

On running the Nine Trigs

Maps are dangerous things. You get them down from the shelf, open them up, start planning routes, and before you know it you're out knackered on the hills on Easter Sunday.

My mistake, obviously, was not actually measuring on the map just how far I'd be running. But the idea was a simple one. Some years ago I'd devised the Six Trigs route round the Hebden Bridge watershed, a nice, logical, route which provided a twenty-something mile challenge, just about right (so I thought) for a good day out. Who'd want anything else? And then (this is a year or so back now) I open up my Torrier and – guess what? – find that John and Kath have been at work devising the *Seven Trigs!* Oneupmanship (oneuppersonship) or what?

This was not something to be taken lying down. I pulled out the South Pennines map and got to work.

John and Kath's route took them from Tod north to the Bride Stones and Hoof Stones Height, then across to Thieveley Pike and Trough Edge End, before dropping down to Littleborough to pick up the trig points of Blackstone Edge, Manshead and Little Holder Stones on the way back. Seven trig points, sure enough. But add on the trig point just north of Wardle near Watergrove reservoir and the one on Dog Hill east of Blackstone Edge, and you'd end up with - Nine Trigs!

Once planned, there was then the little complication that it had to be done. I took the car to the bottom of the track by the Top Brink early in the morning whilst Lumbutts was still sleeping gently and started. This is what happened:

7.10am. Leave the car, run past the pub and down to the main road near the bikers' café. Then up to Cross Stone and the bridleway along the side of Tod golf course. I'm finding I'm running slowly up the long climb across Whirlaw common.

7.50am. Arrive at the Bride Stones. Tod looking very beautiful down in the valley. Head down to Kebs and decide to go the direct way, across the moor to Hoof Stones Height. The trig point is clearly in sight, gleaming white in the morning sun.

8.20am. Take the path down towards Sheddon Clough. Find it without problem (slight contrast from the pack run where I led everyone here into a trackless waste of tussocks). The Pennine Bridleway gets me down to Cliviger, and then it's the usual route up Thieveley Pike.

9.30am. There's always a good view from Thieveley, as the West Pennine moors come into sight. I stop for a first peanut butter sarnie. Then it's easy running along the ridgeway bridleway to the Bacup road and then on to Trough Edge End trig point. Pass a farmer repairing a wall – pretty well the first person I've seen so far.

10.15am. Trough Edge End. I come round the back end of Hades Hill and drop down to pick up the P Bridleway again briefly. The trig beyond the reservoir isn't actually on access land but I sneak up to it. The views now are to the south, to Hollingworth Lake and beyond.

11.15am. Leave the nameless trig and get slightly lost. End up on Shore Rd rather than Calder Brook Rd, meaning I miss my planned short-cut round the north of Littleborough. It's a long climb up past the Rake on to the Roman Rd, and then a minor detour to the Blackstone Edge trig. Two trail bikers look aggressively at me before heading off over bare peat.

12.30pm Frankly I'd like to be going home at this point, straight down the Pennine Way. No chance – instead, it's a long slog across to Dog Hill.

1.15pm. Leave Dog Hill, and pick up the minor road near Baitings reservoir before taking the concessionary path towards Great Manshead. A herd of bullocks charges across to check me out.

2.00pm. Great Manshead, great view. North along the ridge. A short way ahead gleams another trig stone, the one at Crow Hill at the back of the Travellers Rest. But this one doesn't count, it's a trap – madness (and Mytholmroyd) lies that way. Instead, I turn back west, and struggle up Turley Holes moor near the shooting lodge. The GPS says I've come 34 miles. Another sarnie doesn't really help that much. I know this moor well (so I think) but still get the line wrong and find myself at the Two Lads. Then I pick a lousy line across to the Little Holder Stones. I'm walking pitifully slowly through the rough heather.

3.00pm. Finally get to Little Holder. Again get the bloody line wrong, heading much too far west and ending up at Stony Edge. An extra half mile – just what I could have done without. Finally manage to get the legs moving again, past Gaddings dam to get down to the Shepherd's Rest. Take the road back to the car. Look at GPS: 37.6 miles. What a ridiculous way to spend a day. Go home. Sleep.

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