

4 Bridge Road to Spout Lane 1.2km 0.75 miles



Water wheel ruins

You may hear the sound of a waterfall but you can't see one, there's a hidden race below. You can see the ruins of the housing for a huge water wheel. It first powered the corn mill built 1802 at the bottom of Bridge Rd, in the late 1920s it charged accumulators, then was sold for scrap in 1933. Walk 200m uphill. Just past a house called The Haven on the right there's a footpath. follow the track uphill

between hedges and through a series of gates to a field. Cross the field to the top right corner. You will recognise the two gates you walked through earlier, this time when you reach the path junction you go left, up some steps and follow the signpost to Broseley. Depending on the state of your knees, you can choose a series of steep steps or a steep broad track, they both meet up at the top of the steps at a memorial bench to a man who 'was everyone's friend'. Go slight right on the main path through the beautiful Workhouse Coppice woods with mature oak, ash, holly, silver birch trees. Butterflies enjoy these broad 'rides' with holly blues, brimstone, commas, speckled woods, orange tips are often seen. At the path junction go left and then immediate right (follow the Broseley signpost) take the broad woodland path going gently up then down to a bench and a metal gate which will bring you back out onto Spout Lane.



5 Spout Lane to Broseley High St 1.5km 0.9 miles

Turn left. The waterfall sound is the Spout Spring which used to be Broseley Wood's water supply. When you to Bridge Road cross over and take the right fork, Quarry Road, (Cobwell Rd where another of Broseley Wood's old wells used to be.) Walk uphill along the pretty lane and at the top turn right into King St. At the next fork in the road go left into Duke St passing the Pipe Museum on your right. Continue straight on and eventually you come back into Broseley High St.



Looking back down Quarry Rd



Bayliffe's House, Bridge Bank, Woods, Wells and Springs

A 3.5 miles /5.6 km undulating walk with some steep stepped sections (mostly down) and some short steep hills, many gates, no stiles, vertical gain 436 ft /133m

A figure of eight wander around the highest viewpoints in Broseley and Broseley Wood with many rewarding panoramas: a walk of contrasts: old lanes, woods, fields, meadows, old houses and mills. There's evidence of the difficulties of trying to obtain water supplies in past centuries including old wells, springs and water wheels. It is exceptionally good for wildflowers, birds and butterflies too!

1 From Broseley High St to the end of Floyer Lane 1.4 km 0.9 miles

Walk up the High Street, past the Spar, carry straight on past Fox Lane and Jackson Ave and turn right into Cape St. After 200m, just past Court Cottage, look for a small car park to your left with a green signpost at the far wall to Botswell Lane, this was the site of the old Boss Well. Turn left here and walk steeply down the jitty path to Speed's Lane where you turn right. You soon come to a footpath on your left by a small wooden gate where you turn left into 'Penn's Meadow and walk straight across the field. Cross Bridge Road, go slight right take the footpath opposite to the left of Hilltop House, the fingerpost points your way uphill to the top corner of the field. Go through a metal kissing gate and turn right past the Benthall Parish Notice Board, you are now in Floyer Lane. The lane soon becomes a grassy track with lovely views across the whole of Broseley to your right. After 300m the wide path curves left by a ruined farm, but you go straight on down a narrow path (there's a waymarked small post in front of you, follow the arrow).



Botswell Lane Jitty



Penn's Meadow between Speeds lane and Bridge Road

Penn's Meadow is on the boundary between the town of Broseley and the rural parish of Benthall. This is an ancient five acre traditional hay meadow, managed as a small nature reserve by a local volunteer conservation group. It is important for its meadow wildflowers and the insects they attract, including bumble bees and butterflies. The field has been a meadow since records began. Never ploughed or 'improved' with fertiliser, after the flowers set seed the hay is cut and removed, it's then grazed by livestock. Many wildflowers thrive on low fertility soils and the 'cut and carry' method of haymaking does not return many nutrients to the soil and so maintains a diversity of meadow flowers. Please keep to the path and dogs on leads while crossing to avoid trampling grasses and wildflowers and disturbing ground nesting birds, especially in late Spring and early Summer. There was some early mining in the fields hereabouts though, around Bridge Rd, shown in 1621 as Mr Bentalle Coleworks, the site of a shaft can still be made out in the bottom corner of the field next to Bridge Road.

② To Benthall Edge Woods via The Mines and Bayliffe's House 0.5km 0.3miles

Go through the kissing gate in front of you into a small field, carry straight on, keep the pond and big oak tree on your left and continue straight on along the top of the mounds where you get a superb view of Broseley Wood and the Ironbridge Gorge woodlands to your right. The haphazard scattered nature of the old squatter settlement with its jitties and small 'green' areas is obvious from this viewpoint. As you might guess from the hummocks in the ground and the name of the lane below, (The Mines) this is an old mining area.



Descend to the metal kissing gate admiring meadow wildflowers as you go, there is usually a display of cowslips in May. Turn left onto a track and in 50m you come to a lane where you turn left, a few metres later turn right and go down a series of steps into Spout Lane. Go straight on along a broad track for about 200m past an impressive old house on your right known as the Bayliffe's House: dated 1672, it is built of squared sandstone and you can clearly see the stone mason's cut marks, it formerly had exposed timber framed gable ends, possibly from an even earlier building, it has early 16th-century features inside. About 50 m after the Bayliffe's House, the path enters a woodland by a gate and then divides into two, take the right hand fork and continue along a holly lined path.

③ Through Woodlands to Bridge Bank and Bridge Road 1 km 0.6 miles

Go straight on through a metal kissing gate staying close to the wire fence to your right. There are sometimes rare ancient breed Soay Sheep in these fields. Proceed through another gate following a path between fences on your left, make sure you follow the waymarks, and then down some steps to another kissing gate, turn left. Keeping close to the fence on your left, walk around the top edge of the field and go through a pair of small metal gates at the field corner, where you take the path on the right into the woods. This path will take you steeply downhill on a long series of steps through a very pretty woodland. This section of the walk is excellent for wildflowers with violets, wood anemones, bluebells and wild garlic in Spring. You will come to a signpost where



you go right signed to Bridge Bank. You will have glimpses of the town of Ironbridge in gaps through trees to your left, and on the right you may see a dragon too! When you reach Bridge Rd cross over, turn right and walk steeply up hill.



The Spout in Spout Lane

The Spout is a natural spring that historically mainly supplied water to the people of Benthall. Originally it was called The Mine Spring, later it was called the Mine Spout, after a pipe was fitted in the 1870s. Throughout the C19th it was the often the only 'safe' supply for people living in Broseley as well as Broseley Wood. Spring water is naturally filtered, as its source is rain water percolating through rocks. Whereas the public wells needed pumps, fitted and maintained by the Council, at this spring there is an iron spout used to channel the water.

This spout is a gas pipe fitted by George Maw sometime between 1877 and 1880 so that he could gauge the water flow for one of the abortive schemes, a reservoir and pumping station to supply water to his tile works and the town but the project came to nothing. However, it did prove there was a consistent pure water supply not dependent on rainfall fluctuations *"testing the capabilities of each source for the future water supply of Broseley, from which it appeared that the in 24 hours the Mine produced 44,007 gallons ... the water from the Mine spout diminished in a slow and very gradual manner, which is accounted for by the fact that the water is derived principally from subterranean sources."*

You can see steps down to it and a 'laundry platform'. When the pipes froze in the long harsh winter of 1947 it was used as the main source of water for many in Broseley Wood. It is also the only place in Broseley to have been bombed in WW2, a stray bomb fell near here, damaging the original waterfall!

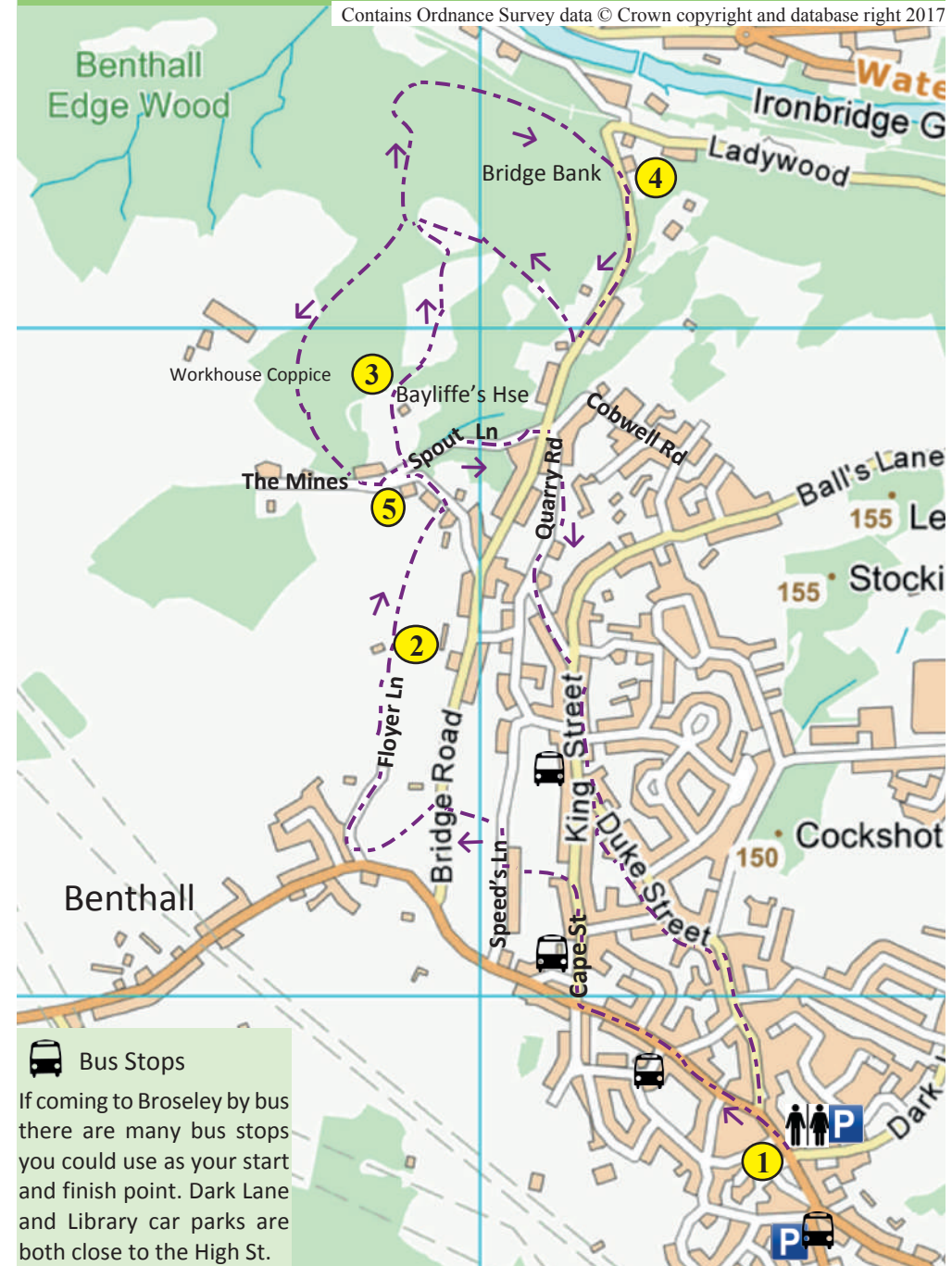
Can you still drink from it? All I can say is my family and I have occasionally done so, with no ill effects, but absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.



The Spout was called the Mine Spring in Victorian times

MAP Bayliffe's House, Bridge Bank, Woods, Wells and Springs

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Bus Stops

If coming to Broseley by bus there are many bus stops you could use as your start and finish point. Dark Lane and Library car parks are both close to the High St.

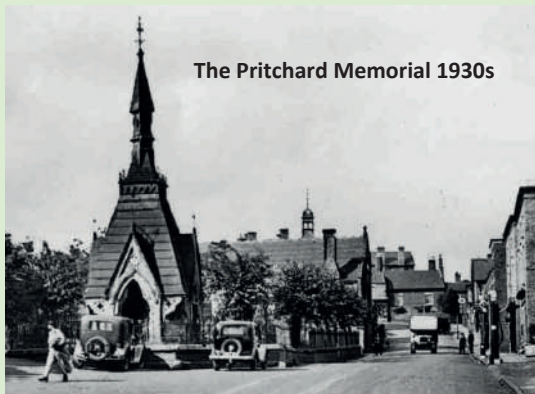
Old Wells and Springs; getting water to Broseley and Broseley Wood

Broseley is not built on the site of a river, large pond or lake, the town relied on wells for water. There were many private wells, often in gardens (some are still there, others filled in) and a number of public wells, mainly the **Down Well** which can still be seen, covered over with bricks, (look for the information plaque next to the Down Well on the Haycop walk). Holywell on Ironbridge Road still exists but it is not near any houses. The names of these water sources sometimes linger on in Broseley place names. Another public source of water was the **Delph**, an open pool in the Square, formed before 1728 from an in filled coal pit, and described in the 1860s as *"an open cesspool, green and bubbling"*. Delph Side was the street beside the Delph!

Water was always in short supply, bought and sold, clean water was at a premium. Access to free water was difficult for the town's poor. Water from public wells was sometimes rationed as in this 1864 report on the Down Well *"allowing only a small quantity to each family, the consequence being that you see a long row of empty cans and jugs turned away when the hour arrives to lock up, and wretched muddy water has to be substituted from wherever it can be obtained."* Houses sometimes burnt down as there was no water to put the fires out.

There were major outbreaks of cholera caused by contaminated wells in the 1830s. In an attempt to supply pure water to the district George Pritchard, a local public benefactor, former Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff of the county, built a reservoir to supply water to Broseley (it later fractured.) After Pritchard's death, as a memorial, an artificial fountain supplying spring water, via a pump, under a tall gothic canopy supported by four arches, was built over the site of an old well in 1862. Unfortunately this new supply turned out to be impure. There were many attempts to improve matters, and many problems, raising the money from local ratepayers was only one of them. In 1885 a new storage tank was dug at **The Down Well** as Broseley's main water supply.

Part of the Pritchard Memorial was demolished in the 1960s. The well had already been filled in, after a boy fell in and drowned in 1887. It partly collapsed in 1936 and the lining had to be repaired. Due to subsidence problems, the memorial was finally dismantled in 1994. A Gerry Foxall sculpture now stands on what remains of the stone plinth.



Cob Well, Boss Well and Getting Water in Broseley Wood

If you lived in Broseley Wood, your water had to be fetched by jugs or bucket from wells. The most important were the **Cob Well**, at the junction between Cobwell Road, Maypole Road and Pughs Jitty, or the **Boss Well** i.e the biggest well, the jitty there is called Botswell Lane. You could also collect water from the **Spout Spring**.

The jitties of Broseley Wood did not begin to be linked to the water and sewerage system until the 1920s, long after the main part of town. Houses had no water supply or drainage, sanitation for many was an earth closet in the garden shed, though some were connected to the Benthall Brook which was an originally an open sewer. It was eventually converted into a covered sewer with vent posts fitted and was regularly 'cleansed'. There was still no proper scheme in Broseley Wood in 1927, when the council houses were built on King Street, they had a septic tank!



Cob well is now filled in. The Boss Well is now in a private garden but this used to be common land where people could come and get water. Later a hydrant was installed nearby when clean piped water was brought to the town. It had a big tap children called The Spitting Lion, as it was the shape of a lion's head. People collected good clean water from the hydrants as an alternative to the old wells. You can see a hydrant on the old pictures of the High Street. Collecting water was often the job of older children, hard heavy work. Buckets were carried and up and down steep paths, spilt water must have made them slippery, especially in winter, you can still see the bricked gutters used to channel spilt water at the path's edge when you walk down the jitties near wells.