

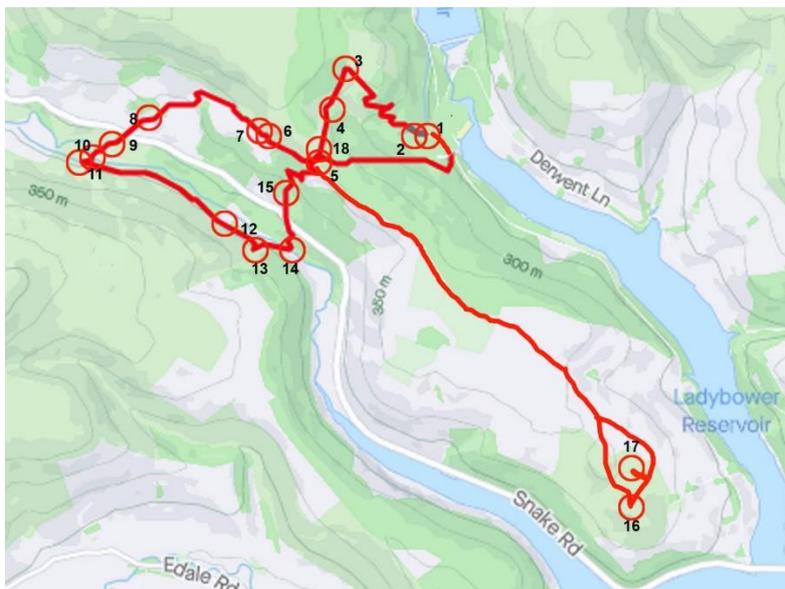
Crook Hill Geocross V74

Crook Hill overlooks the Ladybower and the Derwent Reservoirs, a sentinel gritstone tor.

Crook Hill is the dominant tor and has been awarded an 'Ethel' designation, but in fact Lady Crook Hill is quite a bit higher.

Highlight of this Crook Hill Geocross is the Alphabet Stone which you can easily fail to see it even close up. It took me thee visits.

Each of the locations can be found on the route below. The locations are listed in order and sufficient background is included to help you triangulate your position to identify the location



Start from Fairholmes car park.

Location 1 OS ref SK 17200 89200

Lockerbrook path gate

W3W insurance.agreeing.dumps



This steep path through the woods is quite recent. The bottom part was used in the 1920s to build the Ashop Conduit. Above the conduit bridge it deteriorates into a rocky path until it reaches the forestry road zigzags. It then escapes left into the woods again before emerging to a great view towards Lockerbrook Farm.

Location 2 OS ref SK 17146 89209

Ashop conduit

W3W report.comply.tiles



Derwent reservoir outfall

The Ashop Conduit is a concrete lined gravity fed channel which was engineered to deliver 'captured' water from the River Ashop into the Derwent Reservoir (not the Ladybower). The Derwent Reservoir delivers water to Sheffield via the Rivelin Tunnel, and to the Bamford Water Treatment Works for aqueduct pipeline gravity flow to the cities of Derby, Nottingham and Leicester, In the 1920s the Derwent Valley Water Board devised this means of increasing the capacity of the Derwent Reservoir, before the Ladybower was built. This part of the conduit has just emerged from the 975 metre long, 1.8 metre diameter tunnel beneath Hagg Side. In times of high flow the channel is brim full and the torrent is rushing to leap into the Derwent Reservoir 100 metres above the dam wall.

Location 3 OS ref SK 16561 89635

Lockerbrook packhorse trail

W3W squish.conductor.change



Lockerbrook Farm was an important place for hundreds of years on a packhorse trail which led up and over the high ground above the often flooded Derwent Valley to northern destinations. Turning off the Snake Road past Rowlee Farm or Hagg Farm cuts a lot of distance off the journey.

The packhorse trail now serves mountain bikers and walkers.

Location 4 OS ref SK 16477 89419

Lockerbrook Farm

W3W lucky.blown.carry



The present day Lockerbrook Farm was built in 1756 and would have served refreshments to packhorse trail user for 150 years. When the Derwent Valley Reservoirs project began it was bought up and emptied by the Derwent Valley Water Board.

When the policy of 'no habitation within the water catchment' was abandoned the farm was restored in 1964 by volunteers and became an Outdoor Activities Centre. It has magnificent views over the Ladybower Reservoir.

Location 5 OS ref SK 16379 89067

Haggtor crossroads

W3W cope.tagging.disengage



Historically an important junction of bridleways. One continues north-south along the high ground, north to Alport Castles and Westend, and south towards Derwent and Ashopton. These two trails lead down into the Ashop Valley, one passing Rowlee Farm and the other Hagg Farm.

Location 6 OS ref SK 16039 89229

Alphabet Stone

W3W lessening.shift.croaking



An interesting piece of history sits un-noticed on the hillside in open view above Bellhagg Barn. Most people won't see it, and even those who go there specially to see it may not find it.

The Alphabet Stone is situated on the west-facing hillside above Bellhagg Barn, on the road which links Rowlee Farm to Lockerbrook.

The Alphabet Stone is a boulder of Millstone Grit which has a planed face on which the English alphabet and the numbers 1-10 had been carved. It was probably made in the early 1800s and the text is now in poor condition with some of it barely decipherable.

The part bearing the number 1-10 is missing, probably when the stone was vandalised.

The local shepherd is thought to have carved the alphabet and numbers onto it, in the early 1800s. He taught local children from the nearby farms and was able to keep an eye on them from the windows of Bellhagg Barn when he had other tasks to carry out.

It was used as a Sunday School in the early 1800s.

Location 7 OS ref SK 15991 89246

Bellhagg Barn gate

W3W windpipe.mega.abstracts



Bellhagg Barn is a traditional stone walled and stone roofed barn. The lower wing has windows and a door and would have provided living accommodation for a farmworker, probably the shepherd.

It is perched high on the hillside just below the open moor of Alport. Above the track the sheep would wander freely over the moor. In severe weather the sheep would search out shelter behind stone walls below the moor, but the shepherd would try to rescue any which became snowed in.

Location 8 OS ref SK 15375 89331

Rowlee Farm - gate

W3W goggles.denoting.conclude



This rebuild of Rowlee Farm has a date stone of 1849. The ill-positioned weeping ash tree spoils an otherwise grand frontage. The farm sits by the well-used packhorse trail leading to Lockerbrook and Derwent

Location 9 OS ref SK 15365 89326

Rowlee Low Barn

W3W surveyors.arch.marzipan



Rowlee Low Barn was built in 1865. This is stone with a slate roof. The one storey L shaped building has doors and windows and was probably used for farm workers accomodation and stables. Now abandoned, but this fine building was meant to last.

The road over Snake Pass connecting Sheffield to Glossop was very rough. At Rowlee Bridge travellers split to go east to Sheffield or over the bridge and south to Hope. The Romans crossed here to connect their forts at Glossop and Brough.

Location 10 OS ref SK 14959 89326

Rowlee Bridge

W3W stirs.price.puffed



Before the A57 road was improved as a turnpike toll road in 1818, this was an important crossing of the River Ashop taking pack horses and carts over Hope Cross and on to Hope.

Rowlee Bridge has substantial stone pillars, build to withstand the turbulence of a flooded River Ashop, trundling gritstone rocks along its bed.

There are few bridges over the River Ashop. They need to be very high because the river volume increases dramatically after rain. There are three footbridges, and a forestry bridge further north.

Location 11 OS ref SK 14895 89038

Ashop conduit bridge

W3W buyers.commenced.demanding



The Derwent Valley Water Board was formed by Act of Parliament in 1899 to construct new reservoirs to supply the growing cities of Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Sheffield. Howden Reservoir opened in 1912 and Derwent Reservoir in 1916. Water passed by pipeline to filtration works at Yorkshire Bridge, then by aqueduct to cities lower down the Derwent Valley. But by the 1920s the water supply was found to be inadequate to meet the rising demand.

The capture of water from the River Ashop was an important and clever engineering strategy of the Derwent Valley reservoirs project, and was completed in 1928. It significantly increases the catchment of the Derwent Reservoir, by adding rainwater from over 6000 hectares in the Ashop valleys, thereby providing more water for the cities long before the third and largest reservoir, the Ladybower, was built.

The River Ashop is 'captured' just above the junction with the River Alport; water follows in a concrete channel which drops down into a gravity fed siphon with a pipe bridge over the bed of the River Ashop. The siphon pressure pushes the water up the other side, then through a 1.8 metre diameter 975 metre long tunnel which discharges the captured water into the Derwent Reservoir, above Fairholmes.

The remaining water of the River Ashop now flows into the Ladybower Reservoir, which was completed in 1945.

Location 12 OS ref SK 15817 88625

Ashop conduit grating

W3W village.butchers.sweetened



The river channel has steep sides and any sheep unlucky enough to fall in eventually end up here.

Location 13 OS ref SK 15987 88503

Deep chamber

W3W clouding.procured.panting



This stone chamber has a ladder and locked manhole cover on top. Possibly part of the Ashop Siphon, a spillover for excess water to be returned to the River Ashop.

Location 14 OS ref SK 16219 88469

River Ashop bridge

W3W walked.sings.trembles



Haggwater Bridge is the last crossing point over the River Ashop before the Ladybower Reservoir. It is built high above the river because very high volumes of water are carried after rain, and lesser bridges have been washed away.

Usefully sited for mountain bikers who are probably the bulk of users. There is an electronic monitoring station in place on the left railings.

Location 15 OS ref SK 16178 88836

Hagg Farm

W3W respects.stockpile.cautious



Hagg Farm has been a Nottinghamshire County Council Outdoor Activities Centre since 1989.

In a previous life Hagg Farm, like nearby Rowlee Farm, would have served refreshments to packhorse trail users.

Location 16 OS ref SK 18466 87106

Crook Hill Stone Circle

W3W manage.manicured.kebabs



Crook Hill might have a Bronze Age stone circle. It was built some 5000 years ago. Or it might be the remains of a kerb to a cairn. It's claim to be a stone circle comes from its carefully selected site below an impressive pair of summits, a location for seasonal rituals.

Only two standing stones remain, but there are two others which have fallen and are still in place as part of a circle, within a rubble bank 7 metres diameter. Other stones are partially buried.

There are twelve stone circles marked on the OS map of the Peak District, but there are others. This might be the thirteenth, and the most northerly. There is a theory that the migrating Neolithic people who came to mine lead throughout the White Peak, brought the concept of stone circles with them and gradually spread onto the Eastern Moors. Their stone circle building skills were at their peak when they constructed Arbor Low, but waned over the next few thousand years. This may be one of the last.

Location 17 OS ref SK 18340 86842

Crook Hill

W3W forwarded.walked.vaulting



Crook Hill is a gritstone tor 374 metres high. It forms a landmark at the entrance to the Upper Derwent Valley, and stands above the National Trust owned Crookhill Farm. A few hundred metres north is a similar and slightly taller tor, Lady Crook Hill, 382 metres high. Both have craggy west facing cliffs

Crook Hill is one of the 'Ethels', a select list of 95 hills in or on the fringe of the Peak District, mostly over 400 metres height. They were named 'Ethels' in 2021 by the Peak District and Yorkshire Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, a countryside charity, as a tribute to Ethel Haythornthwaite. Ethel was born into the Sheffield Ward family, daughter of one of the largest industrialists in the Steel City. She was very well connected and passionate about the countryside. She was also well educated and an expert letter writer, and she knew how to use her connections to make things happen. One of her first major achievements was to raise a public appeal to purchase the 747 acre Longshaw Estate which was threatened with development. She bought the property in 1928 and immediately gave it to the National Trust. She

continued to campaign for the countryside and championed the establishment of the Peak District as Britains first National Park in 1951.

Over half of the 'Ethels' are long established trig points. Most have public access but a few are on private land. Crook Hill is now on Open Access Land thanks to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Climbing to the summit of Crook Hill was not allowed in the seventies when access was restricted to footpaths which don't lead to the summit. It makes a good starting point for a 35 km circuit of all the Upper Derwent Valley summits.

Despite it's highly prominent location it doesn't get many visitors.



Location 18 OS ref SK 16376 89059

Hagg Side footpath stile

W3W printout.ponies.coast



This stile leads to an alternative descent to Fairholmes car park, and is not shared with mountain bikes.