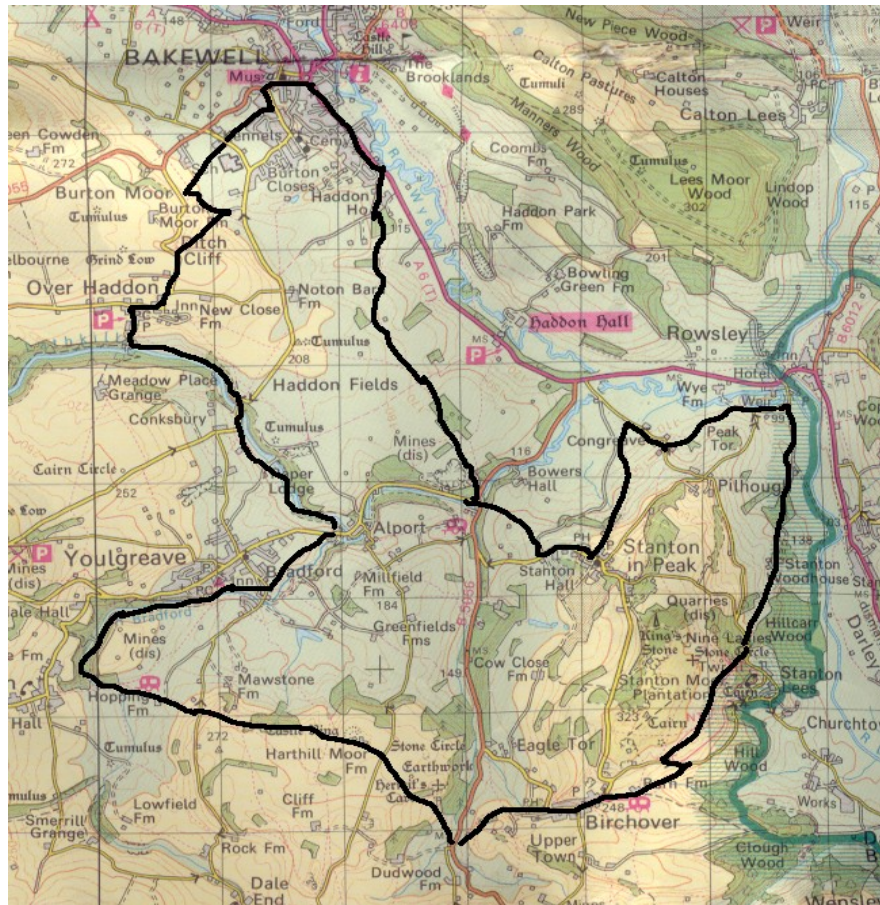


WALK.23
ROWSLEY.23
17 miles
Map White Peak.



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Start at Rowsley near the football ground (256656) back of the old mill, which is now open for visitors. Walk S on a good farm drive opposite the River Wye Bridge. The Wye joins the Derwent not many yards away to the left. Peak Tor stands in a dominating position up on the right. The drive curves around and leads up to and angles right to Stanton Woodhouse Farm (256642) an old building, Stanton Woodhouse Hall is to the left, an Elizabethan house, once the home of the Allens among whom are numbered a Lord Mayor of London and a Cardinal. Pass through the farm buildings through a farm gate, climb on a grassy farm drive going SSW uphill, Hillcar Wood to the left. There are views down to the Derwent Valley to Riber Castle on the distant skyline, very impressive. At a farm gate leave the track to go left to follow a fence on the left to angle to meet a wood and through a stile to a road; at the time of writing there are groups of people camping in the woods with homes in the trees trying to stop a quarry being worked. I hope they extend their activities to other ghastly scenes in North Derbyshire which threaten our beloved county. Turn right on the road to go 100 yards to a driveway on the left.

Go up the driveway to go left of a dilapidated building which looks as though it housed a haulage for hauling stones and trains; one of the buildings has a slot which must have housed a beam to support a large pulley. Go forward to the end of the drive, then go forward steeply uphill on a narrow path through the trees, to the top where there is a path. Turn left here to pass the Tower which has an inscription to Earl Grey who carried the Reform Bill through in 1832. But a deviation NW for 200 yards takes you to the Nine Ladies Stone Circle: it consists of a circular

bank of earth, about 45 feet wide from its outer edge; there are nine upright stones each about four feet high. There was originally a cairn at the centre, which is now somewhat scattered. At a distance of 100 feet to the SW is a single stone called the King's Stone. This may have been part of an avenue or alignment such as one sees in the Dartmoor circles. Retrace steps to the tower and carry on the path going SSE on the edge of the moor giving fine views down the Derwent Valley over Matlock and Riber. What a site for a castle! In 150 yards, go right with the fence, walking SW. Note on a rough stone, the characters "DR 1815" carved. Pass a stile on the right and continue in the same direction to reach the road through two excellent gritstone gateposts standing isolated near a National Trust sign: Stanton Moor edge, a reminder of our debt to many who have entrusted precious parts of our heritage to the Trust for our enjoyment. And so out on to the road at (247625).

Turn left and walk 80 yards down the road to a slot in the right hand hedge, then go to the right SW across the field to a gap in the wall, and in the same direction through the next field to a gritstone stile under an overhanging tree. Proceed through a narrow area to the far end, through a poor stile into a field; bear right to follow a wall over mainly muddy ground, making for the right corner where there is a gate and slot stile on its right. In the next field keep close to the fence on the left and follow it up to Barn Farm on the right then on to a farm drive which goes down to the road at 241622 and Birchover.

Go W downhill through the village passing interesting stone-built houses, the Wesley Reform Chapel of 1851 and the Primitive Methodist Chapel of 1867. At the Druid Inn, the road curves to the right: leave the road at this point and go left down past the little Church which has a carved wooden pulpit. Thomas Eyre of Rowter Hall (was he related to the Eyres of Hathersage?) built a chapel here so that he could be buried there; he died in 1717. Mr Thornhill of Stanton Hall restored the church in 1870.

Rowter Rocks lie to the right; with a meandering path through the rocks; it used to have a rocking stone but some hearty fellows after consuming several pints of ale shoved it over. Pass through a slot stile to the left of a gate then out to an open farm track; a prominent wooded knoll to the left. Go past a ruined building on the right, with extensive views of Cratcliff Rocks. Go sharply downhill WSW to the road at 229620 via a poor slot stile. Turn left and walk along the road for 150 yards; passing an old milestone which reads: To Ashbourne 12 miles, then turn right through a slot stile at the side of a gate to walk uphill NNW to Robin Hood's Stride. Cratcliff Rocks are away to the right with a path through the trees to visit a Hermit's Cave where someone, 600 years ago, carved a figure and crucifix. According to Pilkington it was quite perfect in 1789, but as a sign of our times was damaged by hooliganism in 1945; an iron fence now protects it. The summit of the rocks has a great many great boulders built into a wall, which could be the remains of a hill fort. Carry on up to the Stride. The two blocks of stone form the landmark, which is visible over a great distance; they are 18 feet high and 66 feet apart also known as Mock Beggar's Hall owing to the similarity in twilight to the tall chimneys of a medieval manor hall. Pottery and Roman coins have been found here. Pass through a gateway with a slot on its right. The impressive jumble of rocks stands boldly out against the skyline with its two pinnacles where Robin Hood must have stridden. Go through another gate; the view opens out and you can see a stone circle to the right. A permissive path to the N takes you to this; the stone circle was originally a nine-stone circle which is on a larger scale than elsewhere in the Peak District. It has now become reduced to four stones of the considerable size of eight feet, but Bateman records six when he made a brief exploration across the centre of the circle. Scraps of pottery and flint fragments led him to the conclusion that this circle had been set up for sepulchral purposes. He concluded that the central region of the circle had been effectively ploughed out. Due to their size the site must have been spectacular when the nine stones were upright. What is their history? Tradition associates stone circles with the Druids, but as they never used writing, we have only limited knowledge of this. Julius Caesar gave the only account of we have of Druidism in Britain but no mention of the circles.

Continue NW to a farm gate, a slot on its right at 223626. Cross the road, then go down the drive to Harthill Moor Farm still admiring the views to the N. Go around to the left of the farm buildings, usually well signed, and walk W downhill with wall on the right. There is an earthwork called Castle Ring to the N of the farm, thought to be an Iron Age Camp or Hill Fort, but it does

not appear to have been investigated. It is oval in shape, the diameters being 160 feet by 243 feet. The central area is now entirely closed by a modern wall and immediately outside this is an embankment about two feet high. The ground slopes away on all sides. It is probable that there would be a centre wooden stockade. Most of the hill forts of this type belong to the Iron Age.

At the bottom of the farm drive, go SSW on a footpath which takes you to the corner of Tomlinson Wood, but turn right before the wall to go NW to the far corner, then over the stile to go W for a field then NW through two fields, then W to the corner of Bleakly Plantation. Go over a farm drive and continue WNW through the next field; you can see the slot stile ahead with two trees flanking it like sentinels. The next stile is a slot of two grits, one of them twisted awkwardly. As you walk through this field, you suddenly get views of Youlgreave; the wall ahead has a dip in it: make for this where there are good stone steps near a walled-up gateway. Suddenly, again the land falls away sharply in front, another striking panorama, a wide basin that holds several dales. Go down to a broken wall containing two steps, then down to a stile and out on to a lane at 208630. Cross the lane by a solid stile, then go downhill near to the wall on your left. Down in the left corner, under the trees there is a stile of two grits. Ten yards beyond this, there is another stile leading into a field down which you walk with hedge on the right; the view is now uphill to the slopes, which you recently looked down on from above. You are now down to Hopping Farm, well built and clean. Go through a slot of two grits and note how large and impressive are the gritstone gateposts. Pass very close to the house; go through a slot on the left of a gate, enter a field and make for a stile 40 yards away, a wooden slot against a slot in the wall. Go downhill WNW. The stream close on your left has been straightened. The wall you come up to is limestone: it has a slot stile in it made of two gritstones. Ignore the path on the left which goes over two massive stepping stones, but go slightly right to the trees, then down some good wooden steps, provided with a handrail, and descend into Bradford Dale which you traverse to get to a concrete footbridge over a stream. In 100 yards, go right over a bridge; on either side are ruins of buildings: it is here so tradition states that a Catholic sympathiser was caught during the civil war and killed. Now the Dale affords pleasant walking, the river on the left, the track wide and flat, the water usually low as it flows over many weirs built to raise its level. In previous times the river would have had a better flow but lead mine soughs have taken water from it.

Soon houses appear, perched perilously on the ridge above on the left, and you come to a metal wicket gate at a clapper bridge of good solid gritstones over the river at 209639. The road goes up to Youlgreave; do not take it, but go ahead through a slot made of two gritstones and walk on a pleasant, wide, grassy area, the river on the right, down to another good clapper bridge. Go through a slot, cross the road at 213640; do not go over the bridge to the right, but continue ahead down the dale, the river on the left, passing a limestone outcrop on the right. You get a glimpse of the C.15 pinnacled tower of Youlgreave Church to the left then pass the fine packhorse bridge. A little further on, the track curves to the right; here, you leave the path and go straight on to a slot in a wall near a walled up gateway, then along the riverside passing Rhenstor Plantation on the right. Pass a fine limestone slab on the right and come down to a gate between good gritstone posts, a slot on its left, then come up to the road via a slot on the left of a gate at 220645 in Alport. Here the River Bradford joins the River Lathkill; not much further on they join the Wye.

Cross the road and walk NW the Lathkill on the right, good easy, pleasant walking down the dale. There are eight slot stiles between here and the lane that leads down to the charming Raper packhorse bridge which is overlooked by Raper Lodge, an interesting house that was used in a film. Cross the lane at 214652 and continue up the dale to a road; turn right to go down the road to the mediaeval bridge at Conksbury where once an old Portway crossed on its way to Bakewell. Once over the bridge turn left through a slot on the left of a metal arm in order to continue the walk up Lathkill Dale. Look back to see how high the bridge wall is compared with its arches. Away to the left is the site of a mediaeval lost village, but sadly no access. The view of Over Haddon ahead is quite striking. Keep to the path that follows the river, notice the many weirs and the purity of the water which this river is famed for. The limestone outcrop on the other side of the river, partly covered with trees, has an unobtrusive charm. You soon come to a white house and a slot stile to arrive at a road at 202661.

Turn right and walk up the steep and winding road to Over Haddon. The Romans were the first people to have left evidence of lead mining in the area, but by the 19C. supplies were exhausted. In 1854 there was a short-lived gold rush when gold was found in one of the mines, but it soon petered out.

Passing the church, which has in its graveyard the grave of Maurice Oldfield, a head of MI6 during the period of the Cambridge four traitors of Filby, MacLean, Burgess and Blunt. Also there is a sundial on the west wall, a memorial to Janet Wadsworth with a poem by George Herbert on it. Go to the far road. Turn right: walk E to the junction, then turn left and walk N on the road to Bakewell. In 500 yards, the road curves to the left at 207669; leave the road on the right through a slot stile. There are fine views not only over Bakewell, but also over the thick network of limestone walls around the fields, a characteristic scene. Go downhill NNE for 100 yards to a slot stile, then bear right to go NE down a little valley following a wall on the left for 450 yards to a narrow area where a slot stile leads off to the right, a lane goes straight on, but the route is to the left through a slot stile into a field where the path goes NW, a high bank on the left and a school to the right. Climb up to the far corner, keeping the wall close to the right, and in the corner is a slot made by one grit in a limestone wall. In the next field, go NE diagonally to the far corner to find there good stone steps firmly cemented in place in a wall. Walk to the far left hand corner to a good slot and enter the school grounds; there is a stable away to the left. Proceed to the road through a slot stile at 211679. Cross the road to continue through the playing fields, going NE, there are houses to the right. In 200 yards, you come to a fence that contains a wooden slot and step stile. From here go down to the far wall to a slot stile which takes you down between houses, and you get a surprising view of the church spire and battlements from above. Descend to Bakewell.

This fine market town defies brief description: it is rich in history from many periods: Ball Cross is a small iron age fort; Castle Hill earthworks date back to 923; the bridge is C.1300. There are so many fine buildings that have been preserved that Bakewell requires a great deal of time for their examination; a museum with many artefacts of the area found by Thomas Bateman; but, above all is All Saints Church, the chief glory of this remarkable town. Bakewell is no place to include in a long walk: it requires a day to itself, and what a rewarding day that can be. Its most popular feature is the Bakewell Tart made by a servant in mistake; while making a pudding, she made the base as the top and the top the bottom, but people enjoyed it so much that it became famous.

Leave Bakewell by the A6 after visiting the River Bridge and walking alongside the river parade, then through the recreation ground to the A6 going SE. In just over 800 yards, go right up Intake Lane at 223677 going SW in 200 yards. Go left through a slot stile just the other side of a cottage into a field, walking S close to a hedge on the left towards Burton Ashes Wood which you enter using two unusual circular cement blocks. Pleasant walking through the woods. Leave by a slot in a fence, then go S through the field down to a footbridge in Wigger Dale from which you climb steeply, still going S, to a slot of two grits in a limestone wall above. Continue in the same direction to a stile in a limestone wall, then turn left and walk SSE to the wall ahead and the stile you can see in the distance. Map Plantation is up to the right; to the left are views of Manners Wood. Ahead is the mast of Stanton Moor. You come to a wall ahead: notice along the top the stones that resemble battlements. The slot is made of two good gritstones. This pleasant section of the walk is through Haddon Fields: Haddon Hall may be seen clearly to the left. As you reach the next wall you cross a path from Haddon Hall to Over Haddon. Through the stile and make for Haddon Plantation where you go through two more circular cement Blocks to go forward with trees close to the left, making for a stile to the left of a gateway. Keep close to a fence and trees on the left as the path goes SE. To the right now is the huge quarry of Shiningbank as you go down an industrial road to the B.5056 below at 231649. Cross the road and go forward for 80 yards to a sign and a footpath to the left, then walk up a steep bank through Tolls Wood to a stile by which you enter a field to walk uphill to a avenue of hawthorn trees which you walk through; if overgrown, walk to the left of them, until you reach a farm gate with a slot stile of two gritstones. Follow the hedge on the left to a metal gate in 200 yards; on its left is a three-bar stile and so out on to a road at 237643.

Turn left on to the road past the Lodge House and walk uphill to the village of Stanton in the Peak to the church where you turn left to pass the Post Office. Stanton in the Peak is an estate village mostly constructed by the Thornhill family during the 18 and 19C. Stanton Hall lies well hidden just to the S of the village. The Church is an imposing building dating from the 1830s but contains little of interest. You are now going NNE, passing the little school, then through a metal gate, no stile, into a field, a low wall on your left as you tackle the last few miles. The views from this high point are extensive over the valley. Walk down to a metal gate with a slot on its right, then on to another gate near trees, a slot on its left. Continue with trees and fence on the left downhill. Sheepwalk Wood is high on the right, and Smithy Wood to the left. At the next farm gate, there is a slot in a gritstone wall: a little farm building stands 10 yards away. Go 80 yards down to a gate with a slot stile on its right, then 80 yards again to another gate with a slot on its right, a holly tree on its left. Go N for 50 yards to a broken wall where the tall grit indicates a former gateway; there is a stile at its side: Haddon Hall does not seem far away. Go to a wall and walk downhill with the wall on the right. Where the wall turns to its right, follow it round to a corner and go through an open gateway into a field. Bear left and go downhill N to a fence and a wooden slot stile, then down to a hedge at the bottom where, hidden away in the right corner, are two grits leading to a little footbridge with three bars across the other side. The sewage works is quite near on the left. Angle right and go N to the road ahead where there is a slot to the right of a gate at 243655. Turn right and go SE to Congreave up a steep hill, but turn left at Dove House Farm, a farm building with external steps on the left as you go down a lane to a gate with a stile on its right, then curve E through a field, dropping down to a wooden slot that leads into The Plantation. Go up a bank to stone steps into a field. Go NE with the prominent Peak Tor above on the right for 300 yards; on the left the river comes close, and there is a good view of the mill and the leet which takes water from the river. The path drops down to a farm gate with a slot on its left, and so down the road back to the start.

Checked Friday 10 October 2003