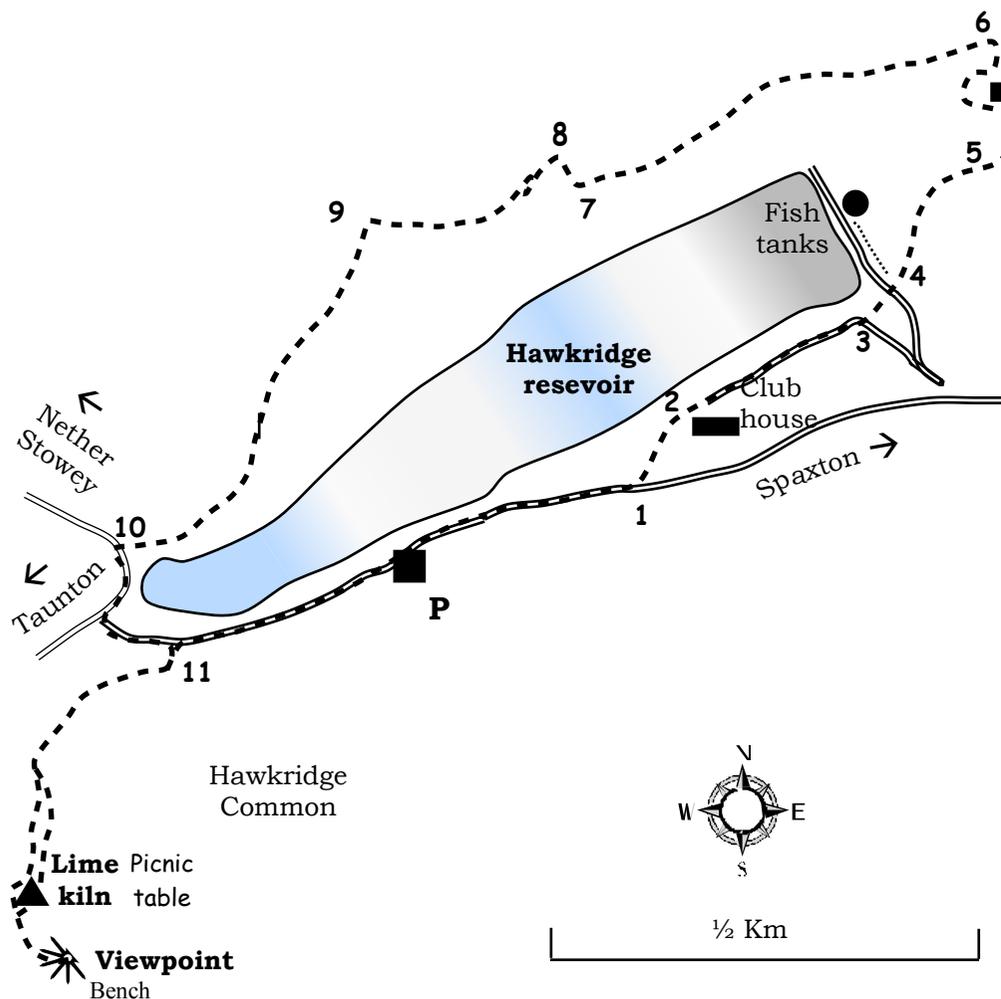


# Hawkridge Reservoir

2.7 miles (4.4Km), total ascent 547' (167m)  
alternative

1.8 miles (2.8Km), total ascent 255' (78m)

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Car parking at ST 206 360  
In large lay-by on the road to Spaxton.

Walk along the road in an easterly direction, past a cottage on your left.

**1** Immediately after the fence round the cottage is a stile on the left. Cross this and go diagonally across the field to a stile in the opposite hedge.

**2** Cross stile and turn sharp right to join the tarmac drive. Walk up the slope, past the fishermen's club house.

**3** Where the tarmac drive bears sharp right, follow the footpath mown in the grass, on your left. Drop down & join track across damn. You can't cross the damn - locked gates both ends.

**4** Ignore slippery steps leading to fish tanks. On your left, just past a hedge is a stile. Cross stile & head diagonally (NE) towards woods. Over another stile - follow track through wood.

**5** Through gate, over bridge, turn sharp left & through garden of Ebsley house. Keep house & garage on right. After garage turn right onto footpath, up 3 steps. Along footpath, meet 3 more setps, go through gate & turn sharp right. Follow path to stile.

**6** ST 213 365  
Cross stile & follow field boundary on the right. Woodland boundary bears

right, follow, but ignore first gateway. Continue, following wire fence.

**7** Fence turns 90° (NW), towards woodland - follow this.

**8** Double stile in hedge on left. Cross, and follow field boundary on your right. Follow wood on right, ignore gate and footpath at 9.

**9** ST 205 363  
Ignore gate, continue following footpath downhill, field boundary still on right, and through next field, eventually reaching the road.

**10** At road turn left along path, and left again into the road where you started.

For the short walk, continue along road to car park. For extension, to visit the lime kiln, cross road at 11. This is the steepest part of the walk.

**11** Through gate, finger post indicating 'To Lime Kiln'. Follow path uphill, ignoring any turnings, and passing disused quarry on the right. On reaching a crossroads bear right (not sharp right), to reach base of Lime Kiln - where there is an interpretation board.

Continue up to viewpoint - views over Aisholt common. Return down same path, at lime kiln take path above kiln to picnic bench. Follow path back down to the road.



**Hawkridge Reservoir** was built to provide water for the town of Bridgwater in the early sixties, holding up to 864 million litres of water. The dam is constructed of 30,000 cubic meters of concrete and is 161m long, 24m wide and 27m high. It now provides a valuable habitat for many invertebrates, wildfowl and amphibians. At the western end of the reservoir is a settling pond that is home to toads, a protected species. During the months of February, March and April these can be seen crossing the road and drivers should take extra care at this time.



## Hawkridge Limekiln

Lime was important to farmers last century. In some areas as much as five tons per acre were added to the soil in order to correct acidity or assist drainage and workability. The necessity to produce such large amounts, meant that where possible lime kilns and quarries were opened. In some areas every farmer had his own kiln. There are 517 recorded lime kilns in Somerset. A kiln Hawkridge size would produce about 5-8 tons of lime a day and is reported locally to have operated until the 1930's.



Lime kiln

Work was completed on this kiln in the summer of 1997. The kiln was repaired with traditional materials such as lime mortar, reclaimed stone from the site and bricks that were reclaimed from the site (supplemented with reclaimed Bridgwater bricks).

This kiln is typical of many built in Somerset. The pot would be loaded with alternative layers of culm (coal) and limestone. These were typically five inches of fuel followed by ten inches of limestone. The kiln would be started with brushwood, gradually transferring to more dense timber in order to get the temperature up to 900C. It was essential to have a good draught through the kiln in order to ensure that the carbon dioxide was efficiently removed. This is why many kilns face into the prevailing wind and have 'wings' in order to catch maximum draught.

*With thanks to the Quantock Rangers for their permission to reproduce the text.*