

## **Barnby Dun - Glass Pass**

**Walk summary:** This gentle waterside trail that follows the history of the local glass industry and the historic village of Barnby Dun. It includes a walk along the canal tow path, a scenic stroll across a couple of fields and a walk through the Glass Park.

**Distance:** 2.8 miles / 4.4 Kilometres

**Duration:** Approximately 1 hour

**Terrain:** Rural walking along relatively flat, unpaved footpaths along the canal. The walk also includes a long section of paved tow path and a brief section of road without a pavement. There is also a section through Barnby Dun which is along pavements but is un-waymarked.

**Nearest Car Park:** Free parking can be found at the end of Pilkington Road next to the canal.



### ***1. River Don Navigation***

Welcome to the Glass Pass! This walk will explore the industrial heritage of the areas famous glassworks, and it links with the river and canal. From the carpark you will be able to see the River Don Navigation. This is a misleading name, for this is not a river at all but is in fact a canal, built to transport goods from the urban heartlands of Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster to be moved around the country and even exported to the rest of the world. Look along the tow path. Here there would have seen boats transporting cargo including coal, sand and other raw materials to factories nearby.

**To start our journey head along the tow path with the canal on your left.**

Keep an eye out and you might see the magical flash of blue indicating a passing kingfisher or the clumsy flight of a Grey Heron!



## 2. Barnby Upon Dun

Here is the village of Barnby Dun, a historic settlement which was named in the Domesday Book. Originally the River Don was known as the Dun which was an old Celtic word for mud, so river Don roughly translated to “Muddy River” - a description that can certainly still be linked to the Don today! The village was situated by the original course of the river Don, so was given the name Barnby Upon Dun, which over time morphed into Barnby Dun as it is known today. Look over the canal through the Bascule Bridge. Here you once would have seen the six huge cooling towers of the Thorpe Marsh Power Station. The plant officially opened in 1967 operating a steam turbine and was one of the most efficient plants at the time. The power station closed in 1994 after it was declared unprofitable and the cooling Towers were demolished in 2012, with the site becoming a valuable nature reserve.

**To continue our walk, pass through the gate and cross the road. Here we leave the canal and follow The Grove which will bare right towards St peter and St Pauls Church.**

## 3. St Peter and St Pauls Church

St Peter and St Pauls Church was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, however the current Structure is mainly from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century with the older tower being constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Look up at the tower. Here you can see 2 Gargoyles with 2 others residing on the opposite side. These Gargoyles are used to drain water from the roof of the tower when it rains. Gargoyles always serve this purpose with other purely decorative faces being known as Grotesques.

**At the end of The Grove you will reach Church Road. Cross over the road onto the pavement and head right towards the centre of the village. When you reach the junction turn left onto Church Road and continue until you reach a pelican crossing (check types of crossing). Cross over the road to the right and head down the narrow Catling Lane. At the end of the Lane Turn left along The High Street. As you walk down the road you will see the Barnby Dun Farms Shop on your right.**

## 4. Barnby Dun Farm Shop

The Barnby Dun Farm Shop has a cafe and is an excellent place to refuel.



**Continue along the road from the farm shop. At the end of the road cross over to the right where you will see a kissing gate and a sign for the public footpath. Head through the gate and continue along the path diagonally left across the field. Head through a second kissing gate and under the footbridge. Further down the path you will pass through another gate, across another field and then over a small metal footbridge into the Glass Park.**

## **5. The Glass Park**

You are now standing in the Glass Park, the former site of the Pilkington's Glass Factory. Historically there were two Glass works in the area. The Rockware Glass Syndicate was established in London in 1919 and began production just down the road in 1934. The company was bought out in 2006 by the Ardagh which still operates to this day as the largest glass producer in Europe. The other major glass factory on the site was the Pilkington Glassworks. Construction of the Pilkington Factory in Kirk Sandall began in 1919 with the official opening taking place in 1922. The site was chosen because of the proximity to the canal for transporting goods, and the high quantities of materials such as coal and sand available locally. Pilkington's revolutionised the production of glass in the 1950's when they created the float glass process, a technique to allow the creation of uniform sheets of glass. The park in which you now stand was a part of the factory site where a waste product, known as cullet, was dumped. The cullet site was used from 1922-1960 and was later gifted to the community after the site was covered with a protective layer of soil, and wildflowers were planted. In 1998 the Glass Park Millenium Green was founded, and work began to convert the site into the lovely park you stand in today!

**Turn right after the footbridge and follow the path around the park. When you reach the gate, continue straight along Moor Lane and turn right onto Pilkington Road.**

## **6. St Oswalds Church**

On your right you will see a small, deconsecrated church known as St Oswalds. In the Domesday book there was a church built on this site, but the current structure was built in the Norman Period. An interesting feature of the Church is the Rockebry Chapel which was built to house the former rector of the church and Archbishop of Dublin, William Rockeby in his marble tomb. The stained-glass window of the Rockebry Chapel contains rare panels that survived the reformation of the monasteries. The Church was closed for



worship on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1979 but has since been preserved by the community and has regular open days.

**Continue a short distance along Pilkington Road and you will return to the car park next to the canal where our walk will conclude.**

## *References*

- St Oswald's & Kirk Sandall History [online] Available at:  
<https://www.stoswaldskirksandall.co.uk/history.htm>, Accessed [2026]

