

In the woodland to your left are the overgrown remains of an old tannery.

Take care – the stones can be slippery in wet weather. Over the stream climb to a “sunken” path which leads to steps and a metal gate. You are now back at Quaker Bottom and a short climb up Firth Lane will bring you back to your starting point.

#### Long walks

Back at the belt of trees, a favourite haunt of the resident kestrel, you can extend the walk by turning left and following the path along the belt of trees for some 200 yards. You will discover a metal kissing-gate under a large holly bush. Go through and downhill, heading for the walled lane leading to Wood Farm. Cross the stone stile and enter the lane, at the end of which turn right. Cross the next stile and follow the track round over Toby Spout, the outfall stream from Square Wood Reservoir.

In 1932 Kitty Robson of Middle House, High Flatts, contracted typhoid and, through a leaking land drain that fed the reservoir, the water became contaminated. A severe epidemic of typhoid broke out. Within weeks 72 people in Denby Dale had contracted the disease, 11 of whom subsequently died.

Here you may continue Alternative 1 - or switch to Alternative 2 (see below).

#### Alternative 1

Turn off the track to the stone stile just outside the reservoir enclosure. The footpath continues across to the corner of Square Wood. Continue along into wonderful semi-natural grassland with scrub. Eventually you will climb, passing the stile below Strines Lodge, and can follow the return route described above.

#### Alternative 2

For a longer walk, continue eastwards from Square Wood Reservoir, crossing a stone stile into a short lane, and via further stiles and field edges alongside dry-stone walls to Calverly Wood. Turn left along the bottom of the wood and then into the track that climbs and turns towards Upper Denby. At the junction of five paths turn right on the track across the end of the metalled



**Bank Lane. Keep the houses of Upper Denby on your left and the fields beyond stone walls on your right. The track bears right – then, almost immediately, take the path to your left along field edges and over several stiles.**

Here you reach Denby Delf, a nature reserve with heather and bilberry growing on former quarried areas, known locally as Mosley Roughts, and accompanying meadows of herb-rich grassland. In summer these fields are a mass of flowering grasses, the colours of ox-eye daisy, red clover, betony, knapweed and yellow rattle, and the sounds and movement of butterflies and other insects.

**At the last stile turn right along the drive, between house and garden, and then over further stiles to descend to Strines Lodge. Just before the Lodge turn left over the stile and follow the return route via “forty steps”.**



Friends' Meeting House, High Flatts

The historical information in this leaflet is taken from the excellent “Plain Country Friends” by David Bower and John Knight and from the Kirklees Council “High Flatts Conservation Area Appraisal”.

Historic photos from the Leslie Robinson collection.

This trail was devised by the Denby Dale Walkers are Welcome Group.

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## Plain Country Friends

### Short walks from High Flatts



View over Square Wood Reservoir

Buses go to High Flatts from Huddersfield (Service 83, Huddersfield Bus Company – no Sunday service) and to nearby Ingbirchworth and Upper Denby from Penistone (Services 301 and 29, 9 buses per day; 6 on Sundays).

Denby Dale railway station (on the Penistone Line) is just a couple of miles away via a variety of interesting footpaths.

**N.B. Public transport details were correct as of May 2010. Please check at [www.wymetro.com](http://www.wymetro.com), from where timetables are available.**

There is limited roadside car-parking on Windmill Lane across from the starting point.

Look out for the “Plain Country Friends” waymarking disc to help guide you.



see: <http://www.denbydale-walkersarewelcome.org.uk>

### Walking in the East Peak



Walking in and around Denby Dale

# Plain Country Friends

Short walks from High Flatts



A choice of three short walks, either ¾ mile, 1½ miles or 3 miles in length, best explored at a gentle stroll. The longer you take the more you'll enjoy them! Stout footwear is advisable.

# Plain Country Friends

## Short walks from High Flatts

The small settlement of High Flatts is set in attractive landscape at the head of the Dearne Valley, high on its watershed with the River Don. Its history and present character are intimately intertwined with the story of the community of the Society of Friends at Quaker Bottom. This picturesque cluster of stone buildings, many listed as of special architectural interest, is designated a Conservation Area.



Quaker School House

**Starting point: the “Quaker Bottom” brown tourist sign on the A629**

**Follow the private road, known locally as Firth Lane, down to Quaker Bottom.**

Quaker Bottom includes several listed buildings, Green Hollows (previously Middle House), Low House and Low House Farmhouse (recognised by the 1717 date stone over the front door), and the Friends Meeting House, where Quaker meetings take place every Sunday at 10.45am. Visits can be made to the Meeting House by arrangement and toilets are available at the building. Contact Thelma Pickford on 01484 607716.

By the early 1650s meetings were being held in the barn that became the present Meeting House. Its relatively remote location provided a measure of security for dissenting Quakers from persecution by the establishment of the day. In 1701 the building was handed over by its then owners into trusteeship, having been extended and modified for use by worshippers. The Meeting House was completely rebuilt in 1754. By 1800 most people living in this area were Quakers, many working in various aspects of the

woollen industry as well as farming and milling, tanning and iron-founding trades.

In 1864 a new floor was added and the frontage and porch built, so that the building looked much as it does today. Quakers were strongly committed to the value of education and in the 1740s a boarding school for about 50 boys was opened in this building. The written records of James Jenkins, an illegitimate son of Zepheniah Fry (of chocolate family fame) and a pupil at the boarding-school in the mid 1760s, provide a fascinating insight into the hardships of life at the school and hamlet.

**Before the cobbled courtyard turn left into the lane which leads past the Quaker Burial Ground.**

The original burials were made in front of the Meeting House. The current graveyard to the rear was adopted in 1790 when the original area was full. This is a serene, evocative place and to wander through the simple headstones and note the recurring family names gives a link back in time to the generations that lived here.

Beyond the graveyard you can look across to the impressive Mill Bank House. This listed building dates from the early 19th century. In 1886 it was converted to a “sanatorium for the restoration of inebriate women of the working and middle classes”, reflecting the Quaker affinity with the temperance movement. The property subsequently reverted to a private residence.

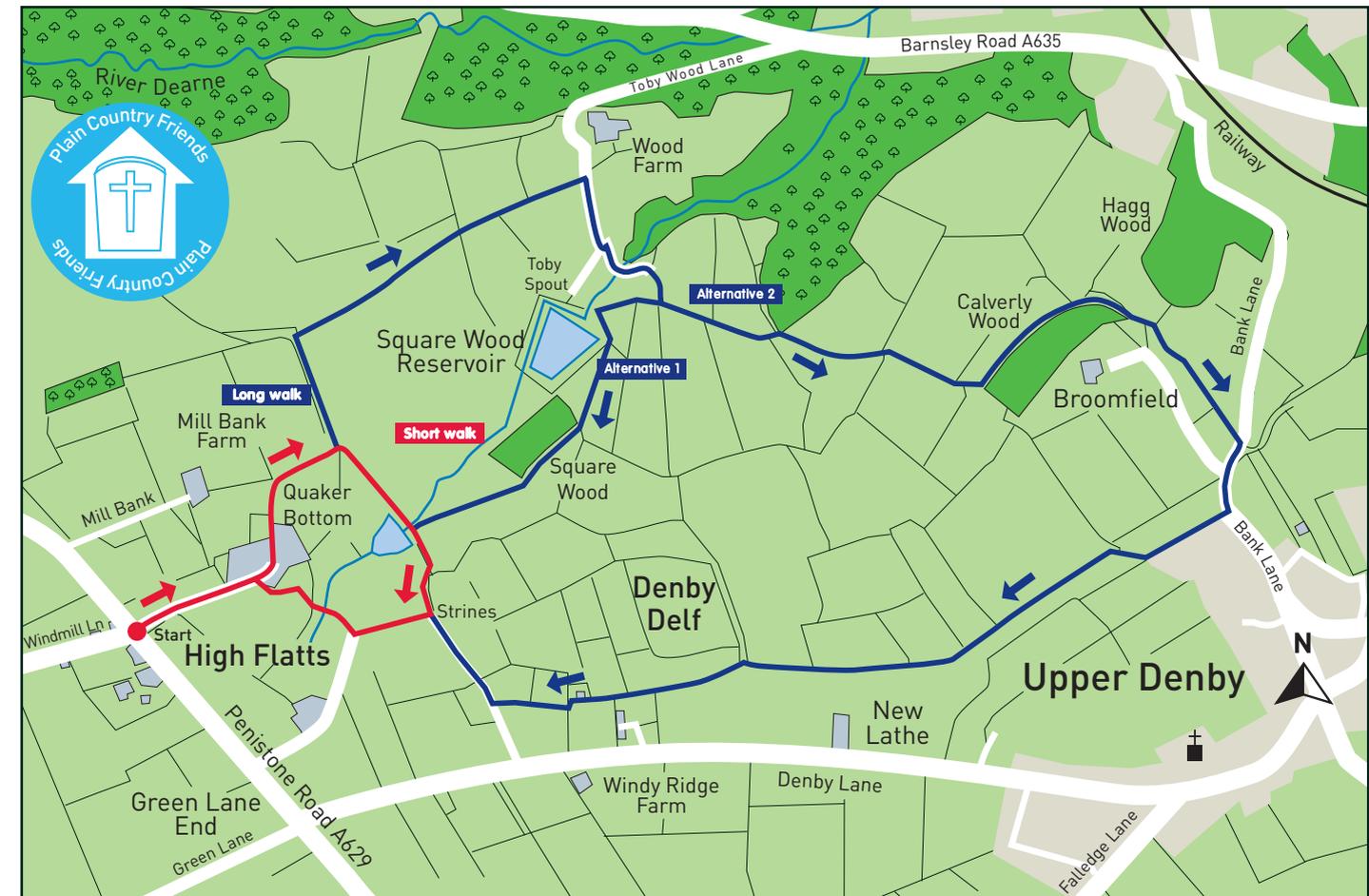
**Go over the stile and turn right down the track by a stone wall leading down to the corner of a belt of trees.**

Look upwards – you may be accompanied by a hovering kestrel.

**Here you may continue the Short Walk—or switch to the longer walks. (see below)**



Houses at Quaker Bottom



### Short Walk

**From here you can take the stile to your right into a field with open access and managed for conservation benefit.**

It is a grand place to linger on the benches provided, enjoy the peace and quiet and admire the wonderful views north-east to the wooded surrounds of Denby Dale, its impressive railway viaduct and beyond down the Dearne Valley.

**Continue downhill to the path on top of the dam of a small pond.**

The pond is in an idyllic setting, is usually frequented by waterfowl and other birds and in summer is alive with the buzz of darting insects.

**Walk uphill now to the stile and cross to the right, going uphill again to a further stile just beyond the chalet-style house, the Strines.**

The Strines has a fascinating history. This was previously the site of old cottages, demolished in the early 20th century and replaced by two World War 1 army huts to become known as the Strines Guest House. It was initially a hostel for residential Quaker Gatherings. Later it was also used as a YHA hostel. It was subsequently owned by Barnsley Council, and used during and after World War 2 as an outdoor centre. In the mid 1950s it passed into private ownership to be used as a barn and chicken hut! Only in the late 1990s were the huts replaced by the present private dwelling known as Strines Lodge.

**Turn right over the stile and continue along the southern boundary of the Strines garden. Over the next stile turn right again, go over a further stile and descend with care a flagged path and steep “forty steps” to cross the wooded stream.**