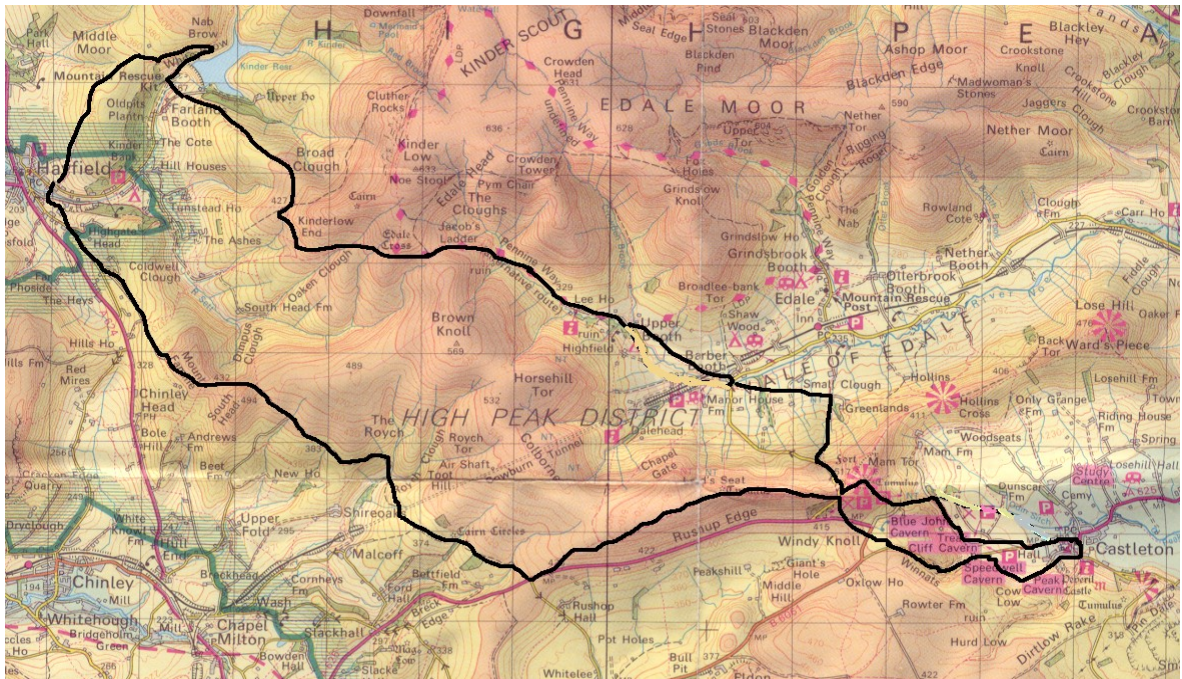


WALK. 27.
CASTLETON.27.
MAP. DARK PEAK.
21 miles. 6 hours.



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Start at Castleton (150829). Castleton is a pretty and a historical village lying at the high end of the Hope Valley. Peveril Castle, the only castle in Derbyshire, now partly ruined, stands on a hill to the S. Unusually not originally a wooden but a stone structure, it was built in 1080 by William Peveril, an illegitimate son of William the Conqueror, the Keep added in 1176 by Henry II.. The Church, built at about that time, has a fine Norman arch across the nave which was constructed 1190 to 1250, the tower added in 1450 to 1500, the church being given a Victorian restoration in 1837. There is a defensive earthwork around the village which can be seen opposite the Bull's Head at the other side of the main road. To the W is Peak Cavern, a massive hole in the rocks. The stream flowing from the entrance is Peakshole Water. Hemp rope was made in the cavern for 400 years, the rope makers' cottages standing in those days at the cave entrance. Byron came here with Mary Chaworth.

Walk W out of the village on the A625; in 500 yards, go R at a fork in the road: Winnat's Pass is to the L. Go 900 yards R then proceed on the road slightly uphill. At the site of Odin's Mine, go L over a large wooden step stile. The name Odin suggests a Norse connection. The area is National Trust property. Climb uphill steeply through some trees passing a prominent huge gash in the limestone rock on the L. When it becomes less steep, keep to the L and make for the wooden step stile near a copse of trees. Turn R just before the Blue John Mine entrance then make for Mam Tor. Cross the road, pass a little building, then go up the bank to a ladder stile. From here, the climb up to Mam Tor is one that requires your concentration every step of the way. The views are superb. The steep path passes close by an exposed face of shale on the R which adds interest to the walk by making it seem like a section of a Lakeland slog.

A trig. point remains at the summit. It will be readily seen that Mam Tor is the site of an Iron Age Fort; an earthwork embankment encloses the camp which had two entrances, one at the

Hollins Cross side, the other at Mam Nick. Flint arrowheads have been found here. Covering 16 acres, it was a large settlement for those days. Mam Tor is formed of shale beds which were unsafe for the construction of the road below Mam Tor which used to run through Castleton: the movement of the beds causing it to collapse and be diverted down the Winnats Pass,

There are splendid views all around, especially the Vale of Edale that suddenly opens up. Having gained so much height, be prepared to lose it all again as the walk descends to the SW to a stile and then on to the road at Mam Nick, the old entrance. Turn R and walk 150 yards round the corner where there is a stile on the R. Take this and walk downhill to the N, passing Greenlands Farm, then taking the farm drive to a point (124846) where the farm drive curves around to the R and joins a path coming down from the L in Harden Clough. At this point, leave the farm drive for a wooden step stile on the L then walk W (to Barber Booth) across a field, easy level walking to a wooden stile. Continue in the same direction across the next field and pass through two thin lines of trees which probably mark an old and disused lane where there is a pair of old gritstones no longer needed. The next fence can be seen: it turns out to contain a wooden stile and near to it a stone carved with the words "National Trust Footpath". Go down some steps, climb a bank. Pass a line of pollarded trees on the R and go beyond a short section of isolated wall to descend into a tiny glen to a wooden stile and a footbridge. Climb the opposite bank, cross the next field to a wooden stile in a flimsy fence. Rowland farm is up to the L. Go down to a bar stile on the R and so out on to the road at 113847.

A road goes to the W but do not take it; instead, go R over a bridge then immediately L between some houses, then L again up a lane. Pass a Methodist church close on the R then proceed through Whitmore Lea Farm. Note on the R "CRC 1806" carved on the door lintel, and a massive, triangular lintel on the L over a farm building. Continue through the farm and at the far end go round to the R over the railway bridge, then L down a lane with the railway close to the L, and thus into a field to a gateway, no gate but a stile on the L. Not far to the L is the river Noe sunken between its banks. Make for a group of trees in front where there is a stile and yet another not far in front, fence on the L. Once over the next stile the fence is then on the R. Go forward to another two-step stile and then come up to a farm on the L. Note in the facing wall a small mullioned window, high up. On the other side of the house, there are two windows with strong mullions and good gritstone dressings. Go through a gate, no stile, and then ten yards forward to a gate with a stone step stile on its R. Bear left through the farmyard to a gate with "Upper Booth Farm" painted on it, then out on to the road; there is a telephone box at this point. At a lane, bear R.

Walk NW along the lane to a gate where a sign indicates that Lee Farm is National Trust property; and a little further on another sign "Peak and Northern Footpaths Society" points the way to Chapel Gate and Rushup Edge via Dale Head. But pass Lee Farm where there is a water tank chipped out of gritstone, then follow the track to a gate where on the L is a step stile with a large wooden step either side. The track reaches a gate and a stone bridge over a stream; this is a mile on from Barber's Booth; a sign indicates that this is the route to Jacob's Ladder and one can see an old track that zigzags up the hill to the L, now disused; it must have been the Jagers' track of long ago. The track to be taken goes straight up the steep face of the hill. Take a deep breath and head uphill, passing another sign repeating the caption Jacob's Ladder then pass another sign erected by the Peak and Northern Counties Footpath Society No 85, 1939. It states Jacob's Ladder to Edale. They have stood the test of time better than most man-made articles.

Walk to the west gaining height until Edale Cross is reached at 077861. Here, a metal sign states "This mediaeval cross is protected as a monument of national importance..." This was once known as Champion Cross, which was a corruption of Champayne, the name of the southern part of the Peak Forest, which included much open grazing country. Near this point, three forest wards meet: Longdale, Ashop and Edale. The cross must have served both as a boundary stone and guide stone.

Keep to the path, which now goes downhill NW for several hundred yards before it comes to Oaken Clough at Stoney Ford (072862). So far the route has followed the mediaeval way, which was taken by travellers from Hayfield to Edale including the packhorse men who were operating until the C.18. Leave that route now by going to the R, the old route goes down the valley to the L.

Here is another sign of the P. and N. C. F. Society No 3 1964, a later one, stating that this is a footpath from Edale to Hayfield via Tunstead. Walk now on a narrow but firm path on the sloping hillside facing views of the magnificent hills in front and to the W. The path curves to the R, going N. where there is a choice of paths: take the one which goes to the R under Kinderlow End which rises up to the R. The path reaches a farm gate with a stile on its R that continues NE for 50 yards until it turns to the L at a R-angle corner of a wall, then follow the wall which is on the L, going N. The path enters a lane, walls either side, and continues until it reaches a sign which indicates the boundary of open country (065871). Go L at this point through the wall via a small gate, and walk NW on a grassy path. Kinder Reservoir is down to the R. Keep to this direction: go through a broken wall and, losing height all the time, come to a fence. Angle R and walk downhill with the fence now on the L, making for the trees in front, passing on the way down a ladder stile on the L of a gate. At the bottom of the slope, turn L at a gate; there is a step stile on its L, and walk WNW with wall and trees and Kinder Reservoir on the R. In a few hundred yards, come down to a wooden gate that leads out on to a road at 054879.

The road goes down to the L; do not take it, but go straight over down a grassy lane, wall on either side, over the outlet from the reservoir and across to the opposite side. Do not go R through the main gates into the dam area but take the path to the L of the gates to go R uphill, walking NE with the reservoir on the R. In 250 yards, go left NW uphill. Fine views over Mount Famine. A worn path goes up to level ground on open moorland past a sign indicating a previous route, and near to a green metal sign indicating the way to Glossop, Hayfield and Edale with a sign erected by the P.D.N.C.F.P.S. 1905 warning of a deep bog. The initials are an admission that such a long title is expensive to publicise. They are, however, a reminder of the good work done for us by those who have gone before. Not far away are two huts painted white; they are probably shooting boxes (060884).

At this point turn L; walk SW on a good path through heather for 450 yards to a sign indicating the boundary of open country. Through a gate, keep close to the wall on R, level going: This is the Snake Path and must be part of the path from Hayfield to the Snake Inn. Go through a gate in a wall from where the path drops gently with good views to Hayfield to the R. Through another gate then over grassy land to a wall and another wooden gate. This is pleasant walking, going downhill on good turf with panoramic views all around. However the path funnels into a lane that rapidly loses interest. It passes two gritstone gateposts no longer needed, and comes down to a metal gate with a wooden gate on its R and down to the road at 041868. This is Hayfield.

Turn L: walk 150 yards SE then go off the road to the R down a little jitty to a wooden step stile, then further down to the river. Turn left and walk up to a good concrete footbridge. This goes up to a road; bear L, high wall on the R. Bear L down a path to the level of the river, which is on the L, walking W for 150 yards then, go R on a good path that begins to climb. This is Elle Bank, wooded on the R. Pass Stones House on the L. The views become interesting: hills to the N; below is the path to Edale Cross. But the path you take rises and eventually proceeds through a gate then out on to the hillside where it descends a little to meet a good track coming up from the L, walking S. Pass two signs, then keep on this wide track which looks as though it was made by horse and cart traffic long ago. It goes S uphill towards Mount Famine, which rears up in front; continue upwards to a point at 054856 where there is a wall on the L and a ladder stile over it. There is a path over Mount Famine here but at the time of writing it is not a public right of way though people use it, so go R and make the way around the mount by going SW then WSW to a road at 050954. Then turn L on this to go 300 yards on the R of Mount Famine avoiding two paths to the R before going between Mount Famine and South Side (another hill) by going first S then SW then W.

Go between two old and disused gritstone gateposts leaning over, then come up to another sign erected by the Peak and Northern Counties Footpaths Society which point the way to Edale via Stony Ford (which we crossed earlier), and Hayfield via Coldwell Clough. This point is at 062846.

Do not take this but walk SE down a lane, Shake Holes on the L with views over Chapel down to the R, losing height all the time. Go past a track on the R at 450 yards then another at 750 yards until a point is reached (077836) where a wall blocks the path, and a stream flows across a ford marked on the map. Roych Clough goes up to the E, (or comes down), go through a gate and ascend a lane, walking S. Note the gritstone gatepost lying in the stream. Regain the height previously lost, and continue to climb, passing over Cowburn Tunnel and leaving the lane to enter a field, wall on the R, trees to the L. On the R, you see traffic passing on the Sheffield road; the route is now level and quite pleasant. At Bolehill Clough, bear to the R and come up to a wooden gate and step stile; then continue on a grassy track, wall on R, Tom Moor Plantation ahead. Go through a stile on to the A625 road and walk L for a 100 yards, then go L off the road at a slot stile into a sunken lane, broken wall on the R, walking NE to go over Rushup Edge, a long slog rising gently. The sunken lane looks like an old packhorse trail worn away by the many horses' hoofs. A sign is reached, another of those welcome markers erected by the Peak and Northern Footpath Society No 124 1950 which gives directions E to W. Continue in the same direction as before until a wooden step stile is reached at 099829. At this point, the track is joined by a footpath coming from Brown Knoll NW: and other areas to the N. Chapel Gate links with this also. Continue in the same direction over good wooden step stiles, passing Lord's Seat, with marvellous views over the L to the Edale Valley and Kinder Scout. Then as Mam Tor gets nearer, cut to the R down a bank to a gate, step stile on the R and on to a road at 125834.

Cross the road to a rugged step stile made with one railway sleeper either side of a bar fence, then walk S downhill through a field of short grass to the far wall. Cross the road to another good step stile with a sign "Windy Knoll". There have been many old finds here including a Sabre Tiger's tooth. Walk SE across the field to cross another road, the B.6061, and negotiate two more good step stiles to walk to the back of Winnat's Head Farm. Go through a slot in a limestone wall and go down to a road, wall on right and farm to the right of that. Once on the road, turn left and walk through the exciting if short Winnat's Pass, a gorge that would be unsurpassed if someone had forgotten to put a road in it. Speedwell Cavern is a cave that can be walked in as well as affording boat rides on an underground stream (once taken by Byron). Go R off the road through a stile at 140828 and walk SE then NE on a good track with wall on L, described on a sign as a safe way to Castleton avoiding busy road, which it certainly does. At a metal gate, there is a slot with its own small metal gate. Peak Cavern is away to the R. This path leads to a road and Castleton, so back to the start.

CHECKED SATURDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2004