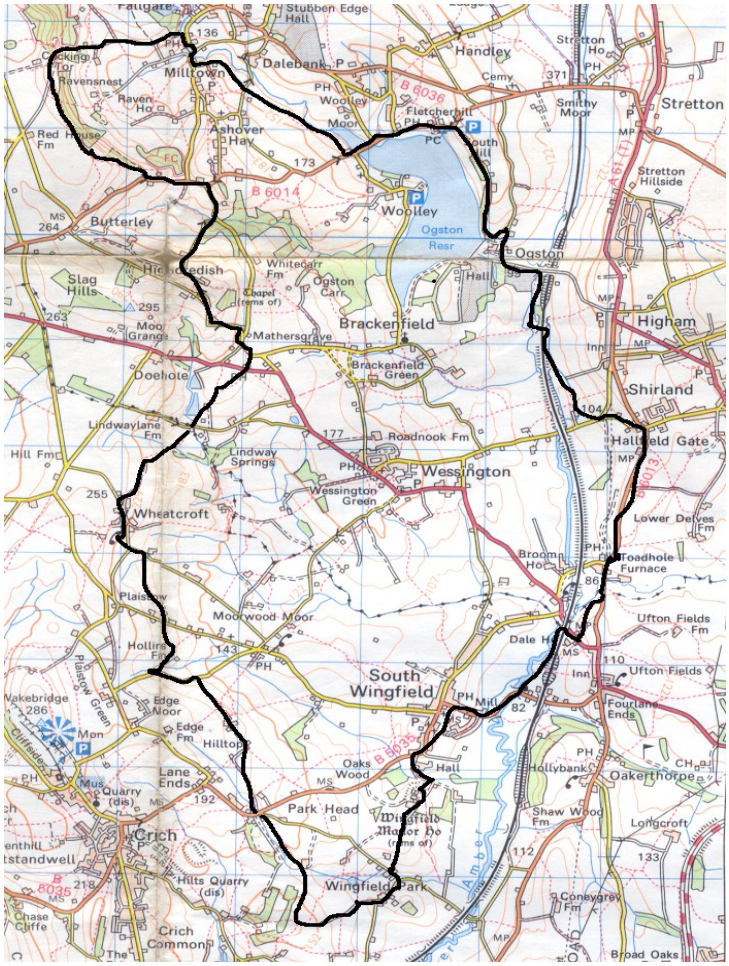
# WALK.17.
# ASHOVER.17.
# Map SK25/35. SK26/36.
# 18 miles. 5 hours 15 minutes.




**"Reproduced by kind permission of Ordnance Survey."**
**Crown Copyright NC/02/30874.**

Start near the Miners Arms pub at Milltown, Ashover (354617). Walk S on the road uphill, then, in 100 yards, turn left along a lane, walking E then SE to a crossroads. Go straight across the junction down a lane to a farm gate with a good gritstone slot stile on its left, then into a field, which eventually brings you to a farm gate. Go to the left of this through a stile near a poor gate and follow the hedge on your right for 100 yards to a slot stile in a wall. Continue in the same direction to a hedge in front where you go through a gap, the River Amber down to the left, and walk with hedge/wall on your right until you approach the entry to some woods by a slot stile, then walk through the trees which fall away to the left; away to the left on the far bank was a coal mine of which very little is left, a small amount of spoil. Leave the woods by what was once a slot stile, and enter a field with a wooden fence on your left, descending a little to reach the road at a cottage (368608).

Turn left to walk ENE along a road, which skirts Ogston Reservoir where sailing may be seen in the proper season. Ellen MacArthur the round the world sailor who came second in the single-handed race in her boat Kingfisher first learned her trade on the reservoir. (See her book: `Taking on the World`). The air around here can be filled with bird song, while rare ducks, several hawks and many different birds can be seen and heard. Past a car park on the right the road then ascends; just before it turns sharply left, take a lane to the right, going S, the reservoir on the right, down to the dam. Change to map SK 25/35. The road curves around to the left, then right, passing

the estate wall then, further on, the Ogston Water Treatment Plant. Just beyond this is the entrance to Ogston Hall, a building unfortunately out of sight. The expert with time and access finds the house a remarkable exercise in dating, the various additions from 1500 onward not always being obvious. Historically Ogston Hall was the focal point of the area, and features in the Doomsday Book 1068, as part of the parish of Morton, which was the property of the Norman Baron Walter Deincourt. Ogston eventually passed to the Turbutts who inherited through marriage with the Revells in the early C.18 who gained it through marriage to the Deincourts. The earliest part of the present house dates from the Tudor period, and oak beams in the west wing bear the Revell crest 1545. The house was later modernized for Gladwin Turbut, by the Architect Thomas Hine of Nottingham, between 1850 and 1865. A large amount of the estate was lost when the reservoir was built in 1960.

Follow the road from the entrance to the hall, walking E for about 300 yards to cross the River Amber, then turn right down steps to a wooden bar and step stile, then down a field at (384596). A sluice at this point probably leads down to the mill at Higham Dairy Farm, which we shall pass later.

Walk S through fields, level going with the Amber close on the right, quite pleasant as you make your way to a fence, and footbridge. Take the wooden stile to the left of the bridge, then turn left to walk close to the fence on your left, up to the railway line where a footbridge crosses it: quite an imposing one for walkers? On the other side of the bridge, turn right and walk along a narrow-off path, railway on right to a stile, which leads to a wider area. In 100 yards through another stile into a narrow area, a leat on the left. The path lies in a valley on which the top left stands Higham where there are many interesting houses. Higham was a market centre as early as the C.13, as the renewed cross reminds us; but long before that, the Romans passed through here on Ryknield Street. No 22, Bull Farm, the Crown Inn and Higham Farm contain crucks. 77 and 79 Strettea lane are the most unusual, in fact they have a conventional street front, but on the back, classical facades to the back gardens: fluted Doric pilasters and pediment doorways improve the normal dull back wall.

Go forward to a better wooden step and slot stile to where, on the right, you will find trees and ponds, onward to another stile, and proceed to Higham Dairy Farm, mill pond on left, from which water can be heard to pour down where once it moved a wheel. Go through a slot stile, and walk with farm on the right to a footbridge, and thus into a field across which you walk SE to the far hedge where there is a metal gate with a slot and step stile together with sign, and so out on to the road at (389583). Turn left: walk uphill to a crossroads, then turn right at the Shoulder Inn to walk S on the B.6013 Take care: it is a busy road, but there is a good view to the right (Amber Valley). A path through the Golf Course on the left can be taken but misses the views. Pass a metal milestone on your right on the way to Toadhole Furnace, an insignificant place, it seems, but it contains a former Friends Meeting House dated 1743, a tiny stone building attached to a cottage, consisting of two blocks with a stairway between, the outer one being a schoolroom over a stable. Furnace House1787 is noteworthy: so is Amber Mill House, a late C.18 stone house with a Doric door case.

Continue S, cross Alfreton brook, and, as the road begins to rise, go right through a slot stile at a gate into a field at (389567), walking SSW with hedge on right and stream beyond that. The field rises to the left. Go forward, climbing the hill a little to the left in order to attain a wooden stile in front: a stile with well-made uprights. There is a similar stile in front in the far hedge, which you reach by going in the same direction across the field, and so out on to the road at (387562). Turn right and walk downhill to the railway bridge on the far side of which, on the left is a gate. To the side of this is a slot and bar stile. Go through this to a narrow field, railway high up to the left, and the Amber on the right, crossed at this point by a large green pipe. Go forward on level ground until the narrow field narrows even further, then go uphill a little, passing through an old gateway, the remains of an old stile still there. Now, there is a view of South Wingfield church ahead to guide you to the next stile which is to the right of a farm gate; then 40 yards to another gate and slot stile; and so up to the church boundary wall and an unusual slot stile.

The church is quite isolated, standing alone half a mile E of the village. It is a C.13 building but much of it renewed in 1803 when the windows of the nave and aisle were arched. The W tower is late C.14 or early C.15: it was built of different stone, and has a diagonal buttress. Inside the church, there is older work: an arcade of five bays with circular piers, characteristic capitals and a kneeled respond. From the C.14 comes the priest's doorway with its crude little figure. The oldest possession of all is the Norman font, tub shaped but plain.

Not far away left is the old station, built in 1839 by Francis Thompson in the classical manner: it has shallow hipped roofs, wide eaves, and large Jacobean-style chimneys. The design was used by Loudon as a villa in his "Encyclopaedia of Villa Architecture" 1846, and has been quoted frequently since as a model of its kind.

From the church, walk to South Wingfield along the road, first along side the Amber, then uphill to the Blue Bell Inn where there is, on the left side of the road a stile at (378555), which you take to walk along side a fence to some bungalows ahead, to a slot stile that takes you into the estate. Keep to the right to some garages where you will find a stile at their side: go through this and climb uphill to the left corner through a stile and follow a wall on your right. At a farm gate there is a slot, which you have to squeeze through into a lane, which leads up to a road at (375552). Turn left, walk downhill; follow the road as it curves to the right then in 40 yards, turn left down a lane which goes downhill to cross a stream at the bottom.

There above you is the breath-taking view of Wingfield Manor House, the building started by one Cromwell and destroyed by another. Ralph, Lord Cromwell, was extremely rich, being Lord Treasurer to Henry VIII, Warden of Sherwood Forest, and Constable of Nottingham Castle. He had already begun building Tattershall Castle, Linconshire in 1434, and was to be buried there. But he could not suit Henry with his marriage annulment to Catherine and fell out of favour: he was to be executed but mercifully died before this could be carried out. The Manor house was completed by the 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury; it is not difficult to understand why it became a favourite seat of the family. It is a larger complex of buildings than Haddon Hall, and like Haddon, has two courts: documents show that it was nearing completion in 1443, being the work entirely of English craftsmen.

George Talbot, 6th Earl, and husband of the famous Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury, was in charge of Mary, Queen of Scots who was kept three times in the manor 1569 to 1584, the last time with a large retinue. This was the occasion when the plot was devised which was to cost Anthony Babington his head. He had been brought up in Dethick, becoming a page to Mary, and thus involved in a plan to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and crown Mary Queen of England. His part in the scheme, was discovered. He was captured, forced to divulge the secret code of the documents outlining the plot, and hanged, drawn and quartered despite his pathetic plea for mercy to Elizabeth: "Most gratious Souvraigne, if either bitter teares, or pensive contrite harte, or any dutiful sighte of the wretched sinner might work any pitty in your royal breast, I would wringe out my drayned eyes as much blood as in bemoaninge my drery tragedye should lamentably bewayle my faulte, and somewhat no doughte move you to compassion….."

The house was badly damaged during the Civil War; by the other Cromwell, Oliver. After the restoration, it was occupied by Immanuel Halton, an astronomer, who turned the banqueting hall into a two-storeyed dwelling allowing the rest to fall into decay. Masonry from the manor was taken and used in the building of Wingfield Hall, but even that fell into disuse until a farm was built in to it in C.19.

From the bottom of the lane go uphill for 100 yards to a farm gate, and on its left a slot and step stile. Go over this, then up fairly steeply on a rough farm drive, and round to approach the back of the manor; a look around the front shows where the cannon balls did their damage during the civil war. At the far end of the buildings (through mud in winter) to a farm gate with a good gritstone slot stile on its right, then continue uphill through field to a slot stile, wall on right, to a broken wall ahead where a gap affords you passage into a field, going downhill S with a fine view of Coalburn Hill. Go through a slot stile adjacent to the hedge on the right, then downhill to a cottage and a slot stile leading out on to the road at (373540).

Turn left and walk 70 yards along this road to a road junction: turn right to walk SSW along a road (that leads to Fritchley) where in about 300 yards, the road turns sharply to the left. At this point, leave the road and go straight up a lane, walking WSW fairly steeply. Often muddy, it is interesting as it curves and narrows, eventually being blocked by two farm gates. Take the one on the right, no stile, and continue, along the same lane, up to another gate across the lane with a slot stile on its right, then up to the final barrier across the lane, a gate and stile, but there are two gates on the right and one on the left. Take the further gate on the right at (365535), go through a stile at its side into a field, walking now NNE, level going, wall on the right, the ground rising to your left, good views. Continue walking in the same direction, out of the field, into a lane, no gate, just a gap. This area is part of Wingfield Park.

The lane curves down to a sort of open area, then goes forward to a farm gate with a good slot stile on its right, then goes uphill, passing Park Farm on the right, going through a gate and stile, and yet another before entering a field, no gate, making for a white gate on the right of which is a good gritstone slot stile; and so out on to the road you used a little earlier. Go forward a few yards to a road junction at (361546); this is Park Head. Go straight across the B.5035 and enter a lane going N. In 400 yards, there is on the right, a poor gritstone slot stile that is little use except for a marker. Jump down into the field, bear left and walk NNW through a gap in the fence in front, then bear right and make for a hedge ahead just over half-way down to a point where the holly hedge finishes and a short section of wall begins. Here is a slot stile that takes you into the next field across which you go diagonally to the far corner and a slot stile in the hedge, just to the left of the corner. You are now on the drive from Hill Top farm; follow it NW, good firm walking up to the next farm ahead through which you go, bearing right on to a lane, still walking NW. The lane enters a field: keep near to the hedge on the right for about 350 yards where you arrive at a wooden gate which allows you to go down an enclosed, narrow lane to the road below at (357558).

Turn left and walk uphill for 400 yards to a farm gate on your right. There is here a neat little stone step stile. Go down the drive to Hollins Farm, passing the buildings on your right, go to a slot stile and enter a narrow field with a wooden stile on its left: go through this. Keep fairly close to the hedge on the left, which leads to a wooden stile in the far hedge, then down some steps thoughtfully provided, and down to a road at (354563). Cross the road and squeeze through a slot stile at the side of a farm building, then walk NNW through a field for about 200 yards to a corner of two stone walls forming a right angle, where there is a stile almost blocked by a post. Over this continue NNW then N to the far corner, holly on the right, and enter a lane, no gate, then walk to the far end where there is a gate and bar stile to its left, and so out on to a road at (352570). Turn left and walk WNW.

In 150 yards, bear left at a road junction, then walk N through Wheatcroft. As you leave the last of the few buildings, go right down a farm drive to Beach Farm. Note the date 1653 over the door. Go between the farm buildings, then through a gate on your right down a lane, walking NE then N to a farm gate with a stile on its right, then into a field, going diagonally to the far end, where there is a gap: the remains of a stile are still there. In the next field, you walk NNE to the opposite hedge that contains enormous holly trees, one of which hides the next stile, go through the holly bush over a stone bridge; over a minute stream, the make for a gritstone slot stile 40 yards to the right. In the next field, angle left to walk NNE to a building in the far corner where there is a soundly constructed step and slot stile, and so out into a road at (356582). Turn right: walk along the lane for 40 yards, then go left through a slot stile in a hedge where there is a sign, and go uphill through a field that leads you up to two reservoirs. Keep to the right of these, close to the hedge on the right, to a gate on the right. This takes you past a farm house on the left, then in 40 yards to a slot stile at the side of a gate. Go through this and walk with the house behind you. Go uphill to the far corner of the field through a stile then diagonally across the next field to the corner where you will find a farmgate with a slot stile on its right; then continue though the next field with the hedge on your right until you come up to a massive gritstone and a wall; and so out on to a road at (360587).

Cross the road and take the lane which goes to the right of the Plough Inn car park, a short walk on an enclosed lane to another road, where you turn left and walk NNW uphill. Carry on past a left turn, and in 40 yards turn left at a road junction. This is Mathersgrave. Go uphill, sharply left, then right. At the top as the road curves left, turn right on to a minor road: this is Highoredish: from this point you get superb views. Continue on the road which descends NW. 400 yards from the top turn sharply right and continue to the ford at the bottom: change map to SK26/36. Note how the ford is paved. Over the ford and curve to the road above, turn left and walk 200 yards to a road junction, then, turn left and walk W along the road for 500 yards, then as you climb steeply, go right at a sign (352605), through a gate. Pass a disused wooden building on a worn path and keep to it as you traverse Hole Wood, keeping to the left and rising until you reach the boundary of a field where there is a gap, no stile; enter the woods keeping well to the left, to emerge into a field, level going. However, the path soon begins to climb relentlessly, the view becoming more striking as you go, and the scene below of the Valley and Ravensnest Tor unfolds below.

Keep close to the wall on your left as you go; it levels out at the top where you make for the woods in front which you enter by a poor stile in the wall, and which you leave by a good slot stile. Walk NNW over rough ground, trees on the right. Go through a slot stile in a fence, and, as you proceed, note a large gritstone water tank, chipped laboriously by hand many years ago when labour was cheap but skills precious. Note, too, the outcrop of Cocking Tor jutting out dramatically high up above you. Continue with wall on right until you find yourself approaching a good gritstone stile that brings you out on to a track that goes downhill. Turn right and walk down under Cocking Tor you then turn right and go steeply downhill over old spoil heaps from this once profitable lead workings (Gregory's Mine) which, you will notice, are situated on gritstone: but descend to the limestone underneath.

You go past the old ventilation chimney; a fire was built in the mine causing an uplift of air up the chimney, which ventilated the mine. Go past a building on the right, go in to a lane, which curves its way down, old mine workings on the right. Go past a small wood on the left then at a point where there is a quarry entrance to the left, a path goes straight on. Go down through the field, and into the next through a gap in the hedge, then slightly to the left, there is a slot stile with two chains across it. Unique! To say the least. In three feet go through a gritstone slot stile, then down some steps, turn right. Do not go straight on up more steps; but take the last few muddy yards to the side of the Miners Arms and the start.

Checked 3 January 2003.