

= Snake Pass =

Snake Pass is a hill pass in the Derbyshire section of the Peak District , crossing the Pennines between Glossop and the Ladybower Reservoir at Ashopton . The road was engineered by Thomas Telford and opened in 1821 . The pass carries the A57 road between Manchester and Sheffield , but it is no longer the main signposted route between those two cities .

Like several other roads that cross the Pennines , Snake Pass has a poor accident record compared with roads in the UK generally , although more favourable compared with other roads in the area . It is regularly closed in winter because of snow , and has seen several longer @-@ term closures owing to subsidence following heavy rain . The road remains a popular route for tourists and motorcycles , however , and sections have been used for semi @-@ professional cycling races such as the Tour of Britain .

= = Route and location = =

Snake Pass runs through the National Trust 's High Peak Estate , and lies within the High Peak borough of Derbyshire ; much of it falls within the Hope Woodlands parish , the remainder being within the Charlesworth parish . It is part of the shortest route by road from Manchester to Sheffield .

The pass starts east of Glossop and climbs to the Pennines watershed between the moorland plateaux of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow to a high point of 1 @, @ 680 feet (510 m) above sea level , where it crosses the Pennine Way . After this , it passes a public house that used to be known as the Snake Inn , and descends through forest to the Ladybower Reservoir at Ashopton .

The name of the road matches its winding route , but actually derives from the emblem of the Snake Inn , one of the few buildings on the high stretch of road . In turn , the pub 's name and sign were derived from the serpent on the Cavendish arms of William Cavendish , 6th Duke of Devonshire . In the early 21st century , the inn was renamed the Snake Pass Inn , such that the inn now refers to the road that referred to itself .

= = History = =

The first road between Glossop and Ashopton was the Doctor 's Gate , a Roman Road that follows the Shelf Brook between Shelf Moor and Coldharbour Moor , a route popular today with walkers and mountain bikers . In 1932 , an Iron Age axe thought to be more than 2 @, @ 000 years old was found near the site of this road .

The current road further south was designed as a toll road by Thomas Telford to improve communications east of Glossop , which was expanding as an industrial town . It was originally called the Sheffield to Glossop Turnpike and run by a turnpike trust , the Sheffield and Glossop Trust . An act of parliament to build the road was passed in 1818 , and construction was financed by the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Devonshire . The road opened in 1821 , having cost £ 18 @, @ 625 to build . Upon opening , it was the highest turnpike road in England . The road was immediately popular and increased toll collections of traffic heading to Glossop . Tolls were abolished on the road in June 1870 .

The eastern end of the pass is by the River Derwent . The river is bridged by the Ashopton Viaduct , built as part of the Ladybower Reservoir project between 1935 and 1945 .

Although Snake Pass is still the shortest route between Manchester and Sheffield , the more northerly Woodhead Pass , which is less steep and at a lower altitude , is now the primary road link between the two cities . Unlike Snake Pass , the Woodhead route is a trunk road . Traffic levels on both passes remained similar until the 1980s , but the Woodhead Pass route is now favoured as it connects directly to the M1 , while Snake Pass leads into the centre of Sheffield . Despite Sheffield and Manchester being among the largest UK cities by population , there is no direct motorway link between the two . A Manchester to Sheffield motorway was first proposed in 1966 , and a small section bypassing Denton and Hyde has been built , now the M67 . The Woodhead Tunnel was

closed in 1981 in anticipation of a road replacement , but linking the cities would have meant constructing many costly tunnels and viaducts across the Peak District . Consequently , the plans were shelved , but reports in December 2014 announced a revival of the scheme .

The road remains popular with drivers . In 2008 , a survey by Caterham Cars rated Snake Pass the best driving road in the UK . The following year , it was listed as one of the best roads for driving in Britain by Auto Trader magazine , who described it as " offering unparalleled views over Manchester " .

= = Safety = =

As would be expected for a road crossing the Pennines , Snake Pass has several dangerous bends and blind summits . Like many roads in the North of England passing through similar terrain , Snake Pass has a poor safety record in comparison to other roads in the United Kingdom . But it is not as dangerous as other roads bisecting hilly terrain in this part of England ; it was not among the top 10 in a list of the most dangerous roads published in July 2010 , despite nine of the top ten being in Northern England .

In 2012 Derbyshire Police announced a campaign to monitor motorcyclists using the pass , who are particularly at risk of being involved in a fatal accident .

= = Weather = =

In winter the road is often the first of the routes between Sheffield and Manchester to be closed following snow in the area . In bad storms the entire road over the summit , including marker poles , has been buried in snow . In the winter months the road becomes icy , but gritting is not a priority as the A57 is only a " secondary " road at this point . Local councils prefer to treat streets in towns that are more likely to be used , as they believe that roads such as Snake Pass will be closed anyway .

In 1924 Derbyshire County Council spent £ 2 @, @ 000 installing underground telegraph wire cables beneath the road , as the above @-@ ground installations were continually broken and disrupted following snowstorms . The British winter of 2010 ? 11 was the coldest for decades and the road was closed on numerous occasions .

Snake Pass has also been closed for longer periods owing to subsidence in the local area following rain . In January 1932 the road was closed after 200 tonnes of debris fell on it during a heavy rainstorm , covering the surface in as much as 4 feet (1 @.@ 2 m) in places . In January 2008 a landslide at Cowms Moor following heavy rain caused the road to be closed to all traffic between Ladybower and Glossop , although access was still available to local premises and businesses including the Snake Pass Inn . A subsequent investigation by the British Geographical Survey showed the road has had a history of subsidence @-@ related long @-@ term closures dating back to the 1930s , including a 1970s project that attempted to strengthen the layer below the tarmac with local rock fill . The road reopened in February , but with temporary traffic lights at the point of the slip restricting traffic to one direction at a time . In 2012 the road had to be closed several times for resurfacing and strengthening .

= = Cycling = =

Snake Pass is a popular route for cyclists . A 1902 report on leisure cycling in the Lancashire Evening Post described the eastward journey from the summit to Ashopton as " nine miles unbroken freewheeling " and the scenery as " magnificent " . The road is one of only a few road climbs in the UK that are comparable in length and average gradient (approximately 7 per cent for around 3 @.@ 2 miles (5 @.@ 1 km) when starting in Glossop) to those used in continental cycle racing . The road had been part of an 82 @-@ mile " Tour of the Peak " race , involving climbing the pass twice , and has frequently featured in the Tour of Britain along with another nearby favourite , Holme Moss .

Cycling Time Trials sanctioned hill climbs are regularly promoted on this course by local club

Glossop Kinder Velo . The record for completing the course was set by Tejvan Pettinger in 2014 , at 11 minutes 51 seconds .

= = Media = =

Snake Pass has been referred to several times by music groups . The track " The Snake " by Sheffield band the Human League , from their 2001 album Secrets , is about the road . The Squarepusher album Selection Sixteen features a track entitled " Snake Pass " , described by Rolling Stone as a " monomaniacal thump " .

Comic character John Shuttleworth has performed a song called " Incident on Snake Pass " about the perils of Snake Pass , relating to an accident he claimed to have had , driving a Ford Anglia on the road .