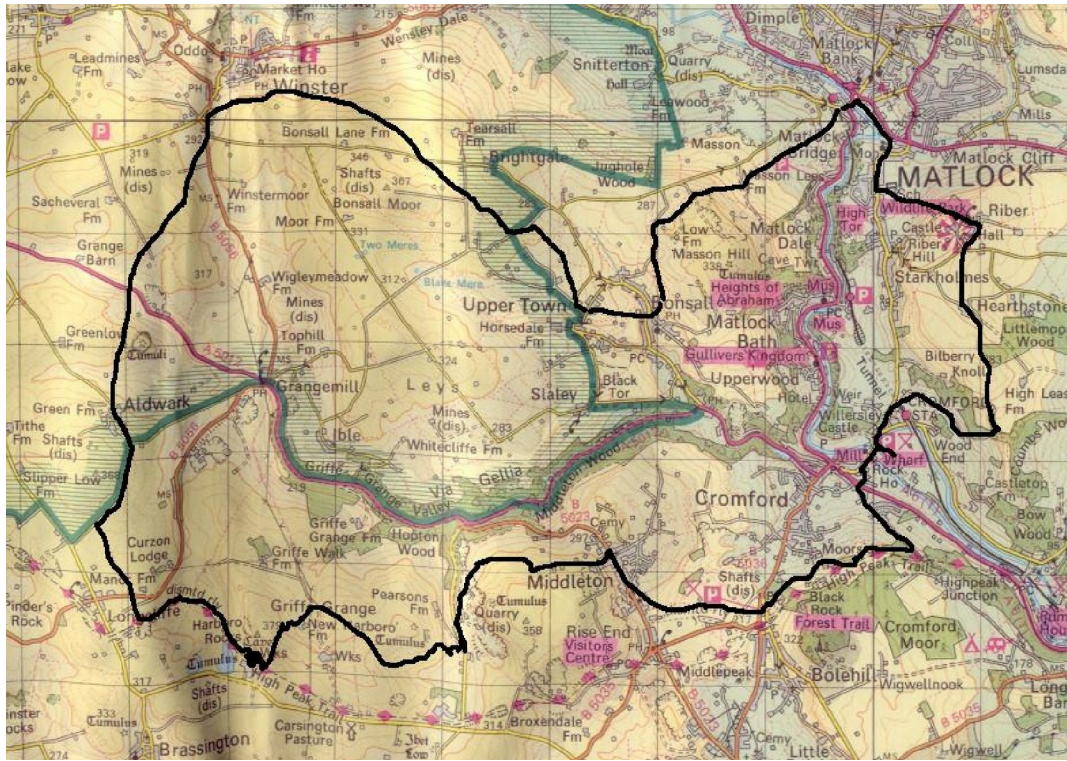


WALK 13.
CROMFORD 13.
19.6 miles 5 hours 32 minutes.
Map White Peak.



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Start at Cromford car park at the canal (300571). Go out of the car park entrance, turn left, Arkwright’s Mill on your right (built like a fortress), then go up a lane on your left, just by the Mill car park. In about 30 yards, go right up a “jitty” to the A6. Cross it, and go straight up the minor road, walking SE steeply uphill for half a mile to woods on the right at (302563). Go right steeply up through the trees, and walk W out of the woods in to a field, going gently uphill more or less parallel to the High Peak Trail above on the left. In about 400 yards, you reach the trail just where there is a good gritstone slot stile giving access to the trail. Ignore it: continue in the same direction as before W through the trees and ferns. The path drops a little as it approaches a farm gate with a slot stile on its right next to the wall. There is a cottage on the right, one away to the left, and Black Rocks glower down ominously above (depending on the time of day and the light). Go downhill to another gate and stile on its right. Down a little further to a junction with a farm drive, then turn left and walk SW up this good drive to Black Rock Cottages above.

At cottage No1, go right through a slot stile next to the wall, and you will rarely see such a stile closed by a metal wicket gate. Walk W through a field close to the wall on one’s left, to a wall in front which you surmount by a wooden stepladder and broken stone steps up to a higher level of rough ground and trees. Go forward about 30 yards so as to meet a path coming up from the right, then walk S uphill through the trees on a good track to a picnic area. Go through this to a minor road: cross it: go up 10 yards to one’s left, then sharp right. Walk through a field with a stone wall on left for about 80 yards to the B.5036 on to which you emerge through a gritstone slot stile

(289556). Cross the road and enter a gateway, directly opposite: a warehouse on the right, continue W uphill through mounds and depressions, these are former lead workings, cross a lane, and continue in the same direction W, through more depressions to a wall and building to the left, continue NNW playing field to the right, to a wall with a slot stile. Go downhill, keeping close to the wall, go through another stile. Note the huge tip of spoil away to the left. Soon the path levels out and becomes a lane, passing Middleton Parish Church on the left. It was built in 1844: its porch is gabled and castellated: its windows straight headed in imitation of the perpendicular style. To the right of the lane is a large house which might well have been the rectory. Continue up the lane passing on the left a tall Methodist Church, then bear left to emerge out on to the main street. Walk NW uphill towards the second, and impressive Methodist Church at a crossroads, turn left and walk SSW uphill. Follow the road as it goes to the right then go W along the lane. Just before a facing farm gate, go right downhill WNW wall on one side fence on the other to an indifferent slot stile. Bear left at this point, walk W over rough ground long grass almost covering large heaps of stones which indicate more former lead mining. The path curves to the left to a prominent works ahead where huge silos resemble space rockets waiting for take off. Go through the works noticing the entrance to a mine as you enter the works: this is large enough to take a large lorry. Go S downhill on a wide road that joins a main road at (261555). Go S uphill for 300 yards to a stile at the side of a farm gate on the right, on the left is a small farm. Go uphill through the field, keep the wall to the left, to a step stile on your left, in the next field going slightly downhill for 40 yards to the next stile, walking SW with large mounds of earth now on your left indicating limestone Quarries. Continue with the Quarry to your left and so out on to a wide lane at (255551).

Turn right. Walk NW uphill on a wide track until the track begins to descend, wall on right. In about half a mile, at (248556), go over a cattle grid: walk SW towards New Harboro' Farm, wall on right, to a tall and imposing wooden ladder stile over a wall to a signpost. Angle right: walk SW with the farm close on one's left; go through an gateway, then continue uphill in the same direction through a broken wall, then to a sound wall where there is a good slot and step stile. Make your way over Harboro Rocks, trig point at (242553), then down to the Tissington Trail via some old gritstone stiles and dilapidated stone buildings near to some workings.

Turn right and walk NW along the Trail for about a mile to a good stone step stile on the right at (229555), 200 yards beyond a cutting. Straight ahead is a prominent building on the hilltop. Go right down the steps, off the Trail, in to a field. Walk N towards a rough area where lorries might be seen, and, in 100 yards, you come to a wooden bar stile in a fence, this brings you to a lane of sorts which you cross and enter a field, walking N towards a metal gate to the left of which is a sign and a slot stile in a limestone wall.

Cross the road at (229558) to a stile made of three poles: enter a field, continue N towards the far right corner near which there is a complex stile in a wall with a wooden frame either side. In the next field continue NNW and note that it seems that a former wall has been removed; so, go to the far right corner, close to the wall on one's right, to another slot in the wall and a wooden arrangement either side. Turn sharp left; keep close to the wall on the left for about 40 yards, and go to the far corner to a good slot stile. In the next field, move away from the wall on one's left and make for the far wall, which contains a good stile. Good walking through the next field, somewhat to the right there is a slot stile. Go in to the next field and make for the road at (228565).

Turn right and walk NNE along the road to Aldwalk, an ancient settlement that probably owed its existence to its position on an old route from Derby to Manchester. The precise route is well known from a map drawn by John Ogilby at the request of Charles II and published in 1675. Ogilby surveyed 100 main roads in England and Wales, drawing them in strip maps, the method used today by the AA for motorways. Ogilby was the first to use the measured mile of 1760 yards, and to determine the distance travelled, he used a road wheel of known circumference, together with a counting device. An order of 1663 at the next village of Brassington on the road route, stated that "everie one scowre their ditches adjoyneinge to the King's highway before the first daie of May or else to forfeite 12 pence)"

N of Brassington there is an old signpost dating from Queen Anne's reign, now used as a gatepost it indicated that the road was connected to Aldwalk along a green lane that now approaches Aldwalk from the W. Also interesting is that at one time Aldwalk had four inns. As you walk through the village you wonder where they were all situated. Later a packhorse way went through the village.

Lydgate Farm catches the eye as a well-built house. Just beyond it, turn right through a slot stile at a signpost (228575), and walk N downhill, through a broken wall, then uphill the other side, wall on right, to a slot stile in the wall in front. In the next field, keep close to the wall on the right and go ahead to a good slot stile made of two large limestone uprights very close together. To the right at Green Low Barrow on the high ground, there is a Neolithic Chambered Tomb retaining a single paved chamber and paved entrance passage; fragments of Neolithic pottery, some of the early Grimstone Ware and beaker sherds were found here, along with Stone Age fragments, and a leaf arrow head of flint. Both chamber and passage contained human bones. In the next field, the route levels out, then descends through an old broken wall which still contains a slot stile standing in isolation; bear slightly left towards two old gates fastened together; there is a slot on their right. In the next field, go uphill, then steeply downhill, the road appearing below, making for the far right corner where there is a signpost at (230585), but, strangely, no obvious stile of any sorts, just a few stones dislodged in the wall.

Cross the road to another sign and a better stile; go into the field, keep the wall on the left, for 20 yards, then branch out NNE towards an embankment away to the right. Get to the embankment; walk with wall on the right until a metal gate is reached near the corner of this field. There is a wooden slot stile in the fence, and a stone slot in the wall next to the gate, both very awkward to negotiate; once in the next field, go NNE towards the wall ahead, making for the gate. Ten yards to the left of it is a slot in the wall that leads in to the lane. Cross it and enter a field by a slot stile, then go NE to the far left corner where there is a poor stile made of some pieces of wood against the wall. Go uphill to the left through the next field, not as far as the corner though, and there you will see a good stone slot stile in the wall, in addition to which is a new wooden construction containing an electric fence. In the next field, walk away from the wall on one's right, going uphill through a broken wall in front, then turn left and walk fairly close to the wall on your left, towards the wall ahead which contains a stile similar to the previous one.

Go downhill NE now towards a small stone building ahead, passing through a gap in the wall and a slot stile. Pass the building and go for a good slot stile in a poor wall ahead; then go 50 yards NE through the next field to a poor slot stile. Cross an old lane through a slot stile, then go through the next field to a slot stile in a wall full of gaps. Similarly in the next field go to a slot in a poor wall. In the next field turn right and go towards a wall where there is a stile of sorts, and so out on to a road at (237598). Turn left and walk 200 yards towards Winster, then turn right up a lane that is usually muddy, going ENE then E to Luntor Rocks in just over half a mile, passing first through a slot stile on the right of a gate. Just below Luntor Rocks, and to the left, there is a slot stile in a wall. Go 50 yards with trees on the right to a slot stile in the corner in front of you, though most people go through the gateway on the right. Go forward through the stile, then, in 100 yards, turn right through a slot stile. Continue ESE with the wall on the left, passing through several broken walls each of which contains an old stile, until you come to the fourth field where you bear right to the wall where the stile is obvious to all by two prominent and tall uprights.

In the next field, cut the corner on your left and make for a slot stile in 20 yards. In the next field, make for a tree ahead and pass under it to the next field where ahead of you is a slot stile of pieces of wood and stone. Level walking now with wall on one's left, parallel to the road away to the right; then in 30 yards, cut off to the right and make for the road where there is a poor stile in a ragged wall at (258596). Turn left: walk E for 30 yards (towards Matlock), then go right through a good slot stile in a wall at a corner. Walk uphill SE, passing the corner of a fence, and making for a slot in a fence above. In the next field, cut the left corner and go to a slot stile in 30 yards. In the next field, go right to a gap in the wall, though there is a good and unused stile to the right. In the

next field, you will see a stone building ahead. Cut the right corner and make for a tree to the right where there is a gap and some evidence of the remains of a former stile. Go right through the next field, the stone building is now to the left; make for a sign near the far corner, go in to a lane, turn left and come to road junction in 10 yards at (262593).

At the road junction, turn right and walk 20 yards to a good slot stile in the wall on the left, the stile made of two excellent gritstones: someone went to a great deal of trouble to provide them, and tool them so skilfully. In the next field, go SE, cutting the right corner in order to make for a slot stile in the wall ahead, the slot again made of two good gritstones carved at the top. You will hardly fail to notice here that the white effect of the limestone wall is set off by the inclusion of several dark gritstones, a novel effect seldom seen elsewhere, gritstone being harder and less brittle than limestone, it is easier to carve and shape, so is used for lintels and edging for buildings and some stiles. Go SE through the next field: a wall comes down to meet you from the right, so walk with it close on your right down to two more marvellous gritstones. Go 10 yards or less through an open gateway, slot stile on the left, in to the next field to a slot stile in the wall. There are some old stone farm buildings away to your left. Go 30 yards SE across the next field to a slot stile in the wall, and so in to the next field, walking close to the wall on your left for 150 yards down to another excellent gritstones; someone took pride in their work.

Go in to a lane here at (266600), turn left and walk about 200 yards NE to a point where there is a stile on either side of the lane: go to the right through a slot stile made of railway sleepers, substantial and strong. Walk SE uphill to a stile in the wall ahead. In the next field, go 40 yards to another stile of carved gritstones. Continue SE through the next field to a slot stile in wall in front, then go downhill, a poor wall on the right. Pass two disused uprights and make for slot stile in the wall ahead. In the next field, there is a wall on the right: pass a stone building on your right: go through a gap in a wall in front of you, then in 25 yards, go right through a slot stile and so in to an open field. Go S Across this field to a slot stile in a wall ahead, then make for another slot stile you can see in the wall in front. In the next field, go 50 yards to a good slot stile: notice the newly-built house to the right. In the last field, go to a good slot stile near a gate, go right for a few yards, then left along a road between some buildings and come to a road junction at (273584); this is Upper Town.

Go left, then immediately right E down a lane between houses to get on to a good path that leads through several good stiles then down some steps to Bonsall, down to the fine market cross standing on a circular base of thirteen steps; it had a ball head which was added in 1671. Nearby is the Kings Head Inn, which was established, in 1677. It has the traditional low three-light mullioned windows, and two irregular gables. There is another gabled house of 1670 (Manor House in the high street). Not far from the cross are some houses used in the past as frame-workshops when Bonsall was the centre of framework knitting. These houses have the characteristic large windows and a stairway at the side. Bonsall was also famous once for its lead mines, slag heaps lie all around the village. The fine Parish Church has a C14 tower and spire with an embattled parapet, pinnacles and gargoyles. The buttresses are diagonal. The church is also embattled.

From the market area go up NE a lane that is certainly steep. We may be thankful, I suppose, that it is concreted for the steepest bit. In 100 yards do not take the path to the right but follow the lane as it levels out, then curves to the right, uphill again then as it levels out and turns right to come to two stiles. Go right through a slot stile: cut the left corner and go to a slot stile in about 40 yards, go to the right of a stone building. Walk NE on this grassy area, odd tree to the left, to a slot stile, which brings you out onto a lane. Go straight across the lane into a field; in 20 yards go over a stile in the right hand wall then angle left starting to go downhill. The summit of Masson is away to the right. Go past some large limestone rocks, through another slot stile, through another field to a gate and onto a lane. The view of the Derwent Valley is very impressive (from Ribblesdale Castle on the right to Wensley, Rowsley and Chatsworth to the left).

Go right for 10 yards, then left over a wooden stile, proceed downhill, hedge on left, through a stile by a gate then downward to a gate at the side of Masson Lees Farm with a stile at its

side. Cross the farm drive, and enter a field by a gap at the side of a tree; go down with a hedge on the left going NE to a stile and gate, then proceed with a poor wall and hedge on the right for 50 yards to a cemented stile. Continue with a hedge on your right through three fields, house on the left farm on the right, over another stile then rough ground for 20 yards then out on to a lane. Go across this through a stile then downhill steeply to a small slot stile closed by an indifferent wooden door. Go down some steps, Bridge Farm on your left; cross over the railway without noticing it, and come out in the centre of Matlock.

Cross over the bridge, which was built in C.15. It has four arches and massive breakwaters. It was widened in 1904. Five ways meet here. Once over the bridge, turn right and walk through the park keeping the River Derwent to your right. At the far end of the park, past some three-storey houses on the left, go right over a stream and go steeply uphill; near the top you can see some black rock in the strata; this is a very hard rock; the old Derbyshire lead miners called it Toadstone. At the top, turn right and walk W in to old Matlock, the Church on your right. Walk on the road uphill for 300 yards to a Comprehensive School where you turn left, into a narrow path, a wire fence on either side, through a stile then uphill with a hedge on your right, through a stone stile then angle left first flat then increasingly steeply, past a farm on the left, very steep now, a hand rail on the left to help, you then through a stile, but first take a look back of the view of Matlock, a hive of humanity but with its own charm. Go along a track with hedge either side to a gateway to Riber Castle; at this moment it is shut to the public. It has been described as an "ideal eye-catcher for the poetical visitor". The embattled castle with its four angle towers, and its embattled curtain walls with its own angled turrets was built as late as 1862-8, a surprising case of late romanticism owing its existence to Mr Smedley's unerring sense of publicity. He died in it in 1874.

Proceed down the road, turn right and walk SW past Riber Hall dated 1661, for long the home of the Wooleys. Riber Manor is dated 1633. Both are fine examples of genuine Elizabethan architecture, which stand in sharp contrast to the ostentatious pretentiousness of the castle. In 50 yards past the Hall, you come to a road junction, with a small pond at its side: go straight across the road to a good stile at (308588), and walk S towards Hearthstone Farm whose towering construction you can see from all angles. There are good slots all the way to the right of the farm where you come out on to a road. Turn left and walk through the farm first SE then S along Hearthstone Lane, a delightful walk at most times. In about half a mile, at (312575), there is a stile in a wall on the left. Do not take it but walk on for about 50 yards and look for a path leading down through the woods to the right. Go steeply downhill W through trees, through a narrow track where ferns abound; in about 150 yards go over a stile into an irregularly shaped field. Continue W downhill to a good stone step stile in a wall in front. Once over this, turn right and walk on good, firm drive NW then SW until in about 500 yards it emerges on to a road. Turn left and walk down to a road junction at (300572), turn right and walk over Cromford Bridge, Arkwright's great house, Willersley Castle, away to the right. This fine old bridge, built in the C.15, with three pointed arches on one side and three rounded arches on the other, has attached to it a C.15 chapel (ruined), and a C.18 fishing pavilion, square with pyramidal roof and the inscription "Piscatoribus Sacrum". It could be a near replica of Walton and Cotton's more celebrated pavilion near Beresford Dale. There is also a plaque to a horseman whose horse pitched him over the bridge; I am afraid he did not survive. It is worth mentioning that the station you have just passed has an ornate French chateau-style waiting room, built in 1860, and attributed to Paxton's son in law G. H. Stokes. And so to the canal and the start of the walk.

Checked 24 October 2002.