

WALK. 122.
CROWDEN 122.
25-2 Miles. 7 hours 20 minutes.
Dark Peak. SE. 00/10



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Tart at Crowden near the Youth Hostel (073993). A few metres on the E side of the Hostel go through a slot in the wall; there is a sign here to Open Country; a stile is a few metres away to enter woodland. A short walk comes to a stile over a leat and face a steep bank littered with boulders to pass for about 30 metres, then bear R and contour.

Pass a post with a yellow circle and continue through a large gap in the wall. Go L uphill to a post in a gap in a wall and continue uphill through long grass to another gap and post in a wall. Keep climbing in the same direction and come across a wide track paved with gritstones. Use this for a few hundred metres until it goes L; but go R here through a gap in the walls which meet in the corner with a gap and sign to Open Country.

Walk NE with wall on the R, the path narrow path but easily seen contouring the hillside, then drop down to Hey Clough and cross a small stream that has formed this small valley. There is a sign to Open Country here and the path is lost as the walk struggles around Ancote Hill near the wall. Climbing now all the time through high grass and fern. It levels out in time and surprise come to a worn path; presumable a path for shooters. Take this path, going L uphill for a short pull up to level ground and soon pass the first of many grouse shooting Butts.

A feint path pass the first of several shooting butts enjoyed for only a short time; go R at the third butt to enter Oaksike Clough. On the other side a fine view; difficult walking on long grass. Turn now N on this fine valley which runs the A.6024 to Holmfirth. It is surprising how short sections of good paths appear then disappear, long grass makes slow and uncomfortable progress; soon it is better to drop to stream level to try progress there, clough hopping now begins.

There is room enough on either side of the stream and this leads to much crossing of Heyden Brook. A number of rounded hillocks appear, and having passed these ahead is blocked by interlocking spurs. Soon pass a small outcrop of horizontal banded rock at stream level, and come to a fantastic sight: a pile of huge gritstone boulders, all heaped together, leave the scene as suddenly as it is reached.

Is clough, perhaps because it is so long and wide, lacks the interest. Proceed though a straight section where the young stream flows between grassy banks, little or no rocks to deviate it course. A rounded hill blocks the view ahead. Just beyond this hill, further tongues of land intersect and two streams join. Take the one on the L and ascend a narrow clough with some difficulty up steep banks and boulders. The valley bottom is now level and the stream thinner between sequences of peat mounds. Good map reading in bad weather leads out to Black Hill and trig. Point (079047).

Take the Pennine Way (alternative route) and follow a line of cairns at a bearing of 45 degrees. This leads to level ground and Issue Clough to the turn to walk at 310 degrees until the land begin to drop and the path descends. Digby Reservoir gleams in the distant; Issue Road cuts straight as a dye, and the land, in front rises to a ridge where the road runs.

The path is now firm and well worn, a change. Enter now a struggle out of Dean Clough, then go over a series of wooden footbridges and eventually climb up a steep bank to a ladder stile near a Pennine Way sign and the A.635 at 075072.

Cross the road at another sign, then continue on a good path with a good view of Wessenden Brook. Drop gently through a landscape that invites interest. Go over a wooden step stile; the path soon joins a wide industrial road and go L on this; notice it keeps a firm line through cloughs. This man make track soon gives way to bogs of peat.

At Wessended Lodge, cut down the bank to the L, where Pennine Way signs go to the R to a gate and stile. Proceed on a good road, wall on the R. on the L notice a fine waterfall, a rewarding sight. In only 400 metres a sign directs down a steep bank on the L to a footbridge over the River Wessenden from which climb up the steep bank to a good path that leads into Blakely Clough, another artificial road. It takes one to a wooden plank across a infant stream, just where it emerges between two fine pieces of masonry.

Out now on a path going roughly W over moorland, climbing gently, stream on the L, the land about devoid of peaks and ridges. There is little to attract the attention for much of the way until, at last, see a little further and cease to rise.

It is level going through a wide expanse of moorland; bear R towards Swelland Reservoir, go over a footbridge, then pass close to Black Moss Reservoir to walk on a beach near the water's edge for a few pleasant metres. Now strike the Pennine Way so bear L and walk S then SE.

In wet weather, the route now can only be described as murderous, it is marked by posts and bottomless bogs from which there is little escape, eventually reach the A.635 at 050063

Here one may get a welcome cup of tea, then push on over the same kind of terrain. Black Hill is eventually reached.

Continue on the Pennine Way, going roughly SW, the path a slight improvement on what has just been endured. Pass an interesting cairn made of thin gritstone neatly built in a kind of tower. Then descend, and make for a path that eventually goes on the high path above Crowden Great Brook: the stream negotiating the spurs, the rock castles on the other sides with gritstone outcrops in strange but fascinating patterns. From this high path, there seems strong evidence of glaciation: gentle sides curving to a flat base where a stream has cut a fresh valley for itself.

Each step brings nearer the distant scene that suddenly breaks, where, down the clough Crowden can be seen. Pass Laddow Rocks and begin to descend the steep and stony track that seems not to affect the athletes that go flying past like sure footed gazelles. Distant hills fill the horizon with lines of ridges rising above the other. Bleaklow Head and Mill Hill on Kinder. Now find the way on good track back to the start.