

The Weetwood ginnel

The main focus of footpaths (and thus later, of ginnels) around Headingley was the corn mill built on and powered by Meanwood Beck nearly a thousand years ago. (Originally known as Wood Mill [after the local 'mean' or 'common' woods], it was acquired by Kirkstall Abbey about 1230, and later was the site of Meanwood Tannery.) It was approached from the south, up Meanwood Beck (see the Headingley Hill ginnel **01**), from the north, down the Beck (see the Weetwood ginnel **19** below), and from the west, over Headingley Moor (see School Lane **16**).



Ordnance Survey 1851

19 The **Weetwood** ginnel links Weetwood Avenue by way of Weetwood Mill Lane and Weetwood Lane with the former Weetwood Hall drive, in three parts; the longest (north) part is 225 metres (245 yards), the ginnel as a whole is 535 metres (585 yards) long (about half a kilometre or one third of a mile).

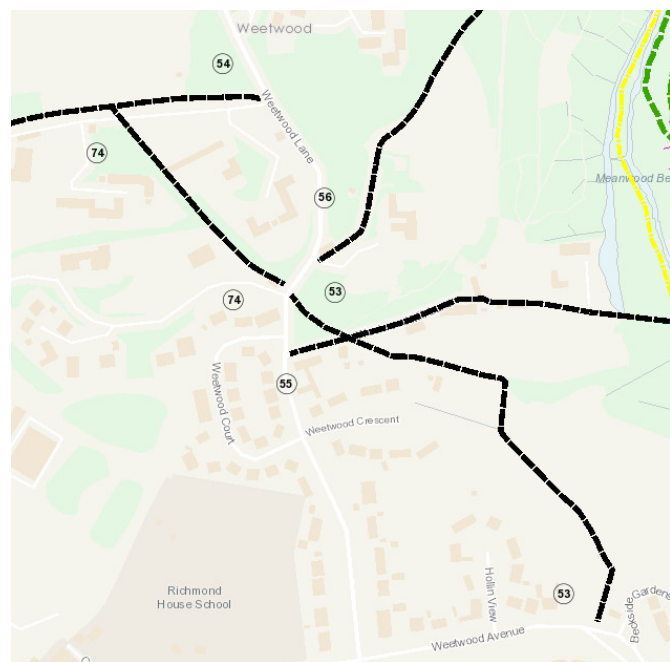
Path: The track originally ran pretty directly, as the crow flies, from Weetwood Hall south-east to Wood Mill, a distance of about a mile or 1.6 km. The Hall was built in 1625, but probably on the site of an earlier house, built after the Dissolution, while the Mill dates back to the thirteenth century at least – so the track is several centuries old, at least. From the Hall, it ran across a field to the drive which originally led to the Hall (it now provides access to the Oxley Residences), over the drive, and along a boundary down to Weetwood Lane. Across the Lane, it followed the edge of another plot (Bateman Hill, now The Hollies), and then headed across fields (sometimes following field boundaries), past a farm (now Hollin House) and across Hollin Lane to the mill stream feeding Wood Mill. The track then ran beside the stream, on to the Mill itself (now the site of Stone Mill Court in Tannery Park).



Over time, the route was amended. In the late eighteenth century, Weetwood Mill was built, and two paths led there from Weetwood Lane, one to the north of Weetwood Farm (now Weetwood Mill Lane) and another to the south of the farm, both crossing the old track. In the later nineteenth century, the track across the Farm's home field was diverted along the southern mill path, and then down the field boundary at the end (doubtless with an eye on

future development of the field). After the Great War, a narrow strip beside the mill stream leading to the Mill became allotments (it's now a smallholding) and the track was diverted to the south. About the same time, the track west of Hollin Lane became part of Weetwood Avenue. And then about 1960, the track east of Hollin Lane was built up as Hollin Drive. Meanwhile, during the twentieth century, the track from Weetwood Hall over the adjacent field fell into disuse, and that field is now part of the playing fields of Sports Park Weetwood (of the University of Leeds).

Ginnet: The original track was mostly enclosed as a ginnet in the later nineteenth century. Along the north part of the present ginnet, Bardon Grange was built to the east in 1860, and Weetwood Villa to the west the following year (the Villa was later The Elms and then Oxley Hall; with Bardon Grange, it now comprises the Oxley Residences of the University of Leeds). Also to the west, Bardon Hill was built in 1873. The middle part of the ginnet runs beside the wall of The Hollies, which was built on Bateman Hill in 1864. The southern part follows the edge of the former home field of Weetwood Farm, diverted from its original route (the path once ran across this field). North of the former field, the ginnet follows the remains of a lane which once ran down to Weetwood Mill: on the north side lie the gardens of late nineteenth houses on Weetwood Mill Lane; and on the south side, the field itself was developed for housing about 1930.



The ginnet comprises two Public Rights Of Way, Definitive Footpaths Leeds 53 and Leeds 74.