Dambuster Dams

This is a 10.5 mile ride around the Derwent and Howden reservoirs in the Peak District National Park. The dams in this valley were used by the [Dambusters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Chastise) as training for their historic mission in WWII. The route is tarmac on the outward leg and a wide gravel track on the return. There are a few steep gradients on the way but they are only short and can be pushed up in a few minutes.

1. Start from the [Upper Derwent Visitor Centre](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/visitor-centres/derwent) [(GR172893)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417245&y=389350&z=120&sv=417245,389350&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=671&ax=417245&ay=389350&lm=0). Take the exit road from the visitors centre building and go up a short steep tarmac climb to the top car park. Go straight on through the top car park and follow the exit round down through a couple of bends to where it ends at a junction with a road. Turn right on the road and follow it a short distance to a roundabout [(GR171893)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417167&y=389387&z=115&sv=417167,389387&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=625&ax=417167&ay=389387&lm=0).

2. Go straight on across the roundabout, taking the first exit. Go up the road as it climbs to the top of the Derwent Dam, with a memorial to the Dambusters on the right. Continue straight ahead and follow the road for some miles as it winds its way up the western edge of the Derwent Reservoir. After some miles the road goes up another steep climb to the top of the Howden Dam. At the top continue following the road ahead, along the western edge of the Howden Reservoir, to where it ends at a gate [(GR168939)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=416802&y=393904&z=115&sv=416802,393904&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=625&ax=416802&ay=393904&lm=0).

3. Go through the gate and follow the wide gravel track ahead, still by the Howden Reservoir. After a while the track goes up a short steep climb. Once at the top follow the wide gravel track as it descends gently to a junction with a gate on the right [(GR169951)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=416902&y=395116&z=115&sv=416902,395116&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=625&ax=416902&ay=395116&lm=0). Go through the gate and follow the main track, signed for the Slippery Stones crossing, down to a stone bridge. After the crossing the bridge follow the gritstone track as it bears left before coming to a junction [(GR169952)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=416964&y=395236&z=115&sv=416964,395236&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=625&ax=416964&ay=395236&lm=0).

4. Turn right and climb the gritstone track to a gate. After the gate the track bears left before going through a long right hand bend that descends gently into the trees. Follow this track all the way back down the eastern edge of the Howden then Derwent reservoirs. There are a few fun descents on the way. After passing the Derwent Dam the gravel track ends at a gate. Go through the gate and follow the tarmac road straight ahead to the following junction [(GR174894)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417484&y=389448&z=115&sv=417484,389448&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=625&ax=417484&ay=389448&lm=0).

5. Turn sharp right and descend the road. At the bottom the road bears left underneath the Derwent Dam. It’s always a wonderful sight but if you can see it when the overflow water is running down the front of it, even better. Continue following the road left then after crossing a bridge climb the road to where it ends at the previously visited roundabout [(GR171893)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417167&y=389387&z=115&sv=417167,389387&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=625&ax=417167&ay=389387&lm=0). Turn left and take the next exit, which is the entrance to the Upper Derwent Visitor Centre. Descend the road and return to the Visitor Centre to complete the ride.