

“ Pennine Way Mystery Camper ”



NB : Prices quoted are for a single backpacker with one-man tent in July & August 2011.
No advance bookings were made.

Night 1 : Edale (Fieldhead) - £6.50 + shower token

Take mozzie spray ! Straight to bed, barely used the facilities and I didn't have a shower in the morning.

Night 2 : Crowden (Camping & Caravanning Club Site) - £6.40

Really helpful. I wanted to 'check-in' at home after the first day's walking and was already experiencing a poor 'phone signal, but the Warden was very obliging in letting me use his office 'phone, merely asking for a donation to his charity box. For knowledgeable advice look out for the other Warden, "the beaded wonder", a 10-times PW veteran whose help and advice was given freely. Cavernous showers, spotless site, decent shop.

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
		




Night 3 : Mankinholes (Cross Farm) - £5 + 50p shower token

Good-size field, although most of it was on a slope. I have no problem sharing a field with sheep, but of the two showers only one had a light and neither had hot water. That's right, no hot water and after a 21-mile day this was not impressive. The couple I arrived with did subsequently get their shower-money back, but is it so hard to change a lightbulb and make sure the boiler is on during the high season ?

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
		

Night 4 : Ponden (House) - £5

I'm sure I clearly said on arrival that I'd like to camp (you'd think the 65-litre rucksack might be a giveaway) but was ushered into the sitting-room for a very welcome pot of tea. After being told my room was ready I re-iterated that I only wanted to camp ! Generous hospitality therefore, but this service is probably not for all backpackers. The campsite is at the bottom of a steep hill behind the property, some 100m from the single shower room / loo. Nice when you get there (remember the mozzie spray for this one too) but it's a bit of a hike up and down that big hill.

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Night 5 : Malham (Miresfield Farm) - £5

Tiny site but very handy for The Buck Inn. With a choice of 2 lawns in the garden at the back of the B&B, I elected to go under the washing-line next to the garage. A tad scruffy, but quite accommodating.

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Night 6 : Horton-In-Ribblesdale (Holme Farm) - £5 + £1 shower

This is what a proper campsite should look like. Clear, separate pitches and plenty of level space. Popular with families so don't expect an early night, but a good place to wash clothes and a stone's throw from the pub and the legendary Pen-Y-Ghent café.

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Night 7 : Hardraw (Cart Horse) - £5 + 50p shower

Neat and trim, this is another purpose-built campsite. Organised and pleasant with a very good loo block – power shower too !

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
		

Night 8 : Tan Hill (pub) - £2

Facilities, what facilities ?!! A bit of open ground round the back of the pub, this is the nearest you'll get to wild camping before the final leg. The Tan Hill is one of the 'must-do' experiences of the trip so you need to be prepared for the relative hardship of a single cold tap and a very basic loo. At £2 to include clean, running water, can anyone complain at the value ?

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Night 9 : Middleton-In-Teesdale (Daleview) - £5

Holiday Park-style accommodation, the site has a full range of dining options, and is just a few minutes walk from the well-resourced town. Beware though, they are not averse to overbooking. I went into town leaving my tent as the only presence in the quite small backpacker's field, but returned to find that the Yorkshire Off-Road Club were now there too ! Dwarfed by monstrous, 4x4 vehicles and quite a loud bunch, the remaining space once they had set-up camp was, shall we say, cosy.

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
		

Night 10 : Dufton (Grandie Caravan Park) - £6




Immaculate, quiet, friendly, near the pub, excellent loo block, great value. Would happily have stayed longer if the schedule had permitted.

NB : My initial destination, Brow Farm, was like the Marie Celeste. I was unable to find anyone at a fairly normal, tea-time arrival. Had a look round and the showers weren't great there, so I'm glad I carried on to the Grandie.

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Night 11 : Alston (Tyne Willows Caravan Park) - £5

The 'Trailblazer' guide describes the ablution block as "...like something out of a Tarkowsky movie." For the uninitiated, Tarkowsky was a Russian film-maker and the block does indeed resemble the grimmest of labour-camp type accommodation. It is infact an ex-Foundry, and once you can get through the seen-to-be-believed entrance the sinks, showers and loos are no worse than other factories provide their workers and the expansive corridors came in very handy for getting stuff organised out of the rain. The site is fine, the owner friendly, it's just that the impression this place left me was as memorable as Cross Fell or Cauldron Snout !

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Night 12 : Greenhead (Holmehead Guesthouse) £8

Daleview in Middleton wasn't averse to overbooking, the owners here certainly are. On arrival I was greeted with a lecture from the owners about how lucky I was to get a pitch and how I wouldn't have been able to stay if I'd turned up an hour ago, at which time the expected party cancelled their booking. Fine, but did I need to know all that ? Can I stay or not ? Having said that, the owner was then very helpful, letting me use the drying room and offering the camping barn (at further cost no doubt.) So I had the place to myself, including a loo/shower combination and the PW is right outside the gate - but this one's a bit steep at £8 for another back lawn.

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
		

Night 13 : Bellingham (Demesne Farm) - £5 + 50p shower

Great drying room, good showers, well-run and a good place for a rest-day. Another popular destination for groups and families though, so don't expect a quiet night to be guaranteed.

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
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Night 14 : Byrness (Border Forest Caravan Park) - £7.50

Another place that is really for caravans and mobile homes, campers are in the (huge) field a fair way from the loo block but it's worth the hike. A bit on the high side at £7.50, but with a very helpful warden and first-class showers it's worth paying the premium – especially since there ain't any camping choice in this one-horse town. For a great meal and a beer try Forest View Walker's Accommodation, or The Byrness B&B will also feed you. There's nothing else.

walkable to a pub	likely to be quiet by 11pm	clean, spacious shower
		

....and in case you're wondering, I did the Cheviot bit in one go so I can't comment on the wild-camping options there. Stayed at a B&B in Kirk Yetholm.....wonderful !!