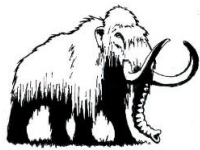


The Syke Common Mammoth

The Mammoth metatarsal (foot) bone was found above Syke in Rochdale, left by the melting glaciers 10,000 years ago. It may be 20,000 or 30,000 years old, having been stuck in the ice until the icecap on the hills above Rochdale melted, forming a lake where Rochdale is now.

The bone is approximately 150mm tall. It has a brown surface which is fossilised skin.

[3-D model of a similar bone from Shropshire](#)



Link to route on OS Maps
<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/osmaps/route/5710602/syke-mammoth-walk>



Thanks to National Lottery players for making this project possible

For more guides, information on the project and resources go to <http://skylightcircusarts.com/news/rochdale-fossils>



If you would like to look deeper into the local geology there are two academic papers about the area.

1. The Rochdale Survey
2. The Geology of the Rossendale Anticline. (Chapter X, page 131, Glacial and Recent Deposits.)

Skylight Circus in Education
T/A Skylight Circus Arts

St Chad's Fold,
Sparrow Hill
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL16 1QT



For more information, to book workshops or onto one of our classes, please email martine.b@skylightcircusarts.com or give us a call on 01706 650676

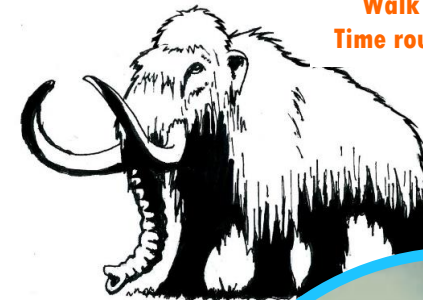
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MAMMOTH WALK

A walk to the area where a Mammoth Metatarsal was found

Walk Length: 6½ km
Time roughly: 2-2½ hours



St Chad's to
Syke Common
and beyond





The walk starts at Skylight Circus Arts, opposite St Chad's Parish Church, originally a Saxon church with some original stones remaining.

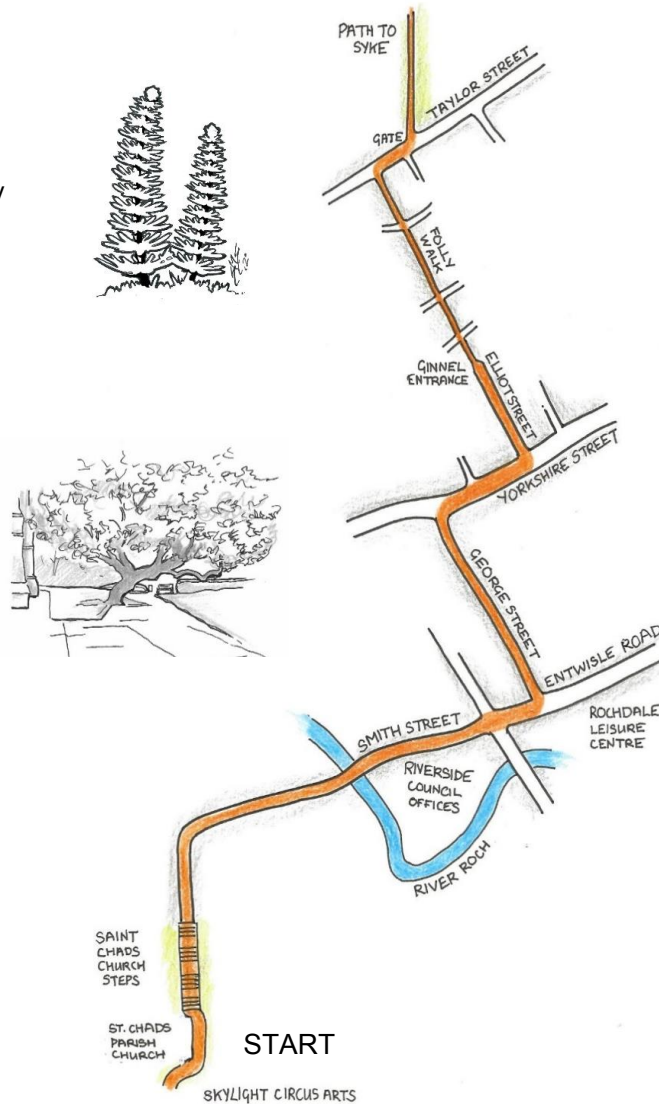
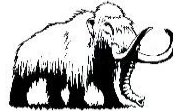
<http://www.rochdaleparishchurches.org.uk/history/history.php>



Walk past the stocks and to the right of the church and under the low branched tree. Walk down St Chad's Church Steps into Rochdale centre. The steps form part of the old road from Yorkshire. The stone for the church steps was brought from Blackstone Edge.

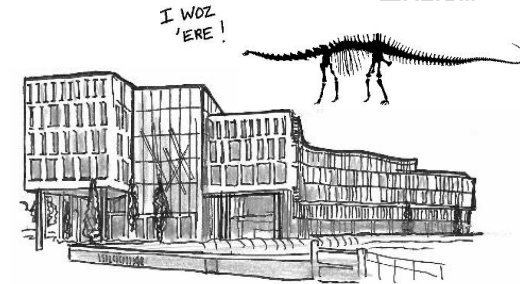


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackstone_Edge



You will cross the river by the medieval bridge at the bottom of Yorkshire Street - as the name suggests - This would have formed part of the route to and from Yorkshire.

<https://historicensland.org.uk/lising/the-list/list-entry/1461917>



Head past the Riverside Council Offices up Smith Street and across the junction with John Street. Then take the first left up George Street. At the top, turn right into Yorkshire Street and then left up Elliot Street.

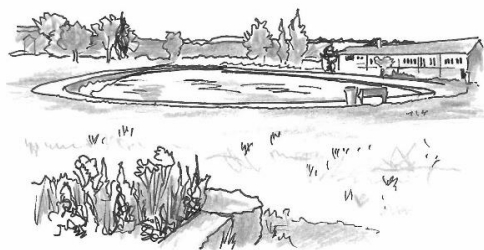
At the end of Elliot Street, you will see a ginnel marked "Folly Walk". Keep walking along this series of ginnels. This was possibly the route of the old road north. At the end of Folly Walk you will come to Taylor Street. Go right then left through the wide metal gate and up the footpath to Syke Common.



The path has a wall on one side and grass on the other. It opens out onto the common. Keep walking.

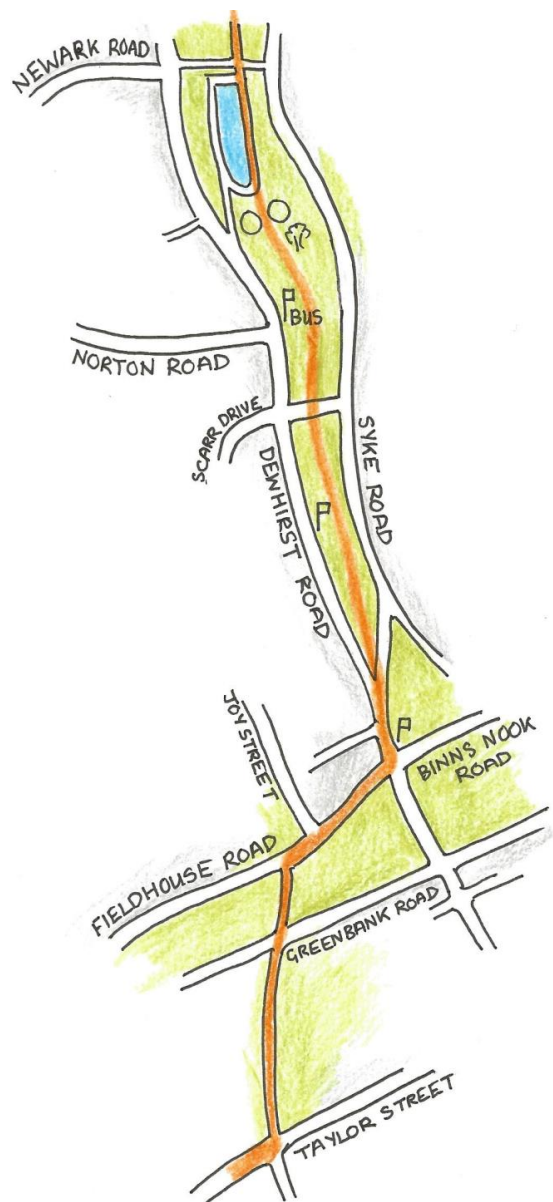


At Fieldhouse Road, turn right and then left and up through the common parallel to Dewhirst Road. Eventually you will arrive at the pond. Note the R1 Bus stops along the way if you chose to return by public transport on your return.

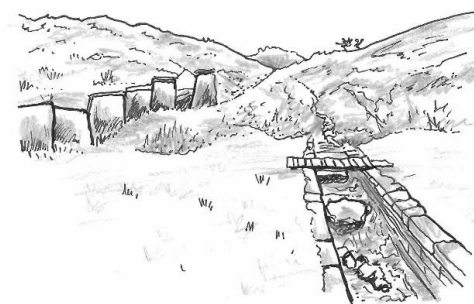


Keep walking past the pond to the end of the common. The Syke Methodist Church is to the right.

Look to the next page for further map details.



Keep heading straight up past Highcroft Way on the left. Very soon you will come to a lane on the right with a gate stile immediately on the left. Go through and follow the path to the next gate stile. You will pass a pond on the right.

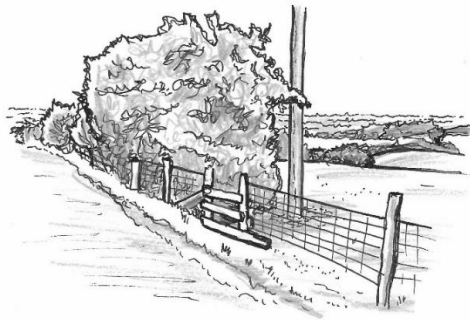


Soon you will arrive at a stream and bridge. There is an old stone flag wall here. These stone flags came from Middle Hill Quarry which was just higher up on the hills between Whitworth and Wardle. We know of the flags origin because there is a rock obelisk in Rochdale Cemetery on the Scorpion Walk that tells us. Such stone flag walls are common around Rochdale.

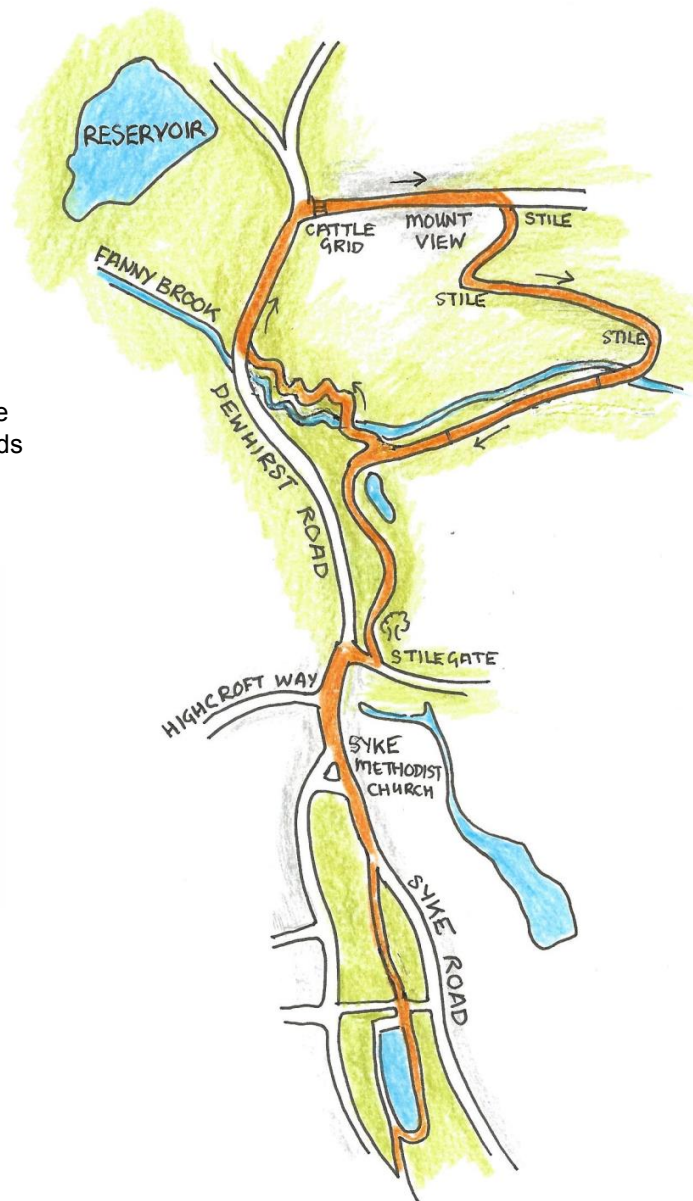
Cross the bridge and walk left along the meandering rocky pathway that follows the stream and climbs upwards. The water is called Fanny Brook. You will see the stream has cut into the shale rock layer.

At the top you will meet a tarmac road. Go right up the hill, along the lane. To your right you will see a bunch of farm buildings and houses. Go along this road by passing over the cattle grid.

Past the buildings there is a stile on the right leading into a field. Find the second stile at the bottom right-hand corner of this field. This leads to an excellent view of the surrounding area.

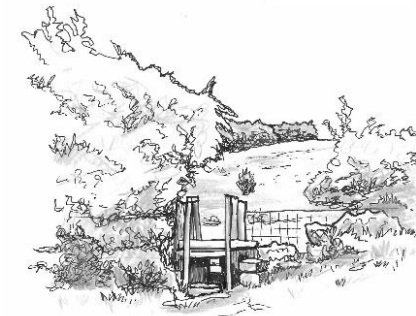


At the brow of the hill, you can see how the meltwaters carved out the valley. There is a layer of glacial spoil visible at the top of the bank. Below that, the shale is again visible. Further down the slope, you will see what are probably Gritstone erratic boulders left by the melting ice.



This is the highest part of the walk. To find out more about how the landscape was carved out by the meltwaters, cutting valleys in the underlying ground, read the article on Cheesden Valley, Heywood. This happened all around the edges of the Pennines.

<https://www.heywoodhistory.com/2016/07/ice-age-carving-cheesden-valley.html?m=1>



You can explore the wider area, but generally make your way around the brow and down the hillside. Near the bottom there is a high stile through a hedge with a stone marker. Further down, you can find a stone flag that crosses over Fanny Brook. From there, look for a new wooden stile that leads to a corridor with fencing on either side. This will take you to a gate that takes you back to the flag stone wall and bridge over the stream.

Retrace your steps to the top of Syke Common and make your way back or take the R1 bus from the top of the Common back to the Town Centre.