

Hayfield

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You'll step out on the Sett Valley Trail and the Pennine Bridleway on this peaceful round walk that takes you to a delightful carpet of spring bluebells and the picturesque village of Hayfield.

Bluebell Wood is the main reason people come here, in order to experience the festival of bluebells that lasts a few weeks in the spring.

However, there is also plenty to see during the rest of the year. Stoats, mice and weasels live in the wood, with badgers and deer also passing through. Wild flowers include wood anemone and marsh marigolds, while the many tree species include oak, maple and willow. It's a superb place and a real highlight of the walk.



Fast facts

Time: 2 hours.

Terrain: Well-established paths with some steep inclines.

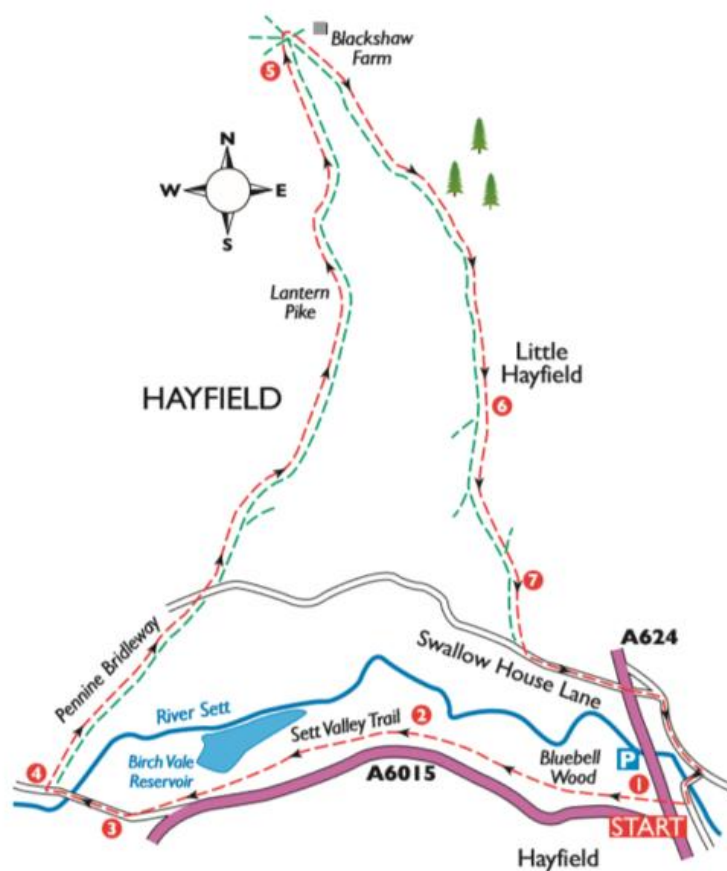
Starting point: Sett Valley Trail car park. (Grid reference SK 036 869)

How to get there: Hayfield is on the western edge of the Peak District, situated on the main A624 road. Sett Valley Trail is well signed from the A624 at Hayfield and there is a large pay and display car park from which to base your day out.

Sat Nav: SK22 2ES

Refreshments: Millie's Tea Room

The Walk



1. Head over to the start of the Sett Valley Trail, pass through the gate and set off along the trail. Before long you'll come to an entrance into Bluebell Wood on your right. It's well worth heading into this looping walk extension for a look around if you are in April or May and the bluebells are out. The carpet of flowers within this nature reserve is superb and it's a great place to take some photographs.

Continue along the trail in the wood, following the duck boards, and you'll be brought out back on the Sett Valley Trail.

2. When you've finished exploring in the wood, turn right on the trail and carry on. The whole valley soon opens up in front of you and you can enjoy the view of Lantern Pike on your right, with the River Sett running down in the valley below. You'll pass a picnic area on the right, which gives you an awesome spot to enjoy a rest or a bite to eat.

Shortly after, you'll see Birch Vale Reservoir down to your right, with its unusual island in the middle of the water. Sticking to the Sett Valley Trail, continue ahead and leave the view over the reservoir behind you.



3. Before long you come to a road at what used to be Birch Vale Station. There's a sharp right-hand turn and you should follow the bumpy path down the hill. When you're brought out onto the road at the bottom of the hill, continue heading down the road and cross over the River Sett.

4. Take the bridleway on the right at the other side of the river. This is the Pennine Bridleway, a long-distance route, and you should stay on it as it heads up the hill and brings you out at a small, country road. Cross over and pick up the bridleway at the other side, following the well-defined track and Pennine Bridleway signs as it climbs the hill and skirts around the edge of Lantern Pike.

Beyond the brow of the hill, the bridleway starts a descent across fields and brings you to a junction at Blackshaw Farm where six paths meet.

5. Of all the options, you need the path that almost doubles back on itself and turns to the right, leading you away from the farm. This continues to go downhill and joins up with another path before proceeding by the village of Little Hayfield, which you can see to the left.

6. Stick to the main path as you head away from Little Hayfield, with a small wood on your left. As the path forks in two, take the route to your left towards Hayfield.

7 Follow this path and it will soon turn into Bank Vale Road, with the start of Hayfield's housing appearing on either side. At the main road, turn left onto Swallow House Lane and continue ahead, under the A624. At the T-junction, turn right onto Market Street and continue ahead into the lovely village of Hayfield. When Market Street bends to the right it turns into Church Street and soon after crossing the River Sett you should take Walk Mill Road on the right. From here you will see the crossing that will take you to the other side of the A624 and back to the Sett Valley Trail car park.

What to look out for – Bluebell Wood Local Nature Reserve



If you time it right when you go down to the woods, you're sure of a big surprise. Tackle this walk in April and May and there'll be thousands of bluebells flowering, so take your camera and allow plenty of time to stop and enjoy.

The spring wonder takes place in the aptly named Bluebell Wood, a nature reserve you'll come across after only a few metres of this walk but one which will provide lasting

memories. When you see the turning on the right for the 1,100-metre circular route, your magical experience will begin almost immediately.

Accessibility is the key in Bluebell Wood; the path for the public has been upgraded in such a fashion that it's possible for pushchairs and wheelchairs to get all the way around. Duckboards to negotiate the trickiest surfaces have been made out of recycled plastic to ensure they last as long as possible and aren't sat in a landfill for years to come.

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