

Socialscene

Out and about in Oldham

life in Oldham

Walk: Two Lakes
Distance: 4miles
Time: Two and a half hours at leisurely pace
Calorie burn: 500+
How do I get there?:
 From Oldham centre take Lees Road (A669) from Mumps and follow Holmfirth signs. After taking sharp right and starting drop to Greenfield Station turn left and follow into Greenfield. Take A635 up hill from centre and entrance to Dovestone is clearly signposted on the right.
Public transport: Buses from Oldham
Parking: Pay & display car park is adjacent to start point

Murders most foul and the King of Tonga

This week the Oldham Advertiser is starting a new and seasonal column to encourage people to get out and about, explore their own borough and get healthy in the process. The walks we will be printing are suitable for all age groups and are not too taxing. Points of interest, and places to stop for a bite to eat or liquid refreshment are highlighted. With the help of the Oldham Ramblers' Association, Council and Countryside Rangers we hope to reintroduce you to the beauty on our own doorsteps.



1 Start at the car park at Dovestone and cross to the information centre on the opposite side of the road. From here, continue up towards the reservoir and press on to the Sailing Club on your left. You now have unrestricted views of the reservoir to the left. Take time to observe the skyline to the right. When viewed from this point you can see why locals call Wimberry Stones Brow 'The Indian's head'.
 Go directly ahead, with a stone wall on your right, and pass through a gate and then over a bridge crossing Chew Brook. Swing left to cross a smaller bridge and rise up to the Dovestone 'Life for a Life' Memorial Forest (Started in 1999, people can pay to have a tree planted in memory of a loved one. To date, 711 have been planted). You are now on a path which is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs which circles Dovestone Reservoir.

the right. (The tunnel runs for three-quarters of a mile from the higher reaches of the valley, bypassing the Greenfield and Yeoman Hey reservoirs in a dead-straight line).

The path continues in the same general direction to the dam wall of Yeoman Hey Reservoir, which is the next reservoir along. At the dam wall we leave the path and



follow the sign-posted path cross country. This can be a little rough in places. Continue on taking helpful footbridges over several feeder drains. On the farther side of the reservoir you can see Alderman Hill and Bill O' Jacks Plantation. (The name Bill O' Jacks was what locals called the 'Moorcock Inn', which used to stand on the

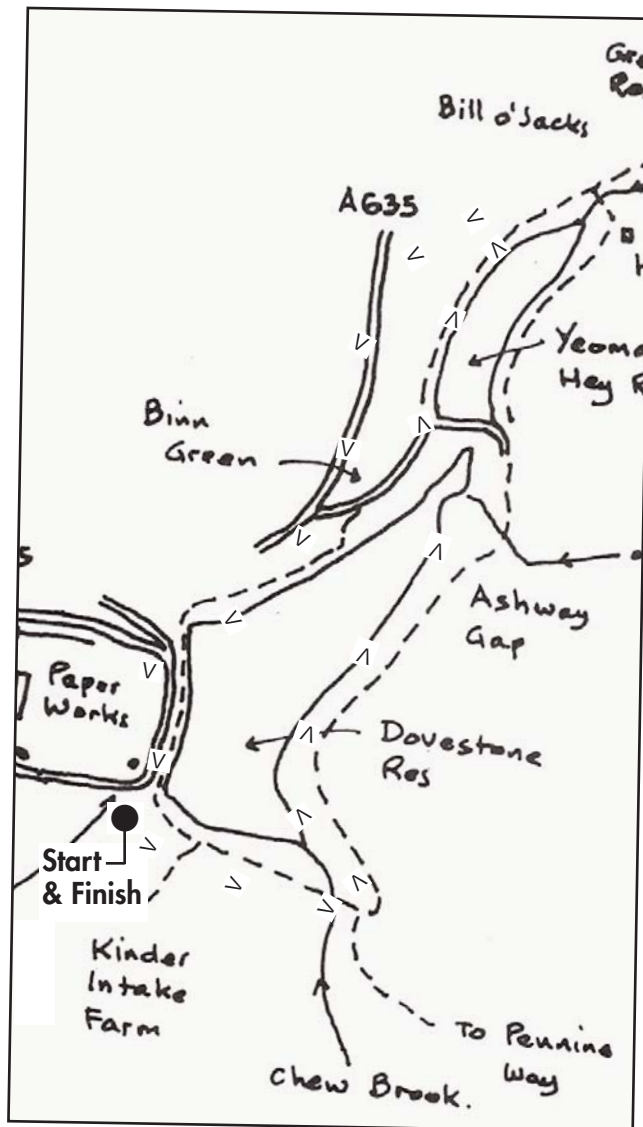
Holmfirth Road. This was the scene of a particularly brutal double murder of the landlord, William Bradbury, and his son, Thomas, in the 1830s. The pair were beaten to death and nobody ever brought to trial. It is thought that the vicious killing could have been about something as simple as a disagreement in the pub with one of the locals. The inn had to be pulled down for fear of water pollution when the reservoirs were built in 1967).

3 Eventually the rough path reaches the start of a long boundary wall. Keep to the left of this. Soon you will reach some steps on the left which will take you to a concrete bridge. Cross this and climb up to a wide path where you now begin the journey back along the opposite side of Yeoman Hey Reservoir. So, with the reservoirs still on to the left, follow the path until a wide gap opens in the wall on the right. Here you continue on the rough path ahead to walk on the shore of the reservoir. Eventually you will reach the dam wall between Yeoman Hey and Dovestone Reservoirs. On the dam wall is a stone plaque commemorating the visit of the King of



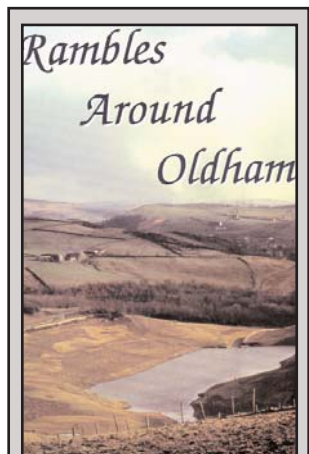
Tonga in 1981. (The King was in England to attend the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Di and decided afterwards that he would head north to admire, and pick up a few tips, about reservoir construction).

4 Directly opposite the King of Tonga stone continue up the walled, asphalt road. Ignore the first iron gate and wooden stile to the left and carry on up to the iron gate across the road and go through the stile to continue on the asphalt road until two footpath signs are reached. Take the left-hand footpath through a large gap down to a stile. The path goes on down to join another coming in from the left. Follow this well-worn path with Dovestone Reservoir on your



left and take a series of steps down to the valve house on the corner of the reservoir. Before descending the steps, pause to admire the view and look across to Dovestones Moss where you can see the memorial to James Platt MP. (Platt was killed in what was described as a "shooting accident", however, there was more to this than met the eye. He was a pro-industrialist in favour of building mills and mechanising the traditional processes of weaving. Needless to say, many locals saw this as a threat to their way of life. Another pro-industrialist and landowner killed "while shooting on the moors" in the same period at the turn of the 18th and 19th Centuries was Ralph Whitehead, the licensee of The Farrars Arms. His daughter Anna also died in mysterious circumstances, when a cannon exploded, and his son William survived a murder attempt).

5 Follow the dam wall back to the Peak Park Information Centre and pick up your car again.



This week's walk is an abridged version of a longer walk provided by Bob Glentworth of the Oldham group of the Ramblers' Association. It is included in the book 'Rambles Around Oldham' which is available from local libraries and tourist information centres at the price of £3.50.

Next week: Don't miss our special guide to a canal walk with a difference

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