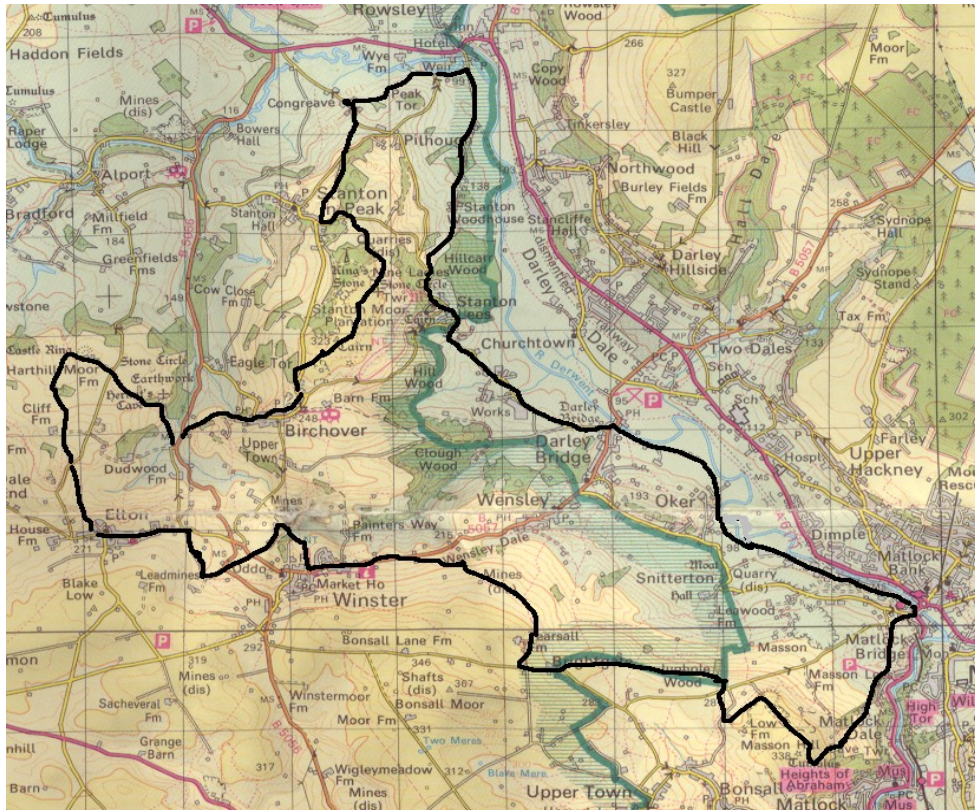


WALK.25.
MATLOCK. 25.
20 miles.
Map White Peak.



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Start at Matlock (297601). From the River Derwent Bridge, go SW up Snitterton Road for 30 yards, then go left off the road, above the bank, at the signpost. Go over the railway bridge, pass Bridge Farm on your right and proceed up some steps to a gritstone slot stile and enter a field. Walk steeply uphill SW. Just over halfway up the bank, angle left and make for a stile in the wall. (Extensive views behind of Matlock and Riber). Go through a slot in the wall and continue to walk in the same direction on level ground; a view of High Tor in front. In 40 yards, go through a gap in a hedge; still level going. In the far corner of the next field, come to a slot stile made awkward by a metal pipe in the middle of it. Go through and immediately look for a slot at the left side of a farm gate. Follow the track, first going S then curving around first left then right to a gate with a stile on its right down a narrow path with wall on left to a minor road.

On the right there is an interesting building: a wall extends quite high up, its base formed of massive gritstones: it contains a well-designed oriel window (reminds me of a local Romeo and Juliet), corbels and a bell tower. Round the corner is a traceries window mildly influenced by the early C.14. The whole thing an interesting Victorian exercise. Asking some local people, I was told that it was build by a local man; who being very disabled, was not encouraged at the local church because his disability was not very pretty to see, so being a religious person he decided to build his own church; then some local people came to join him. Inside the church the back wall is the rock face, and services are still held inside.

Walk uphill to the entrance of a large three-storeyed building (294593); a sign to the right indicates a path to the Heights of Abraham. Take this path; it goes uphill at the side of the estate wall on your left; in 100 yards angle left through a rough field to the corner to a step stile then up a bank to come to Masson Farm. Go to the right of the farm, then through a stile at the side

of a gate and go sharply uphill, the wall on the right receding as the far limestone wall is reached. Proceed uphill angling left S on a good track, though a gap in a wall until a fence is reached: this is where the Cable Cars come up to; called the Heights of Abraham.

From this point (291587), turn right and walk uphill to the N on a good track which opens up to a farm drive that goes to Masson Lees Farm on fairly level ground through trees. Small rocky outcrops litter the path which goes through disturbed ground where lead workings have thrown up stones and slag heaps; just above is evidence of mine shafts. 100 yards before the farm, angle left on a good track which goes 150 yards above the farm, 150 yards before reaching a road there is a gate on the left just up a bank at 286594. Take this and go steeply uphill; the views behind of the Derwent Valley are superb; through a gap in the hedge. Notice the massive rock on the left (the remains of the ice age? What else could have moved it?), there is a stile in the wall on the right; through this and angle left to the stile in the facing wall.

Cross the farm lane, go through the facing stile and walk with the line of trees to the right through a facing gritstone stile, then another, pass a farm building on the right, then angle to the right to a stile in the hedge. Angle immediately right through a stile at the side of a farm gate, go N across a field to a stile in the far hedge and continue N to emerge on a road at 279594. Cross the road, go through a wooden stile, entering a field walking N to the facing hedge and stile. Through this you are now entering an interesting feature where trees almost hide three deep chasms in the rocks called Jug Holes. Pass a water feature chipped out of gritstone, then take a two-bar stile, then in 30 yards to a similar stile and proceed downhill to where there are two caves that lead into a complex cave system. After going downhill with fence on left for 100 yards to a slot stile in the fence, enter a field and walk left W with a wall just below on the right. In about 300 yards in line with Leawood Cottage one field to the right, start climbing uphill on a good track to the left, for 200 yards to the left hand corner of wall, with woods on right. Go through stile and walk SSE uphill for 120 yards with wall on the right to a facing wall, then walk through stile to the right with wall close to the left, through some lead mining mounds for 200 yards to a wall in front with two large limestone uprights making a good stile; continue W through the next field and corner where there is a stile with one large and one small upright. The next field has a slot and step stile. Cross the footpath from Wensley to Bonsall and go to the facing wall and a low stile and carry on with the wall to the left and so out on to the road at 265596.

Turn right and walk W passing Brightgate Farm for 300 yards to go right through a slot at the side of a farm gate; go N down to Tearsall Farm to a point where the farm is on the left. Here turn right and follow the wall on the left which curves to the left. Pass a quarry on the right through a gate; the next section is difficult to follow. The point being aimed for is the road at 255608. When some trees are reached, angle right N on a good track for 200 yards to reach the left wall and corner, go through this then angle left WNW to a gate in the far wall. Walk W through the next field, then walk with wall on the left to a water trough, then angle right to go NW downhill on a discernable path that goes to a farm gate. Through this, walk downhill to go through another farm gate and onward on a house drive down to the road at 255608.

Turn left and walk W along the road into Winster; care needs to be taken because there is no causeway; note the view of Clough Wood to the right. Enter Winster and marvel at the interesting old houses and the Market Hall N.T. which 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 single out the central bay, and a top balustrade; the doorway has Doric half-columns and a pediment. The stone for the building was brought by packhorses from Darley Dale. This house and other buildings in Winster indicate the prosperity brought in former times 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. It is one of the oldest and most picturesque villages in the peak and was once the centre of the local lead mining industry. The village still has the feel of a lead-mining centre with rows of lead miners' cottages clinging to the N side of the hill. Go as far as the road junction near the church, and turn down a narrow jitty to the right, going between houses to a slot stile, then

20 yards to a farm gate with a slot on its right, and so through a yard where, on the right stands a water trough chipped out of gritstone, the inner circular, the outer octagonal. Go N downhill to a gritstone slot stile in the left corner, which leads into a small wooded area. Curve left to a poor wooded bar stile, then walk W down through trees to an open area and take a track going W down through trees to an open area where a track is taken going W out of it, then SSW up to the road at 236607.

Cross the road to the cemetery and walk SW as before, the cemetery now on the right, go up a lane to the road at 234606. Cross the road, pass a building on the right and continue SW uphill; Grey Tor is away to the left. The lane comes to a junction. Go right along the lane to the N, passing an old limestone building with excellent gritstone dressings; in 400 yards the lane reaches a road at 229610. Turn left and walk W into Elton. Proceed as far as the church which is a Victorian rebuild, the old one having collapsed, then turn right down Well Street for 50 yards before turning to the left; go to the next field and walk downhill with a large hedge on the right; note the view of Gratton Dale to the left and Anthony Hill in front, go through a broken wall, carry on to a facing limestone wall with good gritstone uprights, through this then uphill to the far wall and stile, cutting the right corner in the next field and make for a broken wall with a wooden stile. In the next field, bear left and follow the path as it leads to the far corner. In the next field, cut the left corner, go through a gap in the wall and come to a good gritstone stile and so out onto the road at 219617.

Cross the road to another sign, Anthony Hill on the left, then a wooden slot with two gritstone uprights. In 20 yards N another stile. Enter a field and turn right making for the right corner and stile, and proceed N through a large field (the view from Anthony Hill is well worth a diversion) to a gate with concrete gateposts and a stile on its left. Continue with a wall on the left for 50 yards to another stone step in a wall; Cliff Farm is near to the left. Walk N through an enormous field, woods on left and in front, down to a slot in a gritstone wall. Bear left, walk alongside Tomlinson Wood, following it as it goes round to the right to a slot stile from which a footpath goes off NW to Middleton. Ignore that and walk NE through stile to the foot of the slope that comes down from Harthill Moor Farm, bear right and walk uphill on farm track to the farm; to the left N of the farm is an earthwork called Castle Ring 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. Leave the farm by its drive to the road at 223626. Cross the road to a gate and slot on left and walk SE towards Robin Hood's Stride. Level going to a wall ahead. Note the stone circle to the left. It 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 each 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 us the only account of what we have of Druidism in Britain but no mention of the circles. The wall is broken at the stile, it is made of wooden uprights and crossbar, continue to the stride. Climb the hill to the spectacular outcrop of the stride and descend the other side, 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. Cratcliff Rock and the Hermit's Cave are on a good path through trees to the left, where someone, 600 years ago, carved a figure and crucifix. According to Pilkington it was quite perfect in 1789, but, 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, also the path continues to

the stone circle away to the left; these are worth a visit. There are good views around; the area is like a basin with distant hills rising gently up to the horizon. Follow the good track first SE then SSE down to the gate, stile on the right and so out to the road at 229618.

Turn left and walk N along the road for 150 yards passing an old stone, which bears the inscription "Bakewell 5 miles". The stile is on the right, take this and walk uphill WNW to a stile just below the wooded knoll. Turn left and follow the track around into Birchover, passing on the left Rowtor Rocks with its many nooks and passages and 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 the church on the right with its wooden carved pulpit, then on left the Druid Inn. Cross the road, then left for a few yards to take a path uphill to the right through trees; the view to the left is extensive, to the right is Birchover obscured mostly by the trees, the path eventually emerges out to a road at 241625.

Turn left to walk N, passing the stone works. Walk 300 yards down the road, turn right at a point where large stones block the track and walk W uphill through trees until a huge rock on the left is reached; this is Cork Stone where a spot of rock climbing may be indulged (made easy by the provision of metal handles). At this point go left to walk NNE over Stanton Moor. In 100 yards at a junction of paths, take the left one to go NNE again, pass several quarries close to the left and some millstones left as they were finished when the bottom dropped out of the market. Walk around a quarry that is still working to eventually join a track still NNE, which goes to the edge of the moor. Turn left on a good farm drive to leave the moor through a gate across two fields to a road at 246641. Turn left and walk downhill to Stanton in the Peak. In 200 yards turn right off the road, go up a drive that passes the cricket ground on your left then reduces to a narrow path through Sheepwalk Wood, pleasant walking, going N. Just before a house, turn left and walk for 20 yards down to the road at 246648. Bear right past the house and look for the small enclosure on the left; could it be a sheep pen? Just beyond this there is a stile on the left which leads into a field, angle downhill to the right, N, for 80 yards; good views to the A.6 valley, then right to walk below a wall through two fields and out on to a road at 246651.

Turn left and walk downhill around the zigzags to Congreave; a small hamlet. Go right down a drive at Dove House Farm: note the external steps to a stone building, a feature not now much seen, through a stile to the right of a farm gate then curve to the right to a wood where a stream is crossed to enter the wood; uphill to the left to a wall with a step stile, enter a large field to walk NE; note the River Wye to the left and Peak Top to the right. Pass a single, isolated gritstone; was there a hedge here once? Curve to the right to drop down to the river and a farm gate with a slot to the left of the gate and so out onto a road at 254657.

Walk E past the football ground and children's play area and at the river bridge turn right to walk up a lane to Stanton Woodhouse, past a wood on the left then a large field. As another wood is reached (Sweet Chestnuts) a path angles to the right to cut off the corner of the road (where the road cuts in two); it then joins the road in 30 yards to go up to a farm with an interesting complex of buildings; Stanton Woodhouse Farm; look over the wall on the left to see Stanton Woodhouse Hall; it looks like an Elizabethan building. Go through a white gate and continue on a good path to curve to the right uphill, through a gate then in a few yards angle left to follow a fence on the left and so out on to a road at 253636. At the time of writing there are tents on the ground here and in the trees; it looks like a scene from a Tarzan Film. They are trying to stop the working of a quarry in the area. You can sympathize with their aims but not much else; their living quarters look worse than the quarry would. Turn left on the road to pass through Stanton Lees, at a junction go left to walk downhill then level passing the lead works on the right to get to Darley Bridge at 270620. Turn left, to get to a river bridge but do not go over it, but turn right to walk SE with the river on the left. Pass some buildings through a gate and walk on flat alluvial ground with metal road for 800 yards, through a slot at the side of a gate to come to some splendid bungalows on the right. At this point go left down a narrow jitty to a footbridge over a small stream, then walk SE close to the river on the left though it meanders away for a while, go through four fields to get to another narrow jitty which leads to a Bitumen works. Keep to the left

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of the works with the river on the left to eventually drop down to go under a railway bridge, then walk on a good path with the river still on the left back to the start.

CHECKED. THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2004