

Exploring the reservoirs of the South Pennines

Those of us living in developed countries in the 21st century take it for granted that when we turn on the tap, fresh clean water will come gushing out. The South Pennines enjoys the greatest density of reservoirs in the country thanks to its natural geology of high ground and steep valleys which enable water catchment on a grand scale.

As part of the Watershed Landscape Project, Rochdale and Oldham Councils, along with reservoir owner United Utilities have worked together to develop a series of walks to help you explore the network of reservoirs and surrounding landscape in the two boroughs.

As well as providing a safe water supply and a rich habitat for plants, animals and birds, these reservoirs also have a fascinating history. The Industrial Revolution brought huge change to this landscape as pressure grew to meet both the demands for clean fresh water for the rapidly growing populations in the towns below, but also to feed the canal system – a vital means of transporting goods. The construction of the reservoirs on these routes required farming settlements to be cleared and the surrounding

countryside retains evidence of land use in centuries gone by. They demonstrate tremendous feats of 19th century civil engineering. Their past reveals stories of life among the navvies who built them, some of whom died during their construction.

Take Moor Care

Please take care when walking in the uplands. The weather can change quickly, so ensure you have suitable shoes, clothing, a map and food and drink. Whilst exploring the landscape, always follow the Countryside and Moorland Visitors Code. Swimming in reservoirs is extremely dangerous and can be fatal. Please be vigilant about avoiding wildfires, keep dogs on short leads and leave the uplands as you found them.

Please carry the correct map when exploring this landscape. This route is on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL21 South Pennines.

We hope you enjoy walking these trails. To get a copy of the accompanying booklet please visit or contact Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre in Littleborough or Saddleworth Museum in Uppermill.

www.watershedlandscape.co.uk

WALK 2 Blackstone Edge

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Distance: 2½ miles – with ½ mile to the Aiggin Stone and ¼ mile to Blackstone Edge if desired

Approx. time: 1½ to 2½ hrs

This walk begins at the car park below the White House pub. Keeping to the same side of the road, you will see a footpath leading downhill towards Littleborough. Take this path and continue down straight ahead.

Across the main road you can see a path near some houses and a pylon. Be careful as you cross the road and take the path over Stormer Hill in front of you. There are some great views of Hollingworth Lake from the top of the hill.

Soon you will reach Lydgate hamlet. Cross the Blackstone Edge Old Road and take the track ahead on your left towards the houses. Turn left and continue to walk uphill, past the houses and on towards Blackstone Edge.

After ¼ mile, you will reach the bottom of what is called 'the Roman Road'. The route turns left at the point where the water

company drain crosses the path. If you want to turn back at this point, you can follow the footpath along the drain, which takes you back to the car park.

If you have time, it is well worth continuing approximately ½ mile to the Aiggin Stone. Where the main route turns left, simply carry on climbing on Roman Road until you see the stone on the left with a description of its history.

You can then turn back downhill and resume the walk. Or you can continue for approximately ¼ mile to the outcrop of Blackstone Edge and then resume the walk back down. Blackstone Edge is on the Pennine Way.



Blackstone Edge Reservoir

