



Walk 1: Middleton Moor - Directions

Start Point: Middleton Top Visitor Centre on the High Peak Trail. Map Reference SK275552.

Maps: 1:25000 Explorer Sheet OL12, Peak District, White Peak Area or 1:50000 Landranger Sheet 119, Buxton, Matlock & Dovedale.

Distance: 4 miles.

Time needed: 2 - 3 hours.

Description: A fairly easy walk, with little climbing, along tracks and public footpaths. There is only a short stretch on a quiet country lane. There are good views of the quarries in the area. **Shorts are not recommended for this walk.**

Route Directions:

From the car park at the (1) Visitor Centre cross the High Peak Trail and go through a gate directly opposite, giving access into the disused (2) Red Hill quarry (This quarry can be explored). A path leads to the right across the front of the quarry to a metal & wooden gate.

Go through the wooden gate onto a track. After a few paces there is a junction in the track. Ignore the left track and walk straight ahead. (3) The track you are on is actually an old road. The track soon begins a gradual uphill curve to the left. Dean quarry (still working) can be seen ahead with Ribber Castle beyond.

The curve straightens and a (4) small disused quarry can be seen on the left at the side of the track.

The track ends at a barbed wire fence with warning signs. Turn left at the fence and follow it round the edge of (5) Middleton Mine, giving views of the old quarry face. The fence soon goes uphill to the left. Follow it and join a well-trodden path over the hilltop, in a northwesterly direction. (6) A large depression on the left was formed when the land collapsed into the mine in 1975.

Follow the path over the hill across the fields to where it joins a limestone path. Turn right onto this path and walk the short distance to a gate and stile. The stile leads onto an old road, (7) with an Experimental Test Site directly opposite. Ignore the yellow way mark arrow pointing left and turn right downhill. About 30 metres down the road is a good view of the disused (8 & 9) New Hopton Wood (Water Lane) quarry on the left. The road heads more steeply down hill to a sharp left bend. There are good views of the quarry all along this stretch with an old entrance gate at the bend in the road. From the seat at this point are extensive views of the village of Middleton.

Stay on the road till it enters the village and joins another, tarmac road at a T-junction. Turn left, uphill, at this junction, following the public footpath sign. The road turns right, levels out and becomes a track. The buildings with corrugated iron roofs in the right middle distance are part of the old mason's yard.

Continue along the track for about half a mile to where it ends in a metal field gate. Just before this gate, turn right, downhill, following an overgrown path between a dry stone wall and a barbed wire fence. After about 100 metres the fence turns ninety degrees to your left and the path also bends half left, entering an area of bracken. In front are a series of spoil heaps and the path winds its way through them. During the summer months the bracken is chest high but the path remains discernable.

Continue along the path in a westerly direction, to enter an area of scrubland, at which point the path starts to go downhill. You will soon see an (10) old capped mineshaft just to the right of the path, after which you enter a wood proper, still going downhill.

The path emerges from the wood near to the top of a large spoil heap (11). There are good views from here into the Via Gellia. To your left you will see a complex of industrial plant buildings. Follow the path towards these buildings. Near to the buildings the path enters a small cutting with a barbed wire fence to the left. A look over this fence will reveal (12) the large tunnel portal at the entrance to Middleton mine.

At the end of the small cutting the path joins the industrial road at a junction. Turn right onto this road and almost immediately right again at a sign indicating a pedestrian footpath. You are taken between a crash barrier on the left and a fence on the right. After about 50 metres the path seems to end at an office type building in front of you. Go round to the right of the building to join the main entrance road to the complex. Turn right and follow the road down to where it joins the public road. Turn left on the public road and walk uphill as the road goes through a wood. Very soon the trees end and you will see a farm on the left (Arm Lees Farm). Just beyond the farm gate is a stile in the wall with a public footpath sign pointing into the farmyard. Behind the farm is the old railway embankment, which carried the branch into (13) Hopton Wood quarry. There is a cattle creep bridge in the embankment and the footpath goes through the farmyard and under this bridge.

Once under the bridge the path climbs gradually. After about 25 metres, you pass under a tree on the left. Just beyond there is a squeeze stile in the stone wall on the right. Go through the stile and turn half left to climb up a bank, heading towards a solitary hawthorn bush. When you have passed the bush, turn half right and go to the top of the bank, which then opens out into a field. Head towards a short post that is visible in the ruined dry stone wall at the far side of the field. As you climb towards the post, Hopton Wood (Two) Quarry comes into view to your left. To the right rear are some earthworks at (14) Bone Mill Quarry.

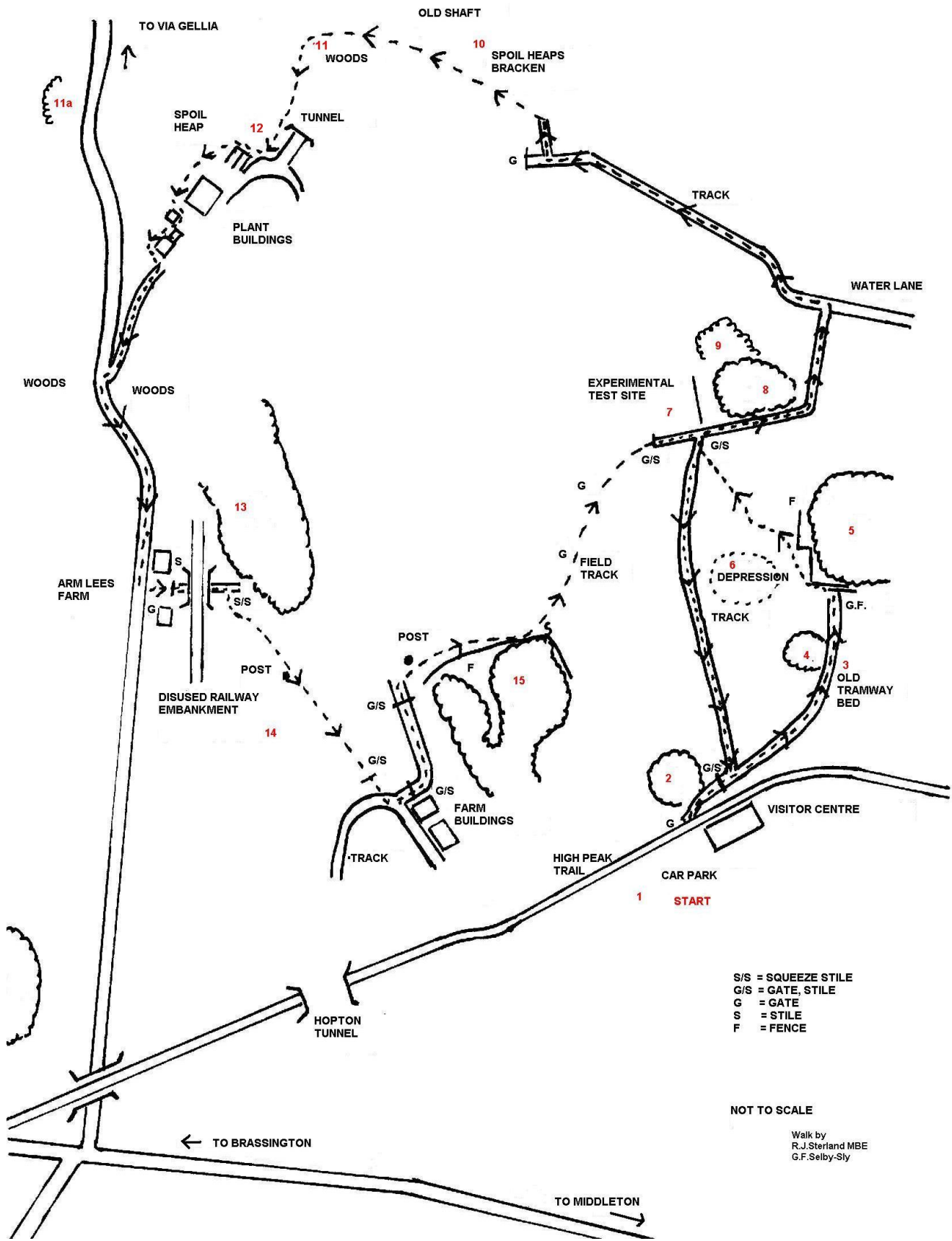
Follow the direction indicated by the yellow arrow on the post, heading uphill towards double power line poles. Go through a gap in a second dry stone wall, still heading towards the poles. Bone Mill Quarry comes into view behind you as to climb higher up the field.

Leave the field via a stile at the side of a metal gate in the top left corner and head along a track towards the farm buildings in front of you. Just before the first of the buildings is a junction in the track. Turn left here, cross a stile and follow the track as it curves left uphill. Go over a second stile at the side of a gate.

About 20 metres beyond, to the right of the track, is a post, way marked with a yellow arrow. Turn right, following the direction indicated by the arrow, keeping near to a barbed wire fence on the right, climbing fairly steeply. The climb is short and soon levels out. The fence is the boundary of the disused (15) Intake Quarry. Once on top of the hill there are extensive views into the quarry from the fence line. Continue along the fence line to the end of the quarry, where there is a stile in a dry stone wall at the junction of the wall and the boundary fence. Cross the stile and follow the direction indicated by the yellow arrow, along a field track, crossing three more fields.

At the end of the field track is a gate and stile leading onto a walled track. Go down the track a short distance to arrive at the Experimental Test Site you passed near the start of the walk. Turn right over the stile/gate opposite the site and walk straight ahead, keeping to the limestone path. The depression seen earlier is passed on your left and the path then heads downhill towards the Visitor Centre. Return to the Visitor Centre via the gate used at the start.

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Walk 1: Middleton Moor – Points of interest

1. Middleton top Visitors Centre.
 - Situated on the site of the Cromford and High Peak Railway.
 - Engine Shed housing a renovated Watts steam engine, the oldest working rotative beam engine in its original building. It was used since 1829 to pull wagons up the incline from Middleton.
2. Red Hill Quarry
 - Opened in 1890 by Spencer Bros. But abandoned and sold to Stanton Iron Co.
 - 1924 Quarry purchased by Hopton Wood Stone Firms.
 - Quarry not worked since 1930.
 - 1970 Quarry site used for picnic site after the C&HPR closed and was converted into a walking trail.
3. Old Quarry Tramway
 - Originally built to carry limestone from Water Lane Quarry to the railway at Middleton Top.
 - It was closed when Middleton Quarry (Now Middleton Mine) expanded and demolished the track at point 5 of this walk.
 - Access was then denied to Water Lane Quarry which then closed.
4. Un-named Quarry
 - No details of this quarry have been found. It was possibly also called Redhill Quarry.
5. Middleton Mine
 - Opened in 1846 by William Killer who discovered Hopton Wood Stone on his land as he was digging out the foundations for a workshop.
 - Began by supplying block stone to HWSCo. to help with the high demand for building stone for the Houses of Parliament.
 - The quarry closed for production of decorative stone in 1954 due to the problem of excessive overburden.
 - To reduce the cost of the overburden the decision was made to mine the limestone.
 - The mine expanded through the hill and emerged at the North side at point 11 of this walk.
 - The Mine closed in 2005
6. On the left of the path there is a large depression in the land. This was caused in the 1970s by an underground collapse. No one was hurt but a large digger was crushed.
7. Site of experimental testing of fencing.
8. Water Lane Quarry - became part of the New Hopton Wood Quarry the with the expansion of 1922
9. New Hopton Wood Quarry
 - Was a quarry from at least 1880
 - Used the quarry tramway from 1899
 - Changed name to New Hopton Wood and Marble Co. after a High Court case over the use of 'Hopton Wood' name.
 - By 1916 quarry had 29 workers and by 1922 the quarry had expanded with the adjacent (Water Lane) quarry.
 - In 1924 HWSF took control of site by demolishing the tramway with westward expansion of Middleton Quarry and refusing alternative access via a narrow steep cart track over their land.

10. Mine spoil heaps
 - a. Mine shafts and piles of limestone
11. View to original Hopton Wood Quarry – In woods.
 - Standing at top of hill looking west to woods on opposite side of valley. The original Hopton Wood quarry was situated within the woods to the south side near the end of the tree lines.
 - This quarry was working from at least the 1700s
 - Site was abandoned by 1780.
12. Middleton Mine North exit.
 - The exit of Middleton Mine can be viewed behind and to the left as the path joins the quarry road.
 - The Middleton Mine had extensive workings under Middleton Moor. The entrance was at point 5 of this walk.
 - The mine closed operations in 2005.
13. Hopton Wood Quarry 2
 - This is the second quarry bearing the Hopton Wood name but probably the best known one of the group. It was opened by the Gell family in 1789 after the closure of the original quarry across the road.
 - In 1791/2 the Gell family had a road built to connect the quarry to the canal wharf at Cromford. This road was called Via Gellia meaning Gell's road.
 - By 1850 the quarry was producing 100,000 tons of fluxing stone plus some decorative stone for Chatsworth House and Westminster Hall.
 - In 1920 during the depression the quarry was one of a few still working as it became a major contractor to supply the Imperial War Grave Commission with head stones for the service men and women of the First World War.
 - On the 24th February 1928 the Prince of Wales (later King George) visited the mason's sheds where the headstones were being carved.
 - In 1935 the quarry became part of Derbyshire Stone which in turn became part of Tarmac in 1980.
14. View of Bone Mill Quarry
 - From the centre of the field turn around to view Bone Mill Quarry at the middle distance.
 - This quarry was opened to extract dolomitic limestone and operations were set up to extract the magnesium.
 - The quarry operations have now ceased but the magnesium works continue using imported stone.
15. Intake Quarry.
 - This quarry was opened before 1852
 - By 1880 it was a larger than average operation due to having direct access to the Cromford and High Peak Railway, having 4 sidings within the quarry.
 - In 1921 road stone was being supplied from the quarry as the siliceous beds were harder and less pure than that required for fluxing.
 - In 1940 the stone was used for sugar beet refining, railway ballast, aggregate and agricultural fertilizer.
 - In 1959 the quarry was used for processing the siliceous cap from Middle Peak Quarry at a rate of 4-5000 tons per week.
 - 1963 reverted back to quarrying. 300,000 tons per annum with a workforce of 30-35. In this year Tarmac Co. took over the quarry.
 - 1968 Last furnace at Renishaw closed reducing the sale of fluxing stone, this together with the poor quality of the stone saw the closure of this quarry.
 - Since closure the site has been used for deposition of river mud from Derwent when the river was dredged to aid flood control. The site has even been used for Police firearms training for some time.