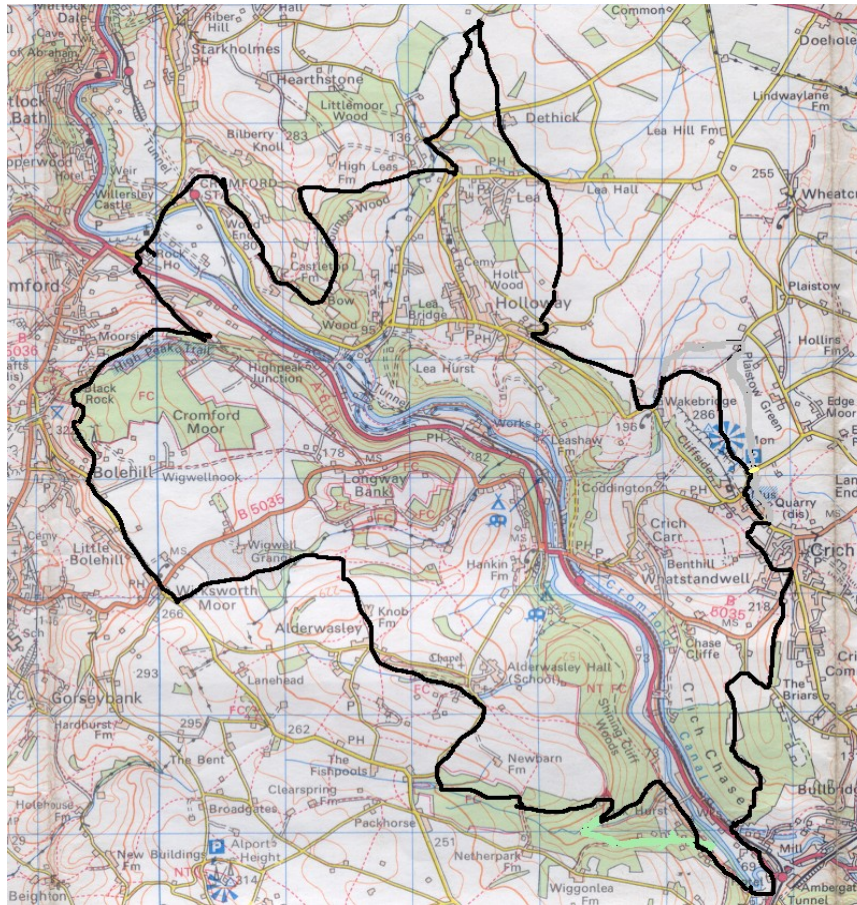


WALK.18.
CROMFORD.18
Map White Peak.
19 miles. 5 hours 30 minutes.



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Start at Cromford at the side of the canal picnic area (300571). The canal was built in 1780 by William Jessop; it went from Cromford to Codnor Park where it joined the Erewash Canal without a lock, a massive feat of engineering in those days. Go out of the picnic area and car park; turn right NW, passing the church built by Arkwright, to the bridge over the River Derwent. This is C.15; it has three pointed arches on one side and three round ones on the other. At the Cromford end, there is an early C.18 fishing pavilion, square with pyramidal roof and the inscription: “Piscatoribus sacrum”. One immediately thinks of the very similar fishing pavilion of Walton and Cotton in Beresford Dale. Attached to the Cromford bridge is a ruined C.15 Chapel with a W doorway and one two-light mullioned window in its left; there is also a plaque to a horseman who died when his horse tipped him over the bridge.

Once over the bridge, go immediately left, (not up to Willersley Castle once the home of Sir Richard Arkwright who made himself wealthy by building several cotton mills in the area, but up on the road to Starkholmes. In a few hundred yards, go right through a gateway and walk along a farm track, which passes over the entrance to a railway tunnel. In about 150 yards, go right off the drive angle across a field SSE to trees (Wood End), which you enter through a gritstone slot stile in a low wall at (305574). Go SE through the wood to a wooden stile at a wall. Go through this into a field, go ahead with wall on the right for 50 yards then angle downhill through an open gateway. Continue SE through the field passing a small chipped out water

trough (another reminder of days when labour was cheap), make for a gritstone stile in a wall, then angle right down to a gate with a stile at its side into a lane at (308568).

Enter the lane turn left and walk uphill for 170 yards; then, where the lane curves sharply to the left, enter a track on the right (no stile), and walk on narrow path raised above the field on the right, a cottage on one's left, to a metal gate, with a good stile on its right. Enter Bow Wood and walk SE on level path. In 200 yards angle left at a footpath sign, go zigzag uphill through trees to an open area, then downhill for 100 yards making for Coumbs Wood ahead, turn left here through an open gateway with stile on its left. Take the right hand track to go through Coumbs Wood first N then NE, the path is well walked and easy to follow. The path then curves around to the left, going NNW in to an open area, go steeply uphill for 150 yards then angle right to go into Coumbs wood again over a gritstone stile, go steeply uphill to the left (poor underfoot) to a poor wall at the top and a wooden stile leading to a small open area with a small building. Keep to the right of this building to get on to a good track: this is Hearthstone Lane, a pleasant walk to Hearthstone Farm. But in 200 yards you leave it on a path to the right near a holly bush at (311574). Over some rough steps, into a field that stands above the level of the lane. Nearby, are some huge stones that may well have given the lane its name.

Walk E for 200 yards, hedge on right, to a low wall with poor stile of wooden bars; then go into the next field, walking in the same direction for 150 yards to where the hedge goes off to the right at 90 degrees. Follow the hedge S, then a100 yards in the second field turn left and walk downhill with a wall and Coumbs Wood on the right. Wonderful views of Dethick below. In 100 yards go through a stile in the right corner, then in the next field a poor wooden step stile. Go downhill through the next field through a gap in the hedge ENE, then through a gap in the wall ahead, and enter a muddy lane in the left corner, woods to the right wall on left. In 50 yards go right through a good gritstone stile into the woods, where you will have to struggle through the undergrowth for 20 yards to find a stile on the left, then down to the right to cross a stream by stepping stones thoughtfully provided by someone: this small stream can be a raging torrent in very wet weather (if so do not risk it; better find another way). Go through a wooden slot stile then uphill to a stile in a wall and on to a road at (322576). Turn left: then admire the gardens to the left and the right; just past these turn right at a road junction to walk uphill first E then NE until the road curves to the right. At this point (324581), go left as indicated by a sign, along Wood Lane; muddy at times, getting narrower for 700 yards. Just before a road there is a good gritstone stile on the right (325588). Take this and enter a field, walk S uphill to the right corner where there is a substantial stile in a wall, over this and walk downhill with the wall on the right; through four fields to the last one which is a small C.L. caravan site, through this and over a wall on to a road at (327581). This is Dethick, which like many such interesting places is more a geographical location than habitation. Go straight across the road; notice the large attractive pond on the right, then go uphill to three farms that contain the remains of the manor house where Anthony Babington was born. He was sixth in descent from Thomas who married the heiress of the Dethicks who fought at Agincourt. Thomas's son John was killed at Bosworth Field; his brother William was a famous Lord Chief Justice. Anthony spent his boyhood in this tiny village. He would have known the large kitchen that is still there with its large turnspit, oak beams and stone arches. At C.16, Anthony became a page to Mary Queen of Scots who was at that time imprisoned in the nearby Wingfield Manor; and later plotted to murder Queen Elizabeth in order to put Mary on the throne of England. The plot was discovered, and even though Anthony sent the Queen Elizabeth an apologetic pathetic letter ("Most gracious Souveraigne, if either bitter teares, or pensive contrite harte, or any dutiful sighte of then wreched sinner might work any pittie in your royal brest, I would wriinge out my drayned eyes as much blood as in bemoaninge my drery tragedye should lamentably bewayle my faulte, and somewhat move you to compassion". But it did not work and he was hung drawn and quartered.

Curve to the right past the farms to the fascinating church of John the Baptist. It has a fine W tower given by Sir Anthony Babington (dated 1530). The buttresses are diagonal; it has

an unusual feature of a tall polygonal SE stair-turret. The windows are late perpendicular. The church is not the equal of the splendid tower: two lancet windows show that it is C.13.

Go through a gate at the back of the church into a field, go SSE downhill to Swinepark Woods at the side of which is a poor wooden step stile: take a look back at the church: it is a view that will stay with me forever; Constable would have reached for his paints if he had seen this view. Over the stile then walk 30 yards with the wall to the right, then angle to the left away from the wall going SE to a wooden step stile leading into woods. A pleasant walk takes you down to a footbridge, and then up to the road at (331575). This is Lea. Cross the road and go straight up between houses. At the top turn left to a wooden gate in 10 yards, a poor stile at its side. From this stile, go SSE diagonally across the field to the far corner through the stile which leads into a lane; do not take this but go straight across by a gritstone stile. Continue SE through the next field, cutting the corner to a poor slot stile in a hedge, then descend into a sunken lane. How did it get lower than the surrounding fields? Go into the lane, turn right, ignore the stile on the left; make your way through obstructions, mud then more mud to the top of the lane where a stile in a wall leads you out into a field. Go to an angle of a wall on the right going S then SSW to a gateway on the left of which is a poor stile, and so into the next field to a gate on the left, over this then in the next field go up and down to a gate with a stile at its side. Through this then walk with a farm on your left slightly to the right to a stile in the facing wall, and so out on to a road at Upper Holloway (330563).

Turn left and walk 50 yards to a road junction. Turn right and go another 50 yards to a stile and sign on the left, where you enter woodland that slopes down to the road below. Walk SE along the bank, then in 100 yards up to the left through a gritstone slot stile, and along a path that brings you to a gritstone stile; through this to enter a field, level walking. Where the bank falls away dramatically on the right, there are splendid views of the Derwent Valley. Go through two fields, to where a facing hedge and ditch force you to go left to a gate with a slot stile on its right. Go through this to walk uphill ENE then downhill steeply to a farm drive. Go right to the front of Wakebridge Farm: Sir William de Wakebridge was Lord of this manor at the time of the Black Death, but the manor was always subordinate to Crich. The manor house was on the site behind the present farmhouse. William de Wakebridge served parliament as knight of the shire 1353 to 1363 and fought in the 100 years war with Edward III. Williams's wife and children died in the Black Death, which made him lose interest in society and take up religion. Upon his death his sister Cecilia inherited the manor; this passed to her husband Sir John de Pole of Hartington and his sons one of whom is buried in Crich Church with his wife in Tudor dress. Another was a Roman Catholic Cardinal at the reign of Mary Tudor. He encouraged her to burn and kill so-called heretics which earned her the sobriquet of Bloody Mary. Go left in front of the farm down to two gritstone slot stiles in a wall and on to a road at (339556).

Turn left immediately up a lane to the disused Wakebridge Mine; the buildings remaining consist of an engine house and workshop. A steam engine was used here to pump water to the level of the Ridgeway Sough. In February 1863, a breakdown in the pumps caused serious flooding which brought mining operations to a halt, causing distress to miners and their families. During this century, the mine has been worked for fluorspar, barites and calcite which are used in the paint and chemical industries.

From the mine, go right in front of a cottage, and walk up a rough lane, hedge on left to curve right at the top where it meets some tram lines. Cross these and walk up a good track keeping the quarry close to the right where you enter the precincts of Crich Stand. This famous memorial to the Sherwood Foresters was erected in 1923 as a tribute to the 11,400 men of that famous regiment who died in the First World War. Fierce local pride still remembers the "Foresters" long after the regiment has been merged with others. Leave this sacred spot and head downhill to the road, turn right then left to get to the Parish Church of St Michael but before the left turn, notice the Tram Museum on the right where rides can be taken to the point where we passed the tram lines previously. Also notice the front of a building which was the façade (1752-

5) of the Derby Assembly Rooms, a handsome five-bay stone-faced front with raised, pedimented three-bay centre.

This fine old church has a great deal of the C.14 in it; but also much older work by the Normans in the arcades where the capitals are square on one side and round on the other. The font too is Norman; it has cabling in strong relief. The tower, built later, has angled buttresses, a fine parapet with a wavy band with trefoils instead of battlements, and a recessed spire with two tiers of dormer windows. Into the chancel wall is built one of the rare bible rests. In the outer wall of the N aisle as well as the inner wall are low ogee-shaped tomb recesses. The oak screen 500 years old was thrown out in 1861 and lay for some time in a timber yard. From there, it was taken to St Peter's in Derby, but later returned to the church, having survived indignities and rough handling with mediaeval toughness.

William de Wakebridge lies in a long gown buttoned to the neck. He sat in the Parliaments of Edward III, but after losing his wife, his father and three brothers, he turned to the consolations of religion and founded two chantries here. In one of them, they laid him in 1369. In the chancel is a tomb to German Pole and his wife, both in Tudor dress. An alabaster tomb has the engraved portrait of Godfrey Beresford in armour (1513).

Opposite the church, go down a short lane into a new housing estate; curve to the right to a field going over a old bridge where a light railway used to run: it carried stone from the quarries to the Cromford Canal at Bullbridge where it could be transported all over the country. In 20 yards from the bridge turn left to go between the houses to enter Crich Market Place. The earliest reference to Crich is in the Domesday Survey of 1088 being a lead mine of value 40 shillings. Ralph FitzRalph became the first Baron of Crich in 1140 being the owner of several surrounding parishes. The television programme Peak Practice was filmed here; they called it Cardale. Turn right to go steeply uphill, with the splendid front of the Baptist Church on the left, then opposite the fire station, go left past a walled area with a few trees and a picnic table to a slot stile. Walk S on the edge of an immense drop to the left where the views are wide and long. Go through a gateway, with a stile to its left; ignore this and carry on with the wall on the left, through several stiles: notice the view of the Derwent Valley ahead; the back view of Crich is very rewarding. You drop down to a road at a point called Chadwick Nick and Windy Gap (348532). Turn right and walk downhill for 200 yards to a metal gate on the left with a metal slot stile on its right. Enter the field and walk downhill with the wall on the left to a stile in the bottom corner of the wall. Go left over this and walk SSE with wooden fence close to the left. The views to the right are superb.

The path is clear: go through some flat woodland S then angle downhill slightly to the right, SE again over a flat grassland to the far right corner with Bilberry Wood to the right where you go through a gateway and proceed downhill through woodland, straight over a track then further downhill to a stile in front which leads you to a field through which you go SW to Cromford Canal. Go right over a canal bridge and down to the A.6 road at (345520). Turn left and walk half a mile to a road on the right where you turn right and walk past a well-built church on the left and a cricket field on the right, then over the River Derwent to turn right up a road with trees either side.

After about 350 yards turn right on a track with large boulders stopping other than walkers going down, go through the old wire works now shut (many a coal mine winding rope and ships' ropes were made here; the long buildings were designed for laying long ropes out). At the end of the works go in to Shining Cliff Wood. In about 100 yards go left on a muddy track which goes SW uphill for 450 yards where you meet a marked track to the right which takes you steeply uphill NNW to a Youth Hostel. Go past the front of the Hostel and walk WSW then WNW on a wide track for 1200 yards, passing two pathways going N on to a road at (322524). A little to the left in the woods is a reservoir. Turn right and walk down Higg Lane for 700 yards NE to the entrance of a hall, now school and church at Alderwasley at (325533). The hall was originally the home of the Lowe family. Thomas Lowe built the Tudor church when Henry VIII was king. There is not much of it left, but note the lintel above the S doorway where there are

crude motifs in square panels. The new church was built in 1850 by Francis Hurt whose family built the hall. It is mainly Georgian.

Go left off the road here to enter a lane, then leave it almost at once to go right up a path through the woods WNW, then to the left of a house into a lane which leads out on to a road at Alderwasley at (316535).

The last section where there is a dispute over access, so if in doubt, carry on up the road to a junction, turn left uphill past old St Margaret's Chapel on the right, then on to Alderwasley at (316535).

Go NNW up a lane that goes past Knob Farm on the right, the lane getting very muddy, to a wall ahead. Get over the wall by stone steps, then enter a field and continue with wall and trees on right. You go downhill, and, 400 yards from the farm behind you, go right through a gate, going sharp left at once, walking downhill keeping close to the wall on your left. Halfway down, there is a prominent stile in the wall; over this then cut across the field going WNW down to the hedge below to a point at (312543) where you first cross a small stream, then negotiate a somewhat elaborate stile made of wooden bars either side of a wall. Enter a strip of woodland, turn left and walk WSW to a gritstone slot stile in a wall, then out into parkland of some character. Continue in the same direction uphill, Wigwell Grange on the right; we see it from the rear. It is of stone, ashlar all round, the Ashover Grit coming from Cromford Moor or Gorsey Bank. The S porch is untooled; the rest has double chevron tooling. Inside, there is a Hoptonwood staircase with iron stair-rail. The roof is flat of Westmoorland green slate. It is an elegantly proportioned 5 by 3 bay house of 2 stories built by Thomas Goodwin C.18. A low wing to the right may contain original work. The site was originally a moated grange of the Abbey of Darley held with 80 acres by the Babingtons at the beginning of the C.16, then purchased by them at the dissolution. After several owners the Goodwin family bought it, and built the present house. Even after being rebuilt it has had several owners. Go over a poor stile. Continue uphill, wall on left, to a gate with a slot on its left; then in 40 yards to another gate with a slot stile on its right, enter a lane which takes you up on to a road at (301540).

Turn right and walk past a thatched cottage on the right and a public house on the left, going NW for 1200 yards, past Spitewinter Cottage on the left (an appropriate name for the location), then 200 yards after the road goes downhill, take a stile to the right at (294551). Go uphill through a gritstone stile then a wooden one; then climb up a searching bank that leaves you breathless at the top; over a wall then on to a double wooden stile: why double? Someone must have worked on dual carriageways. Over this then angle left uphill along a stony path to an ordnance survey trig point at (294553). Carry on in the same direction, pass some wooden fencing on your left going N, then at the end of the fence, cut down left E to the trail, passing Black Rocks on the right. Turn right and walk along the trail for 600 yards to a stile on the left; just before the engine house, which housed a steam engine that pulled the trains uphill by a rope from the High Peak Junction. Take the stile then walk first NE then E to the woods; the trail is on the right. Through the trees down to a lane. Go left on the lane and walk NW past some houses down to the A.6 at (298568). Cross the busy road, go through a wall into a narrow path or "jitty" down 20 yards to a road, turn left then immediately facing you is one of Arkwrights Mills now a museum, turn right walk past this back to the start.

Checked 3 January 2003