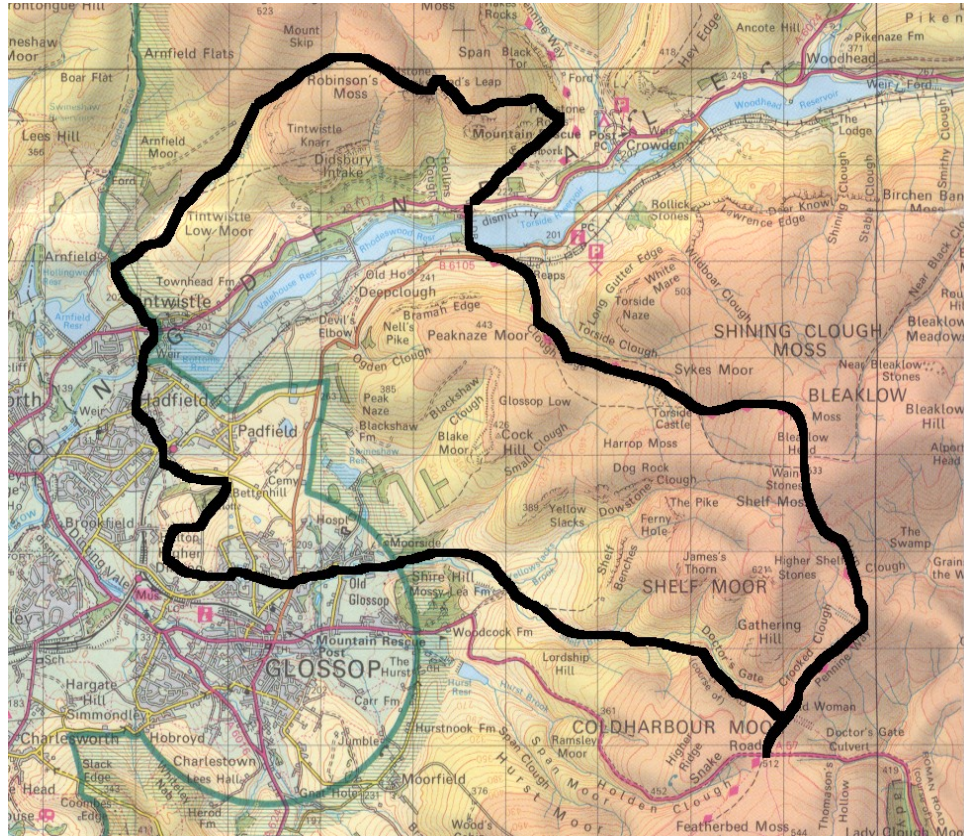


WALK.5.
BLEAKLOW.5.
19.7 miles 5 hours 50 minutes.
Map Dark Peak.



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Start at the A57, where the Pennine way crosses the road. There is no car park at this point, just enough room, at the side of the road at (088929), for a few cars (the early birds).

Take the Pennine way, going N from the road to a good ladder stile. Follow a firm path, paved for some of its route; this used to be very boggy. Gathering Hill is to your left. Go NE over Alport Low (098945); ('Low' Anglo-Saxon for 'hill'). You then meet Hern Clough, which you follow until Hern Stone is seen, a large stone; you wonder how it got there. Go due N to Bleaklow Head; this section is very boggy in wet weather; this is Wain Stones.

Keep N for about 600 yards; there are some stakes to guide you, then turn left, going W down Wildboar Grain (a small stream), dropping down to cross a stream at John Track Well (081964). Still on the Pennine Way, the path climbs the other side of the clough, then goes NW past Torside Castle on your left, along Clough Edge, which is high above Torside Clough, a fine, dramatic viewpoint on a clear day. The path descends to a footpath sign, then a big ladder stile and rough track, down to level ground near a farm. Take the farm drive, going N of W down to the road via a wicket gate at a cattle grid. You are now in Longdendale with its many reservoirs. This massive valley must have been carved out by the ice age.

Go right for a few yards, cross the road, then go left down a lane through a gap at the side of a gate, then cross over the dam of Torside Reservoir. Climb some stone steps to a metal turnstile gate then onto the road at (055985). Go right E for twenty yards, cross the road

to a single house (dated 1718 over the door), then enter a field at a farm gate, walking NE uphill, gaining height all the time and getting fine views. There is a metal ladder stile over a stone wall, and a Pennine Way sign. Keep going uphill to a good, well-kept farm building (probably the Highstones on the map), go around the building to a wooden gate on its N side, and go NE through a field of long grass.

Eventually, a gate is reached at (065994) where another path joins this one. Turn left to go W of N uphill passing Highstone Rocks on one's left. It is something of a climb up to 1500 feet, then the path levels out, following a broken wall on one's left, which turns to go S of W, pleasant walking on fairly level ground. Bear right NW and reach the head of Hollings Clough called Lad's Leap at (052999) height 1566 feet, and from this point, continue NW, over Robinson's Moss to reach Arnfield Clough, then follow the valley down and around so as to meet a good track at (026987) which we could have taken instead of going over Robinson's Moss, but Arnfield Clough was the more attractive way. Go downhill along side Arnfield Brook until it reaches a sign indicating open country (021982). Go to a lane with a fence either side, down to a metal gate with a ladder stile with metal steps on the right. Soon you reach another farm gate, this time with a good, big ladder stile, farm buildings nearby on the left. You cannot fail to see a fine stone bridge away to the right under which the stream flows down to Arnfield Reservoir.

You are now on a lane walking SE to Tintwhistle; the surface is made of stone blocks. Do not turn right in 400 yards (to reservoir), but continue down to a busy road (023972). Cross it, then proceed W of S, down a lane with the Parish Church on one's right for 350 yards down to road. Turn left and walk SE over Tintwhistle Bridge; then, in 100 yards the road bears right; keep on it as it goes through Hadfield, up to the station at (023960). Continue on this road over the railway, uphill (Park Road) for 500 yards, then turn right up North Road at junction with Cemetery Road (030957). In 100 yards or so, turn right up a lane, walking S with Castlehill Wood on one's right for 600 yards to a junction with narrow road. Go S through Hilltop downhill. There is a fine view of the prominent Shire Hill to the E.

The lane curves to the left then reaches a busy road at (029947) and enters Glossop. Bear left and walk E along this road, passing a park on left and school on right. In half-a-mile, a busy road, the B6105, is met at a junction (037946). Continue E and go close to a Church School and through the churchyard of All Saints, Old Glossop, the parish church of Old Glossop; it is a rebuilding of a mediaeval church. Go through fine wrought iron gates and turn left. This area contains a group of exceptionally, well-preserved seventeenth century cottages with low mullioned windows and gables. One of them is dated 1638. Number 82 Norfolk Street was the gate lodge to the Duke of Norfolk's 1850 mansion (demolished in 1960).

The road curves around to the right then right again, passing a factory. Bear left at (046948); walk E with stream on right. Avoid the footbridge on the right; Shire Hill is on the right. On the left one might hear the local gun club practising. The path comes to a large ladder stile and sign to Open Country (053950). Do not take it but go to the right through a swing gate at the side of a farm gate and enjoy the level going while you can. There are interesting bridges at (060946) where the Yellowslacks Brook meets Shelf Brook. Continue SE along this Roman Road now called Doctor's Gate. It ran from Brough to Melandra Castle and was known to the Romans as Ardotalia, Melandra Castle. In Glossop, one will find the best-preserved Roman Forts in Derbyshire. In places the actual stonework of the original road can still be seen with its crown top and gulleys at the side.

Continue S of E, gradually gaining height. You pass another of the metal signs erected by the Peak District and Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society. This one is number 59 dated 1953. How much we owe to them! There is another sign a little further on, number 114.

As the path ascends, there are striking views of sharply cut valleys. Cross a footbridge that lies in your way and walk with stream on one's left along a path that threads its way through valleys that close in, the path getting steeper. Note particularly Crooked Clough. Finally, the top is reached, and level ground makes the going easier: there is not far to go. Soon, the Pennine Way is reached at (089933). Turn right and make for the A57 via that same ladder stile you took earlier on.

Checked. 21 Oct. 2002