

# Map 04: Brunthwaite Bridge and Howden Park



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### Character of the Area

This section of canal runs through a particularly attractive pastoral landscape. To the north and northeast of the canal the open fields rise up gently away from the water's edge and there are good distant views towards hills and moorland. Howden Park Farm stands a short distance to the northeast of the canal and is an interesting group of farm buildings and cottages that enjoy an attractive setting on the banks of the Howden Beck. The beck continues southwards from the farm, passing beneath the canal aqueduct. Set into the banks of the beck are a pair of c.18th century lime kilns (see below).

Two narrow country lanes cross the canal via Brunthwaite swing bridge and Holden swing bridge. Both lanes are thought to follow relatively ancient tracks across the valley and probably predate the construction of the canal. Brunthwaite Bridge Lane is an attractive country lane that continues southwards away from the canal, its route defined by good dry stone walls and mature hedgerows that add interest and rural character to views southwards from the bridge.

Immediately alongside both bridges is an area for mooring boats. Here the water's edge on the south side of the canal is coped with stone. Small iron mooring posts at regular intervals allow boats to be securely roped.

The towpath is mostly grassed through this section, varying between fairly wide and flat sections to rutted and rocky narrow stretches. This section appears fairly well used by walkers and cyclists with the area around Brunthwaite Bridge, widening to form a natural meeting point. The towpath is bordered to its southern side by a dry stone wall that adds to the traditional, rural character of this stretch of canal. The fields to the north side of the canal extend all the way down to the water's edge.

Along this section of canal there was evidence of a diverse range of wildlife. Ducks, geese and swans were present along much of its length as well as the occasional heron.

*Right: The lime kilns near Holden Beck are two of c.40 lime kilns which were built alongside the canal in the late 18th century. Limestone and coal would have been burnt in the kilns to produce lime, a fertiliser used for agriculture. The Grade II listed kilns are in good condition.*

### Features of the Area

**1. Brunthwaite Bridge (192):** The bridge is a relatively modern structure that is operated by a manual swing system and provides a crossing point for Brunthwaite Bridge Lane over the canal. The bridge is principally of metal construction having an iron base and metal handrails with a timber-boarded carriageway. Set into the abutment at either end of the bridge are stone copings. These are also present on the lane on its immediate approach to the bridge. These stones were probably placed there to provide strength to the banks and grip for approaching traffic on the short uphill approach to the original timber bridge.

**2. Lime Kilns, Holden Beck:** Set into the stone retaining wall above the stream running beneath the canal is a pair of lime kilns. These are identifiable by their large, round-arched openings. The lime kilns have long since been defunct but still remain in relatively good condition, internally the kilns are lined with coursed natural stone and the openings are marked by wedge-shaped voussoirs. The date of construction of the kilns is unknown but probably dates to around the time of the initial construction of this section of canal in 1773.

**3. Aqueduct, Holden Beck:** Built of dressed stone, the aqueduct carries the canal over Holden Beck, a narrow watercourse that runs from the northeast southwards towards the River Aire. The aqueduct was built contemporarily with the canal and therefore probably dates to c.1773. A simple structure, it comprises of just a single arch over the stream with dressed gritstone voussoirs and a projecting stringcourse level with the canal. The parapet is surmounted by triangular copingstones.

**4. Holden Bridge (193):** Holden Bridge is a modern metal swing bridge that provides the crossing for Canal Lane on its southern approach to the small settlement of Holden. The bridge has a tarmac carriageway that is wide enough to allow a single car passage and operates on a manual swing system. Sadly some of the stone copings the abutment at either side of the bridge have been replaced with tarmac and concrete.

#### Issues

- ▶ The uneven surface of the grass towpath can make access difficult, particularly for those less mobile.
- ▶ Banks on the north side of the canal showing signs of slippage in some areas.

