

Walk the Way in a Day

Walk 49 Kinder Scout from Hayfield

A splendid hill-walk retracing the route of the famous mass trespass onto Kinder Scout. Heading up William Clough, the Pennine Way is followed along the plateau edge, passing the dramatic Kinder Downfall and visiting Kinder Low before returning by an old pack-horse route.



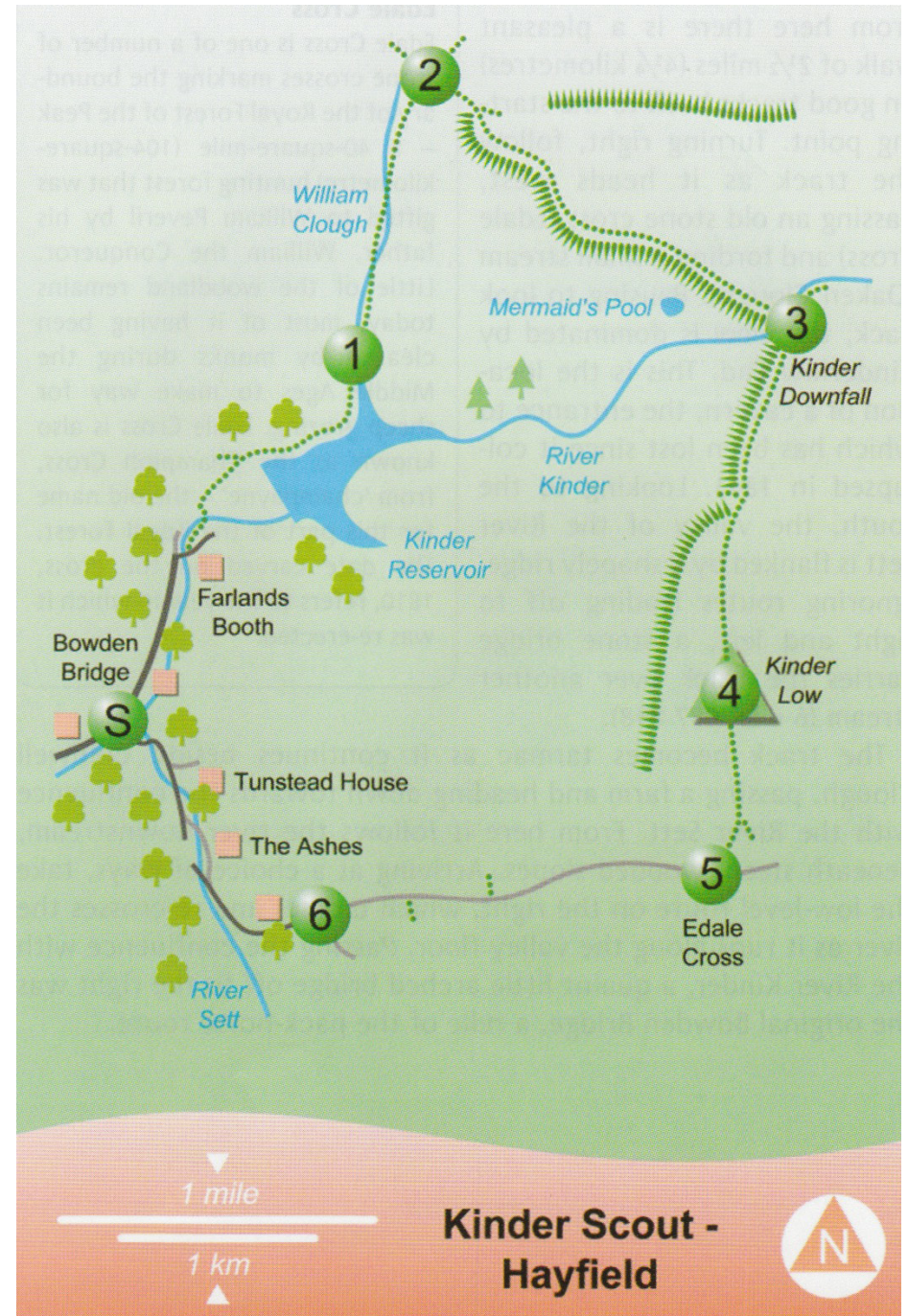
- Length: 9 miles (14½ kilometres)
- Ascent: 1,641 feet (500 metres)
- Highest Point: 2,077 feet (633 metres)
- Map(s): OS Explorer OL Map 1 ('The Peak District - Dark Peak') (West Sheet)
- Starting Point: Bowden Bridge car park, near Hayfield (SK 047 868)
- Facilities: Public toilets. Full range of facilities at Hayfield.
- Website: <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-49-kinder-scout-hayfield>

William Clough

The starting point is reached by following Kinder Road as it heads east from the village centre. As well as the 'pay and display' car park at Bowden Bridge, there is limited roadside parking near the Sportsman pub. There are public toilets opposite the car park, beside the entrance to Hayfield Campsite. The first part of the walk follows the route of the mass trespass, 2¾ miles (4½ kilometres) onto Kinder Scout. From the car park, turn left and continue along Kinder Road, following a leafy lane running parallel to the River Kinder. Crossing the river, a finger sign marks a left turn through a gate.

Hayfield

Hayfield is an attractive village of narrow streets located on the River



Sett. There has been a settlement here since at least Anglo-Saxon times. From the Middle Ages, it served as a stop-over on the pack-horse route carrying salt from Cheshire to Sheffield and wool from Yorkshire to Cheshire. The cotton and paper industries developed here during the 19th century. Clough Mill, which opened around 1830, was the home of Hayfield knitting patterns. Arthur Lowe lived here, and his character in 'Dad's Army' was inspired by a local bank manager. A country fair is held at the village each September, with runners heading up onto Lantern Pike. The railway link to New Mills was closed in 1970, with the route now serving as a cycleway - the Sett Valley Trail.

The Mass Trespass

The mass trespass onto Kinder Scout started from Bowden Bridge on 24th April 1932, with 400 walkers heading up William Clough. Scuffles with game keepers at Sandy Heys led to a number of arrests, with five of the walkers being subsequently imprisoned. However, public reaction to their harsh treatment led to the 1939 Access to Mountains Act, and in 1955 the first access agreement was signed for Kinder Scout. The car park - a former quarry - is home to a bronze plaque commemorating the mass trespass. This was unveiled in 1990 by Benny Rothman, one of those imprisoned.

Following a path above the tree-shaded riverbank, the river is re-crossed by a footbridge. Passing the entrance to a water treatment works, head up a steep, cobbled alleyway. As height is gained, Kinder Reservoir comes into view, and beyond it the hard edge of the Kinder plateau. Ignoring a stony track turning uphill, follow a permissive path running along the steep, bracken-covered slopes above the reservoir until arriving at the foot of William Clough (1 = SK 060 887). This place was named for a miner who operated a smelting works hereabouts, or else a blacksmith whose forge was located in the clough.

Kinder Reservoir

Kinder Reservoir was built 1910-11 to provide water for the Stockport area. It occupies the site of a print works that was

demolished in 1900. In order to facilitate construction of the reservoir, a railway was driven up the valley from Hayfield. Clay to line the dam was dug out of the area now occupied by the campsite at Bowden Bridge.

From here the Snake Path is followed up the bottom of the clough, which runs north-north-east. Whilst the path is stony, it is initially quite accommodating. However, after crossing and re-crossing the fast-flowing stream a number of times it starts to degenerate. In places there is a choice of routes - that taking to the bracken-covered slopes above invariably proving to be the easier. Eventually rough stone steps and a line of cairns lead to a crossroads of routes, where the Pennine Way is joined (2 = SK 064 901).

Kinder Scout

The next part of the walk follows the Pennine Way for 3½ miles (5¾ kilometres) along the western edge of the Kinder plateau. Turning right, the plateau is reached by a short climb up stone steps. Passing a cairn, an eroded path heads south-east along the edge of the scarp, avoiding the rough moorland of the plateau interior. At Sandy Heys, a promontory edged by massive blocks of Millstone Grit provides a fine viewing point, looking over Kinder Reservoir. Continuing along the rough path, a secluded lake (Mermaid's Pool) can be seen nestling beneath the steep scarp. Arriving at the head of Kinder Downfall, a jumble of boulders provides a ready-made picnic site and an opportunity to stop for lunch (3 = SK 083 889).

Kinder Downfall

At Kinder Downfall, the tiny River Kinder falls dramatically over the edge of a Millstone Grit shelf at the head of a steep-sided clough. This recalls the name of the fell - Kinder Scout - which is probably derived from the Old English 'cindwr scwd' ('water over the edge'). When strong winds funnel up the valley, the waterfall actually spurts upwards.

Crossing the infant River Kinder, the Pennine Way continues along the

edge of the scarp, weaving between boulders as it follows a cairned route heading south-south-west. To the left is an expanse of bilberry-crowned peat hags. Crossing another stream (Red Brook) as it drops over a miniature downfall, ignore a narrow path heading off to the right and continue towards Kinder Low, veering away from the scarp. In poor visibility, navigation could be a problem here, with the route crossing mounds of peat as it heads south towards an OS pillar. This stands atop a boulder, and marks the usual target destination for walkers (although it is not the actual 'summit', which is lost within the inaccessible interior) (4 = SK 079 871).

Kinder Scout

At 2,087 feet (636 metres), Kinder Scout is the highest point in the Peak District. It takes the form of a star-shaped plateau extending to around 6 square miles (9¾ kilometres), surrounded on all sides by steep scarps marked by Millstone Grit outcrops. The plateau is overlain with blanket bog, intersected by a maize of channels that seem to bewitch the careless walker. It is also a place of strange rock formations, created through the weathering of Millstone Grit. These have names such as Noe Stool, Pym Chair and the Wool Packs - although the correct angle and a degree of imagination is required to see the objects they are supposed to resemble.

A number of routes lead away from this point, so a degree of care is required. Heading south, a towering block of Millstone Grit (Edale Rocks) is soon passed. From here the path is flagged for a way as it heads down towards a terrain feature known as the Swine's Back, where we leave the Pennine Way. Following a rough path heading south-west around the bluff, a gate leads to a stony track that was originally part of a pack-horse route connecting Cheshire and Sheffield (5 = SK 077 861).

Coldwell Clough

From here there is a pleasant walk of 2½ miles (4¼ kilometres) on good tracks back to the starting point. Turning right, follow the track as it heads west, passing an old stone cross (Edale Cross) and fording a small stream

(Oaken Clough). Pausing to look back, the view is dominated by Kinderlow End. This is the location of a cavern, the entrance to which has been lost since it collapsed in 1843. Looking to the south, the valley of the River Sett is flanked by a shapely ridge. Ignoring routes leading off to right and left, a stone bridge carries the track over another stream (6 = SK 057 858).

Edale Cross

Edale Cross is one of a number of stone crosses marking the boundary of the Royal Forest of the Peak - a 40 square mile (104 square kilometre) hunting forest that was gifted to William Peveril by his father, William the Conqueror. Little of the woodland remains today, most of it having been cleared by monks during the Middle Ages to make way for sheep grazing. Edale Cross is also known as the Champion Cross, from 'champayne' - the old name for this part of the Royal Forest. The date carved on the cross, 1810, refers to the year in which it was re-erected.

The track becomes tarmac as it continues beside Coldwell Clough, passing a farm and heading down towards the confluence with the River Sett. From here it follows the river downstream, beneath steep, wooded slopes. Arriving at a choice of ways, take the low-level route on the right, which crosses and re-crosses the river as it runs along the valley floor. Passing the confluence with the River Kinder, a quaint little arched bridge off to the right was the original Bowden Bridge, a relic of the pack-horse route.

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