

## Walk 6: Middleton by Wirksworth/Cromford – Directions



**Start Point:** Car park (free), at National Stone Centre, off the B5035. Map Reference SK285554.

**Maps:** 1:25000 Explorer Sheet OL24, Peak District, White Peak Area or 1:50000 Landranger Sheet 119, Buxton, Matlock & Dovedale.

**Public Transport:** There is a bus stop for the Rainbow 6.1 bus, running between Derby & Bakewell, at the entrance to the Stone Centre.

**Public Toilets:** National Stone Centre, Cromford Market Place & Black Rocks Visitor Centre.

**Distance:** 5½ miles. (6 miles, if the detour is taken to Barrel Edge Quarry).

**Time needed:** 2½ - 3½ hours.

**Description:** A walk of medium difficulty, with some fairly steep climbs and descents, (one of which is extremely steep) along tracks and public footpaths. There are some stretches along the streets of Cromford and a short distance alongside the busy A6 road. There are also two busy B roads to cross. There are good views of quarries in the area. Other industrial architecture includes that associated with old industry, railways and mining.

### Route Directions:

(1) Leave the Stone Centre by the entrance drive, turning left along the B5035 for a short distance to the bus stop and public footpath sign. Cross the road and go down the track leading to Middleton Cricket Club. Go over the bridge (2) Turn left immediately over the bridge, where the path meanders through (3) some old lead rakes to a squeeze stile in a hedge/stone wall. Continue ahead, downhill, onto a green lane. (4) The old face of Middleton Quarry/Mine can be seen directly in front. Go through a second squeeze stile into a small field. Keep close to the wall on your left and rejoin the green lane, via a squeeze stile.

Walk the length of the green lane to its junction with Chapel Lane in Middleton village. (5) Notice the ancient field system to your right and (6) the graveyard on your left.

Turn right along Chapel Lane and walk down and then uphill to the Congregational Church on your right. Just beyond it is a public footpath sign and a squeeze stile. Go through the stile, walk the short length of path to the village recreation ground, there turn right to follow the boundary wall to the far right corner. Join the walled path between houses on the left and a field on the right. At the T-junction with another path turn right, going through a squeeze stile at the side of a gate, into the fields. (7) More lead rakes can be seen here.

Follow the short stone wall on your left, then turn left to the stone barn and a squeeze stile leading onto a walled path. Head towards a second stone barn, with a squeeze stile in the wall on the uphill side of it. Go through the stile and cross a small field to another walled track that goes downhill diagonally, to your half right. (8) Black Rocks and Riber Castle are visible in front. Slinger Quarry is visible to your left.

The path ends at a wooden fence and stile, joining another path in a T-junction. Climb the stile and turn left along the second path. This path follows the edge of Dean Quarry (9), giving extensive views into the workings at various points along its length. It ends at an unmade access road into the workings.

Turn left, through a squeeze stile just before the road to walk parallel to it for about 25 metres. Cross the road to another stile and then walk down the field. (10) Ball Eye

and Slinter Quarries are visible to your left. At the bottom of the first field you will see (11) the supports of a ruined Dutch barn on the right.

Continue downhill, to the left of the mine enclosure, for a few metres to a gap in a large hedge. This gap leads onto a walled track, with yellow way mark arrows on a post. Go down the track to an old metal gate that seems to block the way. The track continues downhill and is a public thoroughfare. Go round the side of the gate to follow the track, which soon bends right and then left. After a short distance some power lines can be seen overhead and the track visibly steepens. Continue downhill for another 100 metres to a point where there are two stiles opposite each other. The stile on the left has been constructed from an old pallet.

(12) **(A slightly shorter route option can be taken from here which avoids the extremely steep descent into Bonsall Hollow. Continue downhill along the track which soon bends to the right. 200 metres below this is a housing estate on the right, with a road ending at the side of the track. Follow the track for another 100 metres to a squeeze stile and path on the left. Turn left, walking down hill to rejoin the main route at the Scarthin in Cromford.)**

(12) Leave the track via the left stile, which leads into a field. Climb steeply up the field and cross a second field, diagonally right to a gateway. Go through into a third field, turning left to follow a well defined path towards a wood. Ignore the left fork 50 metres along the path, continuing ahead to a wooden fence and stile at the edge of the wood.

Enter the wood and follow the path downhill. After about 20 metres the path forks.

(13) The right fork leads to a small grass area at the edge of the cliff face, from where there is an extensive view of Ball Eye Quarry. **Considerable care should be exercised here, as the cliff is unfenced with a sheer drop in excess of 30 metres.** Return to the fork and follow the path as it winds its way down to the valley floor. The path does have several series of wooden steps and is not easy to negotiate, particularly in wet weather.

When you reach the valley floor, turn right along a path, to follow the flow of the stream. (14) There are several old dams here, built to create millponds. Continue along the path, which soon leaves the side of a stream along a raised embankment (15), to arrive at the outskirts of Cromford. Here a flight of wooden steps leads down to the left onto an open area at the side of a large millpond (16). Ignore the steps and continue up to your right along the path, into an old quarry. Turn left, keeping the face on your right, to a T-junction with a public footpath sign. Turn left and walk down to the main road.

Cross the main road onto a street with a no entry sign (Scarthin) The road climbs slightly and then gradually descends alongside a huge millpond, into Cromford Market Place (17). There are several splendid buildings around the Market Place. Use the pelican crossing to negotiate the road, turn left and walk to the traffic lights at the main A6 road junction. Notice the old quarry face on your right, behind the pub. Turn right at the traffic lights and walk along the footpath for about 200 metres to Intake Lane, on your right. Walk up the length of intake lane and then continue along the walled track, also part of the lane. (18) Along the lane there are extensive views down into the Derwent Valley. The track goes under a bridge which used to carry the old Cromford & High Peak Railway up Sheep Pasture incline. Go under the bridge and then turn right 50 metres beyond it at the footpath post signed to the High Peak Trail.

Join the High Peak Trail by turning left, uphill. (19) Notice the old quarry on the left. Walk to the top of the incline and go through the wooden gates. (20) On the left is the old engine winding house. The Trail is level from here on. There are extensive views to the west, including all the quarries previously mentioned. (21) Further along the trail you will see a very deep quarry on the left.

Continue along the Trail, to reach a series of short posts across it, some of which are LNWR boundary posts with Black Rocks to the left (22). There is an entrance to a car park is on the right.

***Barrel Edge quarry can be visited from here, but there is a stiff climb of 60 metres to reach it. (Walkers who decide not to visit the quarry should ignore the next two paragraphs and turn right into the car park.)***

(23) To visit the quarry, turn left, off the Trail and climb up the right fork in the path, between wooden fencing. The path curves left and the fencing ends just below a spoil heap, from an ancient lead mine. Black Rocks themselves are above to the left. Climb straight up the path, keeping the spoil on your left, and a field on the right. There are good views to the right of Middle Peak quarry in the distance.

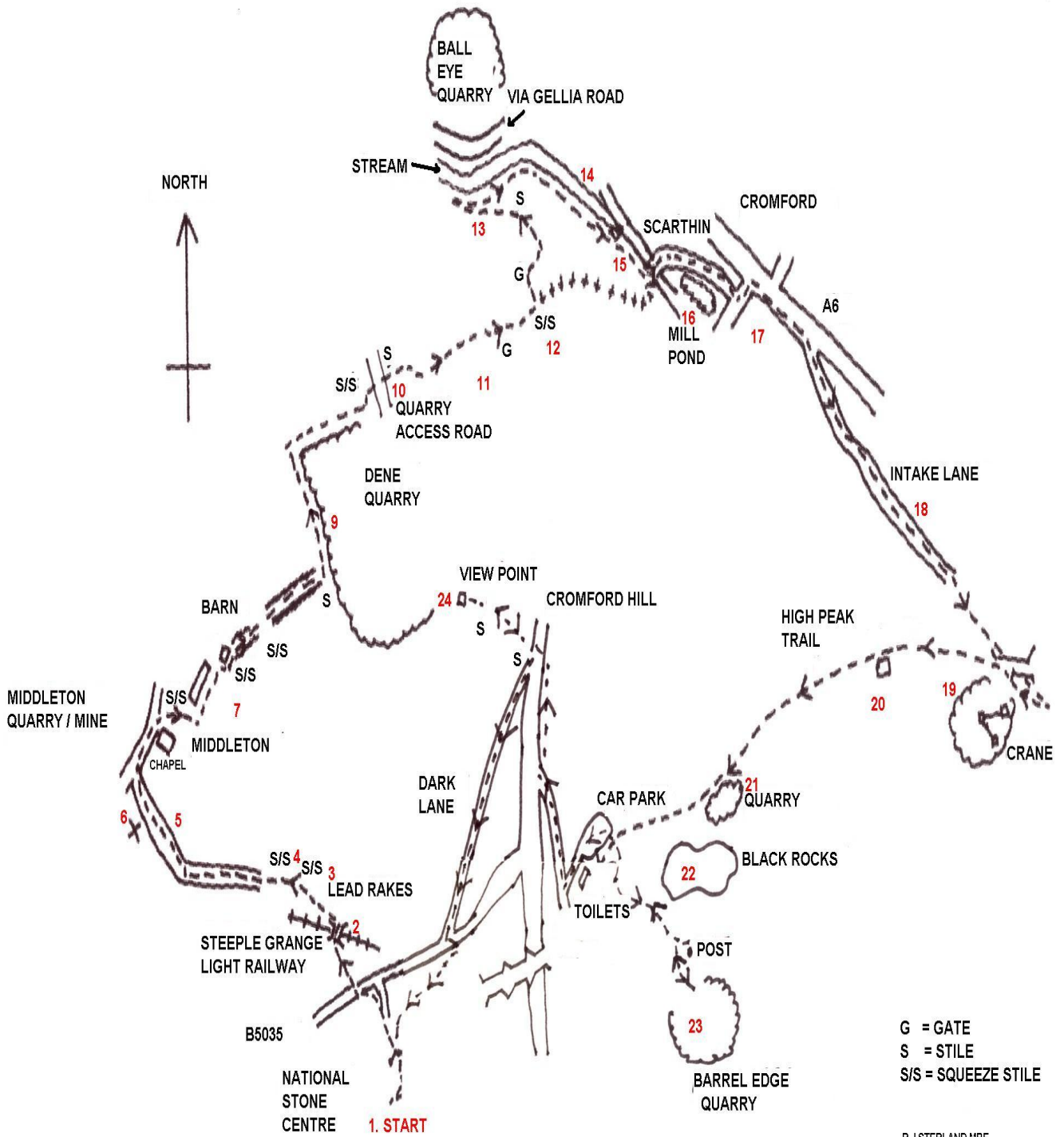
The path enters some trees and curves gently left, away from the field. Further up you will see the path bend sharp left and a post with a yellow way marked arrow on it just before that. A few metres before reaching the post you will see a narrow path branching off the main path, to the right, leading straight uphill. Climb up this path for about 100 metres to reach the quarry, slightly off to the left. There are numerous partly completed millstones lying around.

Retrace your steps and return to the High Peak Trail. As you descend, Balleye Quarry can be seen on the hillside over the valley to your half right. Once back on the Trail, walk straight across into the car park. Turn left, walk across the car park and along the entrance driveway, passing the toilet block on your left, to reach a T-junction with a lane (there is a cemetery opposite). Turn right and walk down the lane to the junction with the main road. Turn right and walk downhill until you are opposite a large road sign warning of the steep descent down Cromford Hill.

Cross the road here to wooden fence and stile. Climb the stile, cross the field to a second stile and then follow the path for a short distance through the trees to reach, (24) the view point and information board of Dean Quarry. You should then retrace your steps to the roadside stile.

Climb the stile but do not re-cross the main road. Instead, turn right to walk up the walled track (Dark Lane) to its junction with the B5035, near to the entrance of the National Stone Centre. (Not far to your right is a dangerous blind summit). Cross the road, diagonally to your left to a break in the stone wall. From here a path turns sharp right and will lead you to the access road of the National Stone Centre. Once on the access road, turn left and walk downhill to the start point in the car park.

WALK 6 MIDDLETON BY WIRKSWORTH / CROMFORD



## Walk 6: Middleton by Wirksworth/Cromford - Points of interest

1. Start at the National Stone Centre
2. Bridge over the Steeple Grange railway.
  - A quarry tramway used to transport limestone from Middleton to join the Cromford and High Peak Railway, now the High Peak Trail.
3. Lead rakes. Spoil heaps from old lean mines.
4. View of the face of the Middleton Quarry.
  - Quarry of Carboniferous Limestone
  - Opened during the 1920's depression
  - This quarry changed operations from open quarrying to underground operations and became known as Middleton Mine. It has now closed.
5. To the right of the track there is a view of the old strip field system.
6. Middleton Church.
  - Within the graveyard to this church are the graves of some of the Killer family who were owners of a number of quarries in and around Middleton.
7. Capped lead mine-shafts and rakes.
8. View to the front of Black Rocks,
  - Exposure of the Carboniferous, Namurian Millstone Grit, Ashover Grit.
  - To the left is a view of Riber Castle (a Victorian folly) and to the left a view of the 'Slinter' limestone quarry.
9. Along this section of the path there are views of the extensive workings of Dene Quarry, an expanding working quarry of Carboniferous Limestone.
10. Ball Eye Quarry,
  - limestone and fluorspar, is visible over the Via Gellia
  - Via Gellia a road, built in the 18C., to join the quarries to the Cromford Canal in the valley.
  - Nearer to the path the Slinter Quarry visible.
11. Ruined Dutch barn with ornate stone trough and a small enclosure around fluorspar mineral workings.
12. Point of start of alternate route avoiding steep descent.
13. Short deviation from path to view Ball Eye Quarry with its limestone and fluorspar operations. ***This is an unfenced area, care needs to be taken.***
14. Stream in the valley supports a series of small dams for powering mills along the valley. The stream flows over lava beds.
15. Disused limestone quarry.
16. Mill Pond
17. Cromford Market Place with
  - The Greyhound Hotel built by Richard Arkwright for guests to his cotton mill.
  - The main A6 road cutting was cut about 1815 to form the 'new' road.
18. View of Derwent Valley;
  - Willersley Castle (at one time home of Richard Arkwright);
  - Cromford Mill (where the industrial revolution began)
  - On the horizon Crich Stand (memorial to Sherwood Forester's Regiment) and Cliff Quarry (a working limestone quarry).
19. Disused quarry with tripod hand operated crane.
  - (Probably used for ballast during the construction of the Cromford and High Peak Railway).
20. Old Winding Engine house used for winching wagons up the very steep 'Sheep Pastures' incline.
21. Disused ballast quarry from the construction of the railway.
22. Black Rocks-
  - Carboniferous Ashover Grit outcrop.
23. Barrel Edge Quarry.
  - The site is overgrown but there are some pieces of millstones still on site.
24. View point to Dene Quarry.
  - A working limestone quarry. An information board at the point outlines the building and operations together with some of the history.