

# Walk the Way in a Day

## Walk 43 Cragg Vale and many reservoirs

Although this walk crosses bleak moorland, navigation is fairly straightforward and the Pennine Way itself follows good tracks beside a chain of moorland reservoirs. Sections of the route use permissive paths created by Yorkshire Water, including a path above the village of Cragg Vale.



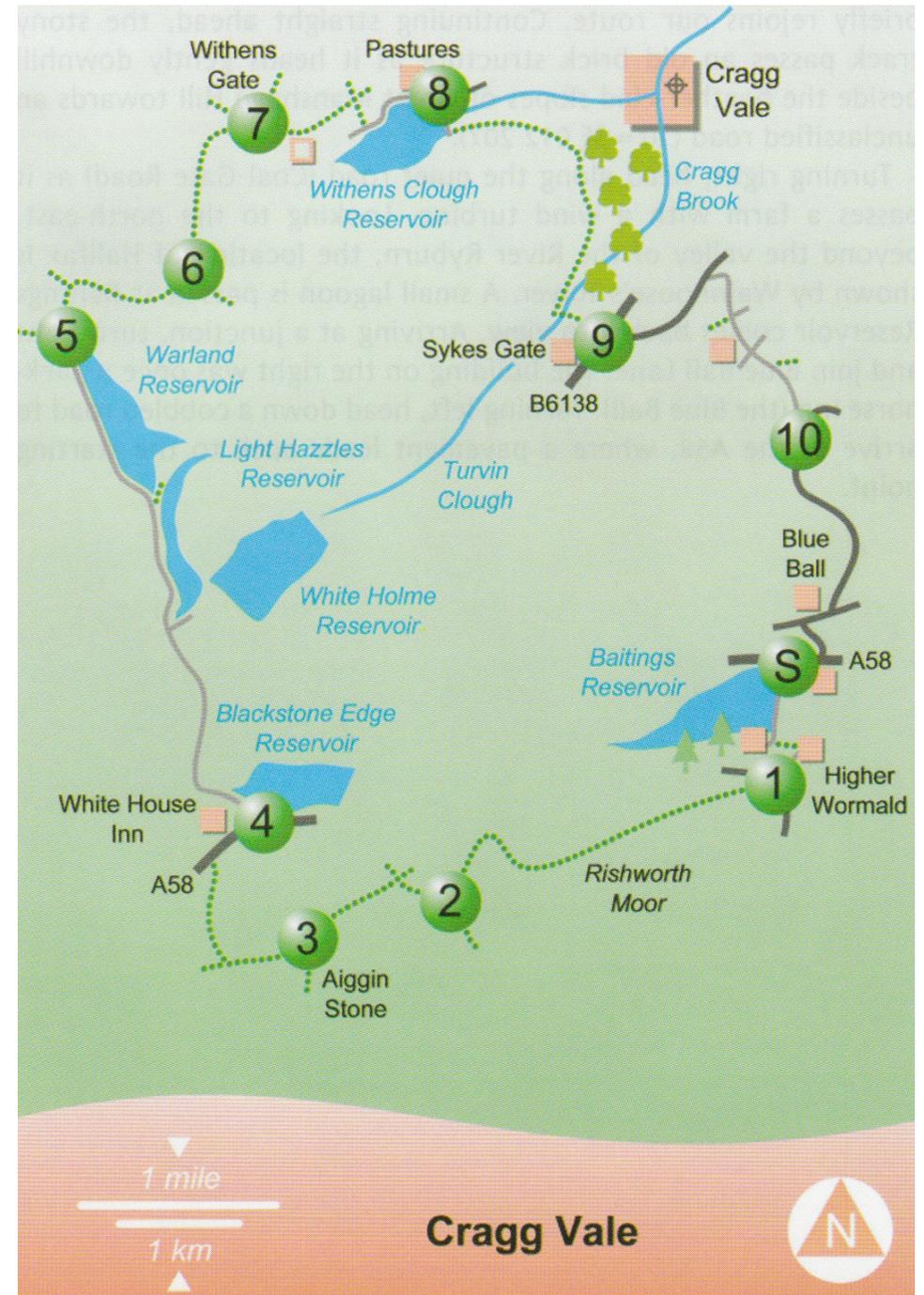
Length:	15½ miles (25¼ kilometres)
Ascent:	1,312 feet (400 metres)
Highest Point:	452 metres (1,483 feet)
Map(s):	OS Explorer OL Map 21 ('South Pennines') (South Sheet)
Starting Point:	Baitings Reservoir car park, near Ripponden (SE 011 191)
Facilities:	None.
Website:	<a href="http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-43-cragg-vale-and-many-reservoirs">http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-43-cragg-vale-and-many-reservoirs</a>

### Rishworth Moor

The starting point is located on the A58, 2 miles (3 kilometres) west of Ripponden. Crossing the towering concrete dam, the views towards the surrounding moors are marred by electricity pylons. Arriving at Upper Schole Carr farm, a sign shows routes heading right and left. Taking the latter, pass through the farmyard and head east across fields towards Higher Wormald farm. Following the farm access up to an unclassified road, the Heights picnic place is a short way to the left (1 = SE 010 184).

### The Ryburn and Baitings Reservoirs

The twin reservoirs on the River Ryburn were built to supply Wakefield. Ryburn Reservoir was built 1925-33, and has a dam 128 feet (39 metres) high. The present Baitings Reservoir was built



1948-56, replacing an earlier construction. The concrete dam is 174 feet (53 metres) high and 1,550 feet (472 metres) long, and is used for abseiling events.

From here the route runs 3 miles (5 kilometres) over Rishworth Moor to join the Pennine Way at Blackstone Edge, following a permissive path created by Yorkshire Water in 1993 (unfortunately, this is not shown on the Landranger map). Crossing over the road, a finger sign points along a short section of lane. As this gives out, the path continues south-west across open moorland, with marker posts confirming the route. To the left is an old drainage channel, snaking about as it seeks a level course. Hooking around a pronounced bluff, Blackstone Edge comes into view, its humpback strewn with boulders. Eventually a finger sign marks a right turn, joining a path running beside a concrete drain (2 = SD 981 177).

Another finger sign shows a link to the Pennine Way, crossing the drain and following the course of a Roman road that once ran over Blackstone Edge. Heading uphill on a rough track, bits of blockwork show through the peat here and there. Passing a fallen marker stone, the stony track runs over the watershed to arrive at the Aiggin Stone, where the Pennine Way is finally joined (3 = SD 973 171).

### **The Aiggin Stone**

*The Aiggin Stone stands near the summit of a Roman road that ran over Blackstone Edge. It was placed here around 600 years ago as a guide for travellers, at the crossroads of old trans-Pennine routes linking Rochdale and Halifax, and Oldham and Burnley. The stone was recently re-erected, although only the top three of its seven feet are above ground. The name evidently comes from 'agin', meaning 'edge' - a reference to its location.*

### **Summit Reservoirs**

From here the Pennine Way is followed for 5½ miles (8¾ kilometres) beside a chain of moorland reservoirs built to supply the Rochdale Canal. Following the course of the Roman road downhill, the blockwork is now

distinct. Looking to the left, great towers of Millstone Grit buttress the flanks of Blackstone Edge. Crossing a drain, the Pennine Way turns right, joining a path following the watercourse through boulder-strewn moorland as it swings around from north-west to north-east. Turning down a stony path leading to the A58, head up the road towards the White House Inn. Just past the former coaching inn, a finger sign shows the Pennine Way joining a hardcore track running beside Blackstone Edge Reservoir (4 = SD 970 179).

### **The Roman Road**

*The Roman road over Blackstone Edge reaches 1,483 feet (452 metres). Daniel Defoe records how he crossed the ridge in a blizzard one day in August ('A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain'). This is a testimony to the impact of climate change since the early 18th century, although conditions can still be difficult, and the ridge is often shrouded in hill fog. It is not surprising that it became known as the Devil's Pavement. Whilst the route itself is Roman, the visible remains are medieval. On the western side of the ridge it is remarkably well preserved, with regular blockwork on either side of a drainage channel.*

The track runs north-west in the lee of the low dam, with Chelburn Moor on the left falling away towards the valley of the River Roch and the village of Summit. Continuing north alongside Head Drain, to the right are the massive outcrops of Light Hazzles Edge, with one large boulder surmounting a Millstone Grit block resembling a wolf's head. Passing under some pylons, the track divides. Ignoring a route signed for White Holme Reservoir, continue along a causeway running beside Light Hazzles and Warland reservoirs. Looking to the north-east, an OS pillar marks the location of Little Holder Stones, close to the highest point on the plateau. Arriving at the head of Warland Reservoir, ignore a path on the left (5 = SD 955 215).

### **Summit Reservoirs**

*During 1801-04, a number of reservoirs were built on the moors above Summit to supply the Rochdale Canal. Blackstone Edge, White*

*Holme, Little Hazzles and Warland reservoirs are located at around 1,250 feet (381 metres), and now supply drinking water for Oldham and Rochdale.*

Continuing north beside Warland Drain, ignore a flagged path taking off through the heather on the left. Staying on the Pennine Way as it turns east then north-east with the stone channel, eventually a finger sign marks the point at which we leave the drain, joining a flagged path heading north over rushy ground (6 = SD 964 220). Passing a couple of boundary stones, the path runs across boulder-strewn moorland. Nearing the edge of the plateau, Mankinholes and Lumbutts come into view down in the valley - although it is the monument on Stoodley Pike that dominates the view. Heading down towards Withens Gate, the Pennine Way continues towards Stoodley Pike, although we turn right, joining the Calderdale Way (7 = SD 968 231).

### **Turley Holes Edge**

The first part of the return route runs past Withens Clough Reservoir and around Turley Holes Edge, a total of 3¼ miles (5¼ kilometres). Heading east along old causey slabs, through a gate in a high wall, a stone bearing a cross and the inscription 'te Deum laudamus' ('we praise thee O God') marks the spot where coffins were rested at the summit of the corpse road. From here the path heads gently downhill, turning left as it passes the entrance to a walled lane. A dirt path follows broken walls, then causey slabs, along the top of some fields, before turning down towards the reservoir. Joining a walled lane, continue past Pastures farm to arrive at the north end of the dam, where a finger sign marks the start of a permissive path (8 = SD 984 232).

### **Withens Clough Reservoir**

*Withens Clough Reservoir was built during 1891-94 to supply Morley, and continued in this role until 1989. Since then its water has been transferred through the Manshead Tunnel to Baitings Reservoir. At one time the surrounding valley was home to 17 farmsteads, although these were cleared to avoid contamination of the drinking*

*water.*

At this point we leave the Calderdale Way, which continues along an access road heading down towards Cragg Vale. Crossing over the dam, turn left and join a narrow path running beside a drain, heading east along the steep, bracken-covered slopes beneath Turley Holes Edge. Below is an old mill chimney, while ahead the terraced streets of Cragg Vale can be seen creeping up the valley side. The path turns hard right as it meets a drystone wall, continuing above the wooded valley. After swinging around to head south-west, the path eventually drops into Turvin Clough. Although it is quite wide, the stream is usually easy to ford thanks to boulders that form a natural bridge. Heading up out of the clough, cross over a track and climb a bracken-covered slope. Turning left at an elbow in a drystone wall, head through a gate and up the side of a field to arrive at the B6138 (9 = SD 997 215).

### **The Cragg Vale Coiners**

*Cragg Vale is best known for its associations with counterfeiting. When the growth of trade during the early 18th century led to a shortage of currency, foreign coins became legal tender. The Cragg Vale Coiners used metal clipped from the edge of gold guineas to forge Portuguese moidores. The ringleader, 'King' David Hartley, lived at Bell House above the village. His brothers, Isaac and William, were known as the dukes of York and Edinburgh respectively. When an exciseman named William Deighton began investigating their activities in 1770, they had him murdered. David Hartley was later hanged for the crime, his body being buried at Heptonstall. At the Hinchcliffe Arms in Cragg Vale there is a display of coiners' equipment found in the wall of a local cottage.*

### **Coal Gate Road**

The final part of the return route follows a combination of lanes and roads, 3¼ miles (5 kilometres) back to the starting point. A short way to the right, opposite Sykes Gate farm, is a junction. Joining an unclassified road heading east then north-east, ignore the access for Sykes farm and

continue straight ahead until a finger sign on the right points along a walled lane. This heads towards an overgrown slate quarry before swinging around to head south-east. At a crossroads of tracks, the Calderdale Way briefly rejoins our route. Continuing straight ahead, the stony track passes an old brick structure as it heads gently downhill beside the heather-clad slopes of Great Manshead Hill towards an unclassified road (10 = SE 012 207).

Turning right, head along the quiet road (Coal Gate Road) as it passes a farm with a wind turbine. Looking to the north-east, beyond the valley of the River Ryburn, the location of Halifax is shown by Wainhouse's Tower. A small lagoon is passed as Baitings Reservoir comes back into view. Arriving at a junction, turn right and join Blue Ball Lane. The building on the right was once a pack-horse inn (the Blue Ball). Turning left, head down a cobbled road to arrive at the A58, where a pavement leads back to the starting point.

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