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Agden Reservoir from Low Bradfield

- Length 2.5 miles
- Time – 1.5 hours
- Grade – Gentle ascents. A short section on roads. The paths are well defined.
- Start – Car park, The Sands, Low Bradfield
- Parking – as above
- Public transport – Buses 61 and 62 from Hillsborough stop at Fair House Lane / Smithy Bridge Road, Low Bradfield.
- Refreshments – The Schoolrooms Café, The Plough Inn, Low Bradfield; Old Horns Inn, High Bradfield.
- Public Toilets – Low Bradfield
- Grid Reference SK 2626 9204

Description - Starting in Low Bradfield the walk climbs gently, then after a short section on a quiet road the route goes around Agden Reservoir, using a path created by Yorkshire Water. The route crosses the stream by a footbridge and then returns to Low Bradfield through woodland by the reservoir. There is a short final section on roads..



Looking across Agden reservoir

Route Instructions

1. At the entrance to the car park turn right and go down the track which runs along the rear of the car park. (See Points of interest 1). (Take care as the flag stones on this path are uneven and can be slippery.)
2. Do not cross the first bridge, instead continue up by the stream to the next bridge.
3. Cross the bridge and go up the stone steps (2), and then take the path up the hill beside a wooden fence to the road (Smallfield Lane). Beware of traffic
4. Turn left and go along the road.
5. Continue along the road until you reach the entrance gate to the permissive path around Agden reservoir (3). The gate is clearly signed by Yorkshire Water. (B)



6. Follow the path round the reservoir. As the reservoir narrows watch out for the path up to the right. This is marked by the red path markers. The path rises from the side of the reservoir through the trees and up to a wooden gate onto a track.



7. Turn left and go down the track until you reach a wooden bridge over the stream on the left. (4)
8. Cross the footbridge over the stream that flows into the reservoir. (The site of the former Agden House (5) is up the track across the stone bridge.)
9. Turn left off the bridge and go through the stile (6).
10. Take the path through the woods by the reservoir.

The path swings into the woods at points rather than following the shore.

11. As you reach the dam wall take the exit from the path onto the road.
12. Turn left and follow the road down towards Low Bradfield past the ruined barn on the right (7).
13. At the T junction turn left onto Fairhouse Lane (8) and go down the hill into the village.
14. The car park is off to the left and the bus stop straight ahead.

Points of Interest

1. The Sands.

A group of cottages once stood at the far side of the bridge but were demolished in the 1960's. People living there in the last century had to fetch water from the stream as there was no mains water in the cottages.

2. Kirkgate Steps.

The Kirkgate Steps (also known as the Fairy Steps) lead up towards the church at High Bradfield. It is thought this was an old burial path to High Bradfield Church.

3. Agden reservoir.

The reservoir was completed in 1869 and holds 560 million gallons of water. The word 'agden' means 'valley of the oak trees'.

4. Agden Bog Nature Reserve.

The area on the right of the track is a nature reserve known as Agden Bog. It is home to a number of rare plants, including bog asphodel, sundew and various sphagnum mosses.

5. Agden House.

A large farmhouse, dating from the 1600's, was situated at the top of the path to the left until it was demolished in the 1970's. Today only the barn and part of the garden remains. Continue along the track ahead of you after crossing the bridge if you wish to see the site.

6. Agden Lodge.

Although it is not visible from this walk, there is a large house on the hillside above the reservoir, surrounded by pine trees. This is Agden Lodge, constructed in 1870, for Samuel Fox of Stocksbridge. It is thought he used the house as a shooting lodge, although he never lived there himself. It is a private house today.

7. Barn.

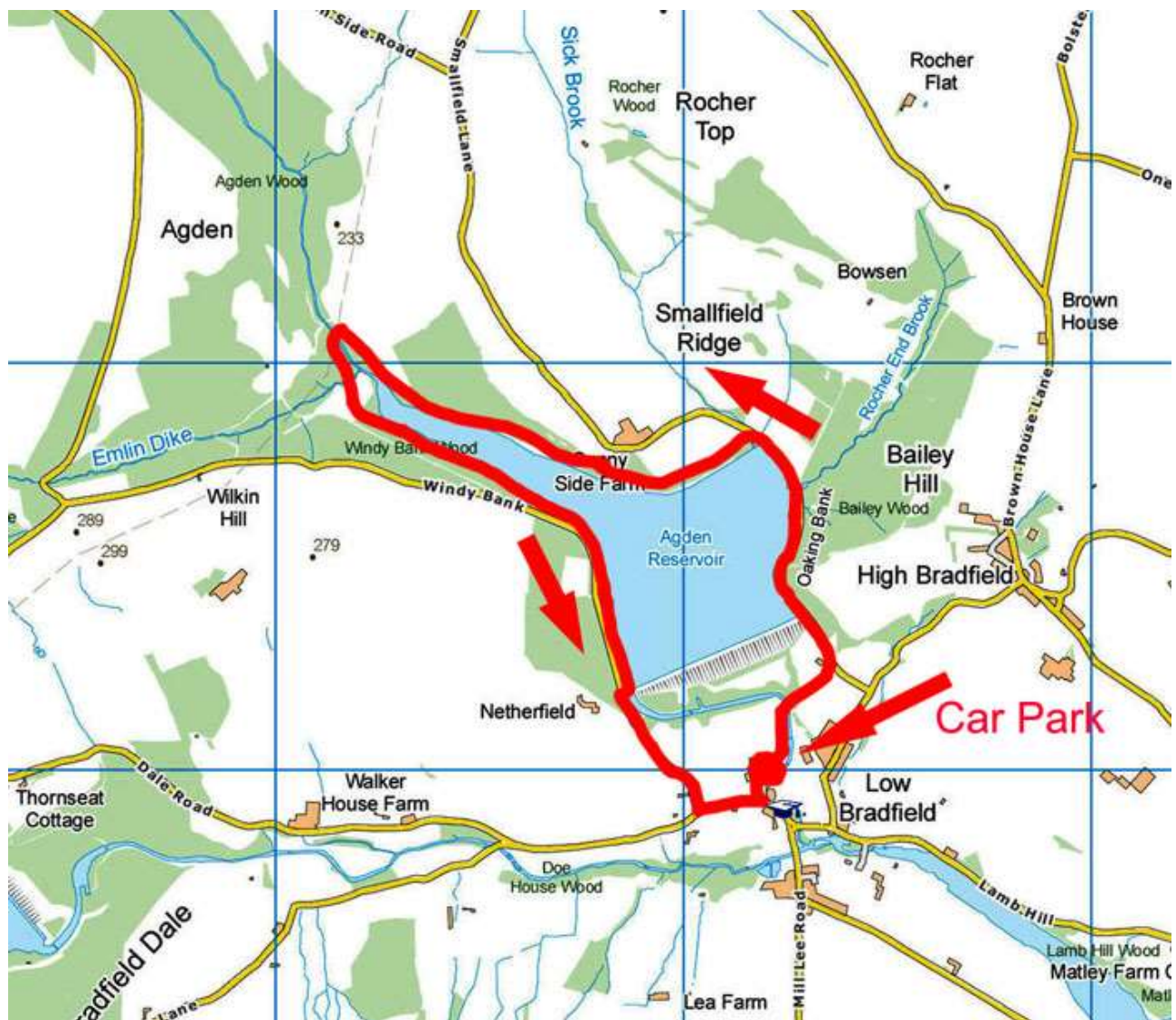
The ruined barn near at the end of the road has a plaque on the wall stating that in 1826 the curate was solely responsible for paying for the rebuilding of the barn, with an inscription in Latin.

8. Fairhouse Lane.

Fairhouse Cottages used to stand where the bus turning circle now is. They were demolished in the 1970's. Fairhouse Farm stands below the turning circle and is one of the oldest houses in the area, dating from the 1630's. It was originally called Swinden House.

Acknowledgements: Malcolm Nunn, Archivist, Bradfield Parish Council.

References: High and Low Bradfield Conservation Area Appraisal, Peak District National Park Authority, January 2010; A.H.Smith (1961) 'The Place Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire', Cambridge University Press.



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