

Notification of a drawdown taking place

The Environment Agency can provide you with a free notification for when a drawdown from Ladybower Reservoir will take place. The message will let you know when the drawdown will begin and warn that river levels will start to rise. You can receive the message by:

- signing up to Flood Warnings by calling Floodline on 03459 88 11 88. You can select to receive the messages by phone, text, or email.

Please be aware that a drawdown will last from several days up to a couple of weeks. Take extra care if you are planning to be in or near to the River Derwent when a drawdown is taking place, as river levels will be higher.

You can check the local river levels by using the River and Sea Levels section of the Environment Agency website. The current and last 48 hours of river level data can be viewed for gauging stations at Yorkshire Bridge, Chatsworth and Matlock.

River and Sea Levels online is available from, www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding.

Flood warnings are issued when there is a risk of flooding. They may be issued when the reservoirs are full to capacity and spilling.

You can find out more information about the Upper Derwent Valley at the Leisure and Learning section of Severn Trent Water's website. It provides details about the Upper Derwent visitor centre and activities you can do in the area.

Environment Agency contacts

Call us:

- To report flooding, call our Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24 hrs)
- To register for flood warnings & get safety advice, call Floodline on 03459 88 1188
- For general queries call 03708 506 506 Mon-Fri 8-6

Email us: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Website:

For flood advice, our three day flood forecast and to see the latest flood alerts and warnings visit: www.gov.uk/environment-agency

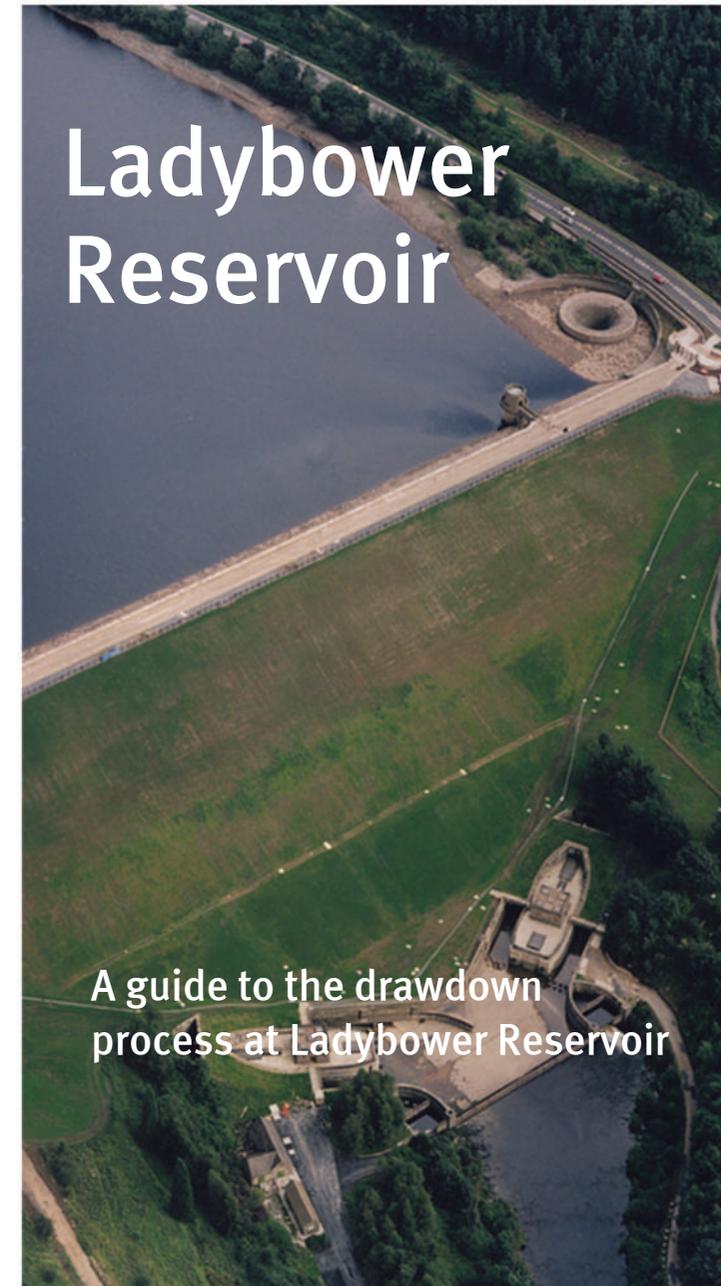
Follow us on Twitter @EnvAgencyMids to find out about the work we are doing.

Severn Trent Water contacts

Website: www.stwater.co.uk

For general queries call:

03457 500 500 Mon-Fri, 8-8 & Sat 8-1



History and construction

The Derwent, Howden and Ladybower Reservoirs that make up the Upper Derwent Valley were created in the early 20th Century to provide 46 million cubic metres of water for the growing urban population in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

The dams of Howden and Derwent Reservoirs were constructed between 1901 and 1916. Ladybower Reservoir was completed in 1945 to supply an ever increasing demand for water. This resulted in the flooding of the villages of Derwent and Ashopton – when water levels are low, you may get a glimpse of the village remains.

The imposing neo-gothic dams were built in the deep valley to contain and control the fast flowing moorland rivers. The valley sides were planted with thousands upon thousands of conifers to protect the steep slopes and the precious water below.

Reservoirs and the law

As the enforcement authority for the Reservoirs Act 1975, the Environment Agency ensures that reservoirs are inspected regularly and essential safety work is carried out.

Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency work together to minimise the risk of flooding and danger to human life from reservoir failure. Emergency plans are in place and regularly exercised to reduce the potential risk and consequences of a reservoir failure.

Flood risk in the Derwent valley

The Derwent Valley has historically suffered from frequent and extensive flooding, with records dating as far back as 1673.

The Derwent Valley Reservoirs are a storage area for water. When these become full the water spills into the River Derwent. This cannot be prevented and inevitably will increase river levels and the flood risk downstream. Flood risk is further increased if there is a period of prolonged heavy rainfall or snowmelt, with the latter contributing to the major floods of 1947.

To lower the flood risk a drawdown is carried out from Ladybower Reservoir into the River Derwent.



What is a drawdown?

A drawdown is a controlled release of water that lowers the reservoir level. This creates more storage capacity behind the dam.

During a drawdown around 550 mega litres of water is released per day into the River Derwent. This increases the river level at Chatsworth by around 20cm and is noticeable as far downstream as Matlock.

In planning for a drawdown the Environment Agency checks if conditions are suitable for one to be carried out. This includes checking the weather forecast, current and forecast reservoir and river levels and if any works are being carried out in the river.

The Environment Agency works with Severn Trent Water to keep a balance in reservoir levels between water supply and flood risk. To keep this balance a drawdown is not normally carried out between the months of February and July. This protects water supplies during the drier months of spring and summer when water consumption is higher.

To prepare for the wetter months of autumn and winter a drawdown is carried out to pre-emptively lower reservoir levels. This creates extra storage capacity for when it rains and reduces the flood risk downstream.

The weather forecast and river levels on the Derwent are monitored round the clock by duty staff at the Environment Agency. If river levels are forecast to rise, with the potential to cause flooding, the drawdown will be stopped until conditions improve.

Left: A drawdown taking place.