

## Going through the Ginnels Southbound

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 Weetwood Hall, follows old tracks which converged on Wood Mill (Tannery Park), and ends at Wrangthorn (Hyde Park Corner).

Bold numbers refer to the images in the Ginnels gallery. For further info on the ginnels, see the Gallery.

### Starting the Walk

From Headingley Centre, catch a bus northbound. **Either** catch bus service 28 up Otley Road and Weetwood Lane; alight at Quarry Dene Park, by Weetwood Park Lodge (formerly the east lodge of Weetwood Hall). Turn, and walk back down Weetwood Lane, and turn right into the drive signposted to Oxley Residences.

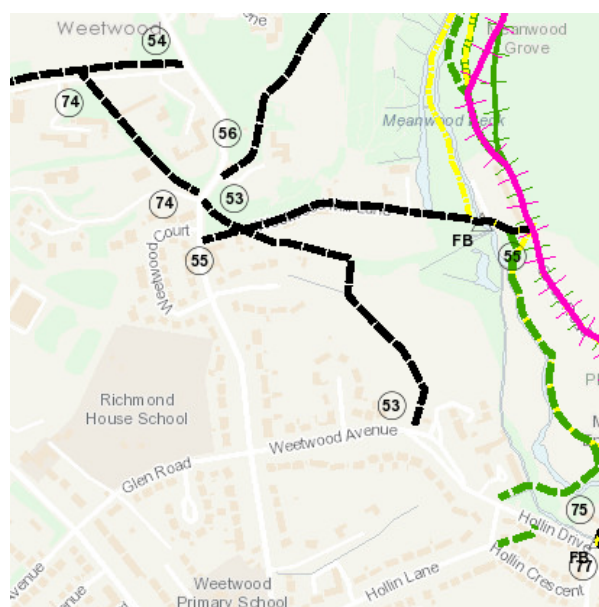
**Or** catch bus services 1 or 96 up Otley Road to Lawnswood School. Cross the road, turn back towards Leeds, passing Weetwood Hall Lodge, and then turn left into a footpath (beside a sign, 'Public Footpath to Oxley Hall'). Follow the path between playing fields, and continue when the path enters a wooded corridor, by the entrance to Oxley Residences on the right. Continue along the path, with the Residences to the right. When these come to an end, turn right, climb over a step stile over a low stone wall, into the drive to Oxley Residences.

***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](#).*

### Stage One, Weetwood



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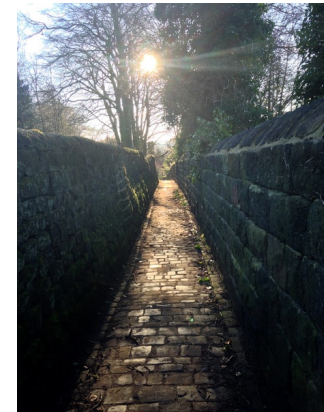


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Originally, the route of the Weetwood ginnel ran from Weetwood Hall, through what are now the playing fields of Sports Park Weetwood, over a stile, to the drive to the Oxley Residences (which was itself the original entrance drive to Weetwood Hall). Immediately opposite the stile, enter a paved ginnel through a gap in the wall (pictured) **19a**.



*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 Weetwood Hall to Wood Mill. The Mill (now the site of Tannery Park) was acquired by Kirkstall Abbey about 1230, and Weetwood Hall has been settled at least since the early seventeenth century – so the track is the best part of half a millennium old (if not more). From the Hall, it ran over fields, crossing Weetwood Lane*



*and Weetwood Mill Lane, and then past a farm (on the site of Hollin House), and along what is now Weetwood Avenue and Hollin Drive. Thence, the track ran by the mill stream to Wood Mill (the path is now diverted away from the stream). The first part of the ginnel was enclosed between the high walls of what are now the Oxley Residences of the University of Leeds, Bardon Grange to the left and Oxley Hall to the right, both built about 1860. Crossing over Weetwood Lane, the ginnel is bounded on the left by the wall of The Hollies (built 1864). Past Weetwood Mill Lane, the ginnel is walled on the left by the gardens of the houses on the Lane, and on the right, by those of Weetwood Crescent, developed in the home field of Weetwood Farm about 1930.*

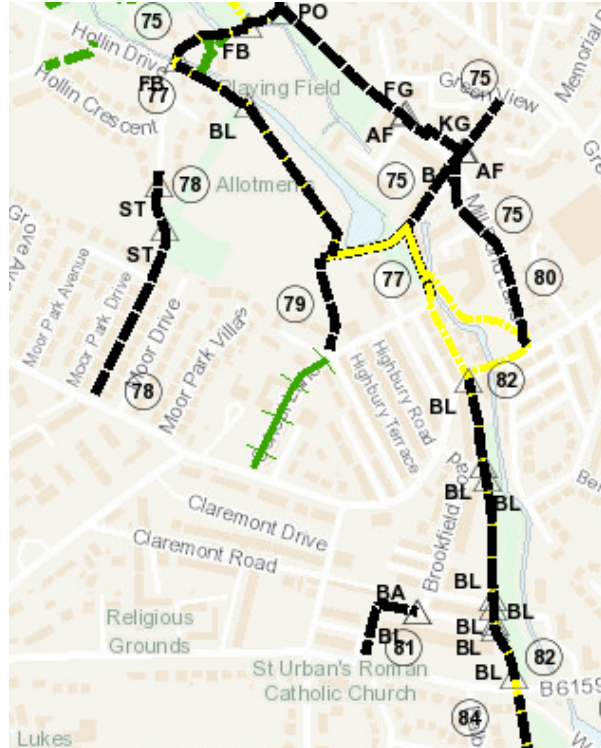
Go down the ginnel, between high stone walls (pictured) **19b**, to Weetwood Lane. Cross the Lane (carefully, it's a dangerous corner!) to a gap in the stone wall opposite **19d**. Descend worn stone steps to the track alongside the wall of The Hollies (on the left). Emerge onto Weetwood Mill Lane, and cross the Lane diagonally left, to a fenced path **19f**. After some 30 yards, drop down a stone stile, into a lane running to the left (this originally led to Weetwood Mill) **19j**. After 100 yards along this lane, the ginnel turns at a right angle, to the right, along a field boundary (with gardens on the right) **19k**. After another 50 yards, go over a stone stile, across a stream and through a gap in a fence, into a field. Follow the track across the field to the far end (caution, it can be very muddy!) **19m**.

Leave the field through a gate or stile, and continue along a short road, following the old track, and come out into Weetwood Avenue. Go ahead along the Avenue, past Hollin House, and continue ahead when the Avenue turns into Hollin Drive, by the entrance to Meanwood Park. The Drive passes the entrance to the **Hollin** ginnel on the right, between no31 and no33 (*unfortunately, the ginnel is currently partly overgrown and impassable: it is an old continuation of Hollin Lane, leading to Whalley Tannery [beside the site of Hollin Lane Farm] and probably dates from the founding of the tannery in the seventeenth century*). The Drive bends to the right, while a track continues ahead – the latter follows the old track to Wood Mill. (You can take a short cut here, to Stage Two of the walk: go along the old track, which runs between a smallholding on your left and Hollin Lane Allotments on your right. This emerges into a cross-roads on School Lane. Go to School Lane in **Stage Two**.)

## Stage Two, Far Headingley



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On Hollin Drive, follow the road as it bends right, up the hill, past Hollin Crescent. At the end of the cul-de-sac, enter the Headingley Moor ginnel, between no1 and no2 **17f**.



*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 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, when it was built over the path.*

Enter the Headingley Moor ginnel, and climb the steps (pictured) **17e**. Emerge onto Moor Park Mount, and cross the road to the second part of the ginnel **17c**. Go down the ginnel, with original stone walls on either side, to Moor Road.

Leaving the ginnel, turn left along Moor Road, and when it joins Monk Bridge Road, continue ahead to School Lane, on your left (pictured) **16a** - 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.*

Enter School Lane, pass between Summerhill (on the left) and Sandfield House (on the right), and come out at the top of Highbury Mount. Cross diagonally left, into the middle part of School Lane, between hedges **16d**. Descend to a footpath crossroads (where the shortcut from Hollin Drive rejoins the walk). Go straight across the crossroads, and continue downhill, with the mill pond on your left, behind a wooden fence **16f**.



Arrive at a T-junction of footpaths at the bottom of School Lane. The path ahead 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 fellmongery (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](#).*

Turn right into the Highbury ginnel (pictured) **15b**.



*The **Highbury** ginnel begins the original old track from Wood Mill, which ran beside Meanwood Beck and then over Headingley Hill, to Woodhouse Moor. It's enclosed by the buildings of Meanwood Tannery and the tail race on the left, and by 1930s housing and an old walled triangular plot on the right.*

Follow the ginnel for 80 or so yards, with the tail race of the former mill on the left at first, and then Meanwood Beck.

Come out into Highbury Lane (at the bottom of Highbury Mount), and follow the Lane back to Monk Bridge Road, with the Spring Hill ginnel opposite (pictured) **14a**. Rather than crossing the road directly to the ginnel (it's a dangerous corner), for safety, turn left for fifty yards or so, to a pedestrian crossing.

*The **Spring Hill** ginnel follows the old track beside a former mill stream (which fed an old linseed oil mill downstream, below Woodhouse Ridge. When Spring Hill Terrace (on the right) 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.*



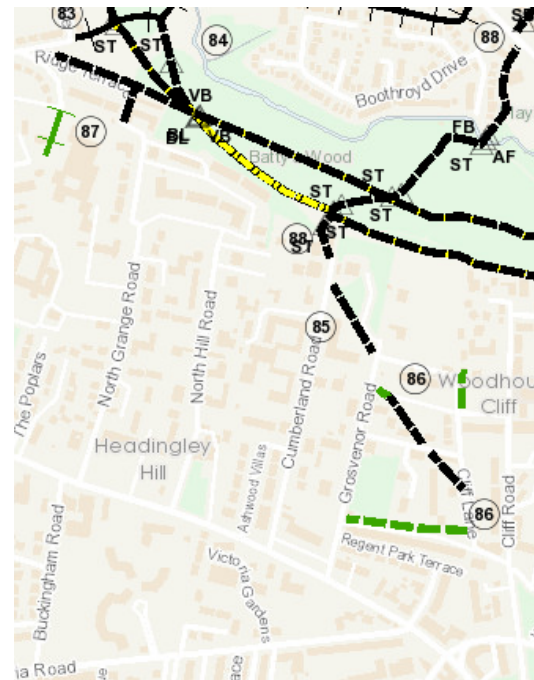
Enter the Spring Hill ginnel, with the fenced gardens and the Beck on your left.

Emergence from the ginnel into a green corridor, including a pond, with Meanwood Beck flowing to the left. Follow the path along the front of the terraces on the right (which back onto Brookfield

Road) (the mill stream to the old oil mill used to run beside the track on the left). Come out on Grove Lane. Cross over Grove Lane (be careful, it's a busy road). On the other side, two paths diverge. The left path passes the Vale Stables garden centre. Follow the right path, which continues the old track, between fenced gardens on the right, and a line of trees on the left. At the top, using a couple of flights of steps, cross a sunken path (this is an extension of Wood Lane, leading left down to the site of the old oil mill [demolished in 1974], and right to Headingley Centre). Continue along the old track across the open space of Cardboard Hill and arrive at the entrance to Woodhouse Ridge – which is marked by a group of boulders and a threshold stone set in the ground, inscribed 'Wood House Ridge'.



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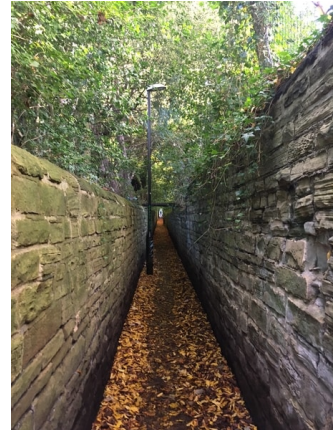
### Stage Three, Headingley Hill

Pass through the boulders at the entrance to Woodhouse Ridge, and follow the old track along the path to the right, beside a wall on the right, with Batty's Wood dropping away to the left, until you come to the entrance to the Headingley Hill ginnel (pictured) **01a**.

*The **Headingley Hill** ginnel was made during the later nineteenth century. At the beginning, it climbs between buildings at the top of Cumberland Road. It then 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 crosses Grosvenor Road and continues behind Grosvenor Mount. Then at the farther end, it passes the former Headingley Orphanage for Boys (now private houses) on the left. 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 Woodhouse Ridge, following the old track, climb the ginnel to Cumberland Road. Cross diagonally right to the next part of the ginnel **01c**, which runs between high stone walls and under the footbridge (pictured) **01d**, **01e** (Ridgeway House is on the left). Emerge onto Grosvenor Road, and cross diagonally right to a small triangular grassed area, around a raised bed. In the far corner, enter a narrow fenced part of the ginnel (behind Grosvenor Mount). Come out onto the Mount, and cross diagonally left, to the final part of the ginnel. Pass the former orphanage on the left.



Exit onto Cliff Lane. Turn right, and then at the end of the Lane, turn left to Cliff Road. Turn right, and then at Woodhouse Street, turn right again to Hyde Park Corner.

### Ending the Walk

There are several cafes at Hyde Park Corner for refreshment at the end of your walk [access of course is curtailed during the coronavirus pandemic]. All bus services northbound from the Corner (except X84 and X85) take you to Headingley Centre.

*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](#).*



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