



Pennine Way
Pennine Bridleway
& Dales Way



Pennine Way
Pennine Bridleway
Restricted Byway Old Ings
Dales Way

England's rooftop route

In the first of a two-part series marking the 50th anniversary of the Pennine Way, **Barry McLoughlin** embarks on a trek along the rugged rooftop of England

View from the Pennine Way in Derbyshire



Rocky outcrops like this heighten the sense of drama at the summit of Kinder Scout



Another distinctive rock formation



One of the unusual rock formations on the Kinder plateau



STANDING ASTRIDE the summit of windswept Kinder Scout, looking down vertiginously on the valley below, you really feel you're on the rooftop of the realm.

What had started out as a gentle stroll from Edale over a partly paved path had ended with clambering over rocks made slippery by a stream – as I found to my cost – then scrambling up scree to the peat-layered peak.

The last time I'd been up Kinder Scout, the highest point in the Peak District and the start of the Pennine Way, was nearly 50 years ago with the school rambling club in the Sixties. This was soon after it had been designated Britain's

first National Trail, and this year the Pennine Way is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Crossing no fewer than three National Parks, it covers almost 270 miles over the 'backbone of England' and into southern Scotland. It also spans two National Nature Reserves, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

For those hardier and more determined souls who aim to complete the Pennine Way in one go, the Kinder Scout leg is just the first of a gruelling two or three weeks of such ascents.

When my partner and I – very much rookie ramblers – made the climb, the landscape seemed unchanged from how I remembered it in the Sixties... unlike my fitness levels. However, I comforted myself

with the fact that the 2070ft summit was considerably higher than the meagre 425ft achieved by the free-runner who had climbed the Wembley Stadium arch for the first time the day before! (Technically, Kinder doesn't have a single specific 'summit' as it's a plateau covering some 15 square miles.)

From the north of Derbyshire's Peak District, the Pennine Way runs along the Pennine ridge through the Yorkshire Dales, the Northumberland National Park and the Tyne Valley. After a short section along Hadrian's Wall, it turns north again across the Cheviots, ending at Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders.

The variety of habitats makes it one of the best places in Europe to see birds such as breeding waders in spring and early summer.

Although it's less than half the length of the South West Coastal Path (*Choice*, June 2014), the Ramblers organisation describes it as one of Britain's most popular and toughest trails.

The Pennine Way was the brainchild of the walker and writer Tom Stephenson, inspired by similar tracks in the USA. He proposed the idea in the *Daily Herald* in 1935 in an article titled 'Wanted: a long green trail', following the mass trespasses on Kinder Scout in the Thirties, which were pivotal in the creation of Britain's national parks and the universal 'Right to Roam'. However, it was to be another 30 years before the Pennine Way was opened, on April 24, 1965.

But it's not just the scenery that attracts the visitors, spectacular though that is.



The beginning of the route is gentle and sylvan

You can see historical locations such as the southern Pennines – birthplace of the Industrial Revolution – pass near the Haworth home of the Brontë sisters, follow the famous Settle-Carlisle railway and cross Hadrian's Wall.

An estimated quarter of a million ramblers use the path every year, and thousands of long-distance walkers

What to see in the Derbyshire section

Castleton

The village of Castleton, at the head of the Hope Valley, nestles at the foot of majestic Mam Tor, one of the largest and highest Iron Age hill forts in the Pennines, and the dramatic contours of Winnats Pass. It's the only place in the world where you'll find the semi-precious stone Blue John, seen to best effect in Treak Cliff Cavern and Blue John Cavern. Jewellery made from Blue John is sold in several local shops.

Peak Cavern boasts the largest natural cave entrance in Britain, while you can travel by boat along an underground canal to see the 'Bottomless Pit' in Speedwell Cavern. A steep climb to the ruins of Pevensey Castle, built by William Pevensey, illegitimate son of William the Conqueror in the 11th century, offers panoramic views across the Hope Valley.

Derwent, Howden and Ladybower reservoirs

Dubbed 'Derbyshire's Lake District', these three man-made dams near Bamford are popular with walkers, cyclists and horse riders seeking a relaxing day out in a tranquil setting.

Derwent reservoir achieved fame as the training ground for the RAF's 617 Squadron before its raids on German dams during the Second World War, and featured in the classic post-war film *The Dambusters*. A museum housed in the dam wall is dedicated to their exploits. The area was also home to the 'Tin Town' for workers who built both Howden and Derwent in the early 19th century; find out more at the Upper Derwent Visitor Centre.

The Moorland Visitor Centre

Located at the start of the Pennine Way in Edale, this flagship centre of the Moors for the Future Partnership provides a focus for moorland research and an inspirational experience for visitors to the Peak District National Park.

■ The Moorland Visitor Centre, Fieldhead, Edale, Hope Valley S33 7ZA, tel: 01433 670207, website: (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/visitor-centres/edale).

Standedge Tunnel and Visitor Centre

Visitors can pause en route to get right to the heart of the Pennines on a cruise through the longest, highest and deepest canal tunnel in Britain, on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

■ Website: (www.yorkshire.com).



The eco-friendly Moorland Peak District visitor centre at the start of the route in Edale



Can you make out the horse's head in this rock?



View down the valley from Kinder Scout

complete the route annually. This heavy use has boosted the local economies but also, inevitably, has led to erosion of the terrain in places, and teams of conservation workers have been helping preserve footpaths.

Large areas of peat have also disappeared, partly as a result of overgrazing by sheep: for example, the peat around the summit of Kinder Low has vanished to a radius of almost 200 yards. A five-year, £2.5m project was launched in 2011 to restore vast areas of the bare and degraded blanket peat landscape.

Indeed, while we were going up Kinder, we spotted a helicopter with a large tank slung below it spreading lime, seeds and fertiliser on the plateau.

Average walking time is 16 days, but for a first-timer about three weeks is not unusual. Most walkers head from south to north, keeping the wind generally behind them.

The Pennine Way Association says: "Everyone has different objectives relating to the Pennine Way."

The association has detailed a suggested walk of 18 days which could be extended to 21 days allowing for rest days and travel home.

Not having three weeks to spare, I've unavoidably had to focus much of this article on the southern section through the Peak District – perhaps appropriate as this was where it all started 50 years ago – but from contacts with walkers I can vouch for the rest of it being equally spectacular.

There are many guest houses, B&Bs, camp sites and youth hostels en route, though these are obviously limited in upland areas. You can book in advance and even have your luggage transferred between them.

On a multi-day walk, you're likely to encounter the British weather in all its many varieties, sometimes creating dangerous conditions, particularly in high, windswept and isolated locations.

The Pennine Way website warns: "As with all walks, sound planning is important. There are sections of the route, especially at each end, which require careful thought about accommodation; advance booking is advisable at most times of the year."

"The Pennine Way takes you into isolated country. That is part of the exhilaration, of course, but consider the challenges and responsibilities such

country brings with it. Pay close attention to detail in your choice of equipment. Brush up your navigation skills, carry the appropriate large-scale maps and know how to use them."

A more detailed description of the route will appear in *Choice* next month, but briefly, the Pennine Way begins its 268-mile journey at Edale in the Peak District. Fittingly, it crosses Kinder Scout, where the pioneering Mass Trespass changed the course of walking history.

The Yorkshire stretch takes you from the Peaks and drops you straight into the atmospheric moorland of West Yorkshire, before bisecting the Yorkshire Dales National

Park as the route makes its way northwards. The Cumbrian section crosses the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and joins the Hadrian's Wall Path at Gilsland. Then the Northumberland section runs from the North Pennines AONB, along the Hadrian's Wall Path past Housesteads Roman Fort and up through the Northumberland National Park.

The final legs of the walk go through the Cheviots before finishing one mile north of Northumberland in the Border village of Kirk Yetholm.

■ Next month: The route in detail, including Yorkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland.

Kinder Scout

At nearly 2100ft – the highest in the Peaks – Kinder Scout is a wild, wind-blown upland gritstone plateau. Its sometimes sinister-looking rock formations and bleak peat topping give it an almost lunar aspect.

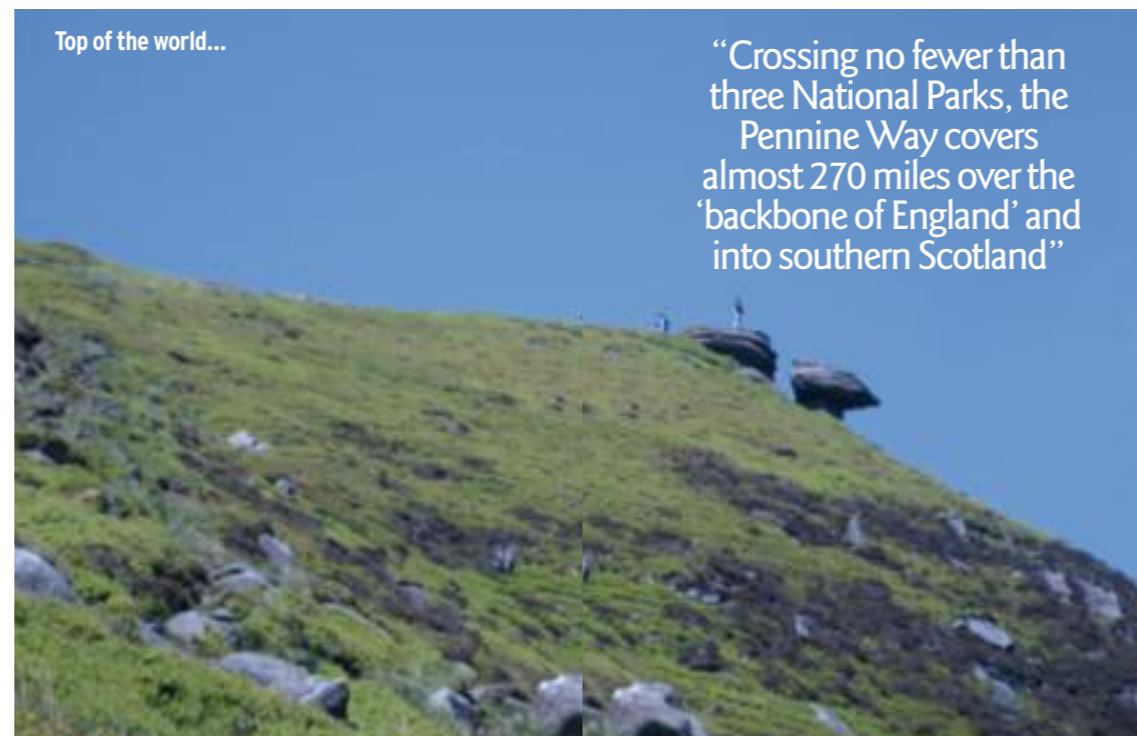
It's the grandest and biggest of the great upland areas of the 'Dark Peak'. In really good weather you can see Manchester and even Snowdonia.

The plateau rises steeply from the surrounding ground and its edges are studded with rocky outcrops and crags. On the western side, the River Kinder flows down in a spectacular waterfall.

The edge of the plateau is covered with deep cloughs or river valleys.

The most popular approach for walkers is either from Edale village or from Hayfield on to the north-western corner of the plateau.

Top of the world...



"Crossing no fewer than three National Parks, the Pennine Way covers almost 270 miles over the 'backbone of England' and into southern Scotland"

Kinder Mass Trespass

The Mass Trespass on Kinder Scout on Sunday April 24, 1932 has entered fell-walking folklore.

Members of the Lancashire branch of the British Workers' Sport Federation had been turned off Kinder by gamekeepers a few weeks earlier. They were frustrated at the lack of progress by the official ramblers' organisations in persuading landowners to grant the Right to Roam.

The protest had a strong political edge as it was supported by many Communists who saw the prohibitions as yet another example in the febrile Thirties of industrial workers being denied rights enjoyed by the wealthy.

On the day, around 400 ramblers set off from Bowden Bridge quarry. In a confrontation with the Duke of Devonshire's gamekeepers approaching the Kinder plateau, one keeper was slightly injured and they pressed on to the plateau. There, they met a Yorkshire group from Sheffield who had set off from Edale.

After celebrating on the summit, they returned respectively to Hayfield and Edale.

As they returned to Hayfield, however, five ramblers were arrested by police who had been alerted by the gamekeepers. Next day, one of the leaders, Benny Rothman, and four other protesters were charged with unlawful assembly and breach of the peace.

Their arrest and subsequent imprisonment sparked a massive wave of public sympathy and united the various ramblers' groups. A few weeks later, no fewer than 10,000 ramblers gathered for an access rally at Winnats Pass, near Castleton – still a record.

The pressure for greater access continued to

grow and it was gradually, if reluctantly, granted over the decades, culminating in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2004, which gave general access rights to the public for walking.

Coincidentally, the hotel where we stayed during our Peak District visit, Losehill House at Hope, had just discovered a connection with the Mass Trespass. The Arts and Crafts-style building was opened by the walking charity, the Co-operative Holidays Association, in 1914.

Owners Paul and Kathryn Roden said: "We recently discovered that the house also played host to the Sheffield and Manchester Ramblers who were planning the Mass Trespass, which dramatically laid the foundations of the creation of the national Right to Roam and ultimately the Peak District National Park – Britain's first."

Paul, who chairs the Visit Peak District organisation, explained how the hotel had been closed by the foot-and-mouth epidemic in 2001 under its former owners but was now playing a leading role in the area's tourism revival.

The Peaks' identity problem in the past has been that it is associated with no fewer than three English regions – the East Midlands, the North West and South Yorkshire. Now, says Paul, a co-ordinated marketing effort is taking place.

■ A Spirit of Kinder Day is held every year on the anniversary of the trespass, calling for access rights for walkers to be further extended. Plans are already being drawn up for next year's event to be held in Hayfield, the starting point of the 1932 protest. The Friends of Kinder Trespass scheme has been launched to raise funds to open a visitor centre at Hayfield to commemorate the history and achievements of the demonstration.

Passport to the Pennine Way

Getting there

■ **By train:** Both ends of the Way are accessible by public transport. Edale railway station is about five minutes' walk from the start of the route. It is well served by trains from both Manchester and Sheffield, and their regular links to London and other areas of the UK, on the Hope Valley Line - where there are also Transpeak Walks, station-to-station guided walks. Glossop has frequent train services from Manchester, and both lines operate regular Folk Trains, with live music en route and at various venues in Glossop, Hathersage and Edale. For full details of train services, see: (www.traveline.org.uk), for information about Folk Trains: (www.hvhptp.org.uk/folktran.htm) and for details of Transpeak Walks: (www.transpeakwalks.co.uk). For general rail enquiries, tel: 08457 484950, website: (www.nationalrail.co.uk)

■ **By bus:** There are limited bus services to Edale. At the northern end of the trail, Kirk Yetholm has a bus service to Kelso, for connections to all parts of the country and rail services at Berwick-upon-Tweed. For details of bus services and other public transport, contact Traveline, tel: 0871 200 2233, website: (www.traveline.org.uk)

■ **By car:** The Pennine Way is within a couple of hours' drive of many major population centres in the North and Midlands.

Where to stay

■ We stayed at the luxury Losehill House Hotel and Spa, Lose Hill Lane, off Edale Road, Hope, which describes itself as the only four-star hotel in the heart of the Peak District. Our bedroom had a wonderful view of the sheep-grazed hills, and the hotel has a fine dining restaurant, The Orangery (see below). My partner particularly enjoyed the indoor heated pool, sauna and steam room, and

there are also treatment rooms and an outdoor hot tub on the terrace. The lounge and restaurant furniture is all hand-crafted by a contemporary chair and sofa designer and manufacturer.

Tel: 01433 621219, website: (www.losehillhouse.co.uk)

■ Natural England produces a free accommodation guide. This can be ordered from the website: (www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way).

Other sites include:

■ Crowden Camping and Caravanning Club, Woodhead Road, Crowden, Glossop SK13 1HZ. A perfect pit-stop for walkers who need to pitch their tent at the end of a challenging stretch of the Pennine Way. Bookings, tel: 0845 130 7633 or 024 7647 5426, site: 01457 866057, website: (www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/crowden)

■ Oaker Farm Cottages, Lose Hill Lane, off Edale Road, Hope S33 6AF. Four-star self-catering accommodation consisting of three cottages created from a former dairy and stables in a tranquil setting, tel: 01433 621955

■ Round Meadow Barn, Parsons Lane, Hope S33 6RB. A four-bedroomed B&B at the foot of Win Hill in the heart of the Hope Valley, with easy access to all walking routes, tel: 01433 621347/07836 689422

■ Stonecroft Country Guest House, Grindsbrook, Edale S33 7ZA. A period country B&B with an emphasis on elegance and comfort, tel: 01433 670262/07879 427937

■ The Old Hall Hotel, Market Place, Hope S33 6RH. A 500-year-old inn with five rooms ranging from a single to four-poster suites, tel: 01433 620160/07966 244364

■ Underleigh House B&B, Lose Hill Lane, off Edale Road, Hope S33 6AF: Award-winning five-star accommodation in a secluded cottage and barn conversion with magnificent views and breakfasts featuring local and homemade specialities, tel: 01433 621372, website: (www.underleighhouse.co.uk)

■ Wind in the Willows Hotel, Derbyshire Level, off Sheffield Road, Glossop SK13 7PT. An early-Victorian country house hotel, in the foothills of the Pennines yet close to the services and amenities of Glossop, featuring oak-panelled rooms, log fires and traditional cuisine, tel: 01457 86800



■ Quality accommodation to suit all pockets and preferences can also be found in the nearby villages Castleton and Bamford, website: (www.visitpeakdistrict.com).

Where to eat

■ Under award-winning head chef Darren Goodwin, the Orangery Restaurant at Losehill House Hotel and Spa obtains its ingredients from local producers where possible, and has been awarded the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark. Since taking over the hotel in 2007, owners Paul and Kathryn Roden have built up a collection of artisan and ethical suppliers who help provide a constantly changing menu. It has been awarded two rosettes for cuisine by the AA and was also included in the Michelin guide. To make a reservation, tel: 01433 621219

■ We also ate at the nearby Cheshire Cheese, a 16th century inn in Hope, with excellent traditional home-cooked pub food, an affable landlord and featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

Find out more

■ For further information on the Peak District and Derbyshire stretch of the Pennine Way, see the website: (www.visitpeakdistrict.com)

■ For the other National Park areas covered by the Way, see: (www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk) and (www.yorkshiredales.org.uk), as well as: (www.yorkshire.com)

■ For more general information, see: (www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way), (www.thepennineway.co.uk) and (www.penninewayassociation.co.uk).



Official start of the Pennine Way at Edale