WALK. 22.
CROMFORD.22.
21 Miles.
Map White Peak.



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Start at the car park at the side of the Cromford Canal (299570). The canal was built by William Jessop a local businessman with the help of Benjamin Outram from Butterley Ironworks. He was encouraged by Richard Arkwright. He needed to get his goods out of the area, a costly job sending packhorses across the hills, but he eventually fell out with the builders. In 1789 the authorization went through parliament, the canal was to be 14 miles long from Cromford to Codnor Park where it would join the Erewash Canal. It was to have 3 aqueducts, 4 tunnels, (the one at Butterley was 2 miles long), and fourteen locks all in the Butterley area. In 1794 the canal opened; in 1797 the first passenger boat service operated from Cromford to Nottingham, 38 miles, costing 25p first class and 15p second class. In 1900 the Butterley tunnel collapsed. Because the tunnel was too costly to repair, the canal became uneconomical, so it closed in 1937.
Go left out of the car park so as to walk in front of Arkwright's Mill which was built like a castle. Richard Arkwright started building in 1771 and so created the first successful water-powered spinning mill. The mills at Cromford with their powered machinery,

large workforce and factory village became models for others throughout Britain and abroad; he earned the accolade "father of the factory system". Problems with the water system due to the drainage by soughs of the lead mines lowering the water table brought an end to textile production at the mill in 1840. You walk alongside to some traffic lights, cross the road into the market place which is dominated by the Greyhound Inn built by Arkwright, then continue up the road for 500 yards, passing the rows of houses on the left he built for his workers. You come to the second footpath sign at 292565 on the right. Walk between some houses and in 100 yards, as the path becomes steeper, turn right to go N up a bank to a gate which leads into a field; there is a sign here "nature reserve". These fields are at certain times of the year full of orchids and ponds with Great Crested Newts breeding. Go N through two fields level going, with hedge on the right, then in 20 yards with the hedge on the left down to a sunken lane.

Go straight across the lane then walk NNW through two fields to a point at the top edge of Slinter Wood (289571). Here, there is tremendous view of the Via Gellia Valley which is sadly spoilt by a massive quarry opposite. Go steeply down left through the trees; notice the mine shaft fenced off near the top; the path can be rather tricky in wet slippery weather, so take care. You come down to the stream and the bottom path along side it. Turn left on the bottom wide track; notice the mill and water wheel on the right. The path begins to climb, poor wall on the right. Go into a field keeping the woods a few yards to the left; go through two fields, then at an angle in the wall, go through a stile into the woods again: the Via Gellia Mill is on the right. Walk through the woods, the path becoming steeper all the time, climbing slowly up to the top of the valley. Near the top, the path becomes very steep; facing you is a massive limestone rock at 282572 with a stile at its side which goes to Middleton. Do not take this but go around the back of the rock on a path, that like the Grand old Duke of York, having come up the hill, you go back down again. It starts out as a good path but near the bottom is very steep and slippery, so take care. It brings you down to the Via Gellia road at 279574 which you cross to climb the opposite bank going W uphill to a stile in a fence. Go into a field then go NW uphill through two fields on the left of a cottage and out so on to a road that is at Slaley.

Turn left past Slaley Hall, left to a junction and telephone box in 200 yards, then left down the side of a cottage to a slot in a wall and so into a field. Go downhill SSW to a gateway which has a slot stile on its left. In the next field, keep the wall to the right; go to a stile with two limestone uprights, then continue SW on level ground to the far corner and a slot with one good upright. Walk with wall on right through trees where the going is rough - stones underfoot where'er you walk - to come to a wet area that is Dunsley Springs: go over a difficult stile on its right, then follow a wall on your left through trees to an open space; bear right; you come to a gateway made of two massive uprights about four feet apart, too big for a slot stile, too small for a farm gate. Go downhill passing on your right a scree of fairly large stones from a quarry above, and through what reminds you of a little dell, then into a lane for 100 yards, before turning to the right at 264566. The route to the left goes down to Via Gellia.

Walk uphill NW on a narrow path through a glen that is badly overgrown, stones underfoot that test the ankles, until, at the top, you enter a field and reach a slot stile in a corner in front; keep the wall on the left as you go through the field to a stile in the left corner. In the next field, the stile is away from the corner; go through the next field where the wall is 20 yards to the left. In the next field, pass a circular pond on the right as you make for the stile in the facing wall; carry on NW to the next stile; Leys Farm is to the right. Go through the stile, turn left to go WWS with wall on the left to the corner where there is a slot stile. Go through this then walk with wall and hedge on right to a stile hidden in bushes in the far right corner; go through this, drop down a little to a stile in the right hedge, through this then walk uphill with wall on the left until it goes off to the left; Whitecliffe Farm is on the left. Walk uphill to the facing wall where there is a slot stile, continue in the same direction through five narrow fields, through one a little larger, then through a narrow one; bear to the right through a gateway then to the left to a stile and out on to the road at 250571; this is Ible.

Turn right, pass through the hamlet, walking N on the Grange Lane for 500 yards to a point where there is a stile at the side of a gate. Enter the field and walk W downhill, making for the corner on the right where there is a gap; walk NW then NNW to a poor stile in the hedge at 244577. Turn left, walk 30 yards to a road that joins from the right then in a few yards you come to a road, the A.5012. This is Grangemill. No signs of a mill here, just a mill pond. Cross the road to a gate with a footpath sign, through this then through another gate into a large field. Walk S for 400 yards to a gap in a hedge, then continue in the same direction uphill 400 more yards to the far corner (the wooded valley of Via Gellia to the left) to a stile and a junction of footpaths at 243567 with a large quarry on the right. Take the path uphill SSW through a large field (a wall has been removed half way up) to a stile in the facing wall: over this. Go in the same direction to a stile in the left corner, then go slightly left, closing onto the wall on the right, to a stile in 100 yards. Through this, then drop down on a farm track to join the wall on the left in which there is a stile on the left of a gate. Go through this then walk SSW to the far hedge with a stile in the facing wall; through this, then through 10 yards of wasteland to a stile and so out on to the High Peak Trail at 236556.

Turn right, walk on the trail for two miles to a bridge at 206569; your path is under this bridge, but there is no access to it so carry on the trail for 300 yards to a track on the right. Minninglow Hill is on the right with its summit of trees that can be seen for miles around. It is an extensive oval cairn covered with at least four stone cists or chambers, two of which still retain capstones. The chambers seem to have been explored and cleared at an early date since Bateman, in 1843, could find only one skeleton. But quantities of Roman objects may indicate that it formed a stopping place for travellers on the Roman Road that runs past the site. The track which you take angles back SE; in 300 yards look for a stile on the right which takes you into a field and so under the bridge which you passed over when on the trail: Someone may in time make some steps down here.

Walk SW along a good track to a broken wall in front where there is a slot stile. Continue downhill to a good ladder stile over the wall on the left. Turn right and walk with wall on the right until you come to a slot stile with a narrow wooden step. Go 30 yards up a bank to a wooden door in the wall and come out on to the drive to Roystone Grange Farm. Go right to examine a once handsome building and look at the sign giving details of the archaeological work done in the area: Roman and Mediaeval remains have been found. Return to the farm drive and gate, and then down the good track for a mile, passing through the works at Ballidon and coming to Cow Close Farm on the left. Continue on the track for 150 yards to a concrete path that goes left to a small Church; the widows show it to be older than first thought. This is Ballidon Parish Church standing isolated in this field. It looks Victorian; in fact it was restored in 1882. It contains some Norman work (a chancel arch, N door now blocked up, and a W window); and a C.15 font with shields and tracery upside down.

One thinks of the vast quarry in Ballidon, but its history goes back further: there are earthworks and enclosures of a mediaeval village nearby. Blackstone Low had five inhumations and one cremation. Roystone Grange up the dale, which we passed earlier has a Bronze Age Barrow; it also contains an Anglo-Saxon secondary burial and there are others.

Go through the churchyard then into a field to climb steeply uphill slightly to the left to come to two gates; the stile is on the left of the left gate; through this then walk WNW in the next field, passing an isolated gritstone upright. Keep to the same direction to the top, then down the other side to a slot stile and out on to the road at (211545).

Cross the road then take the road that goes E to Brassington. In 800 yards, go left over a simple wooden bar stile into a field then walk N to Rainster Rocks at 219548. From the top of this interesting rocky outcrop, go SE for 200 yards to a wall on the left where there is a slot stile with wooden bars across, then walk uphill through rough ground to a slot stile at 224545. This brings you out on to a lane near to a ruined stone building. Turn left and walk the remaining few yards uphill to the end of the lane. On the right is a slot stile; take this then walk SE over ground pitted with small rocky outcrops to a limestone slot stile whose uprights are very solid; then down a bank to a sign and a limestone slot stile and so out on to a narrow road at 229542. Turn right; in 30 yards go left down a narrow jitty between houses down to a road; this is Brassington. Turn left, walk up past the church on the left. This spot has seen many travellers pass through it from ancient times. The Romans came here; mediaeval routes came through here; in Stuart times, the King's Highway came through Brassington placing burdens upon its inhabitants. In 1663, the Court Leet directed that "everie one everie yeare scowre their ditches adjoyneinge to the King's Highway before the first day of May or else forfeite 12d". The packhorse men passed through: a "Jagger Waye" is referred to in a document of 1592. When the turnpikes came to Derbyshire, one of the first sections to be completed, in 1738, was that from Shardlow to Brassington. Unfortunately, the Earl of Egmont travelling by private coach along this route from Derby to Brassington in 1744 found " all the road entirely bad". It took him 5 hours to cover the 16 miles, and was

forced to spend the night at Brassington. Others found the road near the village to be "monstrous hilly"; and the Brassington turnpike was still being mentioned in the Derbyshire Mercury in 1780. By 1817, it was virtually abandoned, so the Hulland Ward to Brassington end of the turnpike was officially "disturnpiked" in 1827 the reason beingthat "this road led to no City Town or Place of importance".
Long before the Romans came here, people lived around and about at Rainster rocks and the Ripley Caves; also at Hoe Grange quarry and Harboro Rocks. Brassington has preserved more than its share of old houses: the Tudor House dated 1615 is one of several C.17 houses. There are others from the C.18 built in the vernacular style with square-section mullioned windows, e.g. West End Manor 1793. St. James is undoubtedly a Norman Church however unimpressive it may look today. It has a fine S arcade and asymmetrically one-stepped arches. The W tower is Norman. High up in its wall is a stone 12" by 10" carved with a quaint figure of a man with a hand on his heart. It could be the work of a Saxon sculptor. He is the oldest inhabitant of this historic village. Then in a few yards, go right down to a road junction at the Tudor House. Go left uphill for 20 yards then right through buildings to a stile in the right corner. Go diagonally through two narrow fields, then left steeply uphill with wall close on the left. Through a stile, then go right S with wall on the right (good views of Brassington); go through a slot stile in the wall in front, then curve slightly to the left over rough ground. At the top, go down to a farm gate with a slot stile on its left then into a lane. Cross the lane at 238539, go through a stile into a field then proceed to the right hand corner, over a stile, negotiate a muddy area then uphill past a rocky area on the right, through a broken wall, slightly angle left through another broken wall; a small round pond on the left, then go E first on flat ground then downhill (Carsington Reservoir in the distance) through a narrow cutting to a farm gate with a stile on its right. Over this stile (one of the most awkward in Derbyshire; one needs rubber legs) then walk down on a farm drive that goes in to Carsington at (251534).
Walk 1500 yards along the road through Carsington and Hopton passing; Carsington Church on the left; Hopton Hall on the right; the hall is Elizabethan but altered in the C.18.
This little village and Hopton Hall is the home of the Gells who have made a place for themselves in our history. Sir John Gell was a Parliamentary General in the Civil War; his doublet and relics were retained in the big house. Sir William Gell was a classical scholar; born in 1777; he travelled much in Italy and was a close friend of Byron, Moor and Sir Walter Scott. Sir Phillip Gell built the Via Gellia in 1791 as part of the Nottingham to Newhaven Turnpike. His main purpose was to allow him to connect his lead mines with his smelting-house and the canal at Cromford. From a dale that was not negotiable, he gave us a road of scenic beauty.. The Crinkle Crankle wall of Hopton Hall is on the right; the bee hive top of the ice cave is on the left; it was used to store ice for Hopton Hall all year around; if looking inside take care, it is a deep hole. Hopton Manor is on the right with a love poem etched on its window-pane. Go past the alms

houses on the left then the multi-corner house on the left, (it looks like a toll house) and so out on to the main road.
Go left on this (care needed - it is a fast road with no footpath), go past the road on the right to Callow, then just past Sycamore Farm on the left; go through a farm gate on the right (no stile) and walk through three fields with a hedge on the left, where stiles have been sadly neglected, to a facing gate, no stile; through this, then angle left then right through a poor stile at the left hand side of another farm gate and so into a lane. Turn left on this and walk uphill for 300 yards to the top where there is a seat on the right and a good step stile on the left.
Take the stile on the left and walk through a field going downhill NNE, past Yokefield Mine (disused) to a wooden slot stile in a hedge; go through the next field with a similar stile. Continue downhill where the hedge comes close on the left to a slot stile. In another 30 yards pass a stone building on the right where a single upright, well carved, tells of better days; and a jitty which takes you around new houses on to a road. Turn left on this, then walk through an estate. Take the second left, go uphill then first right to a path which goes through houses into Wirksworth. Walk N on the B.5023 for 50 yards or so, passing the Parish church behind the shops on your right. It was well restored by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1870, too well, perhaps; but we may still see some C.13 windows. The crossing tower is C.13 below and C.14 above; it has a quatrefoil frieze instead of battlements, and supports a lead-covered spirelet. A marvellous relic rests within the church: a sculptured coffin lid of C.8. There are many Norman architectural fragments in the wall: quaint faces and figures, shafts, mouldings, and a miner with his pick and bucket. There are some fine monuments, the best being that of Anthony Lowe, 1555, made in the new style. Ralph and Anthony Gell have a tomb here.
In the 19.C Moot Hall, with the miner's arms (his scales, pick and trough) carved on the front door, is kept the standard measure for lead ore, made it is said, in the time of Henry VIII. The Great Barmote Court is still held here twice a year, the oldest industrial court in the country. There are many old buildings of interest in this fine old town.
A little further downhill from the church stands a house on your left, where enough of it has been removed to reveal an old cruck, a wooden house frame.
Turn left: walk N past the market place underneath a walking bridge for 400 yards. In 30 yards, pass a road on the right, take a metal track to the right at an Infants School then pass the cemetery on the left. Go over the railway bridge to a farm gate with a stile on its right. Angle left on a good path until it takes you to a narrow fenced path that joins a lane to the right. Go uphill on this lane to Bolehill, passing the Bolehill Institute 1889 where can be seen one of the foundation stones laid by a F. G. Arkwright, Esq. JP.CC. of Willersley; surely a descendant of the great man. The name Bolehill originated as a name for lead smelting; it was done on a hill side so that the wind would fan the smelting flames. Go over cross roads steeply uphill past the Methodist Chapel which is built into the hillside, then angle left into a narrow jitty. Go up on to the road at 294550. Get your breath back then turn right; go uphill on the road for 100 yards; then turn left at a stile and sign. Climb uphill E through gorse bushes to a wall and stile; go over this

then walk through a field to a double stile (one for me and one for you?). Over these then angle left through the trees and heather to a trig point at the summit (294553). The view from here is a large vista. Carsington Reservoir can be seen, but also large quarries I am afraid. Leave the trig point in a N direction to proceed to a wooden fence on the left, then take the track to the right through trees to a cross roads. Go across in the N direction to meet a track facing you. Turn left on this then go to a wall with a stile which leads down steps to the High Peak Trail; notice the building to the right: it housed the engine which pulled the trains up the steep incline from Cromford Canal and High Peak Junction.

Turn left and walk 100 yards on the trail to a stile on the right. Go through this then walk E through two fields, with the wall of the trail on the right, to some trees. Go steeply down through the trees to a lane; turn left on this then walk down to a road and houses to the A.6 at 298569. Cross the road, go down a jitty, turn left on to a road and Arkwright's Mill facing you; turn right then walk 100 yards back to the canal and the start.

Checked 18 June 2003..