

### JACK VINEY

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The Hebble Trail is an established walking and cycling route, but its current use is only part of the history of this path. The trail officially starts at Halifax Train Station and connects the town centre with a relatively level route to the end of the trail at the Salterhebble canal basin. The path follows the route of the old Halifax Branch Canal, connecting Halifax town centre to the Calder and Hebble Navigation, on to the coal fields of Wakefield and the industrial centres via Sowerby Bridge along the Rochdale Canal.

Opened in 1828, the canal served the town bringing down the price of coal and boosting industry at the nearby mills, relieving the horses that struggled to traverse the hills of the Hebble Valley. The 1.15 mile stretch of canal was served by 14 locks, 5 bridges and an aqueduct taking the canal over the Hebble Brook. Boats were raised up 100ft from the level of the canal at Salterhebble.

Due to objections from the mill owners along the Hebble Brook, water to supply the whole stretch of the canal was pumped up the valley from Salterhebble served by a pumping station in Siddal. Maintaining the water levels proved to be a costly feat. Ultimately, the arrival of the railway, improvements in the road network and the Second World War meant that the expense of running the canal was not warranted and the canal closed in 1942.

Remnants of the buried canal are evident along the route serving as a reminder of the 200 year history of the path.

Now, the Hebble Trail takes the explorer through areas of wooded peacefulness, on a tour of Halifax's industrious past and into the present reminders of Halifax's contributions to British society, culminating at the site of the Halifax canal basin, where Hargreaves Foundry recently played their part in the refurbishment of iron work from the Elizabeth Tower restoration in London, and the continuous production of the nation's favourite Quality Street chocolates at the Nestle factory.