

# 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 OL1 The Peak District.

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](http://www.watershedlandscape.co.uk)

## WALK 8 Castleshaw Valley Reservoirs

Take the path from the top of the Castleshaw Centre car park through the kissing gate and cross the small field. Pass through the gate at the end onto Cote Lane/ Waterworks Road.

Turn left and walk along the road towards Castleshaw Lower Reservoir. At the entrance to the reservoir turn left and head towards the dam wall. Follow the dam wall to the cattle grid at the other end. Do not cross the cattle grid. Use the gate to the left of the cattle grid to continue along the path towards the farmhouse.

Continue along the track with the reservoir on your right, until you reach the cobbled yard behind the farmhouse. Turn left and follow the path uphill past the sheep pens. At the top of the hill turn right and continue through the metal gate. Walk between the dry stone walls until you reach the road.

Turn right and follow the road round to the right, crossing between the two reservoirs. Turn left at the junction with Dirty Lane and head uphill for a short distance before turning right onto a track. Walk up the track and through the small wooden gate ahead. Follow the fence on your left and then turn left through the gate. The Roman Fort is straight ahead and well worth a look.



Castleshaw Upper Reservoir

