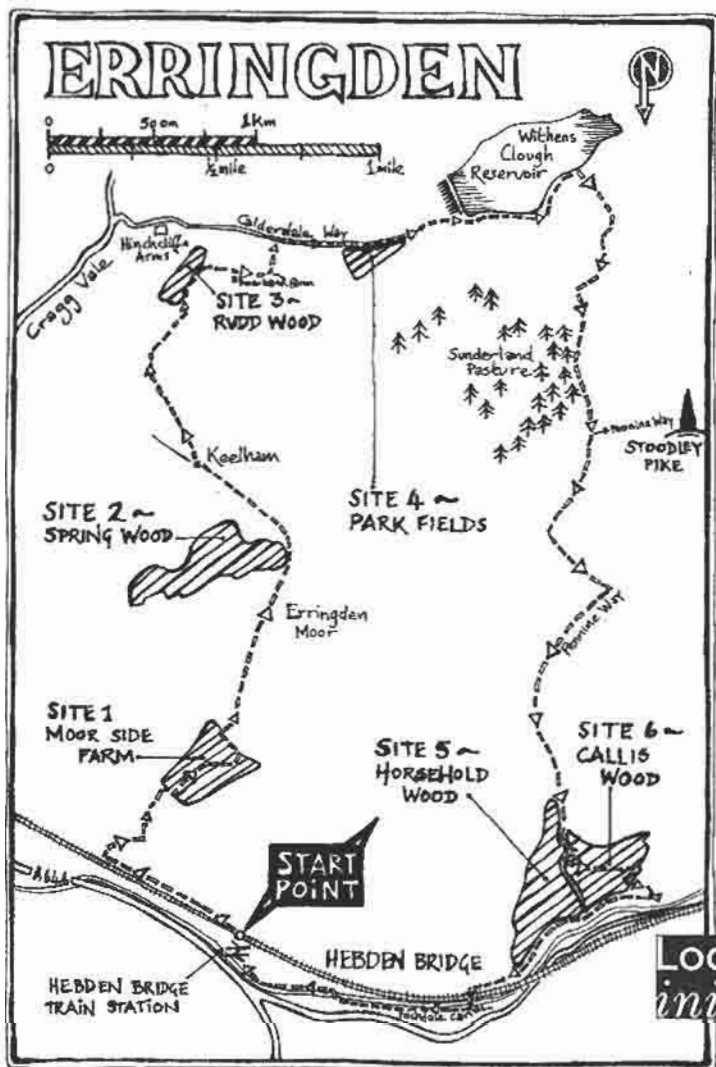


Erringden

One of a series of walks exploring the history and ecology of the Calder Valley and the influence of a diverse and independent people.



Echoes of Elmet

Local Heritage
initiative

Start - Hebden Bridge rail station.

Go left (as you are facing the station) and along a track and cycle route towards Mytholmroyd.

At a junction with the next track, follow it around to the right. Go over the railway and follow the track past Carr House to a barn. Turn right and shortly after left across a field.

When you reach the footbridge, cross over and follow the path up the side of the clough. At a junction with the next track, go straight ahead and follow the path steeply up.

Where the path emerges in an open grassy/heather area, the clough off to your right is the wood at **Moorside Farm - Site 1**. Explore the wood and return to the path. Continue to the top to emerge on a track. Turn right and immediately left towards Bell House Moor.

Follow the path up the hill and bear left towards the corner of the wall and fence. Cross the stream and head for the stile.

Go over the stile and follow the wall to the corner.

Head to the corner of **Spring Wood - Site 2**.

Follow the path round the top of Spring Wood to Keelham.

Bear right 45° along footpath.

Cross stile at wall corner and cross the field.

Cross another stile at the opposite side of the field and join the track.

Follow the track until the way marked path on the left.

Follow the path to Swan Bank Farm and **Rudd Wood - Site 3**.

Turn right along the track at bottom of footpath then turn left down the hill until you join the Calderdale Way, which is here a metalled road.

An alternative here would be to head left down to the Hinchcliffe arms (Weds. - Sun., no kids) for refreshments and pick

up the path again at the same point afterwards.

Turn right along the road. **Park Fields - Site 4** is on the right.

Continue along the road to the reservoir and follow the path along the right side of the reservoir until the way marked sign on the right.

Follow the footpath to the corner of Sunderland Pasture.

Follow path along the wall to the stone stile.

Continue along the path, across another stile and down the hill until the Pennine Way junction.

Take a left along the Pennine Way. Cross over a stile on the right at the sign and continue along the footpath.

Follow the path downhill into the woods (**Horsehold woods**) - **Site 5** and follow the Pennine Way for half a mile until descending a waymarked path to the right.

Follow this through **Callis Woods - Site 6** - following the frequent yellow markers on trees and past the railway.

Cross over a stile into an open field to emerge by some houses. Go left down this walled path to emerge near the centre of Hebden Bridge.

Follow the canal back to the train station or have a well-deserved cuppa at one of Hebden's many cafes. **Finish**

Cotton grass



Erringden

Following the instructions for this walk, and moving through a landscape so apparently bleak, one is astonished to find that there is so much history – from the medieval deer park and the yeoman clothiers of Old Chamber to the former resident of Bell House, David Hartley, one of the Cragg Vale Coiners. They were engaged in the practice of ‘clipping’ gold coins, and returning them to circulation somewhat lighter than the intended original weight.

‘Erringden’ is now a large County Parish within Calderdale, and makes up the area on the south side of the valley around Hebden Bridge, but its name comes from much earlier times. Senior’s essay on place names in Calderdale suggests that Erringden derives from a Scandinavian immigration to the area, possibly at some time soon after the Normans invaded the north of England after a rebellion in 1069. The first element, Erring-, comes from the personal name ‘Eric’ and the second half from Dene, meaning valley.

What is beyond any doubt is that there was a large ‘forest’, (The forest of Sowerbyshire), that was managed as a medieval Norman hunting ground. Within the forest, which was not necessarily completely wooded, was the Park of Erringden, which supported a considerable number of foresters whose job it was to look after the deer and maintain the large pallisade which formed its boundary. The Official Guide to Hebden Bridge tells us: “The name Palace House Road, to be found in Fairfield, Hebden bridge has a link with Norman times. Erringden Park stretched to the Stoodley area from Sowerby. A hunting lodge actually stood where Fairfield is today, taking its name from the pallisading that surrounded the hunting area – Pallisade House. Hence the corruption of the name to Palace House (now demolished) and thus we

derive the name Palace House Road. According to an article in the transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society, the park had long ceased to exist before it started being broken up and the land leased to ‘copyholders’, by Richard Duke of York in 1449. Boundary stones are still dotted around the area; some marked with ‘S’ for Sowerbyshire and some ‘A’ for Arringden, an older version of the current name. Local outcrops bear the names the area’s hunting past – Buckstones, Doestones, Deerstones and Wolfstones.

The hamlets of Horsehold and Old Chamber are the oldest settlements in the area and the Sutcliffes, recorded as cloth makers in the area in 1569, were probably related to the original owner of this part of the park, Thomas Sutcliffe. At this time, as many of the wills suggest, there was a strong connection between these settlements and the church at Heptonstall; coffins were regularly transported across the moors to the church, and there was as yet little sign of the town we know today as Hebden Bridge.

The White Lion (King’s Farm) was not built until 1657 but there was probably a wooden structure there before, catering for packhorse travellers on the way to Heptonstall.

Site 1 - Moorside Farm

Moorside Farm is chiefly of interest because of the wooded clough, which stretches up from the valley below. There appears to be a process of ecological succession taking place, with grassland over heath being taken over by wooded areas at the edge. All three habitats are present. A survey of the site also revealed crab apples, a native species not common in the area, and suckering plums, which may have escaped from a nearby garden.

Site 2 - Spring Wood/Broadhead clough

This site is managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and is semi-natural broadleaved woodland with mires, flushes and fast flowing brooks. Over 1,200 species have been identified here, including 114 higher plants, around 75 mosses and liverworts, at least 160 fungi and 30 lichens. Over 700 invertebrates have been recorded, including 262 beetles, and 97 spiders.

From the route across Bell House Moor we get a revealing view of the bowl shaped valley that forms the limits of the wooded area, probably as a result of glacial movement.

Site 4 - Park Fields

Park Fields is the area of fields just above the Calderdale Way before reaching Withens Clough Reservoir and can broadly be described as wet heath with patches of Bog. However, a survey of the area revealed a number of plants more usually found in Marshland areas, including Marsh Pennywort and Marsh Willow herb.

Site 5 - Horsehold Wood

The hamlet of Horsehold and the wood nearby may have got their name from the stabling of horses in medieval times. It is thought that the Deer Park extended down this far to take in these woods. Much of the wood is planted beech, from the nineteenth century. Although this type of woodland has a pleasing and open aspect, it is not native to the area and supports little in the way of ground flora. Horsehold would have more likely been a mixed birch and smaller oak woodland.

Site 6 - Callis Wood

Callis wood is dominated by birch and is undergoing a slow process of natural regeneration. It may have been cut during the second world war for timber and is only now returning to woodland. Many photographs of Hebden Bridge in the 1950s show that the town was far less wooded even than it is today and as the atmosphere has improved, along with a change in attitudes, many more pockets of land are now partially covered by woodland.

Bell House Moor

The walk passes across Bell House Moor on its way to Keelham in an area dominated by wet heath with patches of blanket bog. The rushes and white tufts of cotton grass in the summer give a warning to the careful walker about where it might be wise to avoid. The area is bounded by the regular walls off Kilnshaw Lane, which are still in good condition today, and clearly show the areas of improved land. These fields may once have been used for growing oats, but pasture for sheep is now the predominant use, along with a small amount of hay making.

The other interesting feature of this area is the network of packhorse trails which cross the area, some of which have been submerged beneath the peat and bog. Rake Head, which is close to our route indicates the name for a gentle slope; this would have been the easier way for travelers to pass and there appears to be an obvious route down to Clough Foot Bridge across Bell House Moor and down past Bell House into Cragg Vale.

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