WHAT TO EXPECT:

Beginning by the cobbled urban River Calder, the Straight Mile takes the route high above the Calder Valley, then heads to Towneley Park. The River Calder leads the route upstream through the park before, nearing the park’s edge, ascending through Wet Marl Wood and across to a young River Brun and the villages of Hurstwood and Worsthorne. From Worsthorne, it leads across to Swiden Water, which guides downstream into Burnley. At Thompson Park, the canal returns to the route’s start.

1. Built over 200 years ago, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal is raised 60ft above the Calder Valley on the Straight Mile at Burnley Embankment.

2. A series of riffles offer a chance to see dippers and salmonid fish, like brown trout. The first salmon fry found in Burnley since before the Industrial Revolution was caught in 2015 downstream of here.

3. Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) created a rock ramp on Wet Marl Wood Weir to make it easier for wildlife to migrate upstream. Towneley Hall can be visited from here.

4. Salterford Bridge was a crossing over the River Brun on the salt route. Missing stones in the wall afford glimpses of the river.

5. A series of weirs lead up to Rowley Lake. Where the River Don meets the River Brun 150m further on, a weir modification eases the migration of fish to the River Don. Here, you can also see the pipe that extracted water to feed the mill pond a short way down Netherwood Road.

6. The bridge that you will pass on your left was put in as part of the Urban Rivers Enhancement Scheme (URES).

7. A further weir modification, to ease the movement of wildlife upstream, can be seen before you reach Thompson Park. A different type of pipe was needed to help fish get over the surface of the Burnley Weir, just downstream of Thompson Park on the River Brun. The weir was built around 200 to give power to grind corn in the ‘King’s Mill’.

8. This section of the Straight Mile takes you past a series of ceramics on the ‘Rope Walk’.

THE RIVERS: The River Calder (thought to translate from Celtic as ‘violent stream’) begins on the moors above Cliviger, not far from the source of the Yorkshire River Calder. From here, it travels through the wooded Cliviger Gorge and Towneley Park from the source of the Yorkshire River Calder. From here, it takes through its parks are fantastic places to see dippers, voles and kingfishers. The higher reaches offer spawning grounds to salmonid fish, including our native brown trout. Eels have also been found in the area. Otters have been sighted in the centre of town, indicating strong fish populations. Look out for butterbur leaves in the summer. Historically, butter was wrapped in these and lowered into the river to keep it cool.

WILDLIFE: Burnley and the riverside paths that this route takes through its parks are fantastic places to see dippers, voles and kingfishers. The higher reaches offer spawning grounds to salmonid fish, including our native brown trout. Eels have also been found in the area. Otters have been sighted in the centre of town, indicating strong fish populations. Look out for butterbur leaves in the summer. Historically, butter was wrapped in these and lowered into the river to keep it cool.
A. The Straight Mile to Towneley

Walking towards the superstore from Centenary Way car park, you’ll come to a bridge over the River Calder. Before the bridge, climb the steps to point (1). Turn right at the top to follow the towpath, with the Straight Mile of the Leeds Liverpool Canal on your left.

Leave the tow path before an overhead road bridge. Take the left fork to walk over the bridge. Head downhill along Parliament Street, using the crossing to the medical centre and continue to the end of the road. The crossing of Todmorden Road will take you directly to Towneley Park. Pass through the Old Gate House arch and turn left.

B. The River Calder & Towneley

On meeting the rainings, take the path to your right and follow the River Calder upstream (2). Cross the first footbridge and remain on the riverside path. To your left, you will pass a wetland area which helps to filter water seeping into the river. Cross the small Unity College road bridge with the river now on your left before soon crossing back over at the next foot bridge. Remaining on the riverside path, you will pass Large Swallow woodland, which offers flood protection for the college. Cross Park Bridge Road to the riverside car park.

At the end of the car park, turn right over the bridge (see the flag 2). Turn left to follow the River Calder upstream. Follow the wooden footbridge. Cross here after the following detour. Continue 300 meters until the path bears right. Catch a glimpse of the modified weir in the distance (3). Now continue.

Retrace your steps to cross the wooden footbridge. Take the track through a kissing gate and uphill through Wet Marl Wood. Leave the wood into a field to gain a good view of Cliviger Gorge. Take care as you pass through the fourth gate, as it leads directly on to the road.

C. Hurstwood & Worsthorne

At the end of the left-hand wall, continue uphill in the same direction, to a dense line of trees. Here, the path leads right and through a pair of parallel wooden gates keeping the fence and wall close on your left. Continue up the road and head left over a stile beyond Laith Farm’s entrance on the right. Follow the fence on your left to a further wooden gate and the wooden stile directly opposite. Head straight across the field through a series of wooden kissing gates in Red Lees Wood.

D. Swinden Water & Brun Valley

After 300 meters, where the track splits, bear right (from here you have a good view of Emyr’s Hall). Cross a small stream and pass Wood Hey Farm. Take a left off the track to a yellow arrow. Bear right across the field to another yellow arrow where the meadow meets a woodland. Take the wooden steps into the trees, down to Swinden Water.

Cross the stepping stones and follow the obvious path over a wooden stile.

Turn directly left to follow the stream down, keeping the sound of the river on your left. Enter Houghton Haggy Wood through a kissing gate. Continue until you leave at a further kissing gate. Make your way to a wooden signpost. From here, the route leads back down towards the stream. At the bottom of the hill, take the right-hand path. On reaching the next way-marker, take the path to the left towards a kissing gate. Continue straight on, hugging the fence, and over a wooden footbridge. Continue up, then down, more steps.

Pass a wooden footbridge on your left which would lead up to Rowley Lake (5). Here, the River Brun and Swinden Water join.

Follow the sign to the town centre and Bank Hall (6). Leave Netherwood Road on a path through two barriers on the left. As you pass a weir, this is where the Brun historically met Swinden Water (see the maps to the left). On re-joining the road, take a left to continue downstream. As the road bears right, take the footpath left signed Thompson Park. Continue past the allotments and under Godley Bridge.

E. Bank Hall & Thompson Park

Continue until you reach Bank Hall Park (previously Bank Hall Pit / coal office). Looking up the hill to your right, you will see a monument to the pit. However, this route takes you left towards Thompson Park.

Continue, passing a bridge on the left which replaced one destroyed by the 2015 floods. The path follows the route of a going gaff from the pit. Pass the outflow from the canal. As you pass under the Leeds Liverpool Canal, a marker indicates the high-water level from 1881. (See * for an added detour.)

(7) Take the track on the right up to the canal towpath. At the top of the steps, turn right passing under the bridge that carries Ormerod Road. Continue along the Straight Mile (8), with some excellent views over the rooftops of Burnley, until you meet the steps back down from the towpath to the carpark where the route began. Before you descend, catch another glimpse of Pendle Hill.

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Every effort has been made to provide accurate information in this guide. Ribble Rivers Trust cannot take responsibility for any errors. No recommendation is given by inclusion or omission of any establishment.

The map sections circled below show how the course of the River Brun has been altered.