

# Building Stones Trail

## About the Building Stones Trail

Huddersfield has been called the “Town of Stone” as most of the buildings in the town centre are built from locally quarried sandstone. Often, the outstanding quality of this stone is illustrated by finely carved decorative features. In addition, polished granites, larvikites, marble and slate were used as the town’s wealth increased. This adds a great deal of interest to the trail.

The trail follows a short route to reveal the 3 main types of rock; sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic. A hand lens or magnifying glass would be useful to bring with you. Geological period names are in brackets and italicised. The locations in this trail are based on Holmfirth Adult Education Geology Group’s booklet ‘Guide to the Building Stones of Huddersfield’, currently out of print.

The detailed trail can be downloaded from Huddersfield Geology Group’s website: [www.huddersfieldgeology.org.uk](http://www.huddersfieldgeology.org.uk)

*Text:* Ailsa Burrows, David & Nolene Shore, Graham Low and Robert Appleyard with thanks for original research by members of Holmfirth Adult Education Geology Group (now Huddersfield Geology Group).

*Images:* Photographs: Robert Appleyard. Drawing: Ailsa Burrows, for Huddersfield Geology Group.

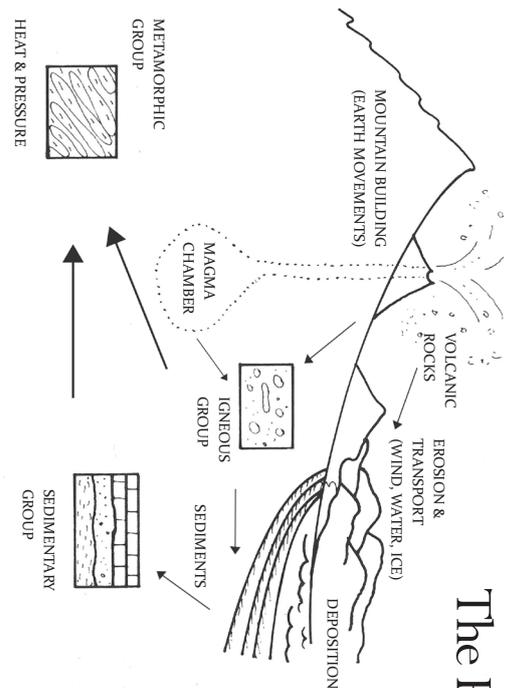
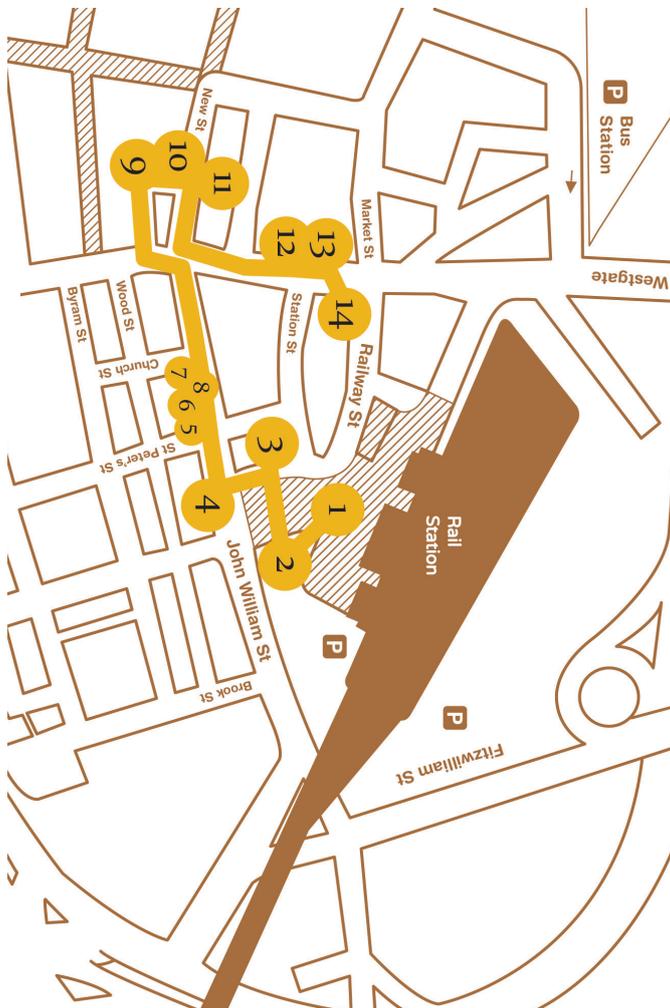
## Information

For more information about Discover Huddersfield or to learn more about the project and how to get involved, please get in touch through the following media:

[www.discoverhuddersfield.com](http://www.discoverhuddersfield.com)

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- Key:**
- Pedestrian area
  - Parking
  - One way traffic flow

Discover Huddersfield offers new ways to experience this amazing Yorkshire town, through guided walks, talks and trails. See Huddersfield at its very best: grand listed buildings and small independent shops; a place for radicals from the Luddites to the Sex Pistols; birthplace of Rugby League; a town rich in creativity, stories, heritage and the odd ghostly encounter.



### St Georges Square

All the buildings in the square and the station steps are made from the local Yorkstone; a sedimentary sandstone laid down in a huge river delta over 300 million years ago (*Carboniferous*). If you have a hand lens you might see the quartz grains, rounded by abrasion in the river (especially at point 2). You may also see glints in the stone, usually the paving, where small mica particles (from clay) have been carried down river with the sands.

**1** The Railway station is built from ashlar blocks – carefully dressed and squared stone. Note the smooth face and fine joints.



**2** George Hotel: the lower courses show spalling – peeling of the stone due to weathering, often because the stone has been wrongly laid. The corners include an irregular carved pattern known as vermiculation (from the Latin for ‘worm’).

**3** Britannia Buildings; note the many sculpted masks, scrolled brackets, festoons and Britannia, showing off the high quality stone.

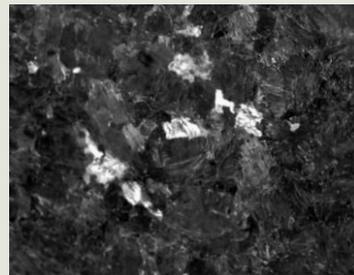
### John William Street

**4** Lion Chambers: the white marble steps at each entrance are from



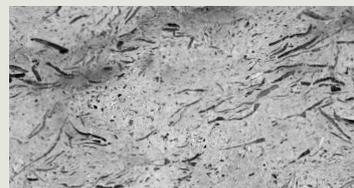
metamorphosed limestone (formed from sea creatures’ shells). These are from the famous Carrara quarries in the Italian Apennine mountains. A hand lens will show large crystals of calcite. Outside no. 46 (formerly Spring) is another metamorphic rock – serpentinite. This comes from very alkaline rock. It has been changed when drawn down deep within the earth’s mantle.

**5** No. 30 (Money Shop): a very dark shiny stone below the windows is called Black Andes ‘granite’. Another metamorphic rock from ancient continental core areas of the world, more than 600 million years old. It is now often used for kitchen worktops!



**6** No. 28 (Gallery Estate Agents): a beautiful black stone with Emerald and Blue Pearl shiny inclusions. This is larvikite, from Oslofjord, Norway. It is syenite, an igneous rock, which cooled within the earth slowly (large crystals). It is dark as it has little quartz. It can also be seen on the Pearl Assurance House nearby.

**7** No. 26 (MIND): a rich red and black ‘granite’ called Imperial Mahogany. It comes from Milbank, South Dakota USA. Originally formed in a magma chamber deep in the earth, it has been changed through later mountain building events, where high temperature and pressures have elongated the crystals and caused streaking of the minerals into bands. It is almost a gneiss - a metamorphosed granite.



**8** In between MIND and Gallery there is a pale buff or cream polished limestone rock (sedimentary) with obvious lines of brown bivalve shells.

This is another Italian rock called Perlato and is relatively young, at 65 million years old (*Cretaceous*).



### Market Place

**9** Royal Bank of Scotland: note the ornate carving of local Yorkstone. Also the polished pink Peterhead granite (igneous) columns in the window jambs. An even grain shows slow, regular, cooling of magma within the earth. Three minerals comprise granite; quartz, mica and feldspar. Quartz (white or cream crystals in the granite) weathers out to sand grains. You have seen weathered mica too in the paving, but in granite it is usually black crystals. Feldspar can be different colours and here it is the striking pink crystals.

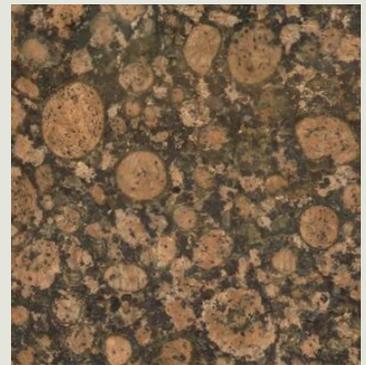


**10** To the right (on the corner with New Street): a granite from Cornwall is used in the window jambs – the feldspar here is grey. There is a high iron content which gives an overall brown ‘rusty’ effect.

**11** Look across to the National Westminster Bank. The window panels above are of slate (metamorphosed mud rocks) which splits easily along cleavage planes at right angles to the direction of pressure. The muds were volcanic ash from the Borrowdale Group in the Lake District and the original bedding, or water-lain layers, runs as colour banding across the slates. Above head height is another granite from Southern Europe with pale pink feldspar.

Retrace your steps to the cross-roads and walk up Westgate on the left side.

### Westgate



**12** No. 11-13 (William Hill): Baltic Brown granite from Finland. Note the ‘orbicular’ or golf-ball texture. The feldspar seems to have a core and to have grown outwards as shown by the rings. Possibly the oldest rock on the trail – over 1.15 billion years old (*Pre-Cambrian*). On either side are impressive zenoliths; pieces of original country rock broken off as the granite magma forced its way in.

**13** No. 17 (Jules Verne): three stones here, Larvikite again, Balmoral Red granite (like Imperial Mahogany at MIND (point 7) and Rubislaw granite.

Cross the road to the corner of Railway Street



**14** No. 26 (Square One): salmon pink Peterhead with grey Rubislaw granite, both from near Aberdeen. Note the beautifully carved Yorkstone on the higher corner arches.

Return to the station along Railway Street again noticing the fine quality and craftsmanship of the stonework on either side.