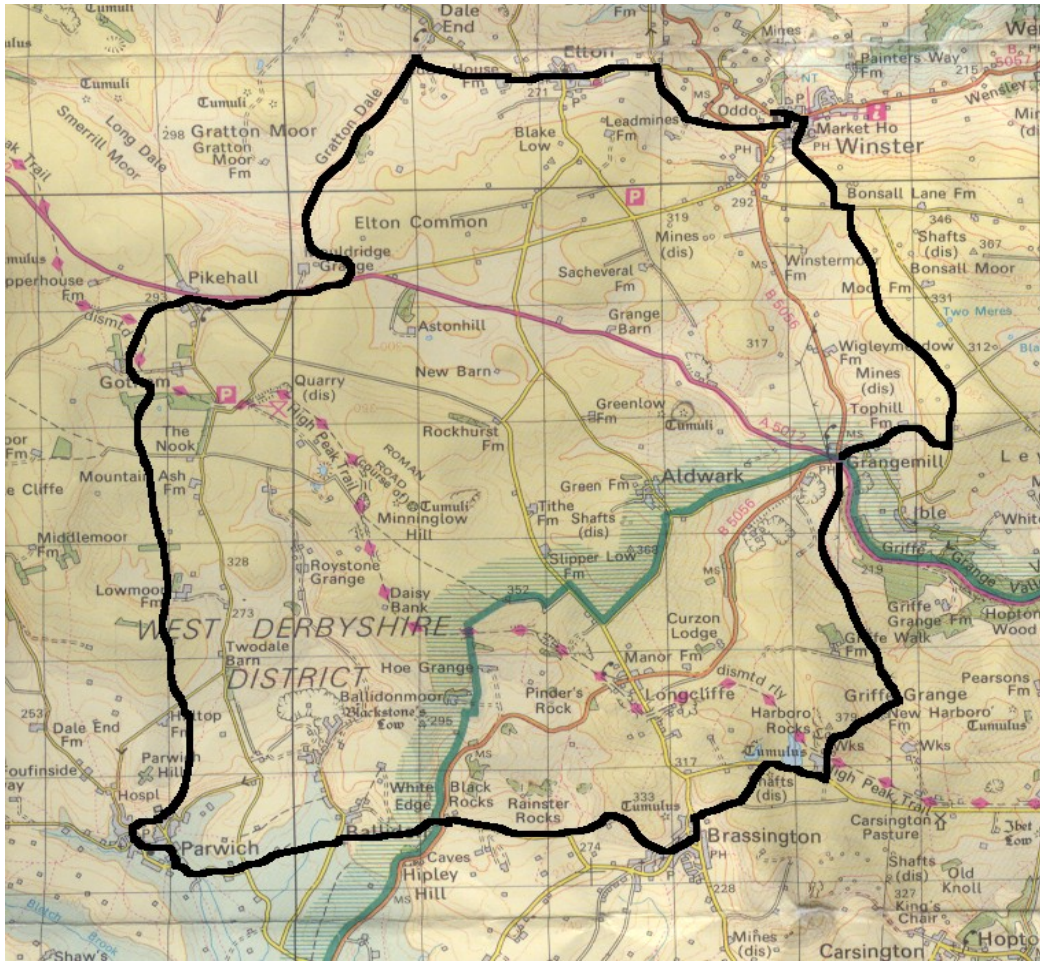


WALK.15
WINSTER.15.
Map White Peak.
18.3 miles. 5 hours, 15minutes.



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Start at Winster (239605) where there is a wide section of road near the church. The Market Hall is C.15 or C.16; its original ground floor pointed arches have been filled in. Winster Hall in the main street is an early Georgian, five bay stone house with giant pilasters which border the central bay, and a top balustrade; the doorway has Doric half-columns with pediment. The stone for the building was brought by packhorses from Darley Dale. The house and other buildings in Winster indicate the prosperity of former times brought in by lead mining; but long before that the area was not without wealth, for a barrow nearby has yielded a cross of pure gold surmounted by a cut stone of garnet. The area must have been populous in the Bronze Age, and active in trade, for a glass bead was found here: it had come from Egypt. Walk E down the main street to the Market Hall, a famous pancake race is held here every year.

From the Market Hall, go S uphill for about 300 yards. Bear right along the road as it leaves the village, then, at the last cottage on your left, (240603), turn left and walk alongside it for ten yards to a slot stile. Go SE uphill past Wyn's Tor (an outcrop of limestone rocks), wall on left, to a slot stile in wall, then straight across a lane (that leads to Luntor Rocks another rocky outcrop), through another good slot stile. Continue going SE through a field to a gap in a wall, then down to the road at 243597 by three good slot stiles.

Turn left and walk for 150 yards or so, passing a ruined stone building on the right, (many of these small now empty buildings in this area provided houses for farm workers' families in the past). Just beyond a farm gate, there is on the right a poor stile in a low wall which leads into a field through which you walk S to the far wall. Over the stile, go SE through a rough field of mounds and depressions to a wall ahead and a slot stile assisted by wooden bars and uprights. In the next field, walk SSW with a low wall on the right of which is a good slot stile. In the next field, continue in the same direction, wall on the right, to a good limestone slot stile in the corner: note an old ruin on the right. In the next field, turn right and go diagonally to a broken wall ahead where a gap lets you through into a field where you make for the wall on your right and a slot stile at 247590.

For the next half-mile or so, you walk in a straight line, wall on left, on level ground, passing several good slot stiles, some of them unnecessary because of the ruinous state of the walls. Even so, it is always good to see the stiles. Moor Farm is away to the left. This present route takes you up to a rough road at 252582 on which you walk S for 500 yards to a crossroads. Turn right; in 150 yards this road turns sharp right. At a corner, on your left, there is a stone slot stile aided by a few pieces of wood. Go through this, then E downhill to a wall, stone ruin to your left. Go through a gap in the wall where there might once have been a stile, then down to the next wall (broken) and through a gap into a field where, on your right, is a stone building and some trees. At this point, note that the map indicates a path going off to the right to a gate where there is no stile, and another going through a fenced-off area in front of you. If you walk with this fenced off area on your right, you come to a wooden step stile, which leads into a small area; go through this to find a stile on the right that leads you on to the road at 247577.

Walk SW down to the road to Grangemill where ancient paths crossed; one of them, the Port way, came from Derby and headed for the iron age fort near Robin Hood's Stride. This was used for centuries, the last section remaining until the turnpike (now the B.5056), replaced it in 1811. The tollhouse at Grangemill is still there but much altered.

Cross the busy A.5012 at 243576, then walk S, going uphill on a well-defined path through fields, passing Grangemill Quarry 100 yards to your right, and going under power lines (on the map) until a signpost is reached at 243567 where a path comes down the hill from Brassington. Ignore this and walk SSE along a good track with wall on the left, through a gate then follow the lane with wall on both sides. This is an ancient track grassed over. Pass Griffie Walk Farm three fields to the right then on to where the lane forks, the one on the right leading uphill to a works, straight on eventually to a quarry. Cross the cattle grid and walk towards New Harboro' Farm with the wall on your right. At the farm go over a large ladder stile, bear left to walk uphill: a sign shows the way, passing the farm on your left and through an open gateway, slot on the right. Go SW steeply uphill through a broken wall, then come to a sound wall where there is a good slot stile. Proceed through level ground pitted with rocky outcrops: there is a trig point at the summit at 242553; this is Harboro Rocks, an ancient burial ground. There was here a chambered tomb with sixteen individual burials (now destroyed). The rocks are pitted with a large number of holes making them an easy rock-climbing nursery; go through a slot stile among some ruined buildings, and down to the High Peak Trail at 242551.

Go straight across the Trail, walking S to the road, then turn right and walk WNW along the road for about 300 yards, until a section of wall is reached where there is, on the left, a gate and a footpath sign. Go over a stile, and walk S, wall on the left through an area of mounds and depressions, obviously an area of workings at one time. Turn right and walk W with the wall on your left as it turns again S to go downhill to a gate with a slot stile adjacent to it. Turn right and walk W along a road past a picnic and parking area, at this moment newly made; go downhill to a road: turn left and walk S into Brassington.

Turn right and walk past the Church that does not look at all interesting at first sight, but is essentially a Norman building. The S porch you see from the road is C.13. High up in the wall of the tower is a stone 12 by 10 inches, carved with a quaint figure of a man with his hand on his heart. It is probably the work of a Saxon sculptor, and was found by the Normans who built it into the tower. It is the oldest inhabitant of the village.

There is much to remind us of our past history in and around Brassington: Rains Cave contained seven Neolithic burials; Rainster Rocks have Iron Age and Roman remains; Gally Low is a Bronze Age Barrow; not far away is Minning Low, crossed by a Roman Road, its ring of Beech trees surrounding rock-chambered graves of the New Stone Age. In later times, the Kings Highway went through Brassington. In 1663, the Court Leet directed that “everie one everie year scowre their ditches adjoyneing the King’s highway the first daie of the May or else to forteite 12d”. (Note the modern spelling!). The road through the village was an important coach route, and appears on Ogilby’s strip map of 1675. However, it suffered a varied fate in later years when the turnpikes came through here and was found to be too hilly for the main routes.

Proceed down to the Post Office on the right just below the church, then turn right and walk up a “jitty” that leads up to a narrow tarmac road above. Turn right and walk 50 yards to a sign on the left where there is a good slot stile leading into a field where you start climbing uphill through a great deal of limestone outcrop to an excellent slot stile at the top of the left side of the field. In the next field, go forward on level ground, shed on left, to a metal gate on the right of which is a good slot stile. You are now in a lane; turn left and walk WSW for 500 yards to a tarmac road at 221544. Continue in the same direction along this road, Rainster Rocks away to the right; in half a mile; you come to a road junction at 211545. Just down to the left are the famous Ripley Caves; but do not go left: go straight across the road to a good slot stile, and walk WSW uphill on a track that is not marked on the map-very odd.

The track levels out and gives you an impressive view ahead. Proceed W downhill and note a minute valley on the right with trees. Keep to the left of this; do not go through a farm gate on your right. Make for an isolated upright stone in the middle of a grassy area and go forward from that to the wall behind it where there is a farm gate and a slot stile to its right. Go downhill to Ballidon with its Parish Church standing isolated in this field. It looks Victorian; in fact it was restored in 1882. It contains some Norman work (a chancel arch, N door now blocked up, and a W window); and a C.15 font with shields and tracery upside down.

One thinks of the vast quarry in Ballidon, but its history goes back further: there are earthworks and enclosures of a mediaeval village nearby. Blackstone Low had five inhumations and one cremation. Roystone Grange up the dale to the right has a Bronze Age Barrow; it also contains an Anglo-Saxon secondary burial. There are others.

The path goes through the churchyard; go down to the road where there is a slot stile at 203544. Cross the road, turn left and walk SW for 40 yards then go right through a wooden slot stile near a signpost. Walk W through a field, level going, hedge on right to a far hedge where there is a simple footbridge with a handrail and slot stiles. In the next field, go diagonally SW towards the left corner, about 25 yards up from which is a stile you cannot easily see from a distance; it is made of two old uprights. In the next field, make for the opposite corner, cutting the left corner, and coming to a little footbridge made of a concrete slab with a good handrail. Keep fairly close to the hedge on the right in the next field, and in the hedge ahead there is a slot stile. Enthusiasts know there is a productive sloe tree here.

Cross the road here at 196542 and walk W along a winding road to Parwich. The Parish church was almost completely rebuilt in 1873. The only older remains are the original N doorway and a Norman tympanum, both built into the tower and easily seen from outside. The tympanum is interesting; it has various animals carved in it, the lamb carrying a cross, and a stag, both standing on a serpent; above the lamb, a bird: above the stag, a pig and a lion.

It is difficult to miss Parwich Hall, a building singularly lacking in charm. It has five bays with the centre bay projecting. It was probably completed in 1747 and retained the mullioned windows from the previous manor house. The doorway has Tuscan pilasters and rustication.

Turn right at the first junction, and walk NNW through interesting cottages for 300 yards to another junction; go right and follow the road as it curves around to the right; then, at a very sharp turn in the road in about 300 yards from the junction, go left through a stile into a field and proceed to the top at 190547, go E for a few yards and enter woods. Now follow a steep pull up a wooded bank, going NE to the top where there is a wall which you follow close on your left to a wall in front and a slot stile garnished with pieces of wood (and a step). Go N through the next

field and veer to the right to a double slot stile, i.e. three uprights. Level going through the next field, walking somewhat to your left to a step stile, the step being a railway sleeper. In the next field, you walk N close to a wall on your right, a copse away to the left, climbing a little to the far wall in front and a sign. A wall marked on the map has been removed, for the next stile is a non-descript thing that leads out on to the road at 191556. Hilltop Farm is away to the left.

Cross the road to another sign, a farm gate and a good step stile to the left of that, and so into a field, walking NNW, wall on left, and climbing up to the wall in front where there is an indifferent slot stile through or over which you get so as to walk in the same direction, wall now on your right, up to a stone barn. Pass this on your right and enter the next field to walk in the same direction, wall still on right up to a wall in front and a stile in the corner. Continue the same way in the next field as the path descends a little, and the stile is to be found on your right, a very good step stile, newly cemented, over which you get over into a field where you go downhill through rough ground NE to another stile, and into a lane. Cross the lane and walk around the barn on your right. This is Lowmoor Farm (191565); it has an enormous pond. Once around the barn, go up a bank to another excellent step stile in a wall, and enter a lane, walk uphill, through trees. As you emerge from the trees, you encounter two gateways in front, go through the one on the right, and walk N with wall on left for about 150 yards to a gate in front of you, there is a good step stile 15 yards to the right of the gate.

Walk NNW on level ground for about 300 yards to a small area that has several gates in it. Lowmoor Plantation is to the left. Leave this and continue in the same direction, wall on right, passing some ruined buildings on your right, and coming to a wall in front and an excellent step stile. Continue in the same direction, wall on right to a copse, which can be quite muddy at times, then soon to a wall with a step stile at 189573. From now on, it will be difficult to give a strict location because the walls are broken: so go NNW through these walls where one or two pieces of evidence suggest former stiles, until you come to a step stile with a rusty metal pipe at 188576 that leads you into the last field before a lane, walking with wall on right to a good step stile into the lane in question at 188577. Cross the lane to a step stile then walk NNW to an open gateway ahead; but note: there is a step stile in the wall 10 yards to the left of that.

Change direction to walk NNE through the next field towards Gotham Plantation and a good step stile in a wall. Go NNE diagonally through the next field to a step stile in wall ahead, Gotham Plantation to the left. NNE through the next field brings you to a gateway; the step stile is to the left of that, and so into an area that can be muddy: it is where Gotham Plantation joins with Chapel Plantation. There are three gates here: go N through one into field, walking N with hedge on right downhill. Follow it round to the right as it skirts a depression, and there, on the right, is a step stile that leads down to the High Peak Trail at (189584).

Cross the trail to a good slot stile into a field, going downhill NE to a farm gate, no stile, and then through the buildings of Gotham Grange Farm. The name Grange sometimes indicates that the farm was run by the lay brothers of an Abbey. Walk E along the farm drive, turn left on to a road that leads down to Pikehall at 191591 and the A.5012. This ancient spot has been used for thousands of years. The Roman road from Derby to Buxton was known as the Street; it passed through here; in fact, Pikehall might well have served the Romans as a posting house (*mutatio*). Saxon and Mediaeval routes passed here; it is shown on Ogilby's strip map as Pikehall Inn, which is the present Pikehall Farm. It has the appearance of being built about 200 years ago, and still retains a barrel-vaulted cellar. It probably provided refreshments to the packhorse men, the drovers and the salt men. Later on, it had a turnpike tollgate which laid the foundations of the modern A.5012 along which people speed in their cars without a thought for the thick layers of history that lie here. All that human experience had to be lived through before we came along to inherit that precious legacy.

Go E along this busy road, taking care for about 1200 yards to 204592 where there is a sign to Gratton Dale and a slot stile. Go N through this and walk N for about 200 yards close to the wall on the left until it angles off left. Mouldridge Grange is away to the left. Go NW downhill to a wall where you will find two beautiful, tooled gritstone gateposts supporting a wooden gate. Enter Gratton Dale and walk NE along it, the early impression being nothing but pleasant. However as

one progresses along it, the whole area becomes stony; walking is difficult, good exercise for the ankles; bad for boots (and tired feet). Continue down the dale until a farm is reached at 211611. Go to the right here and do a U-turn to walk S on a track, then SE; go through a gate in front of you, then climb steeply uphill. At the top, walk with wall on your left for a short distance, then go through a gap in the wall so as to walk E with wall on right. At this point, note the map indicates the path continues with the wall on your right. In practice it is easier to walk with the wall on your left; there are some stiles here to assist you, and otherwise, the last section leading to unspeakable but very smelly silage type mud would be very difficult.

Walk along a firm track close to the silo on one's right. (One has vivid memories of trudging through the smelly muck at this point), and come out on to the road. Proceed E through Elton. The parish Church was rebuilt in 1812, the steeple of the previous building having fallen down. When the new church was built, the old font was thrown out and forgotten. Somehow, it found its way to Youlgreave church where it is today, a big circular font with the remarkable addition of a separate projecting side stoup. The oldest object in Elton church is one bell which dates back before the Reformation; it is exceptionally fine and ornate. It is inscribed, "Jesus be our spede".

As you walk through the village, you will notice a number of interesting old houses, one having a semi-circular pediment above the door; a pair have two-light mullioned windows dated 1717. Continue E along the road to a point (229610), about half a mile from the church, where a road leads down to the left and a lane to the right; turn right up this lane, walking SSE, a hedge on each side, uphill at first, then downhill, passing on the left an old stone building; at one time its roof spars showed like bare ribs. 500 yards along this lane brings you to a crossing of paths. At this point take a stile on the left at the footpath sign, go into a field and walk E to a gritstone slot stile in a wall in front. Pass on the left, a little stone building, and continue E to the road at 235605.

Cross the road through a stile and in 10 yards come to a stile whose uprights have a portion carved out of their base. Go E through park type land and into the church yard, through the churchyard turn left on the road, then left again so as to get to the start at the front of the church.

CHECKED 4 July 2004