**Introduction**

Parking- A672 Ripponden Road, Denshaw- Layby opposite the Ram’s Head Pub  
OS Explorer Map OL21 South Pennines - Grid ref: SD978119 – See Map02.jpg

A moderate 5 mile walk along good moorland tracks and paths, meadows and alongside reservoirs. Muddy in part. (6 stiles).

**Directions**

1. From the lay-by go uphill along the road for approx 100yds and take the footpath sign on the right –signed Castleshaw. Continue along the track until Reddycon Res. is reached.

2. As the track bears right **take the path directly ahead**, over the stile to the right, over the walkway and continue around the reservoir (keeping the reservoir on the right). At the top end of the reservoir cross the footbridge and continue along the path around the reservoir until a locked gate is almost reached. Duck under the wire fence to the left, bear left to reach the main track. Turn left and continue uphill. At the 1st signpost turn right (signposted Castleshaw 2.25miles).

Continue along the path. At the end of a wall on the left, a gate is reached.

3. Go through the gate then immediately through another gate continuing straight on along a walled track–Dowry Road.  
Continue down Dowry Road.

4. At the end of the wall turn right along a track. There is evidence of a large ruined dwelling and deep cellars as you continue along the track. When a track joins to the left continue straight ahead ultimately heading to the embankment that separates Crook Gate Reservoir and Dowry Reservoir. Before reaching the metal railings at the embankment take the stile on the left and continue to along the path to walk along the embankment. On reaching the far side turn left and continue along the grassy path passing the concrete walkway with railings and eventually reaching the main road A640 (at the corner of the dam between Dowry Res and New Years Bridge Res.).

5. Turn right and continue along the road with New Years Bridge Res on the left for approx 200yds. At the footpath sign turn right into the meadow. Bear left diagonally across the field following the contour of the hill. Aim for the barn to the left of the meadow when it comes into view.
Go along the track with the farm conglomeration to the left, to meet a track and wooden gate showing Oldham Way sign.

6. Continue through the gate and take the sunken lane up and then bearing slightly left to reach a gate and the caravan site. Continue through taking note of the sign to keep to the edge of the field and eventually reaching the main A672 road.

7. Cross the road and turn right up the road. At the farm go along the farm track below the farm gate and continue along the path that passes directly behind a house painted white at the back. Continue over the next meadow, over the high ladder stile and into the llama field. Continue straight across, dipping down the meadow then up continuing to the gate ahead. Through gates and onto farm track

Turn right up the track which comes out on the main road A672 at the Rams Head. Turn right on the main road and back to the car in the layby opposite.

**Interesting Facts**

**Dowry Castle**
As we walk down Dowry Lane towards Dowry Reservoir extensive ruins can be seen behind the wall to the right. The piles of stone, lintels, evidence of walls and deep arched cellars are all that remain of Dowry Castle once owned by John Gartside.

Denshaw was once part of the Friarmere estate that was owned by John Gartside together with farms, mills, meadows and moorland. (On the A640 road that passes over the embankment between New Years Bridge Reservoir and Dowry Reservoir an old milestone situated midway mentions the name “Friarmere”.)

John Gartside made his fortune in the brewing business and commissioned a grand mansion. Dowry Castle was built in 1870.

The Gothic style property overlooked the valley where Dowry Reservoir now lies. Because of the construction of the reservoir on his land Oldham Corporation bought most of the estate in 1878 and the remainder in 1884. Dowry Castle was demolished soon after 1897 having stood for less than 30 years.

Work on the NewYears Bridge, Crook Gate, Dowry and Readycon Reservoirs commenced in 1876 and finally opened in 1883 as the Denshaw Waterworks.