

WALK 119.
FRIDON 119.
26-4 Miles. 7 hours 15 minutes.
Map White Peak. Dark Peak. SK28/38. SK29/39



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Start at the car park at the High Peak Trail at Fridon (172607). Walk SE down the trail for about a mile and a quarter to a point at 185590 where a lane crosses the trail; go R here, but in only yard or two, go L off the lane to a stile in the wall. Walk S, wall on R, and uphill through a field to a gateway. Do not go straight on, but go L for a yard or two, then enter a field over a low wall with a broken stile. Walk S with the wall on the R now.

Go through a gate, no stile, into a field, level going. Gotham Grange Farm on the L. Go through a gate into a short lane of 20 metres to a farm building with mullions and dressings. Follow the hard drive over a cattle grid, then continue downhill to arrive back on the trail.

In two hundred metres, go R off the trail, up a bank with a wall and steps to go into a field. Walk S uphill with wall on the L, the trees of Gotham Plantation ahead to where there is a gate, no stile then in 20 metres another gate in 20 metres with stile on the R. walk diagonally through the field to the wall opposite where, in the middle, is a stile of excellent stone steps. Go from this point to the far R corner: here the steps are cemented. Walk now S downhill, wall on the R, to the far wall with steps at the R of a gate, now walk on level ground, to a gate with stile on the R to enter a lane.

Cross the lane to a stile in the wall then continue in the same direction, wall on the L, through field to the far corner to an awkward stile. For the next section of the walk is through broken walls, so fix the eye on the L edge of Lowmoor Plantation and make for it. Come to a sound wall with good steps; go forward to the trees to enter and leave by broken walls, then 40 metres with wall on the L to a wall with a water tank in the L corner and a good stile to the R of it.

Go forward to a gate, then through 30 metres of mud to a gate, no stile, and walk through a field towards trees around Lowmoor Plantation with wooden steps in a wall to the L of a gate. Go

forward down the muddy drive to the farm where, go R over steps in a wall and drop to the R of a large building to walk around, a large pond to the R, building on the L and a stile at the R of a gate. Cross the farm drive to a neat step in the wall.

Climb the steep bank up to a wall which has a stile in it, a footpath sign nearby, an interesting group of farm buildings to the rear. Walk S as before, wall on the L, a band of trees to the R, to a slot in the corner, then walk onwards, level going, the large basin of Tissington to the S. Now pass on the L a stone building, a gateway, no stile, then go down a short distance to a slot in the corner, then proceed gently downhill, wall on the R, to a gate with a slot on its R and so out onto the road at 191556. Cross the road to a sign and poor slot, then walk in the same direction to the corner and a wooden step in the wall; in the next field go 60 metres to a wall with a slot

At the next wall, there is a half slot; go only a few metres to find the land dropping steeply to provide a sudden view of the area below: a valley of gently slopes.

Look for the first of several posts with yellow markings; they give some useful guidance through trees on a fairly steep bank to come to a stile in a fence near some cottages. There is now a view over Parwich. Drop down the bank, passing Parwich Hall, built in 1747. The church of St Peter was rebuilt in 1873; it contains some Norman work both inside and outside: in the West Tower, the original Norman doorway has been replaced. The Norman Tympanum has various animals carved in it.

Walk through the village where there is a cottage with an exposed Cruck built into the gable end. At the far end, at 189542, at the last of a row of houses, go R into an open area, a kind of farmyard to a metal gate then walk S through a field, no sign or stile to help. Go through a gateway into a field and climb gently, passing a limestone building on the R, then go through a broke wall into a field, cutting the L corner to a gate in 10 metres, no stile. Go diagonally through a field to the far L corner which is situated in a small pocket of a field; go L through a gateway, to walk with a hedge on the R to a wooden stile.

Bear L and walk with broken wall and a few trees on the L, but leave these to go diagonally, cutting the L corner, then following the hedge around as it goes to the L. at the top of the field that drops to the R into a shallow valley through which the Bletch Brook flows now then walk SE. go through broken hedge and walk with hedge on the L, level going to an old gate with stile on its L. walk in the same direction with the hedge on the R, in 100 metres go through a slot; the L upright leaning over; in about 80 metres, go through a stile in a fence and continue in the same direction, fence and hedge on the R, dropping gently to slot between wooden uprights, very muddy at this point.

Go to a slot at the R of a gate, then on through a field, dropping with hedge and fence on the R into a shallow valley where two streams converge. At the bottom there is a gate no stile to enter a flat field and go R to the far end to cross Bletch Brook by a bridge with bars. Now begin to rise up a steep slope out of the river valley to where a wall or hedge has been removed; pass a small chipped out stone water trough. Make for an isolated tree above to the R and find a wooden step stile attached to it, then continue to climb Gorsehill Farm to the L. at the top a fence directs one along, to make for a gateway, somewhat below, rather near the farm; then bear R and drop with hedge on R to a depression, then climb up from it. Climb to the far R top where to come to a metal gate, no stile. Enter a field where there is a step stile on the L. ignore the stile and go straight on, level going to a road at 194521. This road comes up from Bradbourne Mill to Tissington.

Walk down the drive to Lea Cottage Farm; go through the farm buildings on the main track, then out the other side passing Lea Hall, an old building, and coming up to a metal gate. Continue, level going, on a rough track to a metal gate. Note that two footpaths lead from the farm: one goes S; go on that which goes SW. enter a field with an old farm building on the R and walk with wall on the R to a wooden step stile, then continue in the same direction, trees ahead, and pass a stile on the R serving no useful purpose. The wall having being left, proceed to a gate ahead to then enter an enclosed area with some trees and a stream on the R. go to a small wooden gate on the R in 50 metres.

Cross the small stream then climb a bank and walk SW across a field, contouring, Woodeaves Farm to the L, fence either side funnels to a gap to the far end to then enter a wooded area, a stream,

then climb out into a field, and walk with field falling away on the L down to a stream. Then rise gently through this field and come to a gate in a hedge in front. Walk S to Woodeaves Farm, an old building with mullioned windows, some filled in.

Where the drive bears L, leave it on the R and go straight on across the field to a gate with a stile. In the next field, pass a stone building and make for a gate with a stile, then walk down past Lees Farm on the R where an old chipped out gritstone water tank; then estimate the time taken to take out the amount of stone discarded.

Go down to a gate between grit uprights and stile on its R, then go across a field to the far hedge where there is a gateway. In the next field, the land rises to the R; going to the hedge and stile, then it is level going, houses ahead, and pass a stone building in the middle of this field. Keep to the R here and come to a metal gate with a stile on its L; it has a self-closing door. Walk now on short grass. Walk now close to a neatly clipped hedge on the L but this goes off but continue through the field, passing a concrete water tank to a metal gate into a farmyard then go down to the road at 175502 at Fenny Bentley.

Bentley Hall has just been passed, now called Cherry Orchard Farm; notice a square mediaeval tower with small openings and a later partly blocked low seven-light window with one transom. Attached to the tower is a C.17 gabled house also with mullioned and transomed windows. The nearby moat which can be seen from the road might have been the site of the hall, the truncated tower being part of the mediaeval gateway.

The manor house was held under the King by the Bentley's from before 1277 until the male line became extinct before 1432. It then came to John Beresford (after the date of the moat); he fought at Agincourt and his soldier son lies in the church. This great soldier has one of the most extraordinary monuments in Derbyshire, an alabaster tomb on which he lies with his wife Agnes, both in shrouds tied at their heads and feet. Round the edge of their tomb are helmets, shields, breast plates, swords banners and drums, the things that the Beresford's loved. The tiny shrouded figures of 21 children are engraved at one end. The Bentley manor house later came to Charles Cotton, the piscator; later in this walk more of him will be seen.

Go through the churchyard and out the other side to go L, continuing on a lane to a sign (To Thorpe) to go R through an unusual metal gate, tall and narrow, then rise through field, a new vicarage on the R. go through another narrow green metal gate and walk through the middle of a field up to a wooden step with bar and so into a field, walking close to hedge on the L, then dropping down to a hedge and slot, then down to a stream, the Wash Brook.

Cross over a wooden footbridge to a stile in a wood, then climb up to a gate and cross the Tissington Trail to another gate. Rise through a field to a double slot. Go 30 metres to a stile, then cross a road at 163501. Continue W up a road which drops into Thorpe, a Danish name; its church has some old work in it. Go L on the road which, at this point curves R. go only a short distance and look for an unobtrusive slot in a garden fence on the R of the road at 156504. Drop down to walk alongside the house between grit uprights, then rise to a small green gate leading into a field.

Rise through the field, hedge on L, to a corner to go through a gap then continue to rise, hedge on L, to a limestone wall with a narrow slot, then bear L to walk towards Thorpe Cloud. According to taste, either go over Thorpe Cloud or around it; in either case drop down to the famous stepping stones at the bottom of Dove Dale.

Enter Dove Dale, go over a stile then angle L and climb up the R bank E of the dale. At the top, walk N and admire the tremendous into and over this famous dale. Whatever the beauty of the riverside walk, there are other views some state better to be had at this height. Eventually go over a wooden stile, then around a tributary valley. Drop down another slope to go through a wooden step stile and eventually go down the steep bank to the riverside.

Walk N on the riverside track and go through a double stile and go onward to a double slot in the wall. Soon come to Viator's Bridge and a N.T. sign to Milldale. This old packhorse bridge was used by Isaac Walton and Charles Cotton and is referred to in the "Complete Angler" published in 1676 in a conversation between Piscator "Cotton" and Viator (not Walton but a traveller from Essex going to Lancashire on business). From the little hamlet, take the lane that goes up to Alstonfield, walk up Millway Lane following in the footsteps of Cotton and Viator.

Go through the Churchyard at Alstonfield. The Normans who rebuilt the Saxon Church left a fragment of a Saxon Cross with a serpent's head, portraits of stone of two Saxon's at prayer and carved plait work. Inside is Cotton's canopied pew, beautifully panelled and carved with flowers, grapes and serpents

Several packhorse ways came through the village. Leave on the route that Cotton probably took on his way home to Berestford Hall. Leave the road going E, past the former Methodist Church to Lode Mill, then in a few hundred metres, go L up a lane, walking N. pass a well-built stone building on the L: a few hundred metres past that, go L over the wall by steps into a field. Go NW through the middle of the field to a wall ahead, then go through a gateway, into a field passing a large stone building on the R. on the R, the land rises to Gratton Hill and on the L Narrowdale Hill, in-between a view over Hartington.

Continue NW, wall on the R, through a broken wall in front, then proceed, level going, to a wall with slot to enter a field, to go on as before, wall on the R, walking on grass. Cut away from the wall on R to a half slot in the wall. Cut the L corner in the next field and go through a gateway in 40 metres, then walk with a wall on the R, the land falling away to the R into Narrowdale; and that is where sometimes Cotton went. Curve around to the L, wall on the R, farm ahead, then come to a metal gate that leads into a lane.

Walk E down a short lane to a gate where a sign by the farmer states no right of way; but the map shows otherwise, so through the gate then bear L to walk down N a steep bank to a wall to follow on the R untill it goes off to the R, then walk on valley bottom.

Go somewhat to the R to come to a wall to follow on the L to a metal gate. This is still the route Cotton followed long ago. In the next section follow a wall on the L. Go forward to go over a low wall. Proceed down to a gateway with a slot on the L to enter a junction of paths where a track goes off L up to a farm which is a listed building. Still level going, wall on the L, to a gate with a stile on its R. walk along a lane, to a metal gate, and continue , wall on the R to a gate with stone steps on its L; get nearer the River Dove all the time; walk down to a gate with slot on its L, then continue along a lane with trees either side to then come to a gate with a slot to reach a road at 127586.

Across the road are gate piers which might have served Cotton's Beresford Hall which was demolished as late as this century. Go R to the river, then L and walk N, The Dove on the R, passing Pike Pool where Cotton and Walton Fished, and the one roomed Fishing House built in 1674. Go over a footbridge and enjoy the hard, dry path for a while to continue on a muddy one. At a narrow slot proceed to cross a narrow stream and go through a slot on the R of a gate to rise up to a wall and slot. Rise up to a lane to enter through a slot, the one on the other side, then through a gateway and so down into Hartington

Several old packhorse routes converge on this fine old town which was granted a market in 1203. It has a classic manor house with three gables, quoins and low mullioned windows with hood moulds; it was built in 1611 by Thomas Bateman of Middleton who was the grandfather of the antiquarian. The parish church has much old work in it; prominent is the perpendicular W tower with set back buttresses, gargoyles, battlements and pinnacles.

Leave along the road that goes E along Hartington Dale. In three quarter mile, go L at a road junction to walk N through interesting Ling Dale, a bare steep sided valley with occasional limestone outcrops. In about a mile and half, arrive at Vincent House, a farm on the R. go through the buildings, up a lane, wall in the R, climbing up to a corner to scramble over what must have once been a stile. Walk through a field, rising gently, wall on the R to a gate to then go R then bear L to walk with wall on the L down to a stile. Come to a sign which unusually , shows the way not to go. So drop down then rise up and go forward towards Darley Farm which has an interesting front. Go through a slot and out onto the road at 142636.

Bear R and walk up to the trail. Bear R and walk S on the High Peak Trail, going L at a junction. Continue then back to the start.