

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 6 Piethorne Valley Reservoirs

Distance: 3½ miles **Approx. time:** 2 to 2½ hrs

This walk starts at Ogden car park. Turn left and head gently uphill. Carry on past the entrance of Kitcliffe farm.

Head up the road past the pylon and you will soon join a private road. To your left you will pass Kitcliffe Reservoir and the large United Utilities Piethorne Treatment Works before reaching the dam wall of Piethorne Reservoir.

Follow track with the reservoir on your left. Pass through a wooden kissing gate. Ignore the footpath on the left. Eventually the track will bend left to run along the dam wall of Hanging Lees Reservoir.

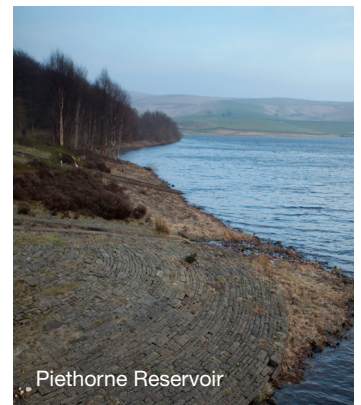
When you reach the T-junction of paths, turn left onto the Pennine Bridleway. Continue past the waterfall. Head through the metal gate and uphill until you pass two large stone gateposts on the right.

Keep heading uphill. As you near the top of the hill, you will notice the wall pulls away from the left of the track. Keep going as the track descends.

Follow the stone bridleway to Hollingworth Lake, shown by a fingerpost. The M62 comes into view on your right. After crossing beneath electricity cables strung between pylons, turn left and follow the bridleway down to Ogden.

Turn right off the main track and down through the ruins of the farm. After the foundations of the second set of buildings, take the ornately paved path between the stone walls.

Cross a small stone slab bridge and keep left, so the brook is on your left and the plantation right. Head down through the gap in the wall on your left and cross the top of the dam. You will arrive back into the car park.



Piethorne Reservoir

