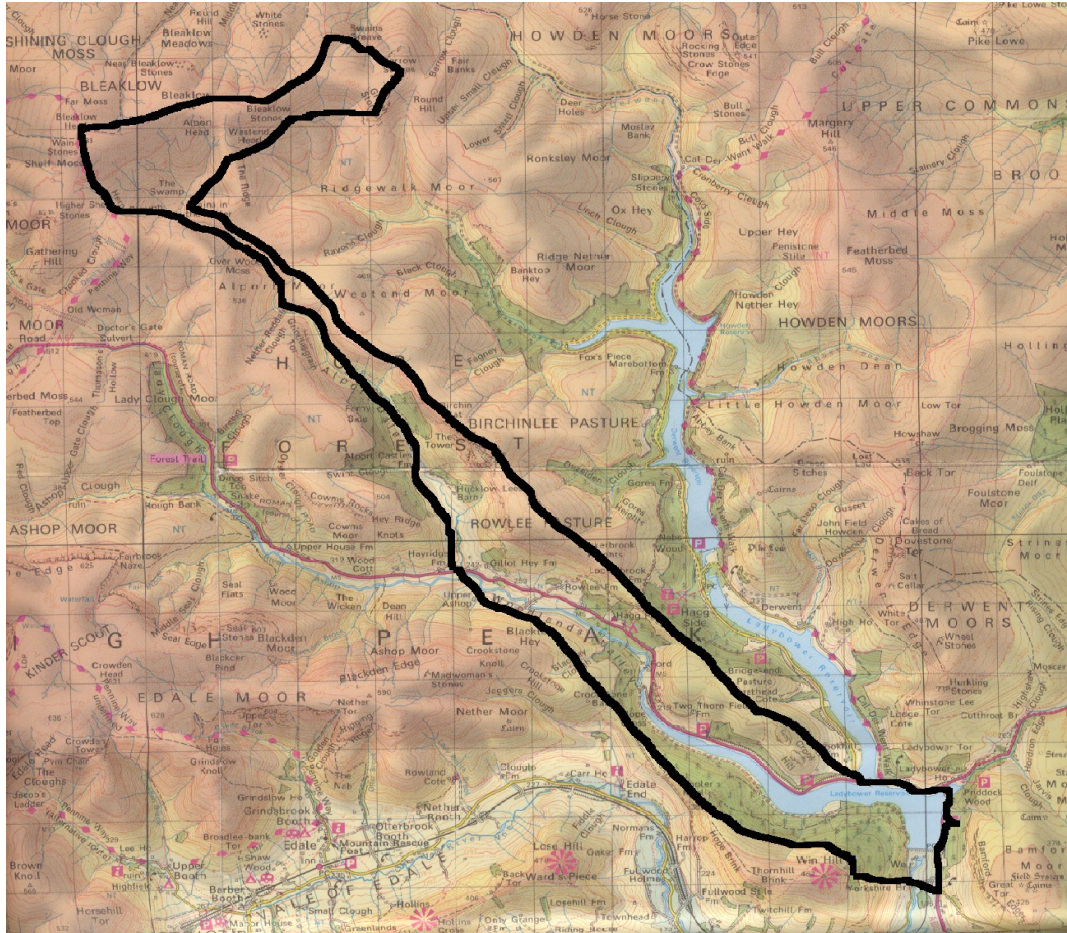


WALK.3.
RESERVOIRS 3.
27.1 miles 7 hours 50 minutes.
Map Dark Peak.



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Start at Heatherdene car park (203859). Walk N over first viaduct, then W over the second, then immediately turn right up the road to the Derwent and Howden Dams. After 100 yards, go left through a wooden gate into a field, the area designated Toadhole Cote on the map. Go uphill NW to Crookhill Farm, proceeding through the extensive farmyard on to a good track W of N. Crook Hill is now on one's left, a prominent feature. Go forward to the wall ahead, though a metal farm gate, then through the middle of a wide field to a good big ladder stile over a wall. Pass the trig. point at (176878) and note the splendid views over Lose Hill, Back Tor, Mam Tor and Kinder.

Next, there is a wooden wicket gate in a wall, and, from this, go downhill with a plantation on the right until a ladder stile is reached; and yet another in 40 yards or so, with farm gate, step stile and signpost. Continue NW with the plantation on one's right to a junction at (157894). A track goes down to Rowlee Farm, but discount this and go forward for 100 yards up a bank to a ladder stile over a wall into open country (signed), and through a field to a far corner where a ladder stile takes one over a wire fence to another open country sign.

Follow a good track, for some of the way; there will be a wall on one's left, but soon you are in open country, walking NW on level ground to be greeted eventually, by a marvellous

view of Alport Castles; they could not be called anything else. (142915). From the path, which follows the edge, you can also see Alport Dale and Farm. It is a fine dale without doubt. The path continues on its way above, and the Dale winds its way below, getting narrower, the river winding its youthful way round pronounced spurs in its higher reaches. From the path you see another interesting feature: the remains of trees, blanched white now, mainly the roots left sticking out of the peat. These could be many hundreds of years old, from the time when the climate was a lot warmer than today, (global warming?).

Our route requires us to leave the security of the path in order to strike out N over rough ground. Leave the path at a point (113945) three quarters of a mile after passing Nether Reddale Clough; Upper Reddale Clough is on the opposite side; take what might be called a pass with the Ridge on one's left. The grass is long, but the going is fairly level at this stage. Turn NE, making, eventually for Grinnah Stones. On the way, pass, on one's right, the head of the tributary of the River Westend. Note, straight ahead, Bleaklow Stones on the horizon, Grinnah Stones away to the right NE becoming more pronounced all the time. Cross another tributary of the Westend, Deep Grain, where you might have a drink in hot weather, (it looks good anyway), then start gaining height avoiding the higher reaches of several little streams that lead to the Westend.

You should soon hit a good path that leads from Bleaklow Stones to Grinnah Stones, which is easily reached at (130962). What an interesting place this is! It is a relief from the long featureless grass, a good viewpoint also. The next stage is to walk NE to Barrow Stones (134970), another fine spot. From here, this route goes to Bleaklow Stones, so go W over rough ground, crossing the grouches above Swains Greave, no path, in order to reach a good path in the peat; it is sometimes blotted out by rain. It is marked by poles that will take you to the start of an area called Bleaklow. You should reach it at (124968), then go SW climbing to Bleaklow Stones (114962).

This kind of walk is quite invigorating and full of interest as well as being a rare route through a landscape that has hardly changed in thousands of years. It is singularly devoid of tourists in the best of weather. Head now W for Bleaklow Hill (106963) on a path that is fairly easily seen in dry weather, even in mist, but gets obliterated after large amounts of rain; you are aided by stakes every 100 yards or so as it winds its way through mounds of peat and islands of grass; it is fascinating, like a moonscape. Carry on to Bleaklow Head (092959) first SW then W. Try to keep to the high ground; there are stakes to help you. The grouches, to the right, feed the Mersey, and to the left, the Trent. The view opens out at Bleaklow Head; sit awhile on one of its large stones and enjoy it. The Pennine Way passes through here on its way to Crowden.

Now walk S, for about 400 yards over more peaty ground on the Pennine Way, which can be very boggy after wet weather. Pass Hern Stone (very large) on your right. After another 100 yards, go SE and look for a feeder to Hern Clough, leaving the Pennine Way. Follow this until the sides get steep; walk down the left hand bank on a good path that takes you to Grains in the Water (105952) which is an open swampy area fed by many feeders to the River Alport.

Go SE, over Alport Head on a good path, then follow the infant river on its way down; it gets deeper all the time and your path gets higher up the bank. The views improve; you are now walking below the path you took earlier but going the other way. Eventually, you must decide to drop to the valley bottom; do so just before the plantation, at (134922) by cutting straight down the hillside to a flat valley bottom. Go S now down this pleasant dale, river on right, then on left, on a good path which soon leads to a ladder stile over a wall, and affords you the most dramatic views up to those fine natural castles.

Mercifully, there are few buildings in the dale. You come to the first of them, Alport Farm (135910); go through the farm and continue on a wide track down to the A5 road. In 100

yards, bear left to a wooden step stile. In another 100 yards go over a ladder stile, then in 100 yards a stile leads out to the road A5 at (141895).

Cross the road, go through a gate, and cross the River Ashop at the ford known to the Romans; then go left on a wide track, wall on left, level going at first, then gaining height in a steep climb on a very old track, Take a good ladder stile on left of gate, then onto a farm drive avoiding the left fork down to river, still climbing S of E on a good track until it levels out and reaches a good step stile at Blackley Clough (155882). You are walking where many, including Romans, have gone before.

Continue along a path that gets better all the time, until a good wooden step stile is reached; then go along to another in 250 yards, the focal point of several footpaths (159876) at Hope Cross, a restored medieval guide stone. Continue E of S keeping close to the plantation as it goes below Win Hill up on your right. Keep strictly to the plantation wall, until you come to a right angle turn in the wall, as it goes off uphill (190853). Enter the woods at this point, and continue SE until you meet a track coming up from the Lady Bower Reservoir. Go left on this path, which drops down the side of Parkin Clough. This gets to a metalled road just above Yorkshire Bridge where you go right to the bridge, then up the road, past the houses on your left to another road, Turn left on this past the pub if you can, and back to the car park.

Checked. 21 Oct. 2002.