

Pots & Pans

Start: Cross Keys Inn, Running Hill Gate

Distance: 7.3km/4.5 miles

Time: 2.5 hours

Total Ascent: 280 metres/918 feet

Introduction

Starting at the eighteenth century Cross Keys Inn, above Uppermill, this classic ridgeline traverse offers virtually uninterrupted breathtaking views throughout its course and visits one of Saddleworth's most recognisable landmarks in this 'lost' corner of Yorkshire's ancient West Riding.

Walk Description

This high level ridgeline walk, which offers a wealth of panoramic views, starts from the Cross Keys Inn which was built in 1745 and situated on the old Marsden Packhorse route. It opened as a tavern in 1763 and still retains many of its original features and character. In addition to being a popular country pub, it is the home of Oldham Mountain Rescue Team and Saddleworth Runners Club.

From the pub, the route follows Running Hill Lane before ascending a track to reach Running Hill Pits, which are a popular playground for climbers. At the top of the track, pass through the quarries and along a faint path to reach an old stone ruin, built in 1836. From here the route follows a faint footpath which leads to a trig point upon Broadstone Hill. First erected by the Ordnance Survey in 1948, it was knocked down by vandals in March 1998 and, inspired by a local hill-walker and fell-runner called Frank Sykes, was rebuilt by members of Saddleworth Runners Club on Remembrance Sunday of the same year. A nearby memorial plaque has since been erected in Frank's memory.

From the trig point, the route crosses the moor to reach Alderman's Hill, where a fabulous vista unfolds. Local legend has it that the boulder-strewn flanks of Alderman Hill and Alphin Pike were the homes of two giants named Alderman and Alphin. It is said that the two giants were at first friends, until they both fell in love with a beautiful water nymph called Rimmon, who resided in the bubbling waters of

Chew Brook, in the deep valley below. Alphin eventually won the affections of Rimmon, which caused Alderman to slump into a state of jealousy. After a period of quarrelling, the two giants engaged in mortal combat, throwing giant boulders at each other across the valley. The boulders, which scatter the faces of these two hills, are said to be the result of their battle. Eventually Alphin was struck by a deadly blow and died where he fell. Devastated at the death of her beloved, it is said that Rimmon jumped to her death from the crags above Chew Valley. According to the legend, Rimmon was buried with her lover upon the slopes of Alphin Pike.

Descending the grassy slopes of Alderman Hill, cross the moor to reach the war memorial at Pots & Pans. The cenotaph, which commemorates the men of Saddleworth who fought and died in the two world wars, was designed by architect Gilbert Howcroft, who himself fought in the First World War. Every Remembrance Sunday, hundreds of local people, including a full brass band, climb the 1,400ft hill to pay their respects to the country's fallen.

To the south of the cenotaph is a large boulder, known locally as Pots & Pans Rock. On top of this gritstone rock are several holes, known as the 'pots & pans', which have formed over thousands of years of weather erosion. Also known as the Druid Stones, it is believed that it was a place of druid worship. In times gone by, people believed that the water found in the 'bowls' had healing properties and was good for curing eye problems.

Before continuing your journey, why not take a seat on the bench located in front of the obelisk and cast your eyes across the picturesque villages of Saddleworth below?

From the war memorial the route now descends from the high moors to return to the Cross Keys Inn, where a refreshing pint and some delicious home-cooked food await the weary walker.

This walk summary has been compiled from the original route which features in the local guidebook, *Saddleworth Discovery Walks*. The full route description, a map and detailed information about points of historical interest are contained in the book, which is available to buy from www.saddleworthdiscoverywalks.co.uk or at local stockists.