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Kinder Scout

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Pay and Display Car Park Edale (SK 124853)
Ordnance Survey map	OL1 The Peak District – Dark Peak Area
Distance	10.5 Miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk starts at the hamlet of Edale and takes you over the exposed plateau of Kinder Scout to Kinder Downfall via Jacobs Ladder, across the plateau to the southern edge to see some of the weird shaped rocks and the very steep descent of Crowden Clough. There are good views across the Cheshire Plain to Manchester and South to the Mam Tor ridge. A paradox of this walk is that to appreciate the best of Kinder Downfall with its 30 metre waterfall, there needs to have been plenty of recent rains yet the walk as a whole is best done after a long dry spell as Kinder Scout is essentially a huge peat bog! From Kinder Downfall there is an alternative route to Edale via Grinds Brook (shown on the sketch map in green) with a probably better defined path but this would miss out some of the weird shaped rocks and the famous Pym Chair.

Kinder Scout is famous as the site of a mass trespass in 1932 from which stemmed the majority of the public rights of access to the countryside that we enjoy today. The moorland is designated as “open country” with “Right to Roam” access.

Some safety points. Firstly, I can almost guarantee that if cloud descends on the featureless plateau, you will get lost unless you have a compass and know how to use it. The section from the cairn across to Pym Chair is extremely boggy and progress is impeded by metal shuttering installed to retain moisture. So, it is hard work! Secondly, the descent of Crowden Clough is incredibly steep and slippery after rain. Walking Poles will help. This is also a good walk on which to use gaiters.

Edale is most easily reached by turning north off the A6187 at Hope between Hathersage and Castleton. There is a pay and display car park with toilets at Edale from where the walk starts (SK 124853).

Start: Leave the car park via the pedestrian access next to the toilets and turn right passing the Moorland Centre and Edale Parish Church. Continue to the Nags Head pub and here take the path to the left signed by the finger post for the Pennine Way (with the acorn symbol) and Upper Booth (SK 123860). At a stile, keep straight ahead on the Pennine Way. Stay on the main track ignoring any routes off to the right.

At the enclave of Upper Booth, the track passes between the farm buildings turning left past a red post box in the barn wall. As you get to a junction with a red telephone

box, turn right staying on the broad track (SK 102853). A finger post confirms the Pennine Way and Jacobs Ladder 1 mile. Cross the stream and over the bridge ignoring the footpath on the right and stay on the main track to Lee Farm where there is a small information centre (SK 096855).

The track passes between the buildings and soon you come to Jacobs Ladder indicated by a National Trust Sign. It derived its name from one Jacob Marshall who farmed in Edale in the 1700s and cut steps in the hillside to make it easier to climb. The steps are now “manicured” stone ones. Climb these.

Where the track at a couple of junctions, keep right and head for the large stone outcrop you can see comprising 8 main “blocks” at Edale Rocks (SK 079867) . There are some good sandwich spots here!

Keep straight ahead here and you will soon catch sight of the trig. point (SK 079870). The track passes to the left of it, heading north before bending north north east. Follow the edge of the plateau and if the weather is clear you will see Manchester to the west and plane activity at the airport.

The sight of Kinder Downfall is unmistakable, a deep cleft in the plateau with the stream tumbling over the edge (though very tranquil on my visit) (SK 083889). From here, turn right and follow the stream across the plateau. The path varies between right and left of the stream, is indistinct in some places and could be tricky if the stream is in full flow.

At a fork marked by a small cairn (SK089884), the “official” footpath branches left (alternative route in green on the sketch map) and heads directly to Grindsbrook Clough but this walk remains with the main stream, making use of the open access rights, heading south to see some of the unusual rocks not least Pym Chair. If the peat is boggy, I recommend you stay on the alternative route.

As the stream peters out, bear left. There is a faint path but you have to weave around some metal pilings inserted into the peat as part of the preservation works. As you reach the higher ground, you will see stone cairn. Head for this and you will then see a large outcrop of rocks known as The Woolpacks on the southern edge of the plateau – Pym Chair is just to their right (west) (SK 088870). Make your way across the moor to these.

Turn left at the rocks and follow the faint path descending until you meet the clear main track. Turn left on this and follow it for about 1½ miles. You come to Crowden Clough (SK 095872), another unmistakable cleft in the plateau with the very steep path starting in an easterly direction at its head.

As Crowden Clough levels out, follow the stream down the valley to Upper Booth then turn left and retrace your steps to Edale.

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