

WATER SUCCESS... BATEMAN'S DAMN FINE ACHIEVEMENT



John Frederick Bateman.

Bottoms Reservoir, one of the Longdendale chain of Reservoirs extending for 10 km (6miles) eastwards, is the closest to Hadfield and Padfield.

The mill which had stood on the site prior to the reservoir construction was owned by the Sidebottom family hence its name. When this immense 29-year civil engineering project was completed in 1877 the reservoirs formed the largest body of man-made water in the world, and were Europe's first major conservation scheme.

The reservoirs were designed by engineering genius John Frederick Bateman (1810-89) described on his commemorative Blue Plaque (located in nearby Mottram) as a 'water engineer extraordinaire'. Whilst working as surveyor on Hurst Reservoir in Glossop in 1838, Bateman saw the potential of the Longdendale Valley as a water catchment area.



Bottoms fountain



Bottoms mill prior to demolition

To provide drinking water for its rapidly increasing population, Manchester Corporation commissioned Bottoms Reservoir in the mid-19th century. Four Acts of Parliament were needed for the entire scheme.

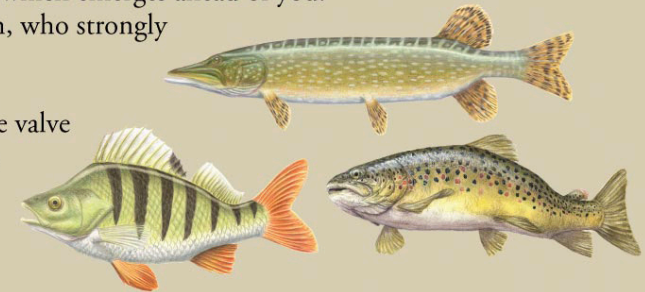
The reservoir was the final reservoir to be constructed. Work started in 1867 and finished 10 years later. It is 50 acres in size, has a capacity of 407 million gallons, and 48 feet deep at its deepest.

Permit fishing is permitted, and anglers pit their wits against pike, perch, and trout. Before the reservoirs were built, salmon were seen in the fast-flowing Etherow. A water skiing slope was a popular attraction for many years. Along with Valehouse Reservoir, Bottoms is a 'compensation reservoir' for the Etherow which emerges ahead of you. The valve house, waste weirs, discharge tunnel and gauging basin were constructed so that the Victorian millowners downstream, who strongly opposed Bateman's plans to flood the valley - although they later received compensation.

The depth gauge meant that they had a constant water supply. Following high levels of rainfall, pressure can be released from the valve house creating a fountain to rise up in front of the dam as pictured above. A steam locomotive railway which served the quarries was replaced by hydro-electric traction in 1904 and by Hornby diesel in 1950 before the line was abandoned in 1968. The Power House supplied hydro-electric power for the above.

The Longdendale reservoirs and their catchment area are managed by United Utilities for the public supply of water to North West England.

Images courtesy Neville T. Sharpe. Illustrations by Nature Sign Design.



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