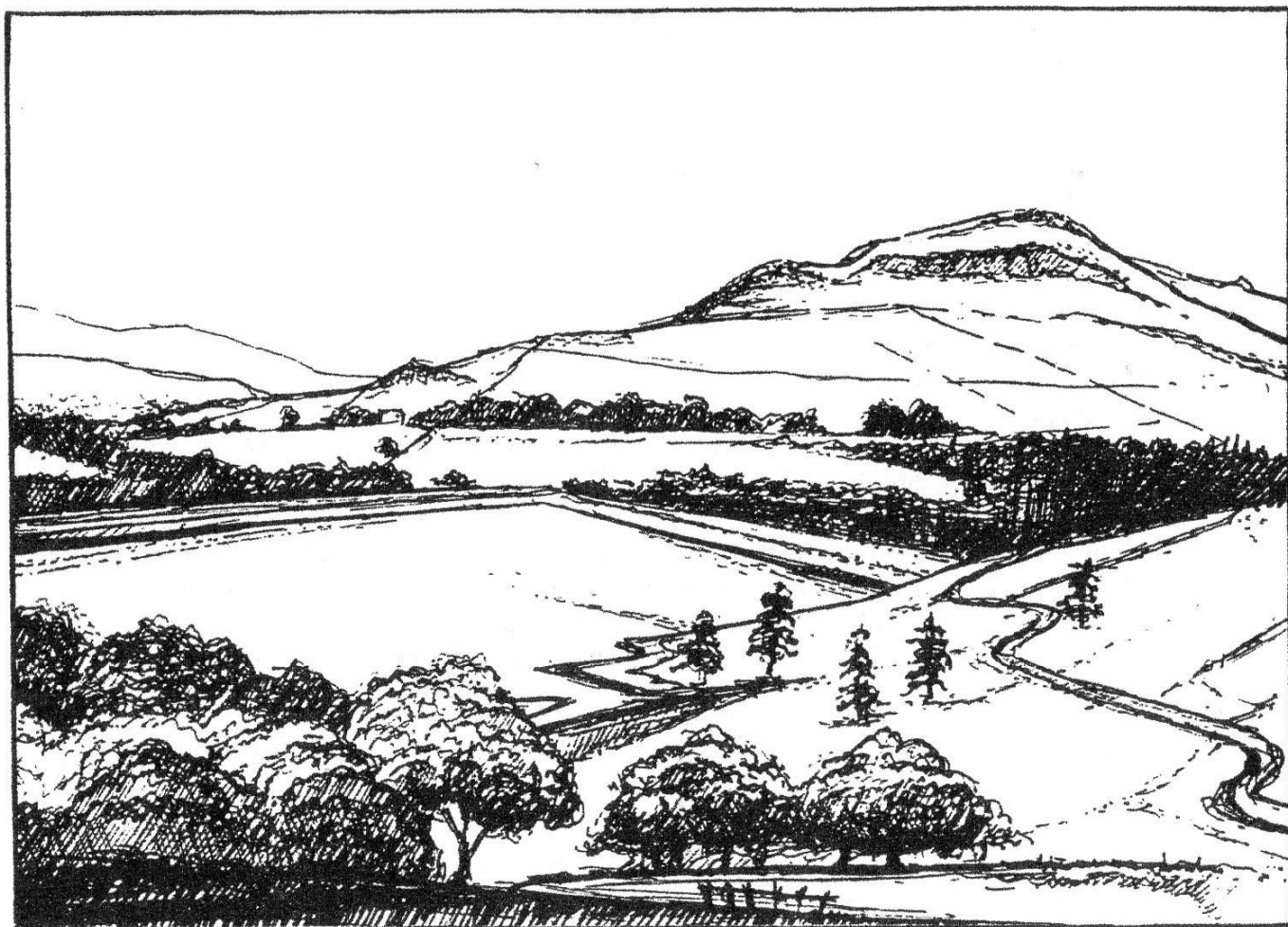


DAM LONG WALK



**A 50 MILE CHALLENGE
WALK AROUND 33
RESERVOIRS IN THE
DARK PEAK**

Ken Jones

DAM LONG WALK

A tough circular walk around 31/33 reservoirs surrounding Black Hill, in the North West of the Dark Peak. This demanding circuit cunningly links together a vast collection of reservoirs, both large and small, by combining short sections of well-known trails with lesser-known tracks. It creates a varied route of almost 50 miles, which constantly reveals picturesque and delightful scenery.

The recommended starting point is Crowden YHA, but obviously this can be varied to any point on the circuit. It is anticipated that the walk be undertaken by fanatics in a single session of under 24 hours, but equally and perhaps more enjoyably it could be divided over two days by the more sedate. Starting at Marsden would allow a convenient over night stop at Crowden YHA, or vice versa in a B&B. in Marsden. There are also convenient 'watering holes' if one's timing is right at: Tintwistle, Netherley, Holme and Dunford Bridge.

If the full route at 50 miles seems rather daunting, it may be shortened in a number of ways to accommodate one's personal limitations or time available e.g:

1. From Crowden YHA go direct to Chew Reservoir.
2. From A635 Boundary Stone go direct to Wessenden Head.
3. From Yateholme Reservoir go direct to Woodhead Reservoir, initially heading for Holme Moss Mast, then down the A6024.

As normal, my route description comes with the usual health warning. It is meant as a brief outline only and must be used in conjunction with the OS 1:25000 Dark Peak map and unfortunately a tiny bit of the South Pennines map. You are advised to carefully check all bearings and grid references for your own sanity.

Devised and Inaugurated by Ken Jones in August 2001.

DAM LONG WALK - GRID REFERENCES

Crowden YHA	073 993	A635 Road junction	077 073
TORSIDE		Kirklees Way	
RHODESWOOD		Nether Lane	
VALEHOUSE		Greaves Head	100 073
BOTTOMS		BILBERRY	
Tintwistle	023 974	DIGLEY	
ARNFIELD		Holme	108 059
Moorhouse Farm	996 976	BROWNHILL	
WALKERWOOD		Netherley Brow	113 054
BRUSHES		RAMSDEN	
LOWER SWINESHAW		Bridge	112 050
HIGHER SWINESHAW		YATEHOLME	
Ogden Brook	019 003	RIDINGWOOD	
CHEW		Crow Hill	120 055
Chew Road		Ramsden Road	
DOVESTONE		Road junction	130 050
YEOMAN HEY		SNAILSDEN	
GREENFIELD		Ellentree Brow	145 043
Stream Junction	038 050	HARDEN	
A635 + Boundary Stone	051 063	WINSCAR	
LITTLE BLACK MOSS		LOWER WINDLEDEN	
BLACK MOSS		Windle Edge	
SWELLANDS		UPPER WINDLEDEN	
REDBROOK		A628 Salters Brook Moss	141 005
Stanedge Trail		Lady Shaw Bridge	137 999
Mount Road	037 101	TPT Long Side	
Netherley	045 107	Woodhead Tunnel Entrance	114 999
BUTTERLEY		Longdendale Trail	
BLAKELEY		WOODHEAD	
WESSENDEN		Crowden YHA	073 993
WESSENDEN HEAD			



DAM LONG WALK

Start - Crowden YHA

From public car park adjacent to Crowden YHA, cross the A628 onto path that descends towards Torside Reservoir. Follow this R on north side of reservoir, along pleasant tracks, through small nature reserve to reach Torside Dam. Continue on good gravel tracks alongside Rhodeswood Reservoir to next dam. Straight on down Water Board tarmaced road, alongside Valehouse Reservoir. At the dam take concessionary path off L from road, and follow a series of paths that wind their way to beneath the obvious church and small playing field, to arrive at Tintwistle. Prior to arriving at Tintwistle, take note of some extremely interesting architectural water work structures on the L.

Turn R up to main road, which is followed to the L. After passing Arnfield Reservoir, take minor road on R to reach Meadowbank Farm and adjacent houses. Follow public footpath sign, (be careful to get correct one - it's the second), CB 306 towards Landslow Green. At the T-junction go straight ahead on grassy tracks passing through yard of Moorside Farm. Follow path, signed Shaw Moor, which contours around Hollingworthall Moor and Wild Bank, before descending to Walkerwood Reservoir. Go round eastern end of reservoir and up to road junction opposite small car park. Pass through large metal gate on R (heading east) and follow minor road past Brushes and Lower Swineshaw Reservoir to arrive at Higher Swineshaw Reservoir.

From the south-east corner of the dam wall, the next objective is to gain the access point in Ogden Brook (GR 019 003) via one of two alternatives. Either, take the first large wooden gate (if open) and follow old metal tracks between reservoir and dyke passing small building on route. At second building, cross small (but deep) stream and follow CB 84 over difficult but varied terrain. Brief sections of high bracken, then marshes and finally deep heather thankfully allow one to pass Green Spot Spring and gain the access point. Or, take the small second metal gate, and follow extremely difficult terrain between dyke on L and fence on R, contouring around Boar Flat until Ogden Brook is finally reached. The first alternative is by far the most preferable. From the access point, follow faint track, CB 40 that gently ascends up Ormes Moor, crossing stile at GR 026 013, to suffer the delectable bogs across the Wilderness, before skirting round to Chew Reservoir.

From south-west corner of Chew Reservoir, descend down Chew Road and branch off R (opposite Chew Piece Plantation) and follow delightful tracks along the east side of Dovestone and Yeomen Hey to reach Greenfield Reservoir.

Walk around north side of reservoir to reach Greenfield Brook and follow it until beneath the impressive Raven Stones, which are positioned dramatically on the

skyline with huge towers apparently defying the laws of gravity. Quickly, take L fork up Holme Clough following faint path on L of stream. When stream divides again, before a waterfall, follow L branch up Rimmon Pit Clough. This entertaining ascent is not easy and is achieved by a combination of climbing up steep terrain on L bank (extreme care required), and scrambling over wet boulders in the riverbed. Pass the ruins of Rimmon Cottage and reach the A635 at the Boundary Stone GR 051 063.

The Pennine Way sign indicates the way forward. Continue easily on stone slabs over White Moss and then follow stakes over increasingly boggy ground, which gently descends to above Little Black Moss (yes, it really is a reservoir). Adjacent to it is Black Moss Reservoir, which is rather a strange reservoir, as it has two dams, one at each end! Cross the footbridge and take small path next to water's edge beneath south-east of Black Moss Reservoir. Turn L onto another Pennine Way path, which crosses the dam with Swellands Reservoir on your R. This is a peaceful setting, complete with bench on which you may rest a while and absorb the tranquility whilst gazing out over the still water. Skirt around north side of Black Moss and down to Redbrook Reservoir. Before reaching the reservoir, turn R and follow the Standedge Trail to Mount Road. Cross road and continue along the Trail for half a mile until it descends to Old Mount Road. Leave trail and make the short descent via various routes, to arrive at public house in Netherley, at GR 045 107. Alternatively, one can simply descend down the road past the golf course to reach this point.

Opposite the public house (possibly useful if open) follow footpath sign, descending slightly, turning R through a large gate into what appears to be a private back yard. Don't panic, go in front of the houses, through a small gate (not obvious) and turn L to descend steps to beneath weir. Climb up steps on other side. At top, turn R onto Kirklees Way, which is easily followed passing Butterley, Blakeley, Wessenden and finally Wessenden Head Reservoirs, to reach the junction of the A635 and the Meltham Road at Wessenden Head, at GR 077 073. On weekends, you may be fortunate enough to discover a mobile cafe here supplying delightful, mouth-watering bacon butties.

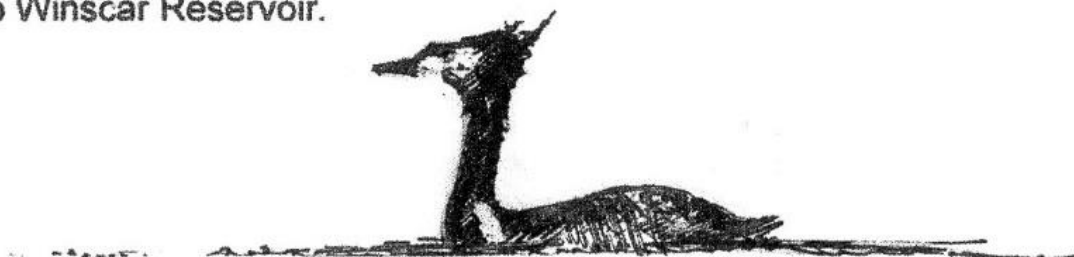
Carefully cross road, dodging the thundering juggernauts, and continue along Kirklees Way as it descends grassy tracks, then follow Nether Lane to junction at Greaves Head GR 100 073. Turn R then down to dam between Bilberry and the wonderfully named Digley Reservoir. When crossing this enchanting spot, it is difficult to imagine that in February 1852, before Digley Dam was built, Bilberry Dam dramatically collapsed emptying 90 million gallons of murderous water into the Holme valley, causing horrendous damage and the loss of 81 lives. Continue along the path, but be careful to branch off R still following Kirklees Way, which ascends through fields arriving at Holme. Turn L into village to meet main road. If one's will is growing weak and requires replenishing, a short detour may be made R to a public house! Back at the main road, turn L passing a hotel on R, then, almost immediately take path sign-posted off R.



Descend towards Brownhill Reservoir following path through wood, which turns sharp L over small stream. Continue, but just before the obvious bridge at end of reservoir is reached, climb over a stile above and to R of path. This is not obvious and you may have to retrace your steps. Immediately over the stile, turn L and follow delightful track along Netherley Brow above and west of Ramsden Reservoir. This descends and skirts around southern tip of the reservoir, then crosses a charming bridge, GR 112 050, before ascending through woods to forest road. Lurking 100 yards to R is Yateholme Reservoir.

Turn L along forest road and continue over dam between Ramsden and Riding Wood Reservoir, a delightful situation. Immediately after the dam, opposite a house, turn R and follow bridleway, which zigzags its way up.

Just before Crow Hill, at end of the plantation, GR 119 053, leave the bridleway at a sharp bend and follow the forestry land rover track, (through gate or other future means of access), south alongside edge of Riding Wood. When wood ends, one arrives in a quarry, (marked as disused tip on OS map), at base of Hoar Clough. Go 20 yds. R of stream and climb steeply up on R of dilapidated wall, until it ends just before a large rock. Take track off R and follow around side of hill, passing old fence post stubs, then climb slightly to reach line of shooting butts. Follow these until Snailsden Reservoir and obvious track is reached. Do not continue on land rover track; instead follow the wall, keeping to its R, initially crossing several small streams, then over tussocky ground to reach Snailsden Dam. Descend steeply on R of wall to reach stream, which is followed pleasantly to a wall and stone bridge before Harden Reservoir. Go to R of wall and follow until just above the stone bridge. Ascend diagonally R up track, then follow it L above reservoir until dam wall is reached. Turn L and cross dam to reach road and on to Winscar Reservoir.



Either, cross the huge dam wall and go round to meet Windle Edge, turning R onto the road and along to pass Upper Windleden Reservoir. Or, as soon as possible after Winscar toilets descend alongside the dam wall down a steep zigzag track and L into Dunford Bridge.

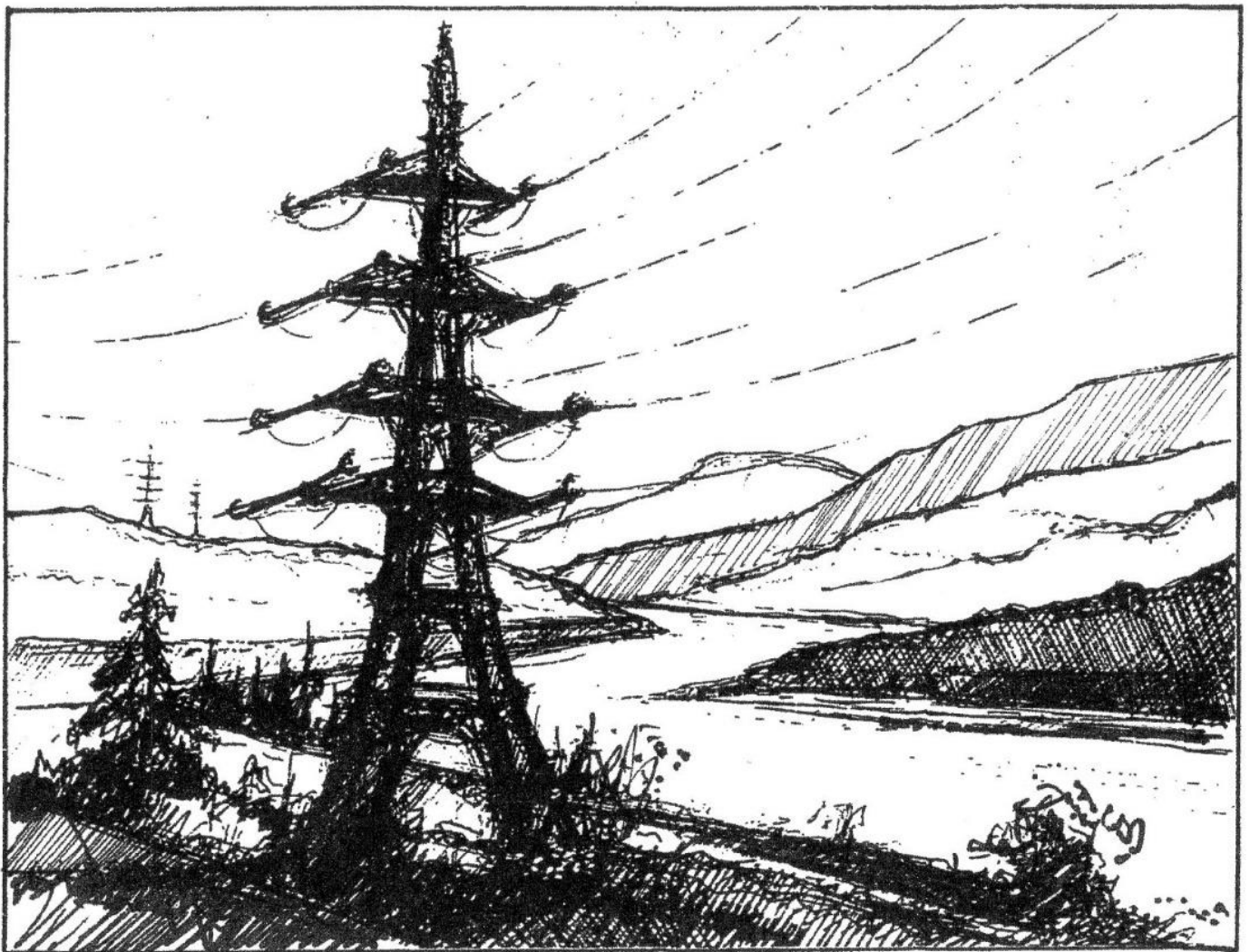
Turn R passing the public house (Stanhope Arms), which is the obvious reason for this detour, _____ and then follow the road that is actually the Longdendale Trail along Windle Edge, with Lower Windleden Reservoir a short distance out of sight to your L. Once again, at present, access is restricted to this. Half a mile further along the road, you see Upper Windleden Reservoir out to the L.

From this point, two possible alternatives now exist: -

1. If you have the energy, take the path, which leads down to the edge of Upper Windleden Reservoir, then gain Salter's Brook via. Woodland Clough, Fiddlers Green, Lady Cross and Lady Shaw
Or
2. Continue along Windle Edge until the A628 is reached. Cross the road and follow the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) into Salter's Brook and Lady Shaw Bridge. This was the original turnpike road for packhorses, constructed in 1692. Close by lies the ruins of the old inn that provided warmth and sustenance for weary travelers.

Continue once again across the road, following the TPT along gravel track for one and a quarter miles, (do not take the first track off L), to reach obvious signpost at GR 116 001. Turn L still following the TPT (not presently marked on the O.S. map) and descend down to cross the A628 again, above the old Woodhead Tunnel.

Pass the entrance to the tunnel and disused railway station. Continue alongside Woodhead Reservoir accompanied by the sentry-like electricity pylons, which crawl their way unceremoniously along this valley, until opposite Woodhead Dam. Cross minor road and at the signpost to Crowden, turn off main track to R and cross the road into wood. Follow track down through wood and over the impressive bridge above the thunderous weirs to finally arrive a short distance beneath Crowden YHA. Easily, (stagger) back to the start, and collapse.



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