

**WALK 74.
RESERVOIRS 74.
20.5 miles. 6 hours 10 minutes.
Map Dark Peak.**



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Start at Fairholmes car park (171897). Walk N on the road toward Howden Dam with the reservoir on the R for about one mile. Go part of the way into the Ouzelden Brook inlet to go L off the road at a sign (167910); the name probably comes from “dene” meaning narrow valley, and the ring ouzel. Walk generally S up the dirt road through woods, climbing at first steeply then levelling out after going through a farm gate, then emerge from the trees; Gores Plantation on the L and Gores Heights away to the R, changing to Lockerbrook Heights as proceeded. Soon come to a Forestry sign to Fairholmes. Nearby is Lockerbrook Farm. Go through a small wooden gate on the

side of a farm gate. Go R past a sign to open country, then make for a ladder stile in a wall above. walkers will recognise the area as a meeting place of footpaths.

Walk NW now uphill, wall on L, through pleasant short grass to a ladder stile over a wire fence near a sign to open country. The track is fairly wide and grassy; pleasant walking through open moorland. Blackden Edge lies S and the Derwent Edge lies to the E, and to the N Bleaklow. The path levels out over Rowlee Pasture; the path becomes a narrow worn track above Alport whose impressive dale stretches below. Heading now to the famous and striking Alport Castles which represent a huge landslide, sweeping the castles down from their former position. They are now protected as a site of special Scientific Interest.

At this point, Birchin Hat, (141916), cross over a footpath which comes up from Westend to the NE. Continue walking NW along the edge of Alport Dale, the path following a wall on the L before coming a true edge path, the land dropping sharply on the L, the peat wall on the R, always in fine weather, those inspiring views all around. The path winds in and out of one little clough, then in a second, (at 133926), but from this one, take a worn path away from the edge, going NW towards a trig point at 129932. Generally, the path traverses level ground; follow it until to within 250 metres of the trig- point, then bear R and walk NE towards a narrow unimpressive little clough that deepens and widens surprisingly quickly. Keep to the R of it on fragments of sheep paths, and so now high above a fairly respectable clough that flows into Black Clough proper.

Here, high above the confluence of streams, go L around the shoulder of the hill and walk WNW above Black Clough for a short distance. Of the several minor cloughs flowing into Black Clough, take that which goes NW out of it; avoid walking on a tempting exit to the W or SW; it is easily done. Walk NW over a relatively short watershed; this goes into Ravens Clough. Drop down to the stream; here, again, the clough soon deepens and widens quickly. Follow the stream down to its junction with the Westend at 132946 where some trees are found; nearby a sheepfold can be seen. It is marked on the map. To the R, the work of the river in cutting a small gorge for itself can be clearly seen.

Bear L and walk NW upstream, passing the sheepfold. The stream comes down from the L, meandering at this point and going is difficult. Soon, however this changes; enter a wide valley with a flat base. Walk either side of the stream or high up on the R bank where there is a worn path that can be followed before it descends into the stream. Pass a mound of considerable height; this has withstood the wearing action of the stream that has been forced to go around. At the head of this wide flat area (124951), go N up Deep Grain which does not look at all that ferocious in the sunshine. It needs to be said, though, that all cloughs change their nature after heavy and prolonged rain. The valley narrows and walking becomes difficult, but there is room to walk. At one point the valley widens out.

Spurs appear ahead; resort to a technique learned through practice in these cloughs of stepping in and out of streams, or actually walking up them, or negotiating steep banks. Always, taking care with wet and slimy rocks or descending to clutching grass or heather to assist, rarely taking eyes of the ground to where the next step can be taken. Eventually near where the head of the clough is, go R up a minor stream, and soon to see the next destination: Grinah Stones. Plough through heather and long grass with hopefully added strength and climb up through those fascinating shapes which lesser mortals of lower taste compare with the work of Henry Moor until the top is reached. The gritstone outcrops of Derbyshire when seen are never forgotten.

After taking in the panoramic views, proceed N to Barrow Stones and wander in and out among the extensive outcrop of weathered gritstone.

Descend now going N to the Derwent over long grass and heather. Cross the Derwent and walk E on level ground, though the path is anything but smooth. Pass Hoar Clough and see Shepherds Meeting Stones against the sky, and remember that shepherds from the S and N met here from time to time. In 300 metres, go L up Coldwell Clough, walking NE through rushes, bushy grass and stones, not easy. However the clough is a short one and soon to be on the hillside of

Coldwell Clough Head. Turn and walk SE and climb a little towards the ridge, then walk under the ridge of Horse Stone Naze; follow the contour on a reasonable path which take with confidence until it suddenly disappears. Fragments of path reappear to lead to Howden Dean.

Drop down into Stainery Clough through difficult heather and ferns; there are some trees here. Once again back into clough-scrambling whose techniques soon learnt in these hills, looking for a place to put boots mid slippery stones, and wet grass; crossing the stream frequently; negotiating steep banks and high stepping through heather. Soon the Derwent is joined and take a wide track that comes down with the river. As the walk climbs, the views expand in only a short distance, regretfully leave the wide track and cut off to the L up a narrow but well-worn path that climbs fairly steeply up Oaken Bank. Here the hill rises steeply from the wide base of the valley.

The path rounds the shoulder of the hill and a wide bowl appears that stretches up to the horizon; enter now Broadhead Clough and pass the remains of a stone hut in the vicinity of Lord Edward Howard's Spring; the base of a second soon appears, at this point having savoured the character of this clough, drop down steeply to the stream which is crossed by means of two flat stones. The path taken is worn and firm; good walking. A stone wall now joins the path. Now come to signs: a N.T. sign to Howden Moor; a metal sign erected by the Peak District A. N. C. F.P.S. showing the way to Flouch Inn and a N.T. sign to Derwent Estates.

This is a popular and busy area where ancient routes met; some of these were mediaeval tracks connecting granges owned by Welbeck Abbey. The wonderful packhorse bridge was brought here from Derwent Village when it was submerged, and erected in 1959 as a memorial to John Derry who fought for access in these hills. The bridge was originally built in the middle ages and was repaired in 1682. It was referred to in a C.14 charter as being the common way from Sheffield towards Derwent. "From this point, Cut Gate goes off to Penistone in a document of 1571 it was referred to as Cart Gate".

Do not cross the bridge, but take the high road that leads down with the reservoirs on the R back to the start. On the way admire the scenery of this beautiful valley where the hills rise from the glistening waters to the distant skylines that suggest great areas of open country. Always, as the walk progresses alongside the great lakes, bear in mind those gallant airmen of long ago, who trained here, and who became known as the "Dam Busters". It might be remembered those who made the film here. It was a sight to stand on the hills above and watch the planes flying below just above the waters. And so back to the start.