

## Introduction

The Peak District National Park is approximately thirty nine miles by twenty four miles, at its extremities. It has a great variety of scenery from vast moorlands to spectacular limestone dales and meadows. These two contrasting types of landscape are often referred to as the Dark Peak and White Peak. The underlying rock of the Dark Peak is gritstone, whilst the White Peak is limestone. The former is largely to the northern and eastern edges of the Peak District, whilst the latter forms the central and southern areas.

This guidebook includes both types of landscape, however the majority of the walks are in the White Peak. Although I have called the book 'Scenic Walks in the Peak District - central area', there are no formally recognised boundaries as to what constitutes the central, northern, eastern or southern areas of the Peak District. The area I have chosen to call the central area is based on my preference, rather than geographical accuracy.

The area I have used for the thirty walks is approximately twelve by twelve miles. The northern boundary being the Longshaw Estate, the southern limit is the village of Elton, just to the south of Robin Hood's Stride. To the east the boundary is Birchen Edge to the east of Baslow, with the most westerly walk being in Chee Dale to the east of Buxton. Within this small area is an impressive variety of scenery. To the north is the moorland and steep-sided valleys of the Bretton Clough area. To the east is the almost unbroken line of gritstone of Froggatt Edge, Curbar Edge and Baslow Edge. In the central and western areas the limestone plateau is incised with the spectacular limestone dales of Monsal Dale, Lathkill Dale, and Chee Dale. The popular destinations of Chatsworth Park and Bakewell also lie within this compact but diverse area.

### Locations of the walks

Rather than the walks being dotted around more or less evenly, the routes cover what I consider to be the most scenic areas. Therefore in some cases the walks may adjoin each other and there are several walks where the routes partly overlap. For exam-

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ple, Walk 18 and Walk 20 both include Froggatt and Curbar Edges. As these gritstone edges give some of the best views in the Peak District, hopefully it won't be a hardship. Sometimes two or three walks start from the same spot, making it easier to combine a couple of walks in the same day.

## Starting Points

All the walks begin from a convenient parking area, either a car park, roadside parking or a lay-by. On pages 18 to 24, I have included detailed road maps and instructions to help you find the parking areas. I have given grid references to help locate the points. (Abbreviated to GR in the text). Information on reading grid references is given on OS Explorer maps. Where a walk starts from roadside parking in a village, it doesn't interfere with residents' parking. Several of the walks start from car parks run by the Peak District National Park Authority. For an annual permit ring 01629 816211 or email: [parking.permits@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:parking.permits@peakdistrict.gov.uk).

## Public Transport

Many of the walks are accessible by bus. There is a 'Peak District Bus Timetable' published in book form twice a year. Available from Tourist Information Centres. More public transport information is available at [www.peakdistrict.gov.uk](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk).

## The Walk Routes

All walks are circular and each walk has a route map with directions on the facing page. Some walks are better at certain times of the year, for example, the Edge walks are particularly good in August and September when the heather is flowering. Where this is the case I mention it in the 'Summary of the Walk' section. I have tried to keep road walking to an absolute minimum. Of course it is sometimes unavoidable when linking paths together. It is obvious from my maps where the route uses a road, as it is indicated in dots. Normally the road sections are in towns or villages, or on country lanes. Where a main road has to be used there is normally a pavement. Even quiet lanes can be dangerous, so take

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extra care on roads and at road crossings.

For each walk I have given an objective summary of the walk, and have included a heading - 'Disadvantages'. Even in the glorious Peak District the entire length of every walk cannot be perfect. For instance I have indicated if a walk has a lot of step-stiles, a rocky section, a steep climb or descent etc. This may be of help to you in deciding which walks to do.

## Stiles

Stiles are basically of two types; 'squeeze stiles' and 'step-stiles'. The names are self explanatory, the former are also called 'gap stiles'. In the 'directions' text, where a path includes a squeeze stile it will state 'go through a stile', where it is a step-stile it will be 'go over a stile'. Thankfully for dog owners and people with hip problems, there seems to be a shift away from step-stiles in favour of a gated opening or a gap stile.

## Rights of Way

The majority of the routes use public footpaths and public bridleways. Some routes use concessionary paths, this is where the landowner allows the public to use a route, without it being legally designated as a right of way. One such route in this book is the section following the River Wye, between the former Cressbrook and Litton mills. Some of the routes in Chatsworth Park also use concessionary paths.

An attractive feature of some of the walks is the use of so-called 'green lanes'. They are walled tracks winding alongside fields. In the walk directions if they are narrow, I tend to refer to them as walled tracks. If wide enough for a vehicle I call them green lanes.

Parts of several walks use paths on Open Access land. This is land where walkers have access to an area as designated in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Some walks use sections of the Monsal Trail, most of which runs along a disused rail line. (The Midland Line between London and Manchester, closed

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in 1968). Some paths don't fall into any of the above types. They are simply paths or tracks that are in free and general use.

Most path signage uses the standard colour-coded arrows; yellow for public footpaths, blue for public bridleways and white for concessionary paths.

## Distances

The distances given for the walks have been obtained by using a hand-held GPS navigation unit. They are given in miles, with kilometres in brackets. Distances have been rounded up or down to the nearest 1/4 mile.

## Walking Times

The times given for each walk are for guidance only. They allow time for short breaks and for enjoying the views etc. It is always better to err on the side of caution and allow yourself too much time rather than too little. As a guide, I consider that 2 1/2 - 3 miles per hour average walking speed, is about right. Of course everyone has their own idea of what is a comfortable walking speed. You will have to use judgement and adjust the times accordingly.

## Gradients

As is the case when measuring from a map, the distances do not take into account the extra distance walked by going up or down hills. A 30° slope adds an extra 15%, whilst for 45° it increases to 41% extra. However as the average angle of even the steepest slopes on the walks in this book is only about 30°, the extra distances aren't that significant.

## Elevation Profile Graphs

On pages 86 to 89, I have plotted gradient profiles for the walks. The y axis of the graphs are height in feet against miles. They are provided as a means of comparing the hills between walks. They are and are subject to slight errors. Don't be confused into thinking that the gradients of the plots represent the actual gradients of the hills. The scale means they appear far steeper than they are.

## Grading of the walks

It is always difficult to give walks a grading. There is no official system. I have attempted to grade the walks and have given them the following grades - Easy, Moderate and Difficult. The gradings are based only on the walks in this book. Therefore the walks graded as 'difficult' are only difficult compared to the other walks. The gradings are based mainly on the difficulty or otherwise of the paths and the steepness and number of hills. Of course the weather can play a part too, a walk that is easy in dry conditions may be more difficult in wet weather. It is far from scientific. The gradings are as follows:

- Easy - Good paths with little or no rocky or muddy sections. Only gentle hills with little ascent.
- Moderate - Generally good paths, but some rocky sections. One or two steep sections.
- Difficult - Significant sections of rocky paths. Several steep sections of significant ascent, or descent.

## Heights

The maximum height attained on each walk is given on the map page and obtained from the OS map. The figure for the total ascent is derived from the elevation profile graphs. It is intended for reference and as a comparison between walks only, as it may be subject to error.

## Refreshments

Where a café or pub is mentioned, this is not necessarily meant to be a recommendation of the establishment.

## Walking with dogs

Keep dogs under control at all times and on a lead near livestock. On moorland areas dogs should be on a lead at all times, as sheep are present all year round and dogs can cause disturbance to ground-nesting birds in the spring.

### The Route Directions

All the directions in this book have been compiled with great care. They have been double-checked by a group of friends who have walked all the routes and who have many years' experience of walking in the Peak District. However if any errors remain, they are entirely my responsibility.

The numbers on the map cross-reference with the corresponding numbered instructions on the page opposite. This helps you to keep track of where you are on the map at each of the numbered instructions. If you think you have gone wrong, it is best to retrace your steps until you regain a recognisable part of the correct route. The walk directions are on the facing page to the map, to save having to change pages on the walk. Any distances over 400 yards are normally given in fractions of a mile. The following conversion table may be useful as a guide -

100 yards - 91.5 metres

$\frac{1}{4}$  mile - 440 yards (402 metres)

$\frac{1}{3}$  mile - 582 yards (531 metres)

$\frac{1}{2}$  mile - 880 yards (805 metres)

$\frac{3}{4}$  mile - 1320 yards (1207 metres)

1 mile - 1760 yards (1609 metres) (1 km - 0.62 mile)

### The Maps

Each walk has a route map facing the walk directions page. See the key to symbols used on page 16. All maps have north pointing to the top of the page. The scale of each map is shown along the bottom edge. The heights are shown in feet and the contour lines are at 25 feet intervals. Whilst it is not essential to carry an Ordnance Survey map with you on the walks, it may help you if you go astray, (hopefully unlikely). It may also contribute to your enjoyment of the walk. All the walks fall within the OS. OL24 Explorer, The Peak District - White Peak Area (1:25,000). For an overview of the whole Peak District use the Touring Map 4, Peak District (1:63360).

### Safety on the hills

I would advise walkers to wear comfortable walking boots (or at least trail shoes). Even at the relatively low altitudes of the walks in this guide the weather can change quickly, at any time of year. Therefore take additional layers of clothing and waterproofs. In summer you may need a sunhat, suncream and insect repellent. An adequate amount of food and drink should also be carried. You may also wish to carry a sit-mat. A map, whistle and compass are also advisable. However so much of what people take and don't take is down to personal preferences and experience. Don't weigh yourself down.

### Mountain Rescue

Mountain rescue is co-ordinated by the police. If you need assistance dial 999. Be aware that you cannot rely on mobile phone reception in some areas of the Peak District.

### Changes over time

During the life of this book some of the instructions may be rendered incorrect by changes to gates or stiles, the removal or addition of walls and fences, house building etc. I hope to reprint the guide with updated information at intervals.

### Finally

The total mileage of the walks in this guide is 143 miles (230 kilometres). You could do them all in a couple of weeks, or a couple of years. However long it takes, I hope you enjoy them, as we have done in the planning of the book.