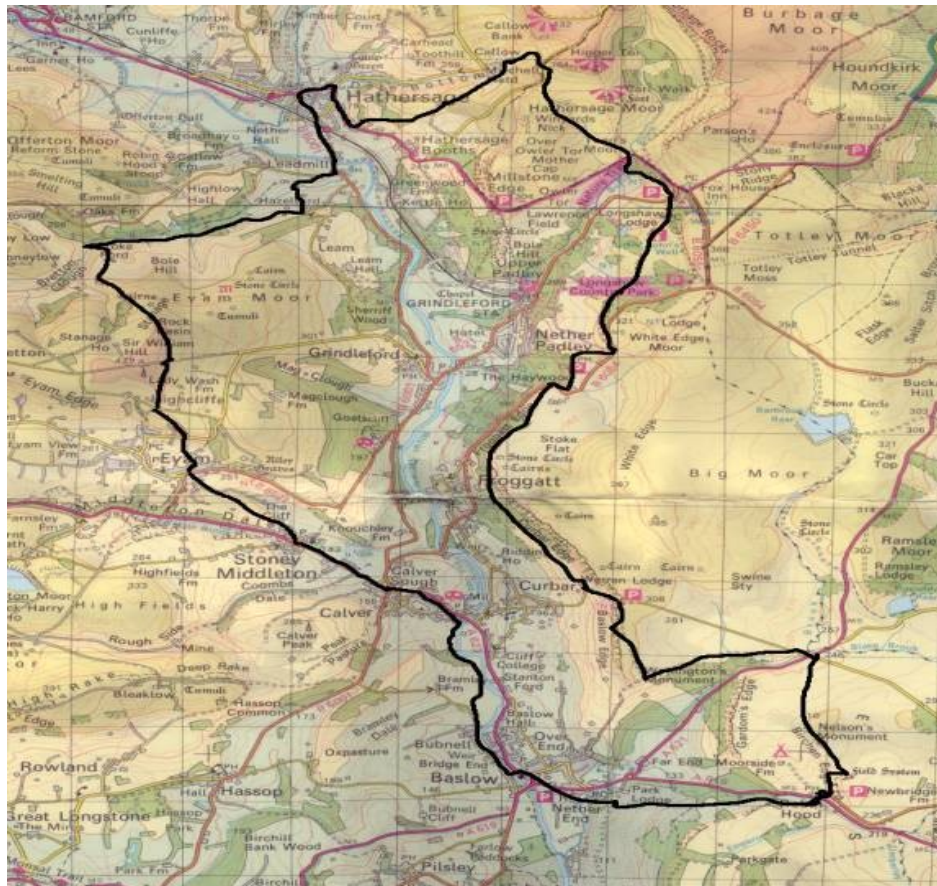


WALK.21.
BASLOW "Robin Hood" 21
20 miles. 6 hours.
Map White Peak. SK 28/38



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Start at Robin Hood, to the E of Baslow (280721), at the car park. Go uphill SE to the left for 30 yards, then go left over a large wooden ladder stile into open country on a good track, walking NNW. After about 150 yards look for a steep path going up to the right, a bit of a scramble near the top, then turn left and walk along the top of the rocks. These are very good nursery rocks, called Birchens. Go past the stone pillar; this is Nelson's Column, the Derbyshire version, erected in 1810 by John Brightman, a Baslow man. Just to the right are three large rocks named "Victory", "Defiant" and "Royal": Nelson's ships. Continue until the

rocks veer to the right, then look for a path down through the rocks and heather; head N for the corner of the walls, a stile near the corner and so out to a crossroads at 279739.

. Cross the road and walk NW along the road slightly uphill for 100 yards to a farm gate on the left; stile on its left, through this then walk W on level path for 1200 yards to the Wellington Monument at 265737 passing a guide stone with an inscription on one face only: Chesterfeilde Roade. An inscription on the Wellington monument states: "Wellington, born 1769 Died 1852. Erected 1866 by E.M.Wrench, late 34th Regiment."

Go N for 1000 yards to Curbar Gap, passing the Eagle Stone on the way, about which a local custom states that the young men of Baslow should prove their fitness for marriage by climbing this strange rocky outcrop (it is not easy). From earliest times, at Curbar Gap, travellers have found their way through this pronounced gap in the gritstone edges. Several ancient tracks converge at the gap, one of them, for instance, from Lady's Cross to Chesterfield, passes two guide crosses before coming over the moors past Swine Sty to the gap. There is a guide stone at Curbar Gap bearing the names Sheffield Rd; Dronfield Rd; Chesterfield Rd; Tideswell Rd; Humphery Gregory, Supervisor 1709. The Tideswell Way inscribed, left the gap for Stoney Middleton. A saltway from Cheshire to Chesterfield came through here and entered Chesterfield, presumable at Saltergate.

Go downhill on the road (turnpiked in 1759) for 300 yards to Warren Lodge (257749); turn right up a short lane to a ladder stile and sign post to open country, then walk NNW through woods for 1800 yards on a good track mostly on level ground, all of the path is not shown on the map but it is open country, passing several square four-feet-high structures with manhole covers on the top; we must assume that a water board pipe passes this way perhaps from the Lady Bower. Your way is stopped by a wall to a garden at 248763 so curve to the right, keeping the wall to your left until you meet a massive stone; just before that, curve uphill NE to reach the top of Froggatt Edge at 249765. Turn left on the summit path, going N. Over the wall, at 250768, you can see a stone circle. You eventually reach a farm gate with a gate at its side, and so out to the road at 254776.

Turn right, walk SE for 50 yards, then go left off the road through a small wooden gate, down some steps to cross a small stream, then up the other side to a wooden step stile passing a NT car park on the right, then walk uphill with a wall on the right. When the wall turns to the right, follow it round, going E to a wall on the left which contains a stile; angle right here to a facing wall with a large stone stile and so out to a road at 259780. Go N on the road for 100 yards, then angle left through a gate at the side of a farm gate; follow a good farm track, which leads to a narrow path, then into Longshaw Lodge. "Strange mountainous, misty, rocky, wild country." so wrote a C.17 traveller about this area, which contains the Longshaw estate of over 1000 acres, now, the property of the NT. It is sometimes difficult to think that Sheffield is only a few miles away, at least in stormy weather when this dramatic landscape of bleak hillsides and gritstone outcrops is distinctly unfriendly. No wonder that Charlotte Bronte chose the Fox House Inn, just 100 yards away, as the place where Jane Eyre was set down from the coach during her flight to "Morton" (Hathersage). Longshaw Lodge was built as a hunting lodge for the Duke of Rutland in 1827, an elaborate building for that

purpose, being a long house with five gables of unequal size. The windows have strong hood moulds; the tower is embattled. There is even a separate chapel for religious sportsmen, as well as extensive stabling, and of course, adequate servants' quarters. One is fortunate to be able to walk alongside the dark and forbidding house that the Duke sold and his 1000 acres estate in 1927 for £22,000 to a group of dedicated Sheffield people led by a Mrs E. B. Haythornthwaite.

Go down the road past the Longshaw Lodge Gatehouse and so on to the road. Cross the road to a stile into an area with trees scattered around for 150 yards, straight down to a stream, footbridge to the left; over this, bear right uphill to a stile that leads to a road at 260806, Burbage Bridge is 60 yards to the right. Change maps to SK28/38. Go straight across the road to a wooden step stile, then walk in a NW direction uphill through the moorland heather to the top of a ridge where one might be tempted to go through a V gap, (and so down to Hathersage, splendid views), but instead turn right to walk N on a good level path, a view of Higger Tor in front, disappointing view of Carl Wark to the right: Carl Wark was an amazing hill fort thought by some to be dated to the Iron Age, contemporary with Mam Tor and Fin Cop; but the rampart of turf and huge stone blocks are now believed by others to indicate a later date. It is an impressive sight from N and NE in open moorland surrounded by outcrops of gritstone with which it seems to merge. The sites of gates are to be found in its perimeter but is not connected with any known prehistoric track. Eventually lose height slightly to come down to a sheepfold; walk with the sheepfold on the right, walking NNW. At the end of the sheepfold, walk WNW for 150 yards to a wall, at 251816. Go down steep bank to a stile then straight across the road via a wooden stile. The views are superb. Descend steeply WNW to a wooden step stile in a wall, continue down to Mitchell Field Farm. Enter the farmyard, turn left; the farmhouse is only a matter of yards to the right, continue 20 yards left, then downhill and up a bank to a stile in wall whereby you enter a field. The view back to the farm shows that blocked windows on the W wall of the farmhouse were mullioned.

Walk uphill to a step stile in the wall which brings you to rough land, walking SW uphill, magnificent views all around. Soon, you gain a view of the next marker, a large house, which as you approach it, turns out to be Scaperlow, an unusual building: two cottages, one either side of a central block which has a most pretentious front, three arched entrances, crosses above, the whole front is embattled. (243813). What is its history, can it tell a tale? Walk with house on right on path that is adjacent to the boundary wall of the house and frequently muddy. Continue with field wall on right dropping to a corner where there is a wooden step stile which leads into a lane among trees. The lane goes more-or-less W and affords tremendous views over Hathersage, a charming section: there are delights at every turn. The lane comes down to a wooden fence with a gate. The path descends to a road at 234813. Turn right and walk N through Hathersage.

There is no doubt that the grave of Little John brings visitors to this lovely village. There are, however, other historical and literary associations. Charlotte Bronte wrote of Hathersage, calling it Morton in "Jane Eyre". North Lees Hall, a fine C.16 house, was introduced into the

story. Moorseats appears as Moor House where the Rivers sisters lived. Charlotte stayed at the vicarage where her writing desk inlaid with pearl is now kept; so are her shawl and slippers. Her choice of the name "Eyre" indicates that she knew of the history of the great family whose influence was felt widely in the area over 300 years ago. Their arms are over the church door; their portraits in brass form a remarkable set, those of Robert and Joan have been there 500 years on an altar tomb, their fourteen children form up in a row. A vague tradition states that an Eyre living at North Lees built a hall for each of his sons, so they could all be in sight of each other. Was it Robert who fought at Agincourt? The houses probably include Offerton, Padley, Nether Hurst, Shatton, Hazelford, Moorseats and Highlow Hall which was once the home of the Archer family, but passed to the Eyres when the younger of two sisters married Nicholas Eyre who was expected to marry the older sister. She ran away and was never seen again, until her ghost haunted Nicholas and put a curse on the house of Eyre.

St Michael, the parish church, stands well on its site high up above the town, an impressive pattern of C.15 tower and spire, battlemented aisles, clerestory and porch, pinnacles and gargoyles. The stained glass E window came here as recently as 1949 from the Derwent Church that is now submerged in the Ladybower Reservoir. In the lovely churchyard you may see Little John's Grave where he now lies, so it is said, after burying Robin Hood at Kirklee, coming back here broken hearted. Who would want to disprove this story?

In Hathersage is a Jaggars Lane, and the Scotsman's Pack, both providing evidence of early travellers in the C.16 and C.17 who came this way through Derbyshire, crossing the Derwent at Leadmill Bridge. In 1708, an application was made for the building of a bridge here, and a sum of £50 was put aside to build a wooden bridge with two stone piers and stone abutments. Unfortunately, a flood washed it away before completion. It was then decided to build a bridge of three stone arches, but their hopes were dashed again. They had underestimated the strength and power of the river. The new bridge was inadequate, so an extra arch was added bringing the cost to £166; it was widened again in 1928.

Walk through the village until you come to a road on the left B6001 marked Grindleford; walk down this, go under the railway bridge until you come to Leadmill Bridge (mentioned above), go over this, walk uphill for 100 yards, turn right at the hamlet called Leadmill and walk steeply uphill for 250 yards where you turn left off the road to walk on a good level farm drive WSW, the Highlow Brook is down to the left in a pleasant valley. Cross the cattle grid, then in 20 yards cut off left at a footpath sign down a bank through trees to a pleasant little spot below where you cross the brook, by a stone arched footbridge. Once through the slot stile on the other side, go steeply uphill keeping the wall on the left, through a stile at the slot stile at the side of a metal gate. Enter a lane that is the drive for Hoghall Farm then climb to the road above at 231799 which is the route of an ancient track between Eyam and flat then downhill to a stile in the far corner and out into Stoney Middleton. Go Hathersage. On your left (which you do not take) is Hazelford Hall mentioned above as one of the Eyre houses Go back to White Peak map.

So at the top of this drive to Hoghall Farm, go right, passing Tor Farm. With this farm on your right, go through a farm gate continuing W, wall on the right, then WSW, Tor Wood on the left above, and to the S of that in the moorland Wet Withens a Bronze Age ring-cairn of twelve stones in a circular earthen bank. Follow the wall on the right through several fields, until you come to a stile which leads into trees; go W down to a stile which leads to a brook which you cross at 220797.

Walk WSW uphill on a good track that has been worn by a tractor and follow it as it levels out, and you walk parallel to the Highlow Brook below on the right. This path descends to an old gate on the left of which is a small step stile. Continue to Stoke Ford in 300 yards at 211795 where Abney Clough meets Bretton Clough. This is a spot where several footpaths meet, a place to contemplate a while. Note the sign erected, one of many, by the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society. Turn left to walk S for a few yards, then turn away to the left from that path (that will follow Bretton Brook). Start climbing uphill fairly steeply along a path that starts E then climbs S to a wall at 212792. Follow a wall on the left walking SSW, to a stile at the side of a gate, then continue on a good track with impressive views; note Abney Barn away to the right, an old building. The path curves E to the left, then comes to a wooden stile in a wall.

Go over the stile: note that 3 footpaths converge at this point. Take the middle one. Walk SE over moorland, uphill, the wall on your right going away from you as you follow a thin track marked out by poles painted yellow on top. To the S appears a mast; the path climbs more steeply until the top is reached. At a sign here, you may well contemplate the views all round: they are quite impressive. Continue in the same direction over the Sir William Hill, the mast coming ever nearer until the road is reached at 218779 where there is a good ladder stile. Cross the road to a ladder stile then walk with wall close to the left continuing forward, the Ladywash Mine to the left. You pass Bole Hill, an indication that this was once an area where smelting was done. Go over some steps in a wall at 217772.

Turn left for 20 yards, then turn right to go over a stile, and proceed through the field diagonally to the far corner; good views, to a step stile which brings you into rough ground for 40 yards; over a stile, then 150 yards keeping the wall on the right to a facing wall with a slot stile. This is now an open area where the land falls steeply. Go downhill to a wall below and walk with wall on the right until you come to a stile that gives access to a road at 220769. Turn left for 15 yards then go over a stile and proceed downhill to a stile. Make for the churchyard and walk into Eyam.

It is presumed that everyone knows the inspiring story of how the plague affected the village, raising the character of its people to heroic heights. One should not miss the experience of simply walking past these simple old cottages and reading and remembering their story: most of the plague cottages now have explanation notices on them.

The parish church of St Lawrence has much of the C.13 in it: the chancel with lancet windows, and the N arcade. The S arcade is later, probably C.15, which is the date for the nave roof and clerestory. The W tower was rebuilt in 1618. The usual Victorian restoration took place in 1868. The Mompesson chair was given to the church by William Mompesson,

the rector at the time the plague struck the village; it was his action that shut off the village; it was he who, with Thomas Stanley, the ejected incumbent for nonconformity, administered to the dying and the dead, losing his wife in the process. They placed money in a well N of the village to purify it, and food was left in its place.

The sundial on the church is quite elaborate, giving not only the time of day but also the parallel of the sun's declination for the months of the year, the scale of the sun's meridian altitude, points of the compass and times in different parts of the world. For a village church in the C.18, this was unusually comprehensive. Nearby is the Saxon Cross dating from the C.9, having survived for over 1000 years, losing only the top of its shaft. Angels with crosses and trumpets are carved on its head. On the shaft is knotwork, scrolls and foliage, the figure of a man with a bugle, and virgin and child.

Eyam Hall is dated 1676; it was built by the Wright family who are still there. At the back, the projecting parts are older. The staircase in one of them came from Bradshaw Hall. The village stocks are situated nearby.

Eyam has been the centre of intense mining activity that has not altogether died out today. In fact, over 200,000 tons of fluorspar are produced annually, as well as 40,000 tons of barites and 4,000 tons of galena mainly from Ladywash Mine and Sallet Hole. These are mainly used in the Chemical paint and metal industries.

Leaving the parish church, go left on the road to where the road forks right; in a short distance, cross the road and make for a narrow lane between houses, phone box on the left, the house on the right bears a plaque which states that the house is Lydgate near which there once was a gate at which all strangers had to be stopped and questioned. Pass Fossil Cottage and the Lydgate Plague graves making for a very narrow slot stile ahead at the side of a gate. Proceed down a track until you reach a wall containing a slot stile; then go along a narrow jitty to a slot stile at the end; then proceed through a large field called The Cliffe. There is a signed boundary stone here. Go SE first down through the houses, one of which has an inscription: in memory of the second Baron Denman of Dovedale. Proceed to the old Toll House; away to the left, is the Parish Church; and so on the road at 231754.

Stoney Middleton is an interesting village that is spoiled by the busy road that tears through it, a road authorised by the 1759 Turnpike Act. It is on record that the Turnpike Trustees met in the Moon Inn on 2nd August 1836 to consider the erection of a tollhouse, a two-storey building. The one that stands today was built in 1840 by William Morton of Froggatt, stonemason, and George Buxton of Stoney Middleton, joiner. It is octagonal; so is the Parish Church of St Martin, which was added to the low C.15 tower in 1759 by William Booth who built also the stables at Chatsworth and Buxton. The tower is all that remains of the C.15 church that was built by Joan Eyre as a grateful offering for the safe return of her husband from the Battle of Agincourt. The lantern added by Booth to the church is, unfortunately the same height as the low tower and, therefore, detracts from the strong effect a tower normally has. As one might expect, all the pews face the centre.

Joseph Denman and his nephew Thomas lived in the Elizabethan house in the village. It is still there. Thomas was an outstanding figure in Victorian England; a judge of high quality;

he opposed slavery vigorously. His sons also reached high positions in society, one an admiral, another a judge. He was succeeded by his son Thomas who has been long remembered in the village for his unusual hobby of keeping black pigs, which he frequently took in his carriage as gifts to his friends. Near the church are the old stone buildings of the baths which Lord Denman built on the site of what was thought to be Roman baths. In 1777, it was stated that the waters were as hot as those in Buxton.

Turn left and walk down the main road to Calver. The existence of a bridge here, no doubt, caused the growth of the village. A predecessor of the present bridge is referred to in the C.15. It was washed away in the great flood of August 1799. Near the bridge on the site formerly occupied by a corn mill, stood a cotton mill which had been built in 1786. Two turnpikes came through here, one went through Chesterfield to Leicester, another through Chapel en le Frith to Manchester. The mill we see today, six stories high, makes an impressive sight. It was built in 1804 by the indefatigable Richard Arkwright. Later, a former employee, Horatio Mason, took over the management of the mill. He was not only hardworking but a kindly man who cared for his 200 employees. He provided education and Sunday school for his worker's children. Sadly, he went bankrupt in 1839. The mill today has been converted to splendid and expensive flats.

When reaching the traffic lights at the cross roads, do not go straight across, but take the road that leads down into Calver village. At the village shop turn right, walk uphill for 30 yards then left at 240746 through houses: formerly a farm. Turn left at the far end so as to walk around with the building on the right, until you come to a stile on the other side of the farm at 240745. Walk SSE with a poor wall on the left and, in front the clear view of the hill that is to be climbed. You reach the top at 242740. Bear left to a stile in 10 yards and so into a field, walking S to the far corner where there is an open gateway. Turn sharp right and in 5 yards take a very good stone step in wall on left of a gate to enter a field through which you walk diagonally S down to the far corner and a gate with stone steps on its left. Go 30 yards to a stile in a fence at Bramley Farm, then to a wall where you step down; then in 30 yards to a slot stile in a wall, then 10 yards to a stile in a fence, down stone steps to descend to a lane that goes S. this takes you to Baslow, passing Bubnell Hall and going over Baslow Bridge.

The church is delightfully situated near the old bridge. It has an unusual clock face which has the word Victoria and the date 1879 in place of numerals. It was done to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The tower with big angle buttresses is 700 years old; the spire, equally old, has big broaches which are unusual for the period; there are no battlements, but there are dormers. The nave, aisles and chancel are embattled. When the Duke of Devonshire restored the church in 1853, he naturally turned to his gardener, Paxton, the designer of the Crystal Palace, and his son in law G.H. Stokes to supervise the work. The oldest part of the church is a fragment of a pre-Norman cross shaft in the porch.

In its early days, Baslow village lay around its church and bridge. The earliest reference to the bridge is an order of 1500 to the effect that "no one shall henceforth lead or carry any millstones over the bridge at Basselowe under the pain of 6s 8d to the lord for every pair of millstones so carried". The bridge was replaced in the C.17 by the present structure; it has

three ribbed arches and cutwaters. A feature which no visitor misses is the tiny tollhouse with a doorway only 3.5 feet high. Just opposite the tollhouse once stood another: the tollhouse erected by the Turnpike Trust. When it was demolished, one of the windows was built in to a house in Calver and inscribed: "Ye Toll House Baslow, dismantled 1872". Reference to it is contained in accounts kept during the building of Hassop Church in 1816-18 when the sum of £10 was paid for the carriage of stone taken from quarries through the tollgate.

Baslow has a thatched cottage, an unusual feature in these parts; old houses mostly used local gritstone slates; and, to the E, the fine park gates leading into Chatsworth Park. They were erected in 1840.

Go past the church walk through Baslow on the Chesterfield road, go past the road on the right to Chatsworth and Rowsley, then just past the entrance to the Caravan Club Site at 256722, go right through a stile and down a jitty, through several iron gates, over a small bridge, then out on to a lane that leads to the right to a tall iron gate in the Chatsworth Estate wall at 258719, turn left and walk E uphill through this delightful park, no footpath is shown on the map. But the Duke allows access around much of Chatsworth Park. Pity more landowners don't do the same, and so onward to meet a farm drive which takes you ENE to a gate at 268720 and excellent stone steps on its left. Continue now, level on a good farm drive to a second gate with good stone steps on the left, then in the same direction pass under Chatsworth Rocks on the right. Carry on over another stile at the side of a gate, then 20 yards ahead, angle left down to a stream through trees to a footbridge, go over this then *run* up the 39 steps; if any energy is left, go right on the road and back to the start.

CHECKED THURSDAY 24 APRIL 2003.