

# COPPICE BROOK RIPLEY TO BELPER LINEAR WALK

A linear walk following the route of Coppice Brook from its source as a tiny stream in Ripley through undulating countryside to the River Derwent and returning by bus.

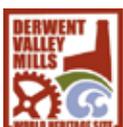


Start: Ripley Market Place DE5 3FJ (Grid Reference SK 398 505). Return by bus.



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Note that in high summer plants can often hide the brook from view.



1

From Ripley Market place walk down Shirley Road which leads onto School Lane. Follow the road down by Crossley Park until you reach the junction, turn left down Derwent road. At the end of the road turn left down Kenilworth Road towards the section of small shops.

2

Before reaching the shops turn right down Sandham Lane (looks like a private drive) towards Sandham Farm. Follow the public footpath to the left. *(This is the first view of Coppice Brook – Within the small woodland on the left)*

3

*(Warning: this section can be very muddy).*  
Continue following the footpath into a field opening, halfway down there is a stile to the left of the footpath/field.

Following the footpath from the stile, keep to the right side of the field. At the next stile go over and head diagonally left up the hill to gate with stile.

**Question:** Can you work out what has happened to the brook here, and guess why and what impact that has?

**A.** It has been put in a pipe to use the land above. Pipes aren't a great place for wildlife and they can get blocked and cause problems with flooding.

4

Go over stile and head straight across the middle of the field to another stile in the hedge. Go over that one and straight across the next field to the stile towards the road.

**After rising in 'Ripley Fields', the brook enters one of the ancient deer parks of the Duffield Frith, 'Morley Park' at the bottom of what was known as Raven Hill. At one stage in the 18th century it was dammed and may have provided power for the Hurt family's iron industries of Morley Park before steam power was introduced in 1780.**

**This may be where you can see Coppice Brook flowing into a wider wetland below you on the right.**

Coming out at street lane cross it and turn left up the hill towards Park lane. Park lane goes down under the A38 towards Morley Park Farm, passing the farm keeping to the left of track. *(The brook flows through Morley Park Farm Garden – Private land).*

5

Keeping left at the junction of paths, follow track for approximately 300m.

6

**Question:** Can you see what happens to the brook after this, and guess at why this happened and what impact it has?  
**It has been put in a straight ditch to form the field boundaries and drain the land. It has steep banks. A shadow of its former self.**

Q

Heading towards the remains of Morley Park Furnaces: take the stile on your left into the field. *(At this point the route leaves the mapped Rights of Way for a short while, but is easy to follow and is where the farmer prefers).*

7

Continue past the furnaces walking across the field towards corner, with the hedge on your right.



**The Morley Park furnaces during opencast mining before the A38 was built in 1977, courtesy of Belper Historical Society.**



8

Cross footbridge halfway down the field and go up towards the stile at the top right (**Don't go through this gate/stile**) continue down the field with the hedge on your right again.

9

Go over stile and continue along a tree-lined track to the left of the field. Climb the gentle hill and as the track starts to curve, head right towards the gate in the hedge halfway up.

Turn right, downhill towards a footbridge over Coppice brook (**Don't cross the footbridge this is just a viewing of the Brook/Boundary Stone**)

Return over the footbridge, turn diagonally right through field to stile. Cross stile and straight on over field and through small wood on to private drive (Dale Farm) Turn right onto Over Lane. (Beware of traffic) Walk down the road and through the metal kissing gate on the other side of Over lane.

**Where the brook leaves Morley Park, it passes under Over Lane, at what was traditionally known as Sot's Hole. It's got to be worth keeping a name like that alive!**

10

Follow this path as it runs through several fields passing through gates and squeeze stiles. Once more, the stream is confined to a deep, straight ditch.

**Question:** Can you see wiggly hollows in these fields which could have been where the brook flowed hundreds of years ago, before it was straightened? Which do you think speeds up flooding downstream more - a straight, deep stream or a shallow wiggly one?

**A meandering stream flows more slowly and can overflow into its floodplain, reducing flooding downstream. When streams are straightened, the water speeds through to the next blockage or flat area, flooding there instead.**

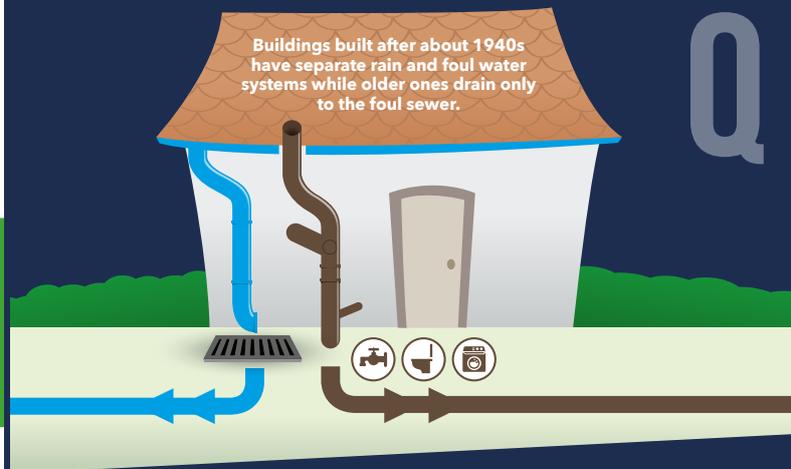
Turn right through pedestrian gate and head straight on along track past Rookery Farm and straight on down to the footbridge in the dip. Cross bridge and turn left to travel with Coppice Brook on your left over fields until you come to surfaced paths.

11

You are now in Alton Manor open space/playing fields on the edge of Belper with good views of Coppice Brook. You can find your way close to the brook here as it winds through woodlands and then passes a concrete outfall.

12

**Question:** What water do you think comes from an outfall like this?



Q

**The problem comes if someone plumbs their washing machine or toilet into the rain water system – yuck! It then flows into some balancing ponds, where it is confined to a concrete channel. Trent Rivers Trust would like to free the brook from this concrete straightjacket here so that it can flow more naturally, be more attractive and fun, and better for wildlife too.**

Continue to follow the surfaced paths straight on all the way to the road (Gregorys Way). Cross the road, go through the wooden gate and cross the Recreation Ground diagonally towards the playground/bowling green.

13



14

At Whitemoor Road turn right to walk along pavement by recreation ground to pedestrian crossing. Cross over, continue in the same direction past the greyhound pub/shops. Turn left down the one-way road (Kilburn Rd) walking past Pottery Primary School.

15

Cross Nottingham Road at the pedestrian crossing and turn right. *(On your left you will see Coppice Brook flowing through private land.)* Walk along Nottingham Road for approximately 500m, continue until you reach house number 167. Turn left down track. Follow the track as it bends to the right. *(The brook is on your right and there is a square stone building).*

At the green metal gates go through gap by stone gate post and head diagonally across field to top right corner. *(Another viewing of the brook if desired is just off Bullsmoor road)*

16

Turn left down track. Follow the track as it bends to the right. (The brook is on your right and there is a square stone building). At the green metal gates go through gap by stone gate post and head diagonally across field to top right corner. Go through squeeze stile and immediately right through another squeeze stile to then head downhill. Continue down as the path becomes tarmac, running between stone walls. Follow the path (known as Walker Bottoms) as it runs alongside Coppice Brook, which is now confined by stone walls, on your right.

17

Cross over at bridge and turn left, (brook on left), to walk in recreation ground.

**The Corn Mill and Damside Recreation Ground. Coppice Brook Mill was a corn mill until at least the 1830s. The mill pool silted up and it was filled in for the Dam Side Recreation Ground in 1912.**



**The brook was dammed by children at the old corn mill bridge in the 1930s, to create a paddling pool.**

*Image courtesy Belper Historical Society*

**Take time to look at the impressive old stone bridge but do not cross. This artificial waterfall probably spills over the dam which powered the mill.**

Follow the footpath on the left of the recreation ground, which continues one up between stone walls of houses with the brook on your left. This footpath is known as *The Dunge*. At road (Parkside) cross over and turn left to walk along road. Halfway up the hill, turn right into Belper Parks.

18

After approximately 100m take the first path on right into Belper Parks Local Nature Reserve.



**Yellow Hannah** *(Pic courtesy of the Mellor Family)*



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Until it was capped in the 1890s, water from the Lady Well on the lower ground to your right as you enter the Parks was said to be the best in Belper for making tea. People would walk through the Parks to draw water from the well.

If you didn't fancy the walk to the Lady Well, you could buy the water in the Market Place, from a woman who collected the water in pails each day and sold it to make a living. She was known as Yellow Hannah, as she was severely jaundiced, but this didn't seem to put people off buying the water she had collected! She was photographed in about 1870.



These old photos (courtesy of Belper Historical Society) show the bridge and former ford in days gone by. Returning to the ornamental bridge, just downstream you can see the remains of the ford in the left bank.

Bear to the right heading downhill/steps in Belper Park. A metal artwork bridge goes over the Coppice brook here.

19

(Optional detour, over the bridge turn immediately right for a loop walk along the brook/meadows back to the bridge)

Here the brook is wider and shallow and much more natural. Large wood has been left in the brook, creating valuable habitat. After heavy rain the brook can spread onto what is probably the only small piece of naturally functioning floodplain left along the whole brook.

Since then, the brook has been dredged, ironing out the meanders and giving it a deeper, straight course. This happened to a lot of rivers and streams in the 1970s onwards. We are now realizing that not only does this reduce habitat, it also carries flood water much more quickly downstream, where floods can occur.

From the bridge take the path to the right back up the hill/steps walking through the field. (parallel with brook on your right).

20

Turn right down one step and over bridge and follow path to New Beck Road.

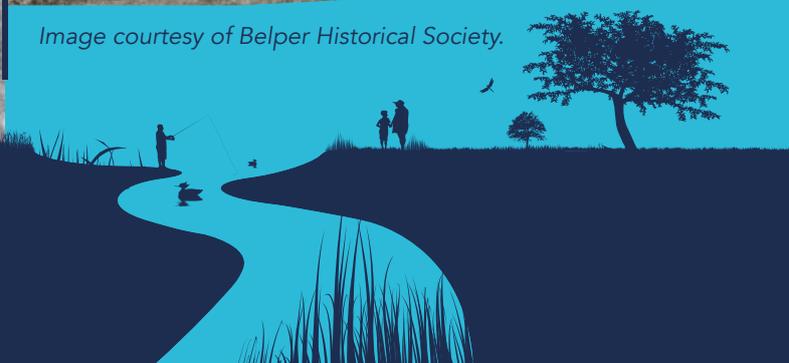
Retrace your steps or loop round in the meadow.



Here is the bridge at the edge of the Parks before the trees grew



Image courtesy of Belper Historical Society.



Turn left onto Queen Street and cross over. Continue in the same direction and you will pass over the brook. Turn right onto Manor Road and then turn right down path just past House No 20. You will pass over the brook again and at the road (Brookside) turn left.

**As you walk along Manor Road, and again after you cross the footbridge, you can catch glimpses of the old reservoirs behind the houses on the right. These were built around 1860 and fed by the brook for drinking water.**



The brook has been very polluted at times! In May 1966 a local factory accidentally released a large quantity of detergent into the brook – there was foam from Nottingham Road to Brookside which collected by this bridge.

## Flaming brook

The Coppice Brook was so polluted it burst into flames in March 1944, where it had been dammed in the Herbert Strutt School playing fields (now the rugby field). A 20 feet stretch of water was ablaze, with flames shooting nearly 30 feet in to the air.



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At the main road (New Road) turn left to walk over the railway bridge and down to the roundabout. Turn left at roundabout and then cross over road at pedestrian crossing and turn right back to Morrisons supermarket. Turn left into the car park and left again to find Coppice Brook (again in a stone channel) which drops down to the River Derwent. At the back of the supermarket there is a public footpath through open fields towards the River Derwent and picnic tables, and you may be able to trace the brook down to its confluence with the River Derwent.

**Distance:** 5 miles (8 km)

**Time:** Allow 3 hours

**Buses:** Catch 6.2 or 6.3 bus from Belper town centre to Ripley Market Place. These buses broadly follow the route of the walk, and would also allow you to do the walk in smaller sections.

**OS Map:** Explorer 259 (1:25,000) Derby

## PLEASE FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control  
Consider other people



**Report pollution**

**0800 80 70 60**  
**0800 783 4444**

