

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 5 Rakewood

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Distance: 3½ miles

Approx. time: 2 to 2½ hrs



This walk starts at Hollingworth Lake and Country Park Visitor Centre, which has parking spaces, information and refreshments. From the Visitor Centre, take the path up to the lake and turn left following the dam alongside the lake. Follow the tarmac road all the way into Rakewood Village.

Rakewood is a hamlet with a campsite, old mills and weavers' cottages. From the road at Rakewood, follow the waymarker right onto the bridleway, which runs between the rugby club and field.

Follow the path through the trees and up the hill keeping left. This is Deep Lane. At the top of the hill you will pass Heights Barn Farm on the right. Continue straight ahead for ½ mile, walking straight through the junction at the bottom of the hill until you reach a tarmac lane.

Turn left and follow the lane until you come to a bridge over the M62 at Tunshill. As the lane bears right over the bridge, take the steps down the banking and follow this footpath across the fields.

At the top of the next hill, turn right into the valley and through the gate. Continue around the side of Castle Hill. This will take you under the M62 viaduct and up the side of Dick Hill. Turn left at the T-junction and walk down into the valley following the Pennine Bridleway back under the viaduct. This will take you back to Rakewood village. Follow Rakewood Road back along the dam alongside the Lake and to the Visitor Centre.

