the farther end, it passes Ridgeway House (because the track ran through the House's grounds, it was enclosed by high walls - with a footbridge over, to connect the two parts). The track continues between buildings at the end of Cumberland Road; later development enclosed it on Grosvenor Mount. But why does the ginnel strike at a diagonal across the rectangular street pattern? The reason is that long before the Victorian development of Headingley Hill, an ancient track ran across the Hill – on Woodhouse Moor, it branched off Woodhouse Lane, it passed Wrangthorn, crossed the fields on the Hill, and then dropped down to Meanwood Beck, following the stream up to Wood Mill, a medieval corn mill (now the site of Tannery Park). This mill was acquired by Kirkstall Abbey about 1230 - so the path followed by the ginnel may be the best part of a thousand years old!



From Cliff Lane, turn left into the old track (pictured), the first part of the ginnel, passing the former orphanage on the right. Come out into Grosvenor Mount and cross the road diagonally left into the next part of the ginnel, at the back of the Mount gardens. This then opens onto a small triangular grassed area, around a raised bed: from here, cross Grosvenor Road diagonally to the

right, to the entrance to the next part of the ginnel. Pass between high stone walls and under the footbridge (pictured) (Ridgeway House is on the right) to Cumberland Road, and again cross diagonally to the right to the last, steeply-sloping part of the ginnel. Exit onto Woodhouse Ridge.



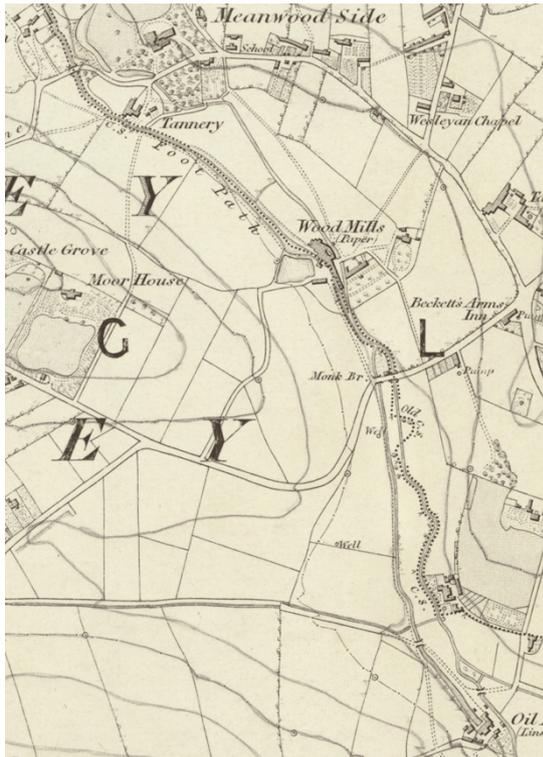
Turn left, and follow the stone wall on your left, along the old track, with Batty's Wood on your right, down to the entrance to the Ridge – which is marked by a group of boulders and a threshold stone set in the ground, inscribed 'Wood House Ridge'.

### Stage Two, Far Headingley

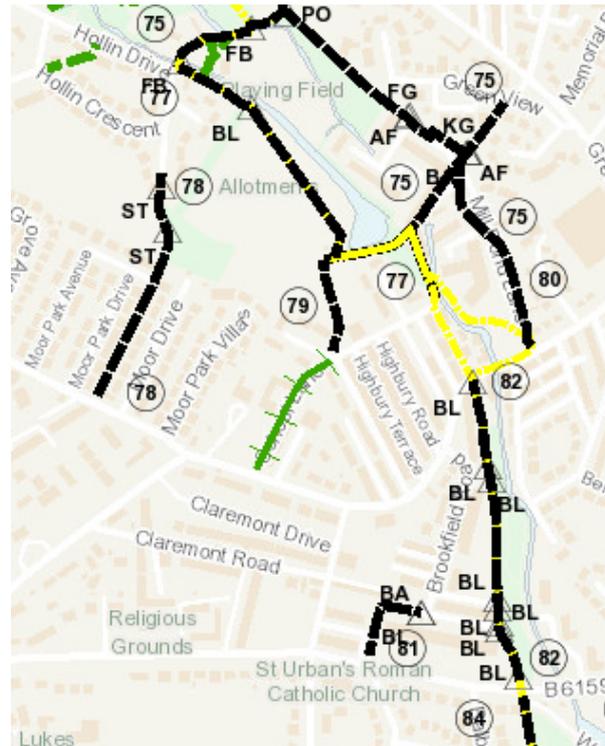
In front of you, there are three paths. The left-hand path leads to Ridge Terrace and thence to Wood Lane (and back to Headingley Centre). The right-hand path descends the hill by a series of steps, to the site of an old linseed oil mill (later Woodland Dye Works), by Meanwood Beck; it was demolished in 1974. Turn left, passing the Vale Stables garden centre, to re-join the walk at Grove Lane.

The middle path continues the walk along the old track across the open space of Cardboard Hill. On the far side, using a couple of flights of steps, cross a sunken path (which is an extension of Wood Lane, leading down to the site of the old oil mill), and follow the track between fenced gardens on the left, and a line of trees on the right. Emerge onto Grove Lane.

Directly opposite, the track runs ahead, beside the end of Oakfield Terrace. Cross over Grove Lane (be careful, it's a busy road), and follow the track along the front of terraces on the left, which back onto Brookfield Road; on the right is a narrow green corridor, including a pond, with Meanwood Beck on the far side. The mill stream to the old oil mill used to run beside the track on the right. At the end of the corridor, where it meets Brookfield Road, follow the track into the Spring Hill ginnel (pictured).



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The **Spring Hill** ginnel follows the track beside the former mill stream to the old oil mill, which leads on upstream to Wood Mill (Tannery Park). When Spring Hill Terrace (on the left) was built in the 1880s, its gardens ran down to Meanwood Beck, with footbridges over the mill stream, and the track running through. It seems this track became a ginnel only when the stream was filled in the 1970s, and the track was fenced.



Come out onto Monk Bridge Road. Rather than crossing the road directly to Highbury Lane (it's a dangerous corner), for safety, turn right for fifty yards or so, to a pedestrian crossing. Return to the Lane, and at the far end of the Lane, directly ahead, enter the continuation of the old track through the Highbury ginnel (pictured).



The **Highbury** ginnel concludes the original Wood Mill track beside Meanwood Beck. It's enclosed by the buildings of Meanwood Tannery and the tail race on the right, and by 1930s housing and an old walled triangular plot on the left.

Follow the ginnel for 80 or so yards, with Meanwood Beck on the right at first, and then the tail race of the former mill. The Highbury ginnel and the old track arrive at Wood Mill, and end in a footpath T-junction.

The path to the right leads into Tannery Park, on the site of Wood Mill.

**Wood Mill** was built in the Middle Ages as a corn mill on Meanwood Beck, and named after the local Mean (or Common) Wood. It was acquired by Kirkstall Abbey in 1230 and leased to tenant millers. This continued after the Dissolution, leased by absentee landlords, until the mill was burned down in the eighteenth century. It was rebuilt, and leased by Thomas Martin for paper-making, and he enlarged the mill pond. The mill was burned again in 1852, but bought and rebuilt in 1856 by Samuel Smith (of the brewery family) as Meanwood Tannery,

one of the largest in the country. The building was subsequently leased, as a tannery, then as a piggery, and finally as a fellmongers (preparing sheepskins for tanning), when it was known as Highbury Works. It continued in use as a fellmongery until 1994, when the building was listed Grade II, the site was redeveloped for housing as Tannery Park, and the main building converted to Stone Mill Court apartments. For more info, go to [Meanwood Beck Mills](#).

At the T-junction of footpaths at the end of the Highbury ginnel, the left path is the bottom of another old track to Wood Mill (pictured), known as School Lane – though there is no school nearby!

*The route of what is now **School Lane** developed over Headingley Moor in the eighteenth century, probably to connect Wood Mill, by way of Monk Bridge Road, with the newly-opened Leeds-Otley Turnpike (now Otley Road). When Thomas Martin rented land on the Moor from Lord Cardigan, in order to enlarge the mill pond, he was required to pay the rent to the school in Headingley, and became responsible for the lane. Thus, when the Moor was enclosed in 1834, the track was named 'School Road', to reflect that payment. It became a ginnel when Summerhill and Sandfield House were built on either side in the nineteenth century, and when housing was developed down the hill in the twentieth.*

Go up School Lane, with the mill pond behind a wooden fence on your right, until you come to a footpath crossroads. (You can take a short cut here, to Stage Three of the walk: turn right at the crossroads, and follow the path between a smallholding on your right and Hollin Lane Allotments on your left, until you emerge into Hollin Drive. Now go to **Stage Three**.) Otherwise, go straight across the crossroads, and continue on the old track into the middle part of School Lane, between hedges. Exit onto the top of Highbury Mount, and cross diagonally right to the entrance to the final part of School Lane.



Come out where the track joins Monk Bridge Road. Turn right. When the road bends left, keep straight ahead into Moor Road, and then just after Moor Drive, find the entrance to the Headingley Moor ginnel on the right (pictured).

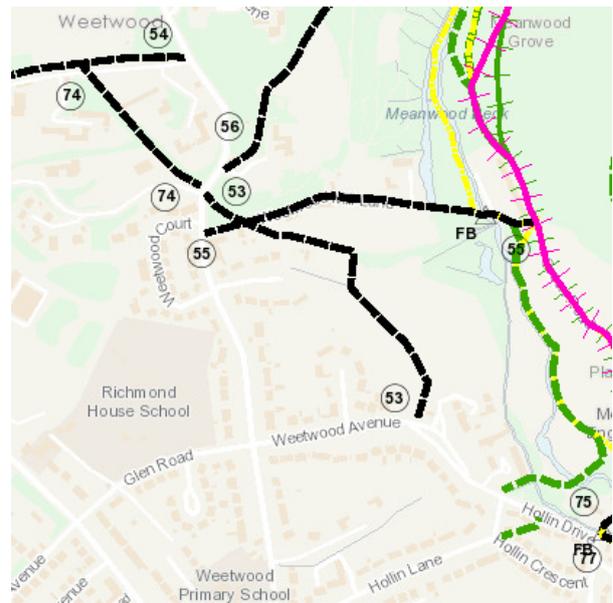


*Moor Road was originally a drovers' track across Headingley Moor. When the Moor was enclosed in 1834, the track was designated as a road, with plots on either side, and a drive ran north (to the right) to Moor House. This route continued as a path down the hill, into Meanwood Valley, crossing the mill stream to Wood Mill by a footbridge to the Whalley Tannery, built in the seventeenth century (beside the site of Hollin Lane Farm). The route over **Headingley Moor** was made a ginnel, after Moor House was demolished, by housing development between the wars: it was enclosed between Moor Drive and Moor Park Drive, and then by Hollin Drive, built over the path.*

Enter the Headingley Moor ginnel, which climbs between inter-war houses, to Moor Park Mount. Cross this road to the north part of the ginnel. Descend the steps, to emerge onto Hollin Drive, between no1 and no2. Pass Hollin Crescent on the left, and continue down the Drive, until it is joined by a footpath from the right, and the road bends to the left.



Ordnance Survey 1851



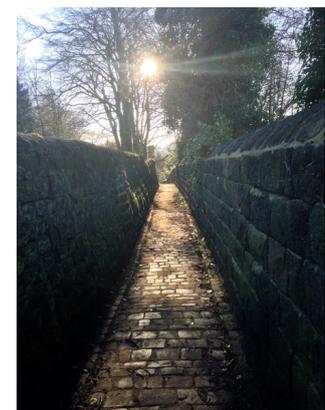
Leeds Public Rights Of Way Map

### Stage Three, Weetwood

The footpath from the right follows the route of another old track from Wood Mill, this time to Weetwood Hall, and it continues along Hollin Drive. The Drive passes the entrance to the **Hollin** ginnel on the left, between no31 and no33 (*unfortunately, the ginnel is currently overgrown and impassable: it is an old continuation of Hollin Lane, leading to Whalley Tannery, and probably dates from the founding of the tannery in the seventeenth century*). By the entrance to Meanwood Park, the Drive turns into Weetwood Avenue, still following the old track. When the Avenue bears left up the hill, continue straight ahead (along the track), to a gate and stile into a field (pictured). Follow the track across the field to the far end. Pass through a gap in the fence, over a stream and over a stone stile, into the Weetwood ginnel.



*Like many local ginnels, the **Weetwood** ginnel was made along an old track, which ran for a mile as the crow flies, across fields from Wood Mill to Weetwood Hall. From the Mill it ran by the mill stream (the path is now diverted away from the stream) until it diverged along the route of Hollin Drive and then Weetwood Avenue, past a farm (on the site of Hollin House), over fields and crossing Weetwood Mill Lane and Weetwood Lane, to the Hall. The first part of the ginnel was enclosed on the left about 1930, when Weetwood Crescent was developed in the home field of Weetwood Farm; it was already walled on the right by the gardens of the houses on Weetwood Mill Lane. Beyond this Lane, the ginnel is bounded on the right by the wall of The Hollies (built 1864). And then, over Weetwood Lane, it runs between the high walls of what are now the Oxley Residences of the University of Leeds, Bardon Grange to the right and Oxley Hall to the left, both built about 1860.*



At the stile, the ginnel diverges from the original track, to follow a field boundary. After about 50 yards, the ginnel turns left at a right angle, into what was a former lane to Weetwood Mill. After another 100 yards, mount a stile on the right, rejoining the original track, and follow a short passage of some 30 yards, to Weetwood Mill Lane. Cross the Lane diagonally left, into a wooded passage, with the wall of The Hollies on the right. Emerge onto Weetwood Lane. Cross the Lane (carefully, the bend is dangerous!) to a ginnel opposite (to the right of Bardon Hall

Gardens), continuing the old track. Climb the steep paved ginnel, between high walls (pictured). At the end, emerge onto the drive to the Oxley Residences. Originally, the track continued ahead to Weetwood Hall (through what are now the playing fields of Sports Park Weetwood).

### **Ending the Walk**

**Either** cross the drive to a step stile over a low stone wall, immediately opposite. Over the stile, turn left along a path through a wooded corridor, with Oxley Residences to the left, and the playing fields of Leeds University's Sports Park Weetwood to the right. Emerging from the trees, continue along the paved path between playing fields (Weetwood Hall is beyond the trees to the right), until you reach Otley Road, opposite Lawnswood School. About 100 metres to your right is Weetwood Hall Lodge and the entrance to Weetwood Hall, where you can find the Stables Pub (pictured), for refreshment at the end of your walk [access of course is curtailed during the coronavirus pandemic.]. Further on is a bus stop - all bus services southbound (except X84 and X85) take you back to Headingley Centre

**Alternatively**, turn right along the drive to Weetwood Lane, turn left for 100 yards along the Lane, to Weetwood Park Lodge. Here you can turn left again, to Weetwood Hall and the Stables Pub. Otherwise, cross the Lane, and at the Quarry Dene Park bus stop, catch Bus Service 28 back to Headingley Centre.

***Weetwood Hall** is the oldest building around Headingley, built for Daniel Foxcroft in 1625 (the site may be medieval). It has been extended in every century since. The Hall was bought by the University of Leeds in 1919, and used as a hall of residence. Since 1993, it has been a hotel, conference centre and pub, and is now the Weetwood Hall Estate. Originally access was from Weetwood Lane (by the drive now leading to Oxley Residences), but is now from Otley Road. For more info, go to the final destination in [Wandering through Weetwood](#).*



**Richard Tyler**, Headingley Development Trust, March 2021

There will be more information on **Ginnels around Headingley** in the forthcoming gallery on the [HeadingleyLeeds](#) website.