

Walk the Way in a Day

Walk 39 Ickornshaw Moor and Ponden Reservoir

The route crosses windswept moorland by rough paths that can be boggy in places. Passing small reservoirs and a ruined cotton mill, points of interest include Ponden Hall (the inspiration for Thrushcross Grange in 'Wuthering Heights') and the Earl Crag monuments.

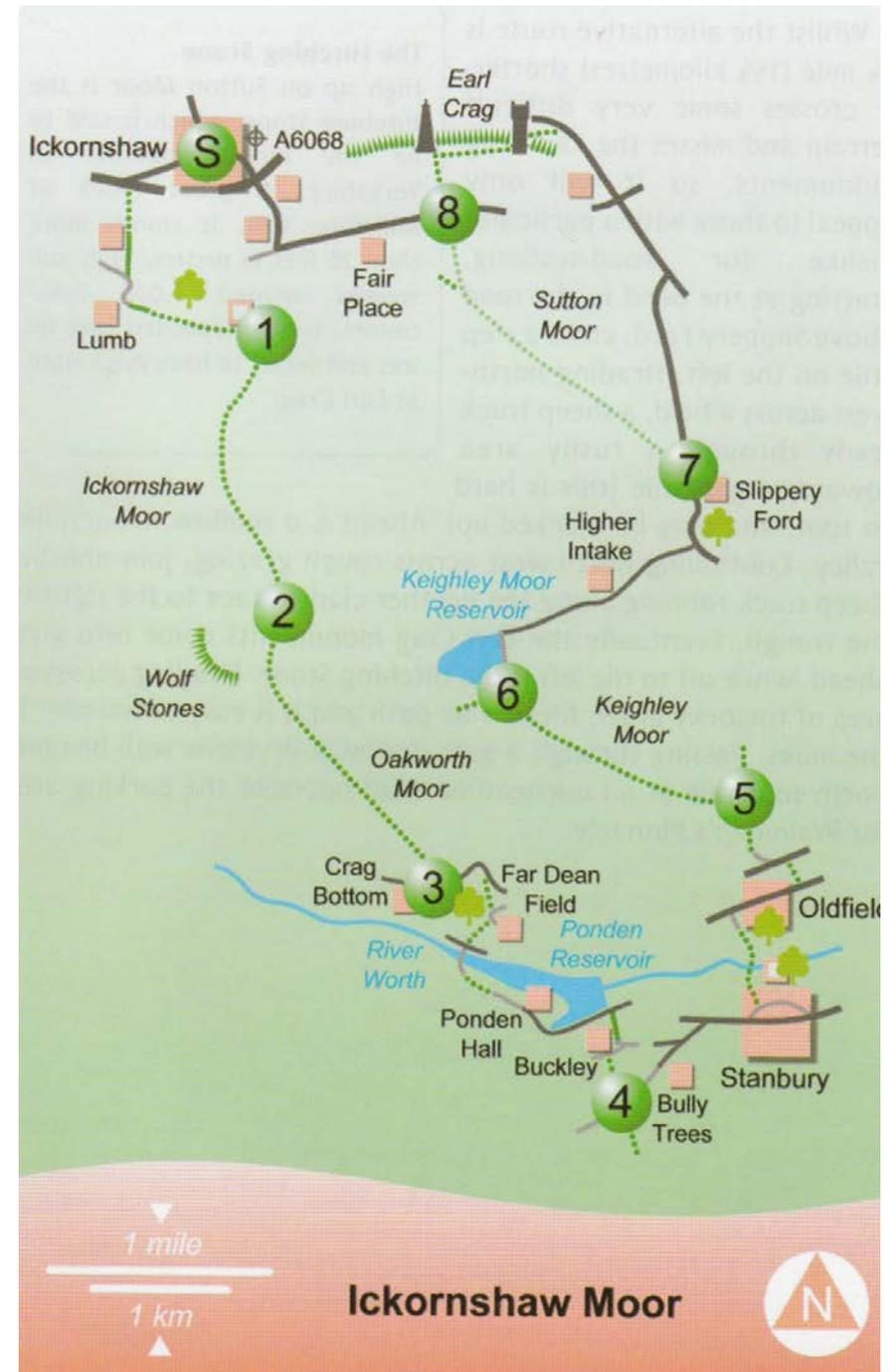


Length:	15½ miles (25¼ kilometres)
Ascent:	2,362 feet (720 metres)
Highest Point:	437 metres (1,434 feet)
Map(s):	OS Explorer OL Map 21 ('South Pennines') (North Sheet)
Starting Point:	Gill Lane, Ickornshaw (SD 968 430)
Facilities:	Public toilets and inn.
Website:	http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-39-ickornshaw-moor-and-ponden-reservoir

Ickornshaw Moor

Starting at the Holy Trinity Church, head west through the centre of Ickornshaw. A finger sign on the left shows the Pennine Way leaving the road, climbing a steep bank leading to the busy A6068. Over the main road, another finger sign points through a narrow gate and up the middle of a field towards Lower Summer House farm. Following an overgrown lane, then a hardcore track running around the head of a deep gully, Lumb farm is passed. Crossing a couple of side streams, head steeply uphill beside some ruined farm buildings, where a finger sign shows the Pennine Way turning over a ladder stile (1 = SD 972 418).

From here the route runs south over Ickornshaw Moor then south-east across Oakworth Moor, a total of 3¼ miles (5¼ kilometres). Whilst there is a real sense of isolation on these windswept moors, navigation is fairly



straightforward. Initially the path follows a boundary as it runs past some grouse-shooters' huts. Crossing a small stream beside a stone-built hut, it heads onto open moorland. Flagstones provide passage of boggy ground as the cairned route climbs gently towards an old fence line marking the highest point on the walk (2 = SD 974 397).

This is not the highest place on Ickornshaw Moor, however, which is at the Wolf Stones, a short way to the south-west (a 'there and back' detour is rewarded with fine views, but crosses some very difficult terrain). The Pennine Way continues along a rough but well-defined path, which soon swings around to head south-east. Passing a pond and a few old boundary stones, a shallow drainage ditch is followed for a way as the surrounding heather is replaced by grassy moorland. Meeting a drystone wall, the route soon enters a walled lane. Crossing a stile, a track leads down through an overgrown quarry, with views over the valley of the River Worth. Arriving at the bottom, turn left along an unclassified road (3 = SD 984 379).

The Wolf Stones

The Wolf Stones is a small group of Millstone Grit outcrops surmounted by an OS pillar, standing 1,454 feet (443 metres) above sea level and marking the point at which three counties meet - North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Lancashire. The name recalls the fact that the surrounding area was inhabited by wolves until the 16th century.

Ponden

Following the road past a row of cottages and around a wooded clough (Deep Clough), a finger sign marks the start of a path running along the valley side. When this meets a hardcore track, turn right and head down to Far Dean Field farm, where a short alleyway leads to a ruined byre. Continuing down through fields, an unclassified road is met. A short way to the left a finger sign shows the Pennine Way crossing a bridge at the head of Ponden Reservoir. This was completed in 1877, and despite its relatively small size is home to a boat club. Joining a track running beside the reservoir then up a walled lane, the Brontë Way joins from the right

(this 40 mile / 64 kilometre route links various locations of significance in the lives of the family).

Turning left, follow the track as it heads towards Ponden Hall, where an access road is joined. This passes the outflow from a deep, incised valley (Ponden Clough), then continues towards the south end of the dam. Here a finger sign shows the Pennine Way turning right, up a muddy track. Arriving at Buckley farm, join a hardcore track heading east. Just past a cottage, the Pennine Way switches-back onto another track, then turns onto a stony path climbing a heather-clad slope. A stile in a short section of fence marks the point at which we leave the Pennine Way (4 = SD 998 364).

Ponden Hall

Ponden Hall is an imposing collection of Millstone Grit farm buildings dating back to 1680. It is one of many locations in the area with links to the Brontë family - being the inspiration for Thrushcross Grange in Emily Brontë's 'Wuthering Heights'. The present form of the structure owes to a restoration of 1801.

Stanbury

The first part of the return route heads north-east to Stanbury before re-crossing the Worth Valley. Turning left, follow a track (Back Lane) down to an unclassified road, then continue towards the village. Joining a back lane opposite the village school, turn through a gate on the left. Heading down through a couple of muddy fields, a sunken lane runs around a reed-choked millpond. The lane itself is very boggy, but a broken wall to the right offers firm footing. Passing a ruined cotton mill, follow the tree-lined river for a short way before crossing by a flat bridge.

On the north side of the river is an overgrown stone enclosure, the purpose of which is unclear. Heading uphill beside a stream, then a high wall, just past the entrance to Oldfield House an unclassified road is met. Turning right, follow the road as it runs through Oldfield. Passing through a gate on the left (opposite a telephone box), head up through a couple of fields. Crossing another road, a finger sign points to a hardcore track leading to

Hare Hill Quarry. Zigzagging up through the overgrown quarry, there are good views down the valley towards Haworth. Continuing along a rough track, a marker post indicates a left turn onto a moorland path (5 = SE 006 386).

Keighley Moor

Following the remains of a drystone wall, the path runs between a stand of conifers (Pine Wood) and a line of grouse butts. Turning through a gap in the wall, the path continues alongside the boundary before heading north-west across open moorland, with a couple of marker posts confirming the route. Eventually the south end of the dam at Keighley Moor Reservoir is reached (6 = SD 989 393). The reservoir is located high up on the moors, with heather growing right up the face of the dam. Joining the access road at the far end of the dam, this runs north-east above the valley of Morkin Beck, across which can be seen the imposing remains of Clough Hey farm. Passing a farmhouse, the track continues down towards an unclassified road. Turning left, the road runs through a wooded clough, then past a couple of farms (Slippery Ford). As it heads uphill, at a sharp bend, there is a choice of ways (7 = SE 001 409).

Sutton Moor

The first follows quiet roads for 3¾ miles (6¼ kilometres) back to the starting point, visiting the Earl Crag monuments along the way. Continuing along the road (Long Gate), this eventually joins Cowling Road as it heads north-west. Arriving at a crossroads, continue straight ahead before turning onto a track running through an overgrown quarry. Steps lead up the side of the quarry to the head of Earl Crag, where Lund's Tower stands sentinel. A spiral staircase provides access to a viewing platform, with wonderful views over Airedale. Following a path along the edge of the plateau, this is marked by great blocks of Millstone Grit that provide sport for rock climbers. Crossing a couple of difficult step stiles, Wainman's Pinnacle marks a left turn, heading towards a parking area (8 = SD 985 426). Turning right, follow the quiet road as it heads west (Buck Stone Lane) then north (Old Lane). Passing a scattering of farmsteads, cross straight over

the A6068 and head down the steep bank leading back to the starting point.

Earl Crag Monuments

The steep scarp of Sutton Moor is marked by a line of Millstone Grit outcrops known as Earl Crag, and surmounted by a pair of monuments looking like over-sized chess pieces. Lund's Tower (or Sutton Pinnacle) was built as a folly during the late 19th century by James Lund of Malsis Hall, probably to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Wainman's Pinnacle (or Cowling Pinnacle) takes the form of an obelisk, and was supposedly built by Richard Wainman of Carr Head Hall after the Battle of Waterloo.

Whilst the alternative route is ¾ mile (1¼ kilometres) shorter, it crosses some very difficult terrain and misses the Earl Crag monuments, so it will only appeal to those with a particular dislike for road-walking. Starting at the bend in the road above Slippery Ford, cross a step stile on the left. Heading north-west across a field, a sheep track leads through a rushy area towards a gap stile (this is hard to spot, and may be blocked-up). Ahead is a shallow, trough-like valley. Continuing north-west across rough grazing, join another sheep track running along the heather-clad terrace to the right of the trough. Eventually the Earl Crag monuments come into view ahead, while off to the left is the Hitching Stone. Heading across an area of tussocky grass, there is no path and it is easy to founder in the mires. Passing through a gate, follow a drystone wall heading north to arrive at an unclassified road opposite the parking area for Wainman's Pinnacle.

The Hitching Stone

High up on Sutton Moor is the Hitching Stone, which is said to be the largest boulder in Yorkshire. A great block of Millstone Grit, it stands more than 20 feet (6 metres) high and weighs around 1,000 tons / tonnes. It was deposited here by ice, and seems to have originated at Earl Crag.

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