

**LYMEFIELD AND BROAD MILLS  
HERITAGE TRAIL**

25 yards

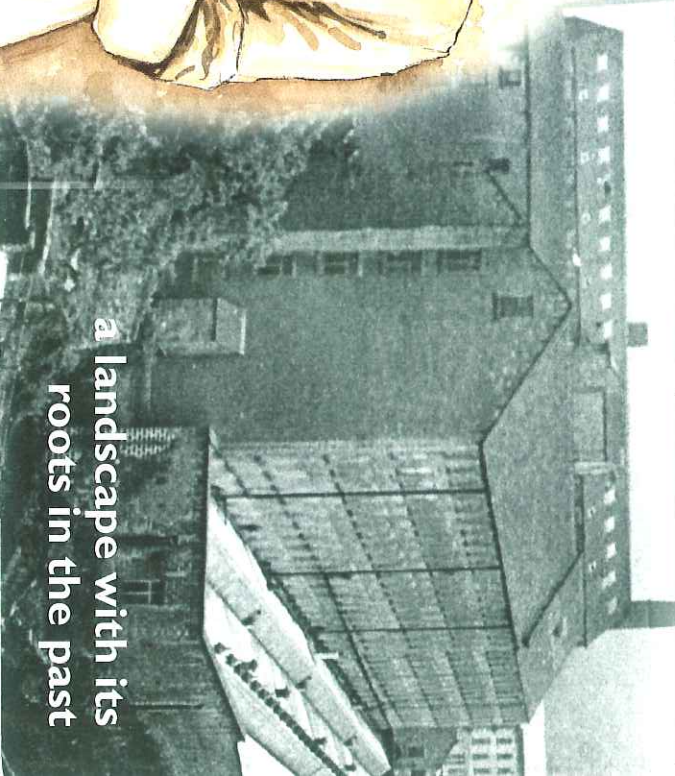
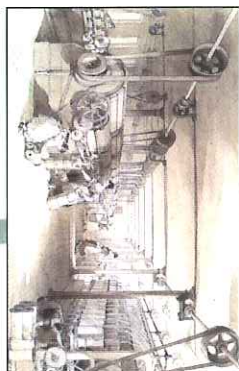
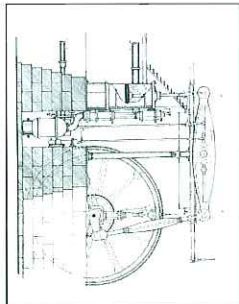


Tameside Countryside Service

**LYMEFIELD AND  
BROAD MILLS**

**Heritage Trail**

A half mile walk, along flat surfaced paths, discovering the fascinating history of this once thriving mill complex.



a landscape with its roots in the past



# LYMEFIELD AND BROAD MILLS

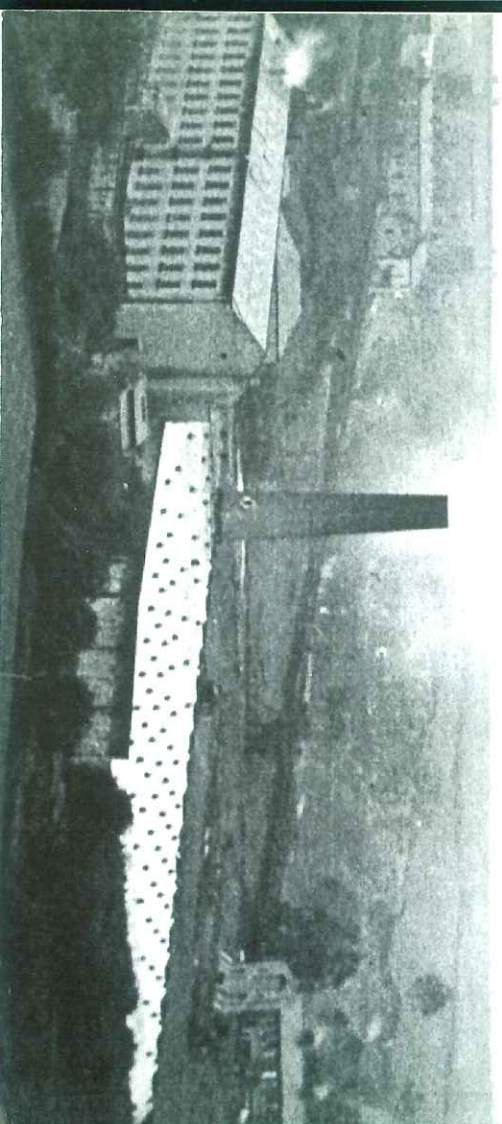
As you walk around this area today, it is hard to imagine that only 200 years ago you would have been surrounded by one of the largest textile mills in the area. With the closing and demolition of the mills, industry has given way to nature.



Where there were once weaving sheds, wildflowers bloom and attract a variety of insects like butterflies and grasshoppers. Trees have taken over the sites of the mills, and the woodlands are home to birds such as woodpeckers, great tits and chaffinches. The sweeping curve of the River Etherow forms the boundary of the site and kingfishers can sometimes be seen flying above. The water that turned the waterwheels is now home to ducks, moorhens and damselflies and the bats from around the site often hunt over the water on summer evenings.



Much of the area is wheelchair and buggy friendly. There are picnic areas and open spaces, paths through the woods for you to explore and pond and river banks where you can watch the wildlife. For younger visitors, this is the perfect place for getting closer to nature. There are nature wayfaring posts to discover and lots of places for adventurous play.



# LYMEFIELD AND BROAD MILLS

## Heritage Trail

A half mile walk, along flat surfaced paths, discovering the fascinating history of this once thriving mill complex.

**Broad Mills, originally Broadbottom Mills, were the largest of several textile works which were established in and around Broadbottom from the late 18th century onwards.**

This industry was largely responsible for transforming a rural landscape into the extensive village of today. The attraction of the area to early textile entrepreneurs lay in the natural resource of the River Etherow which, when harnessed through the construction of weirs and mill leats, provided a power source for the mill machinery.



Broadbottom Mills were established by William and George Sidebottom in the early 1800s and by 1824 included three large cotton spinning mills.

In the 1830s water power was supplemented by steam and the company added cotton weaving to its activities. In 1850 John Sidebottom further expanded the business with the construction of a large weaving shed and warehouse. John's gambling habits later led him into massive debts and he continued to run the mills only with financial help from his mother. The 1860s however brought the cotton famine and the closure of Broadbottom Mills. The community of the village, heavily dependent upon the textile industry was halved as people sought work elsewhere.

In the 1870s Broadbottom Mills reopened under the new ownership of the Hirst family. The early 20th century saw a change of name to Broad Mills and in the late 1930s, against a background of widespread decline the industry textile production at Broad Mills came to an end. In 1949, fire damage resulted in the demolition of the greater part of the mill complex.

In the 1980s Thameside MBC purchased the Broad Mills site and so began a programme of conservation and archaeological investigation which has revealed many of the key elements of this locally important industrial site.







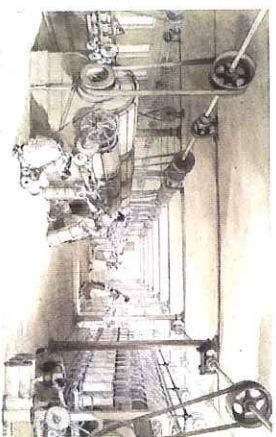


Water would have rushed through the three archways on the right into the wheel chamber. The water was regulated by sluice gates and turned a huge waterwheel.

You can see the deep wheel pit next to the railing. From this waterwheel, power was transmitted by a series of gears, shafts and belts to the machinery on the floors above.

The water then would flow through the arch on the left, possibly to supply further wheels.

We are hoping that future archaeological investigations will give us a clearer picture of how these complex water channels were used.



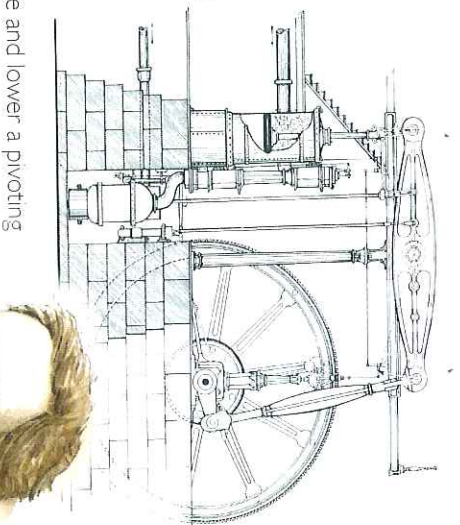
## 7 Behind you, through the trees, you may be able to see the railings that mark the site of the engine house.

If you take the path on the left you can see the ruins.

These ruins are all that remains of an engine house that stood at the gable end of the spinning mill. From 1830 onwards it provided power for the mill machinery.

The engine house contained a beam engine, the typical form of steam engine in mills of this period. Steam, from a nearby boiler house, was fed to a piston cylinder and cooled in a condenser to raise and lower a pivoting beam. This beam

was connected via a crankshaft to a flywheel, the rotary motion of which was transmitted to the system of gears, shafts and belts in the adjoining mill.



"Of course the boss wouldn't admit it... but I reckon I've got the most important job round here. If ever the flywheel stopped turning, then most of the looms would grind to a halt."



You can still see the remains of the stone blocks that supported the beam and for mounting the piston cylinder. The position of the flywheel is marked by two deep scour marks in the lower part of the mill wall.

The beam engine probably remained in use until the early 20th century when a new and larger engine house was built at the mill.

## 8 Continue the trail to the steps on your left, overlooking the banks of the River Etherow.

Set into the riverbank is the stone built arched opening that was the outflow from the wheel chamber of the 1824 cotton spinning mill.

## 9 Follow the trail through the woodland

You are now walking through the site of Old Mill. The footpath runs through the centre of what was once a single storey shed, built next to the river for weaving and preparing cotton. To your right were the two adjoining mills. The first built in 1802 by William and George Sidebottom, the second in 1814. Both were built for cotton spinning. To your right, standing five storeys high and over 300 feet (91 metres) long, the mill was an impressive structure.

As you walk through the woodland, you can spot the stone remains of the mill buildings.

## 10 Continue along the trail until the wall is reached.

If you turn up the steps and turn left, you can better see the stone walls that mark the northern end of the mill complex.

Set into the basement wall of old mill by the river you can see a wide arched opening.

This was the outflow through which water, used to turned waterwheels, flowed back into the river.

The trail finishes here at the very place where Broad Mills first began....

