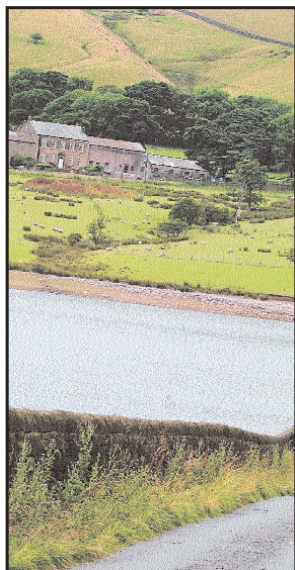


Enjoy the peace, but beware of the ghostly soldiers

Walk: Castleshaw Trail
Distance: Two miles.
Time: One hour at a leisurely amble with time to stop and view the fort.
Calorie burn: 200+
How do I get there?: The route starts from the car park at the Castleshaw Centre. Head from Oldham Mumps straight up Huddersfield Road (A62) past the turn off for Delph. You will eventually see a sign on the left for the centre, which is off Waterworks Road.
Public transport: Call GMPT on 0161 228 7811 for bus details for the area.
Parking: Free parking places at the Castleshaw Centre.

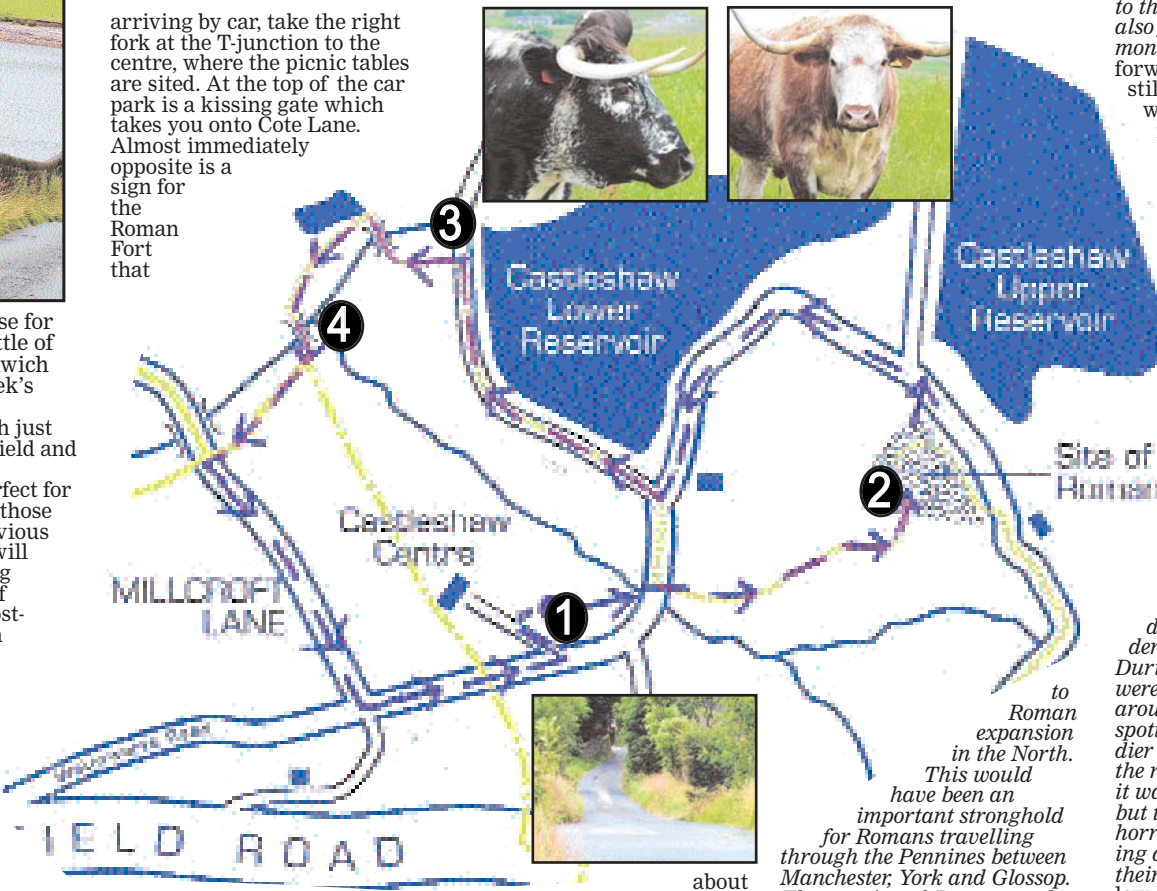
This is our 13th feature in a series of seasonal articles aimed at encouraging people to get out and about, explore the borough and get healthy in the process. With the help of the Oldham Ramblers' Association, Oldham Council and Countryside Rangers we hope to reintroduce you to the beauty on our own doorstep. This week we take in the Castleshaw Valley



arriving by car, take the right fork at the T-junction to the centre, where the picnic tables are sited. At the top of the car park is a kissing gate which takes you onto Cote Lane. Almost immediately opposite is a sign for the Roman Fort that

THERE is no excuse for not packing a bottle of water and a sandwich and taking up this week's walking challenge. A gentle amble, with just one minor climb up a field and a couple of stiles, the Castleshaw Trail is perfect for all age groups and, for those who have taken on previous walks in the series, it will hardly involve breaking into a sweat - unless, of course, you see the ghostly apparitions of Roman soldiers!

The walk begins at the car park at the Castleshaw Centre. (The centre was opened in 1895 by the Oldham Poor Children's Association to get youngsters out of the mill towns and into the fresh air of the Pennines. Over the years it has been used as a sanatorium for children suffering with tuberculosis and as a base for school camps and adventure trips.) If you are



takes you up a path over the field. **2** When you get to the top of the field you will see the information boards

the Roman Fort that used to stand on the site. (The original fort dates back to around AD79, when new Roman roads were being built in the Pennines as an aid

back down into the valley past the side of the lower reservoir. Take a right, virtually opposite the cottage, and follow the path along the bottom of the reservoir into the heart of the Castleshaw Valley.

3 As you head around the reservoir you will cross the dam and at this point you immediately go left through a gate before the cattle grid (As well as being home to the Romans, the valley was also farmed by Cistercian monks in the 13th Century). Go forward across the grass to a stile by the reservoir spillway and then go down the field, keeping roughly parallel to the wall on the left to a footbridge across the stream. (The stream is Hull Brook, which was created by the retreat of the Ice Age. Its original route was around the southern side of Delph Hill.) Do not cross the footbridge, but turn right, with Hull Brook on your left.

4 You will see a stile in a fence and soon after will cross a footbridge that keeps Hull Brook on your right. There is now another stile leading onto a quiet road called Millcroft Lane. (If you are of a nervous disposition, don't be wandering these quiet lanes alone. During the 1960s three friends were travelling in a van around the area when they spotted a mounted Roman soldier riding towards them on the road. At first they thought it was someone in fancy dress, but their curiosity gave way to horror as the figure kept coming and passed right through their vehicle.) Turn left and follow this lane gradually uphill to reach a crossroads of lanes at the top. Turn left onto the level Waterworks Road for 300 metres back to your car at the start point.



Good news for ramblers
WALKERS and riders using Oldham's public rights of way will find it easier to get around thanks to new signs set to spring up across the borough. A total £50,000 of new Government funding has been made available to sign the public rights of way along all of Oldham's 805 paths, which total over 400 kilometres.

Work will begin in August and will be carried out over the next 18 months. It is part of the Government's requirement that highway authorities improve the ease of use of rights of way.

Landowners who have rights of way running across their land can contact the Environmental Services Department for information but before any work is carried out they will receive a letter and a map showing where the location signs will be placed. Assistant Director for Environmental Services Tony Noblet said: "This project will provide for the first time a comprehensive signposting of Oldham's rights of way. It will include the installation of new signs, replacement of damaged ones and clearing of overgrown paths."

"If landowners would like additional waymarkers along paths across their land, to avoid trespass and more clearly define routes, they can contact our department." Any landowner who would like more information on the programme should contact the Rights of Way officer on 0161 911 4364.

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