



Royal
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Crossing point

A self-guided walk around Saddleworth in the South Pennines



Explore a landscape criss-crossed by old paths and tracks
Find out about the engineering challenges of constructing roads and tunnels
Discover how transportation became more efficient through the centuries
Compare old industrial routeways with new leisure trails

www.discoveringbritain.org

the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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Cover image: Delph and the Castleshaw Valley from Knott Hill © Howard Lunn

Crossing point

Discover routeways over and under the Pennines

The Pennines form a natural barrier between Northwest and Northeast England but people have always needed to cross from one side to the other from ancient times to the present day.

This walk explores some of the routeways over and under the South Pennines in Saddleworth between Oldham in Lancashire and Huddersfield in Yorkshire.



There were many engineering challenges to constructing transport and communication routes across this difficult landscape of steep valleys and high moors.



Walk in the footsteps of Roman soldiers, medieval monks and loaded packhorses. Trace the development of the road network from turnpike routes to a modern motorway.

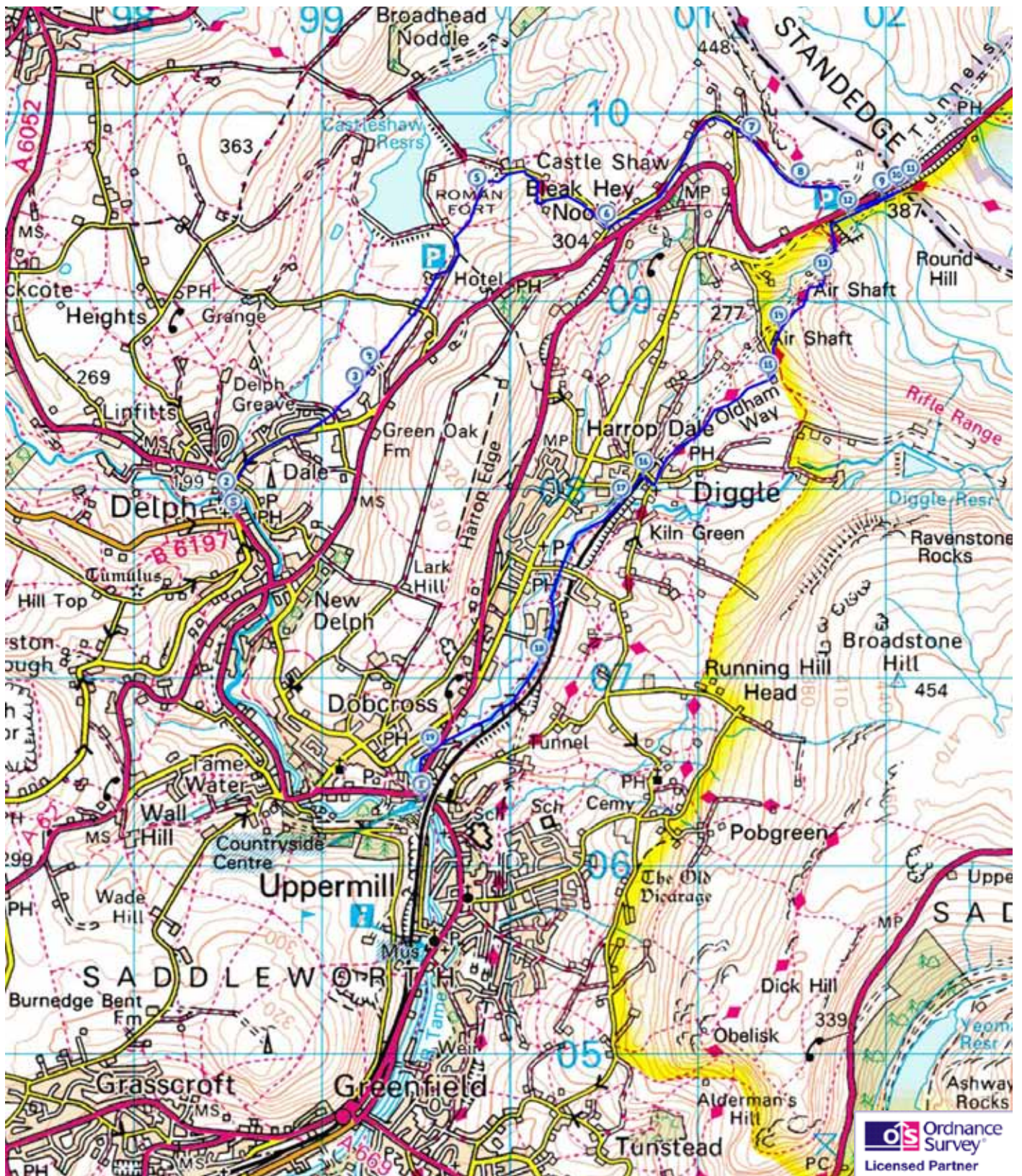
Discover how transportation became quicker and more efficient through the centuries. Find out how record-breaking canal and railway tunnels were constructed through the hills. See how today's leisure routeways contrast with older industrial routeways.

The landscape is full of evidence of routeways – fords and bridges, tunnels and cuttings, tracks and towpaths, locks and viaducts, coaching inns and toll houses. Peel back the layers and discover two thousand years of history.

Standedge Cutting (top) and the entrance to Standedge railway tunnel at Diggle (bottom)

© Jenny Lunn

Route overview



Start: King Street, Delph

Finish: Brownhill Countryside Centre, Dobcross

Practical information

Location	Saddleworth, near Oldham, Lancashire, Northwest England
Start point	King Street, Delph, OL3 5DH
Finish point	Brownhill Countryside Centre, Wool Road, Dobcross, OL3 5PB
Getting there	<p>Car - Saddleworth is easily accessible from the M62 at J20 (Oldham) or J22 (Ripponden/Saddleworth); free street parking in Delph or in Millgate car park</p> <p>Train - The nearest station is Greenfield (3 miles from walk start); served by local trains running between Manchester Victoria and Huddersfield (one per hour during daytime)</p> <p>Bus - Both the start and finish of the route are served by local buses from Oldham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Manchester and Huddersfield</p>
Directions from railway station to start	Catch a bus from Greenfield railway station. The 350 towards Oldham runs half-hourly in the daytimes and hourly in the evenings; the 353 and 354 run every two hours in the daytime only. Alight in the centre of Delph village on King Street outside The Swan Inn.
Walk distance	6 miles
Shorter option	It is possible to do this walk in two halves (Stops 1 to 11 and Stops 12 to 20) by using the 184 bus which runs from Manchester to Huddersfield via Oldham and Greenfield railway station. It stops by the car park at Brunclough Reservoir once an hour (Mondays to Saturdays).
Level	Challenging - The ascent from Delph to Standedge Cutting and the descent back down to Diggle is long but steady
Terrain	The walk route includes pavements, narrow lanes, field paths, gravel tracks and canal towpath; sturdy footwear is required
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sections of the route can be muddy in places – an alternative dry route is suggested between Stops 2 and 5- The midway point at Standedge Cutting is high and exposed so take suitable warm and waterproof clothing
Suitable for	<p>Dogs – A fantastic walk for dogs but keep them on a lead across farmland where there are grazing sheep (especially between Stops 3 and 5 and Stops 12 and 14)</p> <p>Families – Suitable for children with some walking experience; plenty of things to interest them along the route</p>

Refreshments

- A cafe, a few pubs and a small supermarket in **Delph** (start of walk)
- **The Diggle Hotel** (just before Stop 16) serves pub food
- **Woolyknit Café** (between Stop 17 and 18) serves drinks, snacks and light meals
- **Grandpa Greene's Ice Cream Cabin** (between Stop 17 and 18) is a small kiosk known for its excellent homemade ice cream but also serving drinks and snacks
- **The Navigation Inn** (near Stop 19) serves pub food
- **The Limekiln Café** at Brownhill Countryside Centre (Stop 20) serves snacks and light meals
- A wide selection of cafes, restaurants and pubs in **Uppermill** (½ mile from finish point)

Toilets

- Community toilets in Delph at craft centre (start of walk)
- Community toilets at The Diggle Hotel (just before Stop 16)
- Public toilets at the Brownhill Centre (end of walk)

Places to visit

Saddleworth Museum – High Street, Uppermill, OL3 6HS

An independent museum that tells the story of the people who have created Saddleworth's landscape and character (adults £2; concessions £1)
Open 7 days a week from 1pm to 4pm
www.saddleworthmuseum.co.uk

Saddleworth Canal Cruises – Mooring beside Saddleworth Museum

1 hour trips (weather permitting) on the Pennine Moonraker narrowboat from Uppermill to Wool Road (adults £4; concessions £3.50; children £3)
Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays plus daily during school holidays
www.saddleworth-canal-cruises.co.uk/pages/cruises.html

Standedge Tunnel and Visitor Centre – Tunnel End, Marsden, HD7 6NQ

The Standedge Exhibition Centre on the ground floor includes a film telling the story of the building of the tunnel and its restoration.

Open daily; closed during the winter (mid November to late March)

Family-friendly boat trips into the tunnel – 30 minute, 50 minute and 2 hour trips available; check website for departure times and prices

Centre also includes Watersedge Café, outdoor playground, indoor soft play facility and wildlife garden

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/standedge-tunnel

Tourist information

Saddleworth Visitor Information Centre

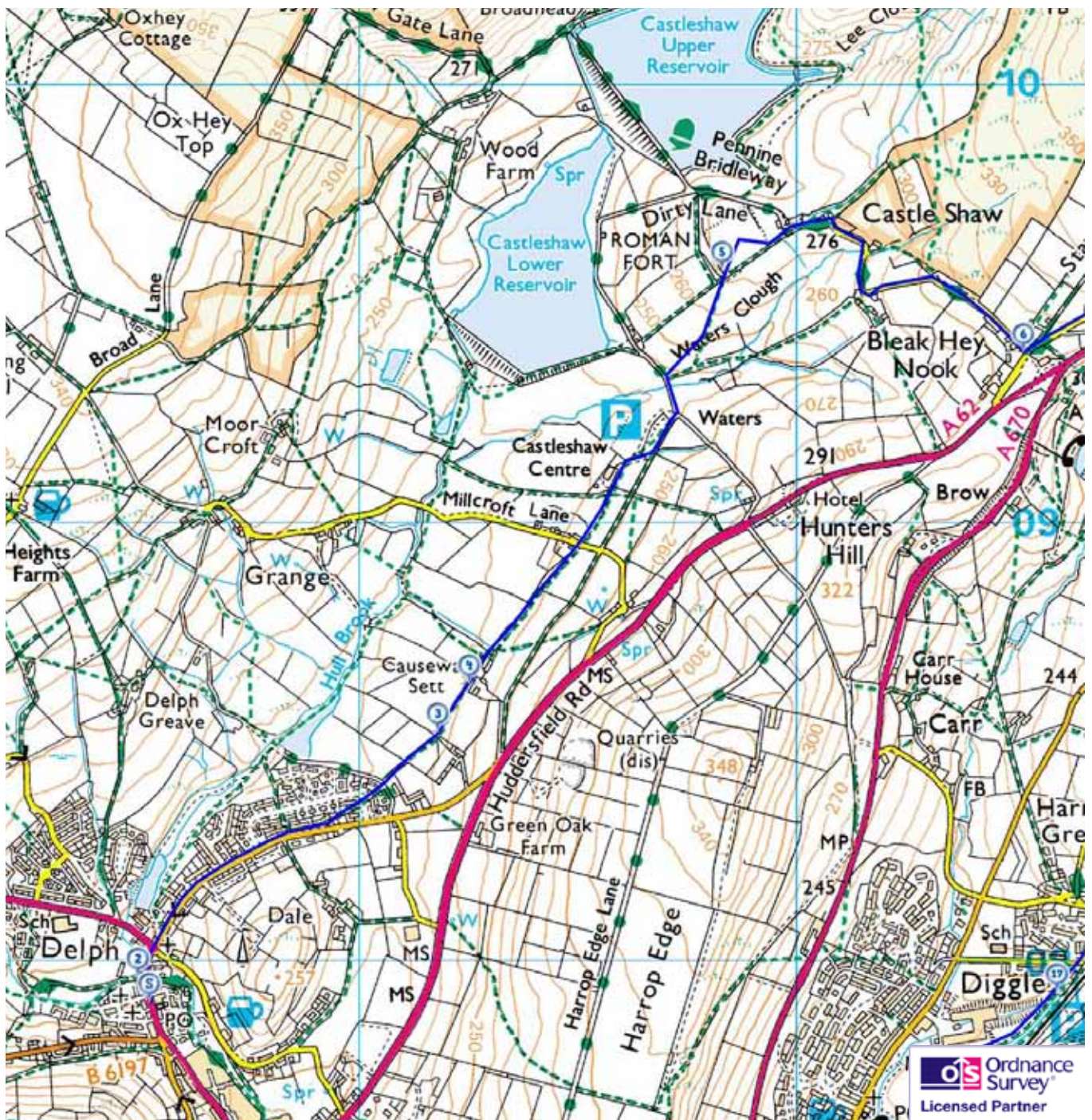
Located inside Saddleworth Museum, High Street, Uppermill, OL3 6HS

Open daily 1pm to 4pm

Email: saddleworthtic@oldham.gov.uk

Phone: 01457 870 336

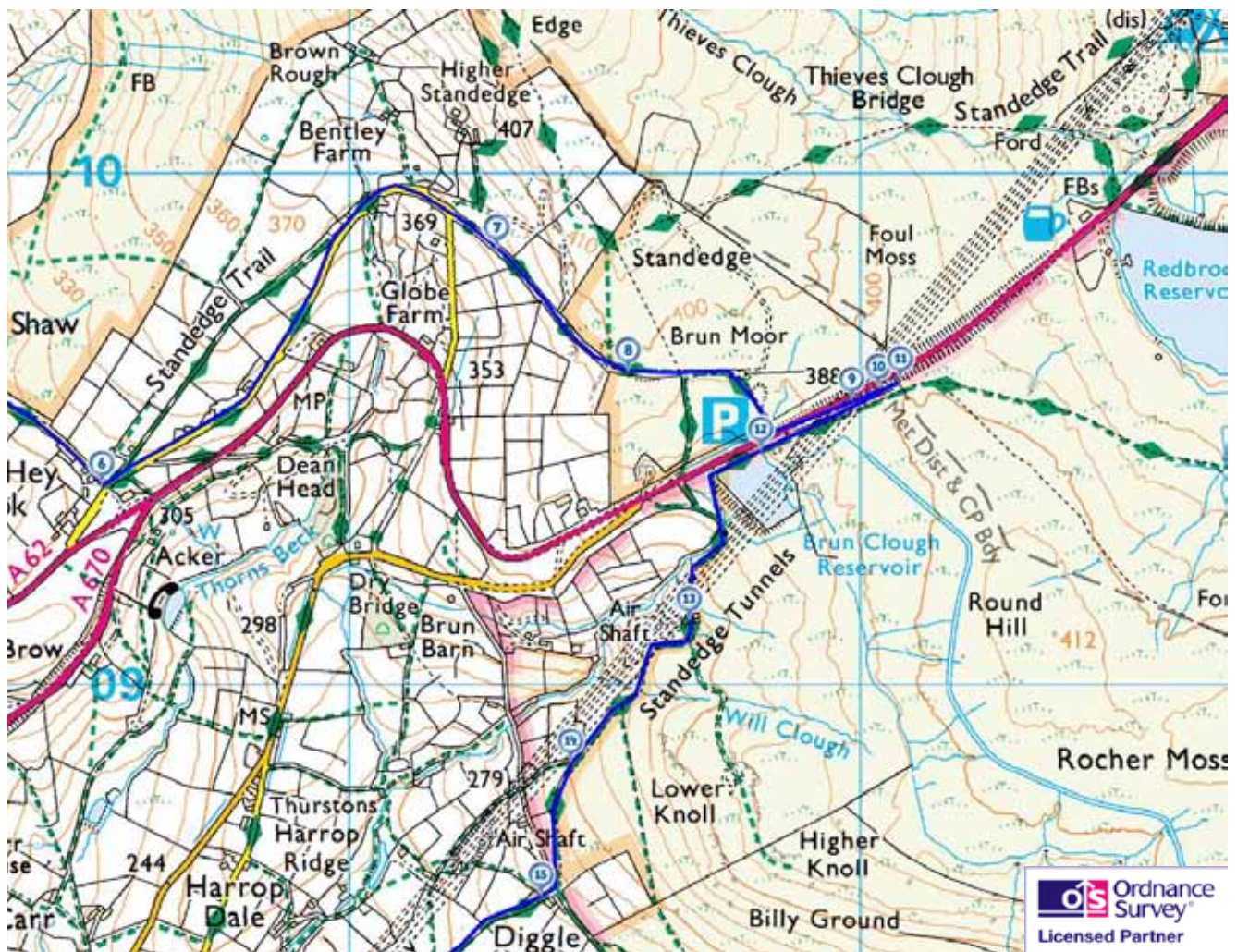
Detail of first part of route



Stopping points

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. King Street, Delph | 4. Field path by Causeway Settle |
| 2. River Tame by Delph Bridge | 5. Castleshaw Roman Fort |
| 3. Field path between Hull Mill Lane and Causeway Settle | 6. Bleak Hey Nook |

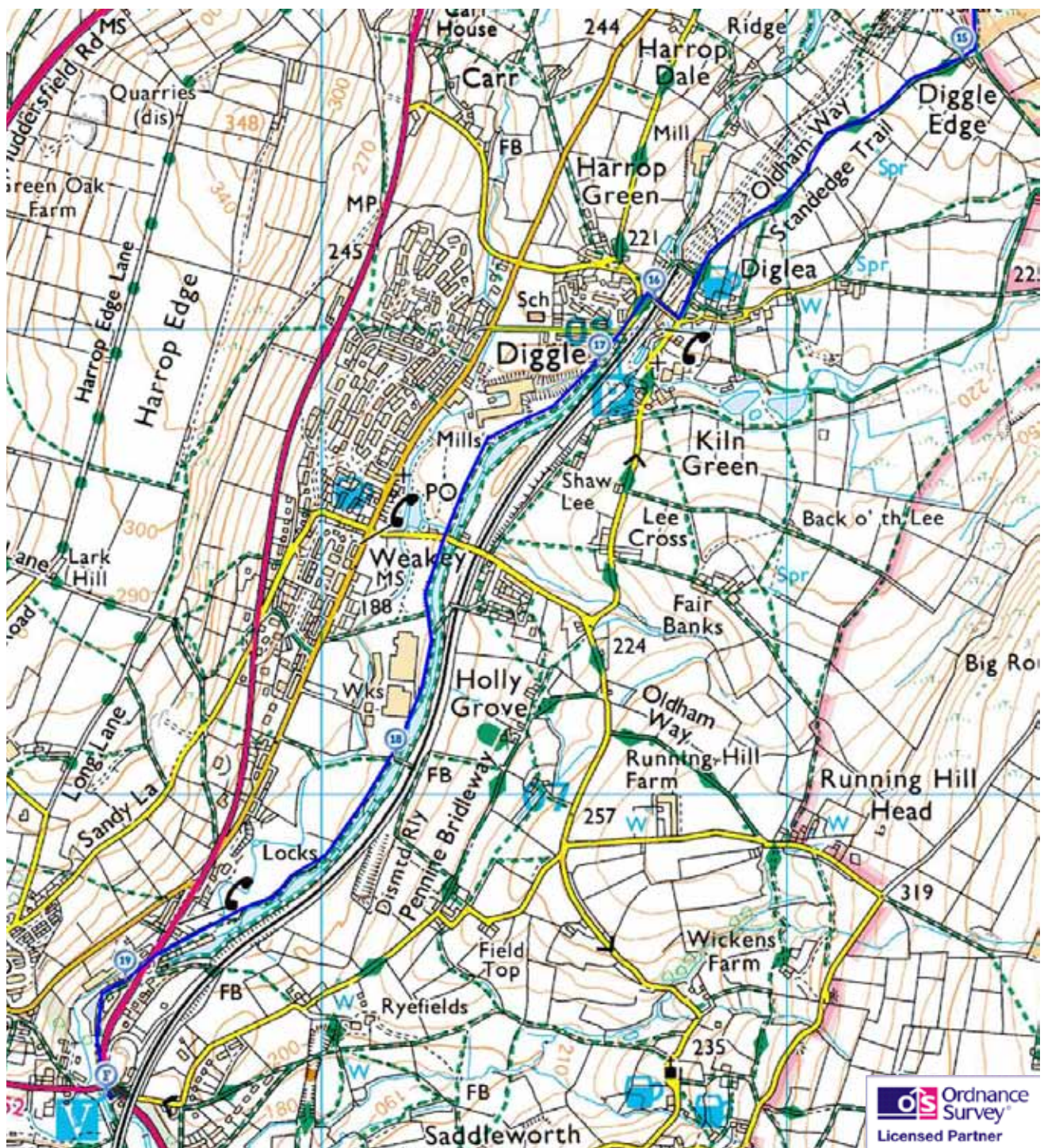
Detail of second part of route



Stopping points

- 7.** Standedge Foot Road
- 8.** Where Pennine Way joins Standedge Foot Road
- 9.** Footpath above Standedge Cutting
- 10.** Footpath above Standedge Cutting
- 11.** Footpath above Standedge Cutting
- 12.** Brun Clough Reservoir
- 13.** Derelict stone house below Brun Clough Reservoir
- 14.** Boat Lane
- 15.** Diggle Edge Farm

Detail of last part of route



Stopping points

- 16.** Bridge over railway, Station Road, Diggle
- 17.** Standedge canal tunnel entrance
- 18.** Lock 29W, Diggle Flight
- 19.** Wool Road Transhipment Warehouse
- F** Brownhill Countryside Centre

Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions in the boxes below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Saddleworth

King Street, Delph

Directions 1

Walk along King Street towards the river. When you reach the bridge, bear left down the track to the river bank. Stand by the river and listen to Track 2.

2. A busy river crossing

River Tame by Delph Bridge

Directions 2

Go across the road bridge and up to the White Lion pub where the main road bends round to the left. Go straight on up Delph Lane and note the stone drinking trough on the right which was probably used by animals using the road. The road climbs steeply then levels off and starts to descend gradually.

Where the road levels off almost at the lowest point look for a signposted public footpath on the left which passes between a modern house (Number 101) and an old stone house.*

This narrow path goes between houses and gardens. At the next road (Palinwood Road) go straight across to continue along the signposted Public Footpath. This is also narrow and passes between houses and gardens.

When you reach the next road (Hull Mill Lane) go over the stile opposite and follow the signposted public footpath into the field. At the first field boundary go through the gateway and continue across the field. At the second field boundary cross the stile. Stop on the other side looking across to the other side of the valley and listen to Track 3.

*** Note:** The next part of the route can be wet and muddy in places. An alternative route is to continue along Delph Lane. Follow it along the flat section and then as it climbs steeply. At the top is a five-way junction. Take the second left fork which is Waterworks Road, a straight road with stone walls on both sides and signposted to the Castleshaw Centre. Stop part way along the first section looking across the valley for Stops 3 and 4. Continue along the road and rejoin the route by the Castleshaw Centre en route to Stop 5.

3. A network of paths

Field path between Hull Mill Lane and Causeway Sett

Directions 3

Continue along the field path towards a pair of stone houses which are called Causeway Sett. Stop on the path by the lower side of the second house and listen to Track 4.

4. Packhorse routes

Field path by Causeway Sett

Directions 4

Continue along the footpath below the houses. Beyond the second house is a stile in the corner. Go over the stile and follow the path past the old farm outbuilding then along the lower boundary of this field. Immediately to the left is a marshy ditch and fence. In parts this path can be very wet and muddy.

Go over a double stile and follow the footpath across the lower side of the next field towards a group of houses. When you reach the houses go over the stile onto the lane (Millcroft Lane). Go straight across the lane and through the gate to continue on the marked public footpath on the lower edge of the field.

When you reach a kissing gate with a sign for CCTV the path goes through the grounds of the Castleshaw Centre. We suggest avoiding this because there are often school children around the site. Instead turn right and walk up the field to the stone wall. Go over the stile and through the gap in the wall and turn left onto the lane.

Note: This is where the alternative dry route joins the main route.

Follow the lane where it bends to the left signposted Cote Lane. Shortly after the dip look for the signpost for Public Footpath and Roman Fort on the right hand side.

Go through the gap in the stone wall and through the gate then head diagonally up the field. There is a wooden post at the mid-point to help guide your direction. From the post continue diagonally upward across the field towards a fenced area. Go through the gate. Stop at the first information board and listen to Track 5.



Entrance to the Roman Fort

5. A Roman road

Castleshaw Roman Fort

Directions 5

You need to leave the fenced fort area by the top corner so head towards the nearest stone cottage. Once you reach the telegraph pole walk alongside the fence to the stile. Go over the stile and turn right onto Bleak Hey Nook Lane. Follow the lane as it winds round and up. After about half a mile is a row of stone cottages which is a hamlet called Bleak Hey Nook. Stop at the T-junction and listen to Track 6.

6. Turnpike trusts

Bleak Hey Nook

Directions 6

From the junction turn left up Standedge Foot Road (signposted Pennine Bridleway Standedge 1¼). Immediately bear left up the rough track and under the telegraph wires. Go through the gate straight ahead and walk up Whimberry Lee Lane. After about one-third of a mile go through a gate and rejoin the surfaced lane.

Note: Whimberry Lee Lane can be muddy, particularly nearer the top, so for an alternative drier route follow Standedge Foot Road, the surfaced lane, as it steadily climbs up the hillside for about one-third of a mile to just before Hillview cottage where Whimberry Lee Lane rejoins from the left.

Do take time to look at the view and notice the main road below snaking up the hillside. Continue up the lane past Standedge Foot Barn on the right (probably once a toll house). The lane curves round to the right. Where the hard surface ends and Manor Lane forks down to the right continue straight on (signposted Pennine Bridleway Standedge ¼). Stop where the track becomes rough but wide and listen to Track 7.

7. Gentler gradients, faster travel

Standedge Foot Road

Directions 7

Continue up the wide track. Stop at the highest point where the Pennine Way long distance footpath joins from the left and listen to Track 8.

8. Leisure routeways

Where Pennine Way joins Standedge Foot Road

Directions 8

Continue along the track. After another 250 metres it bends round to the right and down to the road. Cross the road with great care into the car park. At the left side of the information board go up the steps and follow the path.

At the path's highest point, about 250 metres from the car park and before the National Trust sign and gate, go up onto the mound at the left side of the path and look down into the cutting. Be careful as the ground is very steep. Stop here and listen to Track 9.

9. Catering for the travellers

Footpath above Standedge Cutting

Directions 9

Remain overlooking the cutting and listen to Track 10. If it is too cold or windy you may prefer to return to the car park for Stops 10 and 11.

10. Modern routeways

Footpath above Standedge Cutting

Directions 10

Remain overlooking the cutting and listen to Track 11.

11. Changing sides

Footpath above Standedge Cutting

Directions 11

If you have not already done so, retrace your steps back to the car park. Go across the car park to the edge of Brun Clough Reservoir and listen to Track 12.

12. Capturing water

Brun Clough Reservoir

Directions 12

Follow the footpath along the bank of the reservoir with the water on your left and road on your right. At the end go through the gate and follow the footpath down to the left where it joins a track. Follow the track as it winds downhill. Stop at the derelict stone house and listen to Track 13.

13. Above and below

Derelict stone house below Brun Clough Reservoir

Directions 13

Follow the track downhill with the spoil heap on your right. Cross a small stream. Look for the second fingerpost which marks a public footpath bearing off down to the right. Stop here and listen to Track 14.

14. Pulling power

Boat Lane

Directions 14

Continue following the main track downhill. When you reach a gate go through and turn left onto the lane. Follow the lane as it bends round to the right with the stone cottages of Diggle Edge Farm on the left. Where the surfaced lane becomes a rough track (before a gate), stop and look back at the cottages you have just passed. Listen to Track 15.

15. Connecting hubs

Diggle Edge Farm

Directions 15

Continue following the track downhill with fields either side. See if you can spot any more ventilation shafts and spoil heaps. Eventually you reach the hamlet of Digglea and The Diggle Hotel. This is a highly recommended place to stop for refreshments and also has community toilets. When you are ready leave the front of the pub and turn right over the railway bridge. Stop on the right hand side of the bridge and listen to Track 16.

16. Another new routeway

Bridge over railway, Station Road, Diggle

Directions 16

Continue across the railway bridge and bear left which is Station Road and becomes Sam Road at the corner. Go past the bus stop. Where the road bends round to the right go left into the car park. Go through the car park and down the path at the far end towards the canal towpath. Stop by the tunnel entrance on the left and listen to Track 17.

17. One of the seven wonders

Standedge canal tunnel entrance

Directions 17

Walk away from the tunnel entrance along the towpath. You can walk on either side of the canal and there are regular crossing points. After a short distance is a path on the right down to Warth Mill where the excellent Woolyknit Café is located.

Near the first lock (32W) is a landscaped grassy area with benches and play equipment. This was another spoil heap of rocks from the tunnels that was excavated and later landscaped. By Lock 31W is Grandpa Greene's which is recommended for its homemade ice cream.

Cross over or under bridge number 66 at Ward Lane and continue along either side of the towpath. Stop by Lock 29W and Bridge 69 where there is a bench on an elevated viewpoint. Listen to Track 18.

18. Fighting the competition

Lock 29W, Diggle Flight

Directions 18

Continue along either side of the canal towpath. Immediately after Lock 24W the canal goes under Bridge 70. If you want refreshments you can leave the towpath here and divert to the Navigation Inn just 100 metres up Wool Road. Otherwise continue under the modern road bridge (Number 71). Immediately afterwards is a warehouse with an overhanging roof on the opposite side of the canal. Stop here and listen to Track 19.

19. Rebirth

Wool Road Transshipment Warehouse

Directions 19

Continue along the canal towpath. By the car park the path leaves the side of the canal for about 30 metres but soon rejoins it. Immediately after going under Bridge 73 is a large stone building on the left side which is the Brownhill Countryside Centre. Stop here and listen to Track 20.

20. Layers in the landscape

Brownhill Countryside Centre

Directions 20

This is the end of the walk. There are toilets at the Brownhill Countryside Centre adjacent to The Limekiln Café.

To return to the start of the walk in Delph village you can catch a bus from the stop on top of Bridge 73 (Dobcross New Road) or walk along the Delph Donkey which is a footpath following the route of an old railway branch line. For the latter, continue along the towpath. Just beneath the viaduct turn right across the canal. Walk up the track and then turn right up the lane. After going underneath the bridge turn right to access the Delph Donkey. Turn left and follow the path for 1 ½ miles. At the old Delph Station (now a private house) is Delph crossroads. Go diagonally across and up The Sound through the trees and follow the road into the village.

Alternatively, continue into Uppermill village where there are several cafes and pubs as well as a museum with Tourist Information centre and other attractions. Continue along the canal towpath under the viaduct. Leave the towpath at the first bridge and turn left down Moorgate to High Street. From Uppermill you can catch buses to Oldham, Ashton, Manchester or Huddersfield. 1 ½ miles further is Greenfield Station from where you can catch trains (one per hour) to Manchester or Huddersfield.



A ridge marks the route of the Roman road
© Jenny Lunn



Grange Lane was part of a medieval network of routeways
© Michael Fox, Geograph (CCL)



Whimberry Lee Lane - the first turnpike road
© Jenny Lunn



The third turnpike winds gently up the hillside to Standedge
© Jenny Lunn



Standedge canal tunnel entrance at the Diggle end
© Jenny Lunn



Train emerging from Standedge tunnel at Diggle
© Michael Fox, Geograph (CCL)

Credits

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Caroline Millar for editing the audio files

Further information

Visit Oldham

www.visitoldham.com

Huddersfield Canal Society

www.huddersfieldcanal.com

Transport for Greater Manchester

<http://www.gmppte.com/>

Saddleworth Canal Cruises

www.saddleworth-canal-cruises.co.uk

Saddleworth Museum

www.saddleworthmuseum.co.uk

Standedge Tunnel and Visitor Centre

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/standedge-tunnel

Saddleworth Historical Society

www.saddleworth-historical-society.org.uk

Pennine Waterways

www.penninewaterways.co.uk

The Diggle Hotel

www.digglehotel.com

Woolyknit Café

www.woolyknit.com

Grandpa Greene's Ice Cream Cabin

www.grandpagreenes.co.uk/icecreamcabin

The Limekiln Café

www.thelimekilncafe.com

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