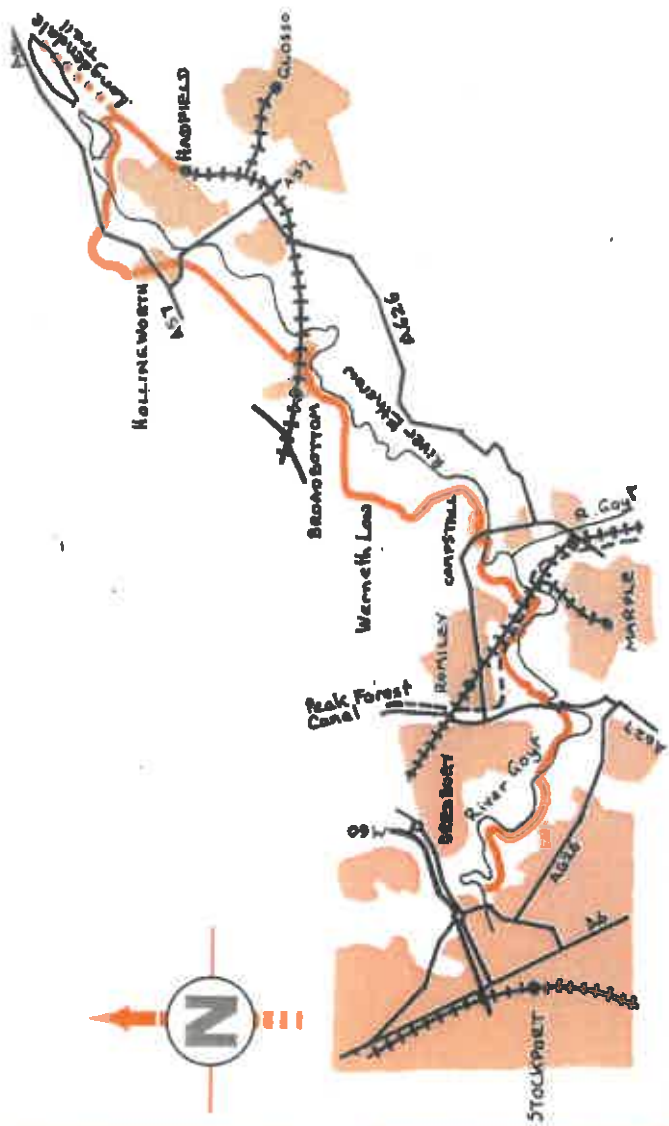


ETHEROW-GOYT VALLEY WAY

A W A L K I N G G U I D E

a 25 kilometre (15 mile) walk

FROM STOCKPORT TO LONGDENDALE



Key to Route Maps

Route of the Way

Other paths

Boundaries

Built up area

Individual buildings

Trees

Contours at 10 metre intervals

..... 100.....

Scale : All maps at approximately 1:10,000 scale (6 inches to a mile)

North is at the top of all the maps.

Section 1 : Vernon Park to Woodbank Memorial Park 2.7 kilometres (1.7 miles)

Start at the junction of New Bridge Lane, Carrington Road and New Zealand Road. Across the road from 'The Park' public house go through the entrance of Vernon Park and take the right hand of the three tarmac paths.

Vernon Park is a typical formal Victorian park, opened to the public in 1858, following the donation of the land by Lord Vernon. It covers 9 hectares (21 acres), and was formerly known as Stringer's Field, this name surviving in nearby Stringer's Weir on the Goyt. Today the park houses Stockport Museum. In the late 1990s the park was restored to its former Victorian splendour with assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In 150 metres, at a path junction, go straight ahead (not up the hill), to find a flight of steps near railings, with the River Goyt beyond. Go up the steps to the top, and take the path leading ahead and uphill to reach a circular hedged border to the left of the red brick Stockport Museum.

Pass to the left of the circular border. The tarmac path soon ends as Vernon Park meets Woodbank Memorial Park via a pedestrian gate. Keep along the top edge of the wooded bank high above the river, with the main tarmac park drive over to your right.

Woodbank Park and Hall was the private estate of the cotton magnate Peter Marsland, donated in 1921 by the then owner, Sir Thomas Rowbottom, as a memorial to the men who lost their lives in the Great War. A feature of the park, and indeed many of the woodlands along the Way, is the number of fine beech trees.

Alternative start

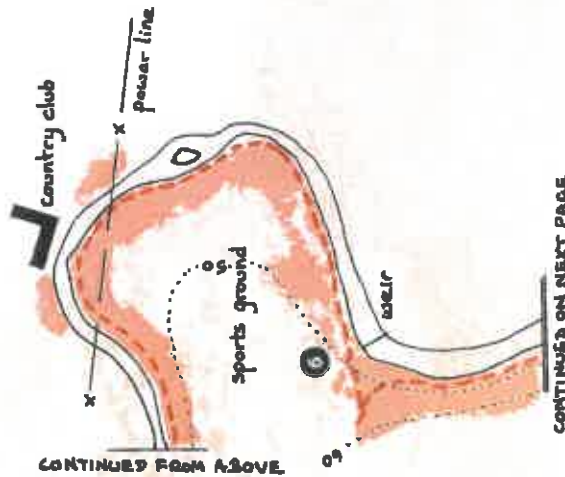
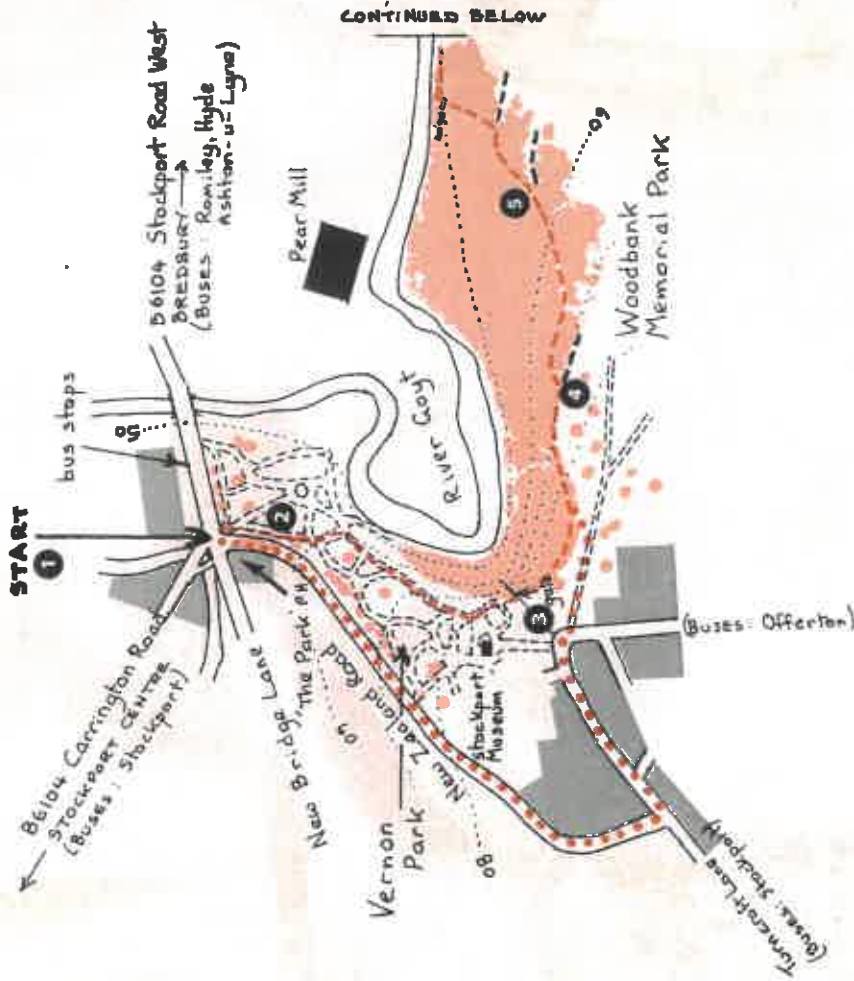
Vernon Park is closed between dusk and dawn. In the unlikely event of your being here when the park is closed, use the alternative start. Go up New Zealand Road to the top, and left into Turmcroft Lane. Where this bends sharp right go forward beside the stone pillared gateway into Woodbank Memorial Park.

In 150 metres leave the main drive by cutting half left across the grass through scattered beech trees to the edge of the steep wooded slope high above the river. Go right on the path along the edge, now on the main route at Point 4.

After 200 metres go left on a path descending into trees, through rhododendron. In a further 250 metres or so take the path branching left (its start is by an upright stone inscribed with the figure 8).

Go left again in a further 75 metres (by an upright stone with an arrow). Reach the river bank near the impressive Pear Mill. Turn right, and follow the river in a big loop to a weir.

Here go half right away from the river, to ascend the steep bank by the most convenient line to find a crossing path. Go left, now above the river.



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Section 2 : Woodbank memorial Park to Kirk Wood 3.4 km (2.1 miles)

In 500 metres you reach a squeeze stile (marking the boundary of Woodbank Park). Keep parallel to the river, below Offerton Cricket Ground, and pass behind the pavilion to a kissing gate leading into woodland.

In 500 metres watch out for a footbridge across the river. A rock outcrop prevents a direct line to it. So follow the path veering slightly away from the river, and beyond the footbridge before turning down sharp left to the Jim Fernley Memorial Bridge.

The bridge commemorates the work of Jim Fernley, the Etherow Goyt Valley Chief Warden from 1979 to 1986.

Across the bridge go up between fences, over two small bridges, to a squeeze stile leading on to a farm lane. Turn right.

Follow the lane for 1.5 kilometres, passing Waterside Farm and Chadkirk Kennels en route, to reach the busy A627 by Otterspool Bridge.

This bridge dates from 1660, when it replaced an older bridge, and marked the boundary of Macclesfield Forest.

Cross the road and turn left. (Refreshments are available across the bridge at Wyevale Garden Centre). In 200 metres turn right into Vale Road (car park and toilets on the left) to enter the Chadkirk Country Estate.

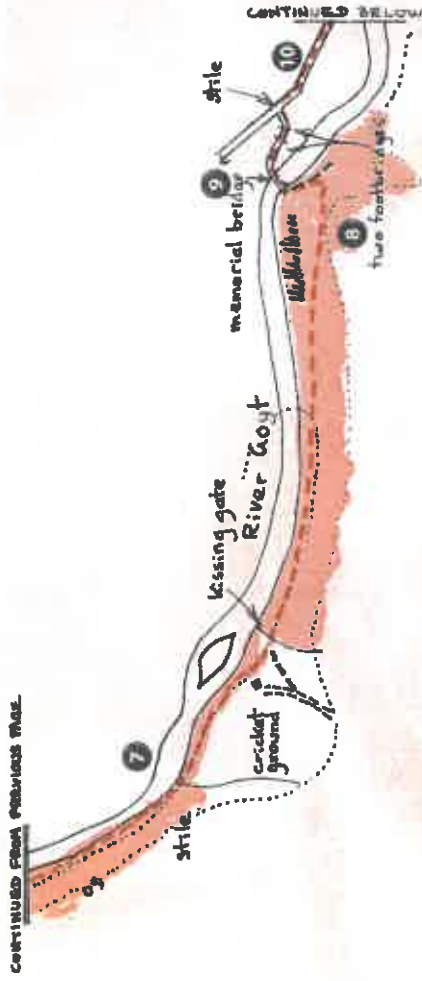
Chadkirk has a rich and fascinating history. The estate, owned by Stockport Council, remains a working farm. At the farmstead is an ancient chapel dedicated to St Chad, Bishop of Lichfield from 669-672, who, tradition says, founded a monastic cell on the site. There are information boards at various locations on the estate. The Chapel is open to visitors on Saturday and Sunday from 1.00- 5.00 p.m.

In 400 metres, where the road bends left, go forward through the squeeze stile, keeping close to the hedge on the left (not into the picnic field) bearing left into Kirk Wood. In 75 metres the Way turns into the wood, up steps, but a detour to the chapel is recommended. For this continue to follow the path along the bottom edge of the woods for a further 100 metres, returning the same way.



Otterspool Bridge

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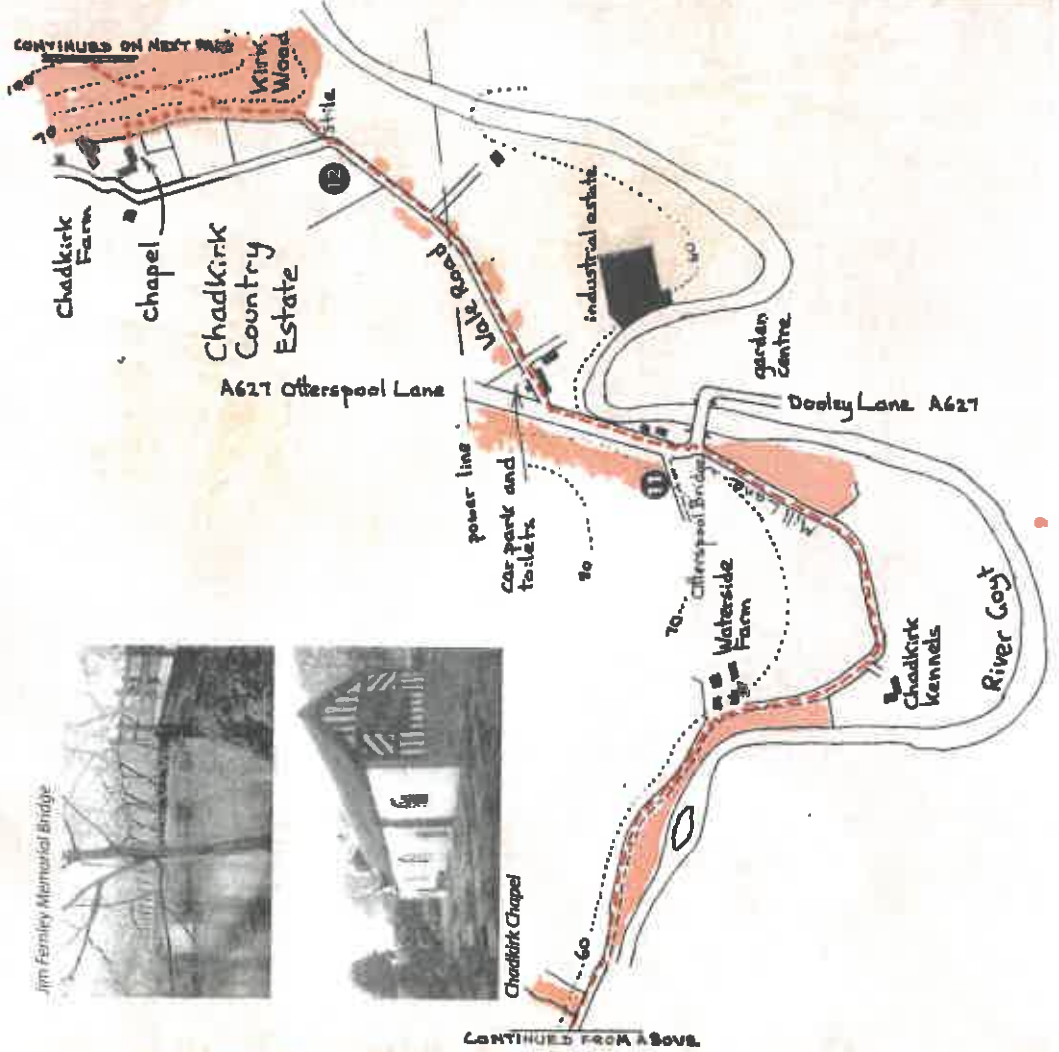
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Jim Fernley Memorial Bridge



Chadkirk Chapel



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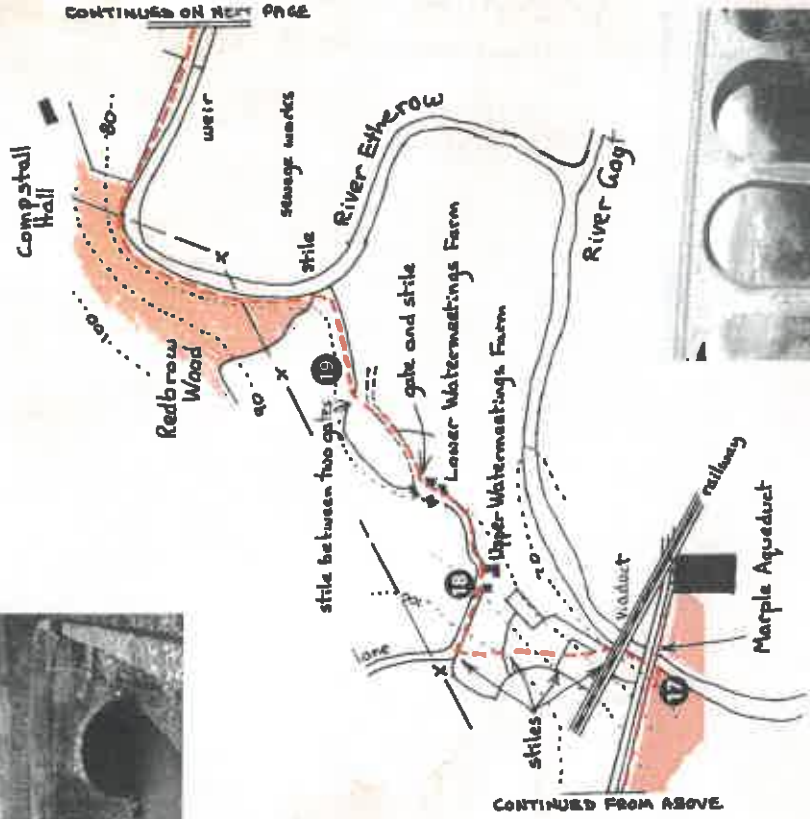
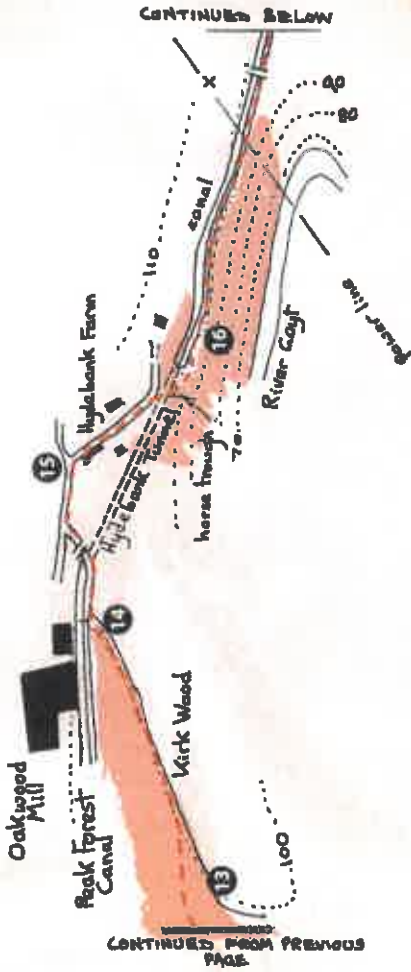
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Section 3 : Kirk Wood to Compstall 3.0 km (1.9 miles)

13. The path levels out and keeps near the top edge of the wood.
Kirk Wood is an Ancient Woodland, which means it was in existence before 1600.
The remains of Oakwood Hall, a mock Gothic mansion built around 1845, may just be seen beyond the wood to your right. More easily visible are the retaining walls and steps which led to the hall.
14. The path emerges on to the towpath of the Peak Forest Canal. Turn right and follow the path across the entrance to Hydebank Tunnel, under a bridge, and out to an unmade lane. Turn right.
Forming part of the Cheshire Ring, the canal was constructed between 1794 and 1801 by Samuel Oldknow to take raw materials to and from the cotton mills and quarries. The mill on the far side of the canal is Oakwood Mill, formerly a cotton mill, now dealing in paper products. Hydebank Tunnel is some 300 metres long. It is a legging tunnel : to pass through the bargee had to lie on top of the barge and, with his feet on the tunnel roof, walk his barge along. The horses went the easier route which you are now following.
15. Take the right fork in the lane in 50 metres at Hydebank Farm. As the lane curves left towards a house take the path descending half right to the canal bank. (On the way note the trough used by the canal horses).
16. Follow the canal for 750 metres. The Way leaves the canal at a gap in the wall on the right just before the Marple Aqueduct, but it is worth going to the far end of the aqueduct for the views.
The three arched aqueduct, standing over 30 metres above the Goyt, was built by Benjamin Outram, and had taken nearly seven years to build when it was opened in 1800. It was restored in 1964 following extensive frost damage.
The neighbouring railway viaduct is 36 metres high, and 280 metres long.
17. The path descends into the valley, and goes under the aqueduct to a stile under the viaduct. It now turns away from the Goyt for the last time. From here go half left up an often wet and slippery field to a stile, keeping the same direction, above the riding establishment of Upper Watermeetings Farm, via two more stiles, aiming for a pylon. Reach a tarmac lane and turn right.
18. Pass Upper Watermeetings Farm, and in a further 150 metres follow the track through the yard of Lower Watermeetings Farm. (These names are a reference to the nearby confluence of the Goyt and the Etherow). Beyond the farm the track can be very muddy. In 100 metres leave the track and cross a stile 10 metres to the left, between two gates.
19. Keep along the right edge of the field to a stile at the far end, entering Redbrow Wood, now alongside the River Etherow. Beyond the wood keep alongside the river, with a good view across open farmland towards Mellor Moor.



The railway viaduct from Marple Aqueduct

Section 4 : Compstall to Beacom Houses 3.0 km (1.9 miles)

The path emerges via a squeeze stile on to the busy B6104 in Compstall. Turn left. In 200 metres cross the road at the pedestrian island, just short of the junction with George Street, and go forward on a tarmac path (beside an Etherow Country Park sign) into the country park car park near the visitor centre, cafe and toilets.

Etherow Country Park was established in 1968 on part of the estate of George Andrew, who in the 1820s, together with his brother Thomas, built not only the nearby mill, but also the village of Compstall itself to provide housing for the workforce. The mill was used at first for printing and dyeing cotton, then in 1824 spinning and weaving was added. The waterways and ponds within the park fed the water wheels of the mill.

Pass in front of the visitor centre/cafe and go forward on a wide surfaced path with a mill pond on the right. Follow this path for 300 metres until it joins a wider tarmac drive. Go right.

Follow this drive, with the mill pond now narrowed to a canal, for 500 metres to where the canal widens out into a basin.

Just before here, on the right, are the remains of one of the horse drawn barges that once carried coal from nearby Ermocroft Wood to Compstall Mill.

Here the drive forks, near Weir Cottages. (A detour on the right branch for 100 metres is recommended to see the impressive weir). The Way itself takes the left branch (toilets on the left).

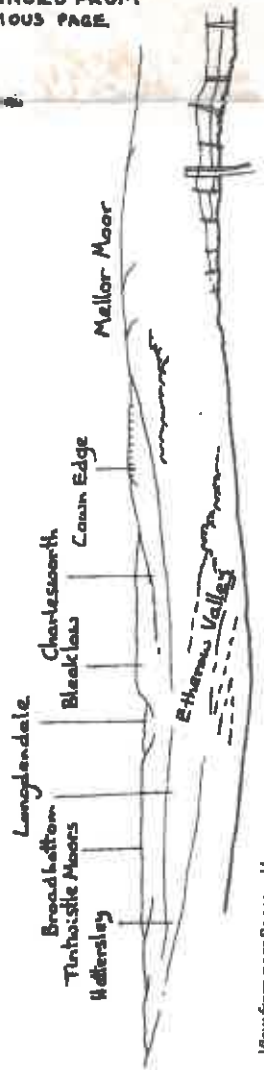
From here to Bothams Hall four kilometres away, there is no path close to the river, so the Way takes to higher ground, across Werneth Low, with spectacular views.

Follow the driveway up into Keg Wood. Cross a small stream in a slight dip, and continue for a further 200 metres to the top of a rise.

Here go left on a path (by a wooden shelter) up into the woods, to reach a wicket gate. Follow the path beside a fence (right) along the top edge of Mortin Clough. At the top of the wood cross two stiles and up a hedged path to another stile where you go left to a tarmac lane.

Turn right uphill. In 300 metres pass through Beacom Houses and continue to follow the lane.

These cottages once formed part of the manor of Werneth. The name appears on Ordnance Survey maps as both Beacom and Beacon. Beyond there are some excellent views across the Peak District and the Etherow Valley.



View from near Beacom Houses

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Weir Cottages
weir
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coal barge

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Wicket
Myde's
Farm

26
shelter

25
Weir Cottages

24
pond
coal barge

23
mill pond

22
visitor centre, cafe
toilets

21
church
100
George St.

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stile
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Compstall
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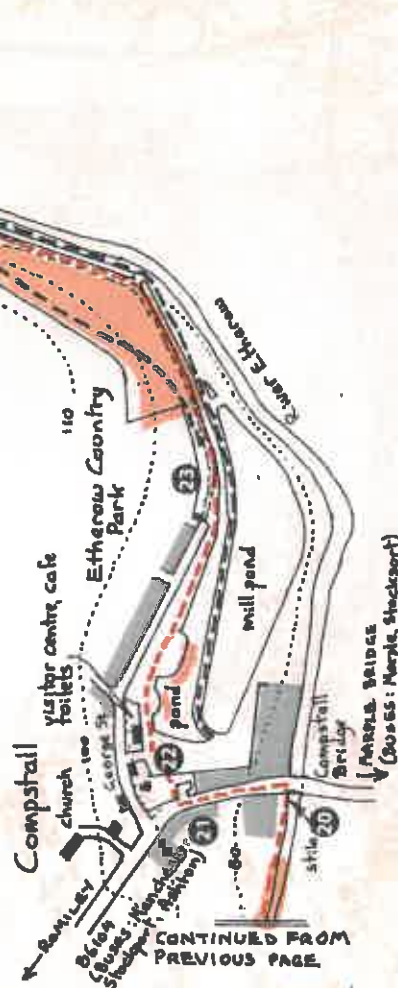
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Etherow Country Park: the weir



Compstall



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Section 5 : Beacom Houses to Hodge Lane 3.0 km (1.9 miles)

Follow the lane round a sharp left bend and uphill for about 150 metres, with Werneth Low Golf Course on the left. There are excellent views from here over the Etherow Valley, Longdendale, Glossopdale and the moors beyond.

Go through the kissing gate on the right and along the bottom edge of the field to another kissing gate at the far end.

This field is part of Werneth Low Country Park, the main part of the park being on the other side of the hill. The Country Park extends for 80 hectares (200 acres). In 1920, following a public appeal, the War Memorial Committee of Hyde Borough Council purchased land at the Low as a lasting tribute to the 710 men from the area who perished in the Great War. In the late 1970s this land, in the care of the Hyde War Memorial Trust, together with adjoining land owned by Tameside Council, was formed into Werneth Low Country Park, which was formally opened by the Duke of Gloucester on 9th June 1980.

Emerge on to a steep lane (Cock Brow) and turn right downhill, rounding a left bend, where the lane levels out. Here, opposite a bungalow on the left, take the path leading down on the right between some sheds (right) and a house (left). This path can be quite wet at times.

Follow the sunken path to a track at the bottom (150 metres), cross the stile opposite and go down the path to another stile. Cross this and go down the farm track, between two hedgerows thick with holly, then keeping close to the right edge of the field to another stile.

Go straight across the next field for 50 metres to a stile at the corner of a wood (Back Wood).

Back Wood is a site of wildlife interest, with mature oak, birch, sycamore, rowan, ash and elm. In spring bluebells are abundant.

Follow the path along the top edge of the wood, in due course crossing two stiles, before descending steps, then across a small stream and forward to a crossing path. Turn right to reach a stile leading on to a farm lane near Bothams Hall.

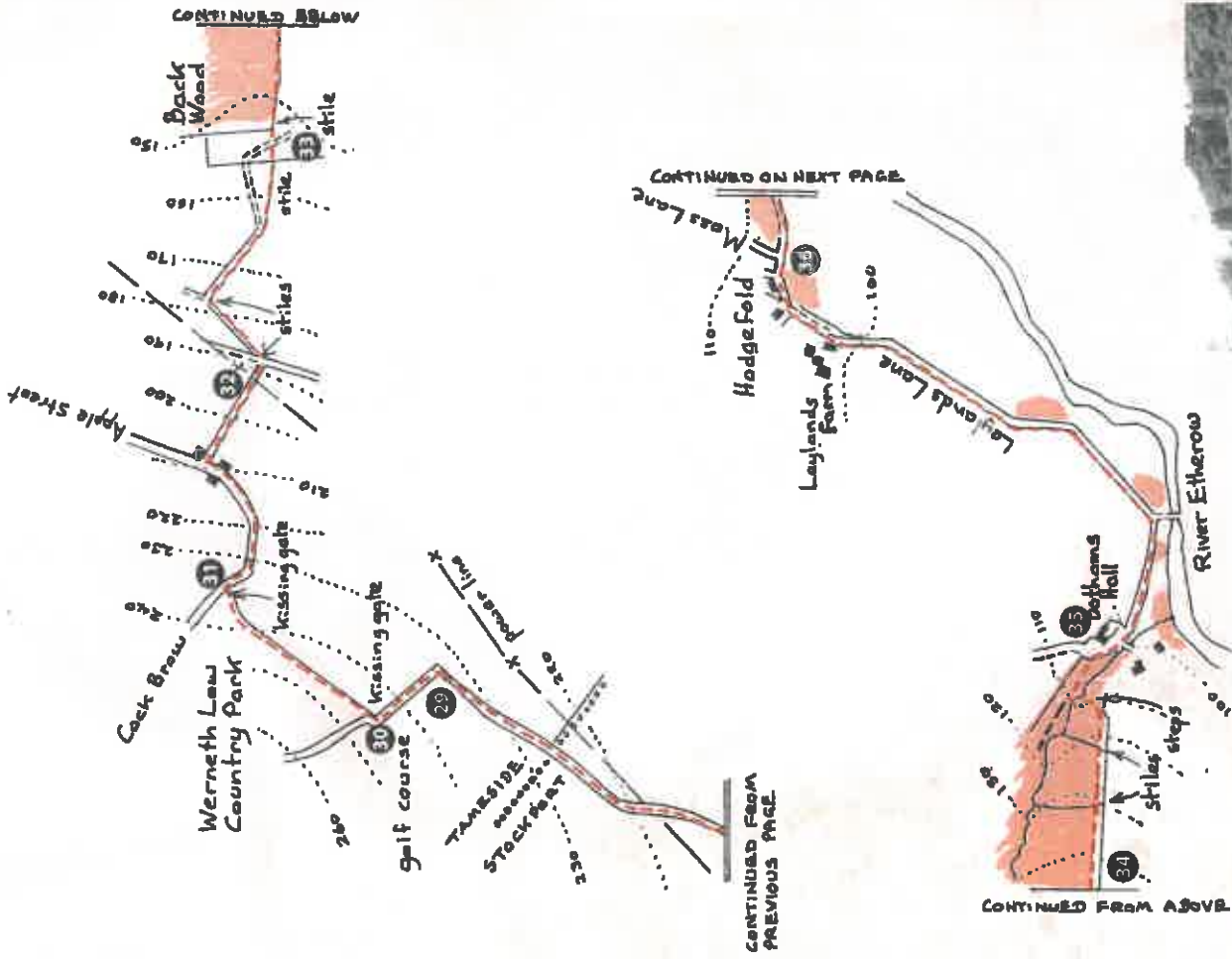
The hall dates from the early 14th Century with later 17th Century additions.

Turn right and follow the lane (Leylands Lane) past Bothams Hall, for about a kilometre. Pass the buildings of Leylands Farm on your left, and then bear right with the lane past the cottages of Hodgefold.

Leylands Farm was once an inn, The Cuckoo on the Nest. Hodgefold originated as a settlement of agricultural cottages.

Where the tarmac road bears left uphill (Moss Lane) carry straight on along an unmade lane known as Hodge Lane.

Hodge Lane was once part of an old packhorse route used to transport salt from mid Cheshire over the Pennines and into Yorkshire.



Hodgefold

Section 6 : Hodge Lane to Hague Road via Broadbottom 2.2 km (1.4 miles)

The lane soon passes the old stone dye vats on your right, then climbs to reach the cottages of Summerbottom.

The dye vats lay at the western end of the huge Hodge Print Works, of which little now remains. The vats, three groups of bleaching baths, probably date from the early 19th Century expansion of the printworks.

Summerbottom is a row of weavers cottages, dwellings for workers at Hodge Print Works.

(Note : a path to the left of the cottages climbs up to Broadbottom Station in 200 metres).

Immediately beyond the cottages carry straight on through a wicket gate. Follow the path along and then down to the end of a row of houses (Well Row).

Go steeply downhill to the right of the houses on a tarmac path to Warrastfold Bridge over the Etherow. Do not cross the bridge but go through the kissing gate into the Broad Mills heritage area.

In this area was an extensive group of mill buildings founded in the early 19th Century for cotton spinning and later for weaving as well. At its height in the 1860s some 1200 people were employed here. The mills closed in the 1930s and were partly burnt down in 1939. The area has since been excavated and landscaped. Information boards at various points on the site explain the mills' history and features of interest.

Follow the path down steps and through the wood, curving left and right out of the wood, past the mill races, to an open grassy area. Follow the main path ahead to reach a kissing gate at the far end, and go forward on the track to the houses of Lyme field Terrace on the right.

At the far end of the terrace turn left up the unmade road (Lyme field), passing the Lyme field Visitor Centre, a base for Tameside Council's countryside wardens, and with displays and information about the local countryside.

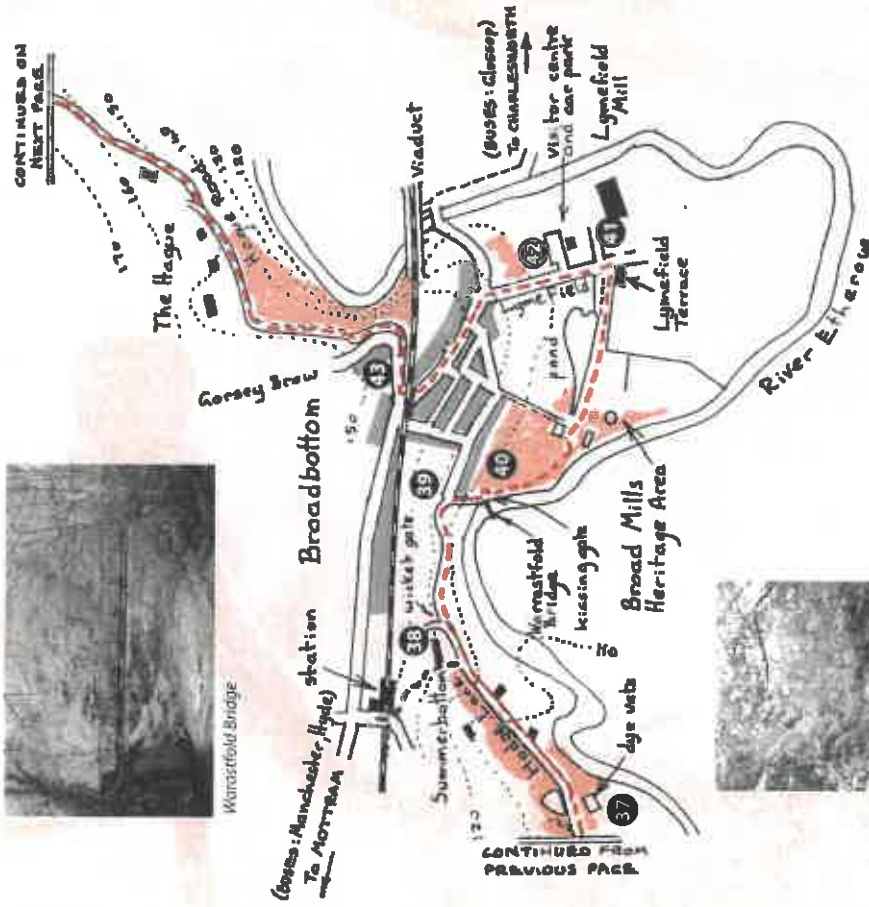
The viaduct seen as you walk up Lyme field was originally designed as part of the Sheffield, Ashton under Lyne and Manchester Railway, with wooden arches on brick pillars. The viaduct burnt down in 1858, to be replaced by the present structure.

Go up to the main road through Broadbottom village, and turn left.

Beginning as a scattering of isolated farmsteads, Broadbottom grew from the late 18th Century with the development of the Hodge Print Works and Broadbottom Mills (later Broad Mills), and associated housing for the mill workers. The cotton famine of 1861-5 halted expansion of the village.

Go under the railway bridge and immediately right up Gorse Brow. After 25 metres fork right into a lane (Hague Road), and follow this for about a kilometre, passing Hague Bank and the magnificent Hague House.

Both were built by the owner of Besthill Mill, John Marsland. There are superb views from Hague Road across the valley to Cown Edge.



Warrastfold Bridge



R. Etherow near the dye vats



The dye vats

Section 7 : Hagne Road to Woolley Bridge 2.4 km (1.5 miles)

Follow the lane past the buildings of Little Hill Farm (two gates). Then as the lane curves right and begins to descend go over a stile on the left, up steps, and beside a high fence out to an unmade lane at the top. Turn right.

Go forward for 100 metres to reach the high iron gates of Pear Tree Farm, with a squeeze stile on the left. Go through the stile and past the buildings (on your right), continuing soon on a footpath (named on maps as Carrhouse Lane) through scrub vegetation, descending to a stile leading into a field.

Beyond Pear Tree Farm there is the first real view up Longdendale, flanked by the mass of Bleaklow (right) and the Tintwistle moors (left).

A spur of the proposed Hollingworth - Tintwistle bypass may in future cut through the fields in the area ahead, at which time the footpath will be safeguarded and suitably signposted.

Continue in the same direction downfield to another stile, go straight across the next narrow field to a gate, and along the right edge of the following field to a stile at the far end.

Continue forward to a footbridge, then ahead along a grassy track, at first between fences, then along the right edge of a field, to a stile.

Keep the same direction to a kissing gate which leads to the yard of Woolley Farm. Pass the house and bear left along the farm access lane to the main A57, Woolley Lane.

Cross straight over this busy road (with care) into The Boulevard, a residential road. In 100 metres, as the road bears left, go forward on a wide path to its far end in 150 metres, to emerge on to the quiet Water Lane. Turn left uphill.

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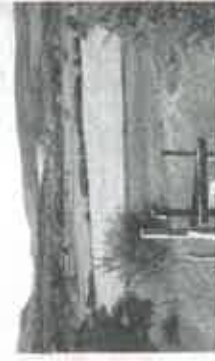
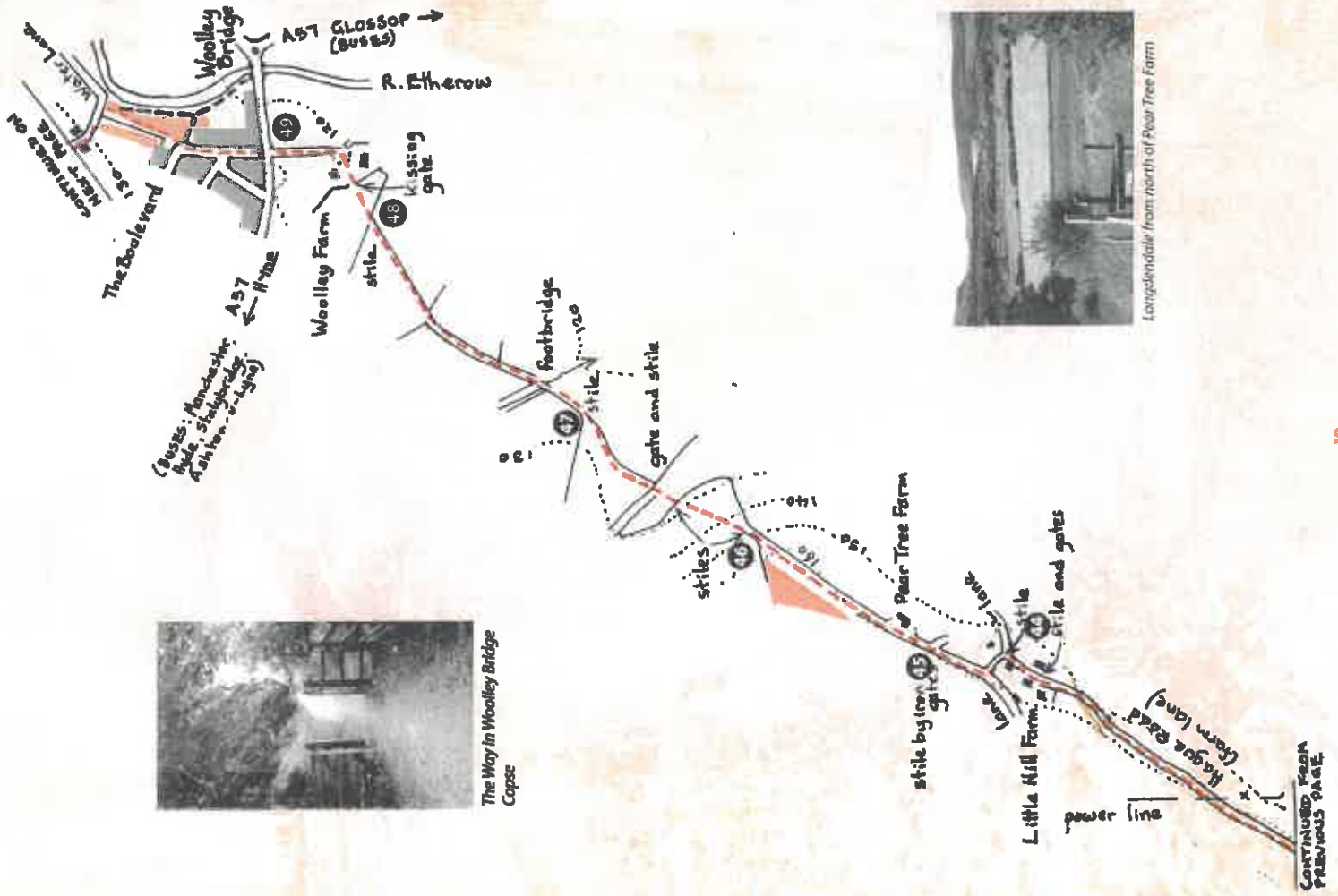
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The Way in Woolley Bridge Copse



Longdendale from north of Pear Tree Farm

Section 8 : Woolley Bridge to Bottoms Reservoir 3.0 km (2 miles)

Follow Water Lane to the busy A628 in Hollingworth.

Hollingworth, straddling the busy A628, grew from a small village in the second half of the 19th Century, with the development of spinning, weaving, dyeing and bleaching, largely along the course of the-Etherow.

Cross straight over (use the nearby pedestrian crossing) and go up Green Lane. In about 150 metres go up the stone steps on the right and forward on a tarmac path past the backs of houses.

At a junction of paths take the left branch out to a road (Fields Crescent) and go right.

In 75 metres go left between numbers 15 and 17 and forward on a tarmac path to reach the end of a road (Hawthorn Grove), and follow this to the top in 100 metres.

Turn right (passing Meadowbank Farm) and continue down the quiet Woolley Mill Lane.

Note the elaborate drinking trough on the left just before the bridge over Hollingworth Brook (the trough itself is missing).

After 800 metres Woolley Mill Lane bends right to the A628. (Bus stops for Haafield, Glossop, Stalybridge, Ashton under Lyne). Cross straight over (with care) and go along West Drive into a suburban housing estate. Follow West Drive round a left bend, and for another 350 metres until it bends left again.

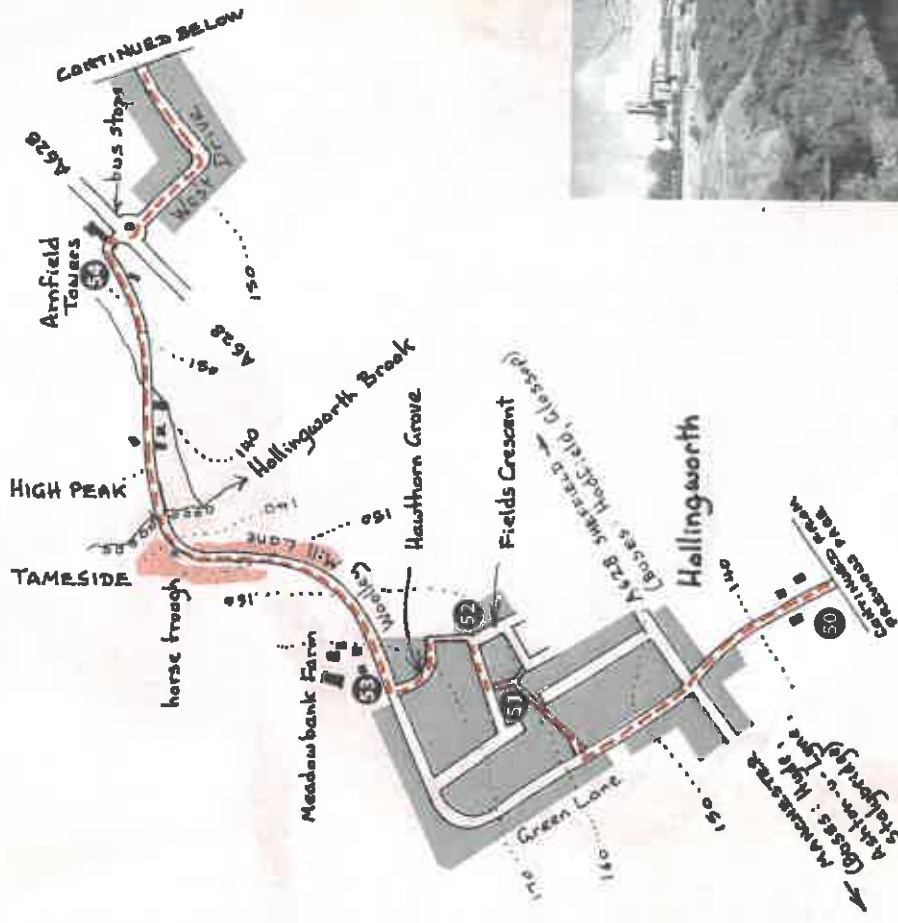
Here on the right, at a patch of green between the houses, go down a tarmac path, which is soon running between a fence and a wall, with allotments (left) and an industrial area to the right.

Emerge on to New Road and go right downhill, across Timtwistle Bridge over the Etherow, near the point where it is once more a river after several kilometres of flowing through the five reservoirs in Longdendale. Go left up Goddard Lane. (Note the 1879 drinking trough on the left).

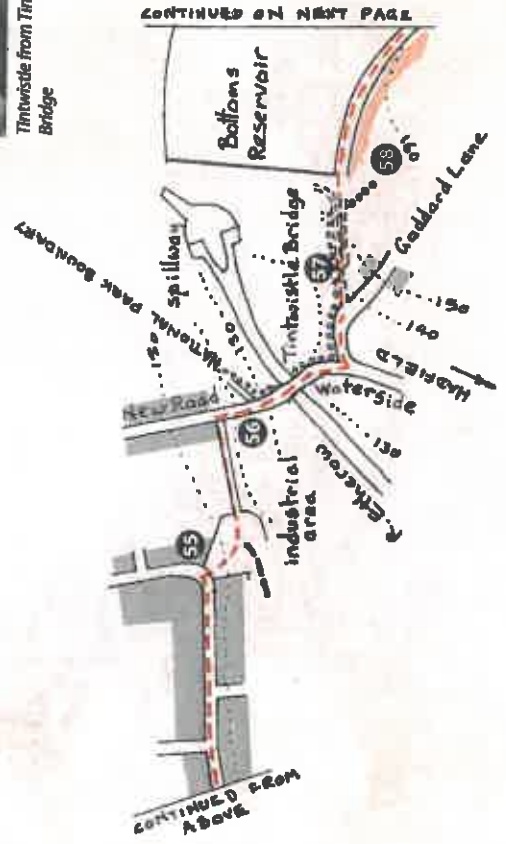
In a further 75 metres go through the wide gateway on the left and forward on a wide track (a concessionary path), forking right uphill in a further 50 metres to reach the top of the dam of Bottoms Reservoir, where the Way enters the Peak District National Park.

Go round to the right of the dam wall and on to the North West Water concessionary path on a terrace along the side of the reservoir. This ends just beyond a small stream at a stile on the right.

Throughout this part of the walk there are excellent views across the water to Timtwistle, and ahead to Bramah Edge on Bleaklow and the moorlands on the north side of Longdendale.



Timtwistle from Timtwistle Bridge



Section 9 : Bottoms Reservoir to Hadfield 1.8 km. (1 mile)

The Domesday Survey suggests Longdendale in the 11th Century was heavily wooded. Disafforestation began in 1589 when the Earl of Shrewsbury purchased a large part of the area and there began the gradual but steady growth of settlement and farming. Perhaps the most dramatic changes to the valley occurred with the building of the chain of five reservoirs : Woodhead, begun in 1848, Torside (1849-69), Rhodeswood (1849-52), Valehouse (1865-69) and Bottoms (1869-77). On completion they were together the largest single expanse of artificial water in the world.

Across the stile go left on the fenced path, almost at once over another stile, to reach a kissing gate on the right in 300 metres.

The Etherow Way briefly coincides with the Trans Pennine Trail walkers' route at this point. The Trans Pennine Trail is a developing long distance trail from Southport to Hornsea, linking across the North Sea from Hull to Rotterdam and continuing to Istanbul as part of European Route E8. (The cyclists' and horse riders' route is along the Longdendale Trail).

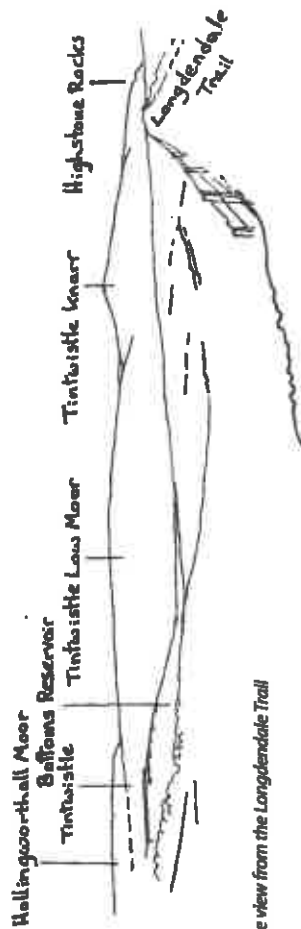
Go through this and half right upfield, passing the end of a wall, to reach another kissing gate at a subway under the former Manchester to Sheffield railway, now the Longdendale Trail route for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and people with disabilities.

The railway was completed in 1854, including the construction of the first of the Woodhead Tunnels, one of the greatest achievements of the formative years of the railway age. The railway closed to passengers in 1970 and to freight in 1981. The Longdendale Trail was opened from Hadfield to Woodhead in 1992.

Go through the subway. Most walkers will complete the walk by following the Longdendale Trail to Hadfield. So turn right to join the Trail and continue along this for just over a kilometre to its end at an information board and small car park on Platt Street.

(If you want to continue towards the headwaters of the Etherow by following the Longdendale Trail up valley from Point 61, this involves some 14 more kilometres of walking, and you will need to make suitable transport arrangements for the return).

For the trains and buses go right along Platt Street to the junction in 200 metres in the centre of Hadfield. The bus stops are here, near the war memorial, and the station yard entrance on the left.



The view from the Longdendale Trail



View from Bottoms Reservoir



The Longdendale Trail

