

Introducing the Midshires Way

The Midshires Way is a long distance foot path and bridleway linking the Ridgeway National Trail in the South with the Trans Pennine Trail in the North - a distance of some 225 miles. It provides opportunities for people wanting the challenge of several days walking or riding and will also be used as part of circular walks and rides.

The Countryside Commission, the East Midlands Regional Council for Sport and Recreation, County Councils and a Metropolitan Borough Council have jointly funded the Midshires Way to help improve the route and promote its use.

On the Way through Derbyshire

In Derbyshire the Midshires Way uses existing paths and tracks from Sawley near Long Eaton to Duffield, then linking with the High Peak Trail near Wirksworth. The Trail crosses the Peak National Park to Buxton. The Way follows paths and trails up the Goyt Valley towards New Mills and on via the Goyt Way to Stockport.

This leaflet forms part of a series for Derbyshire and is one of many for the Midshires Way as a whole. It describes the section from Duffield to Dowlow near Buxton. The section from Duffield to the High Peak Trail is a footpath route only, over most of its length. The High Peak Trail is a bridleway. Details of riding routes in Derbyshire can be obtained from the British Horse Society (telephone (0203) 696697).

Further Information

Planning & Highways Dept,
Derbyshire County Council,
Matlock,
Derbyshire,
DE4 3AG.
Tel: (0629) 580000 Ext 7190

or

Countryside Service,
Central Derbyshire Area,
Middleton Top Visitor
Centre,
Middleton-by-Wirksworth,
Derbyshire, DE4 4LS.
Tel: (0629) 823204.

What to Remember

This leaflet can be used as a map guide, although you may still find the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Pathfinders maps useful for planning shorter circular routes.

Enjoy your walk in the Derbyshire countryside by being well prepared:

- ◆ Wear wellies or boots even in summer
- ◆ Carry wet weather clothes, food and drink
- ◆ All farmland is somebody's livelihood, always stay on the footpath!

The financial assistance of the Countryside Commission and the East Midlands Council for Sport and Recreation towards this project is gratefully acknowledged.



Midshires Way

(Derbyshire Section Two)

DUFFIELD TO DOWLOW

Walking Route Only

~ 29 miles ~

through the historic landscape
of Central Derbyshire



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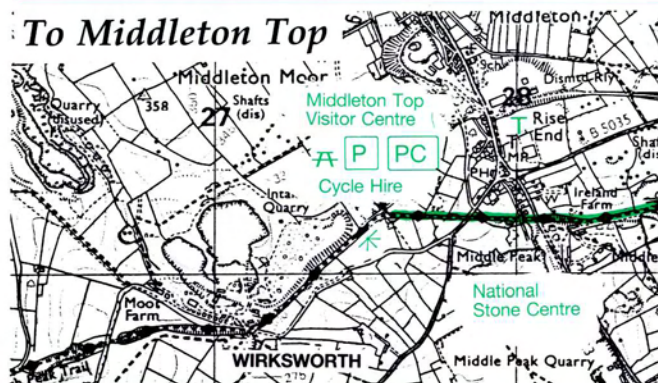
DERBYSHIRE
County Council
Caring for your Countryside

Sheep pasture incline to Middleton Top

From the top of the incline enjoy your last views of the Derwent Valley, northwards over Cromford towards Matlock Ribber Castle on the skyline the cable car at Matlock Bath Willersley Castle overlooking meadows at Cromford (built by Richard Arkwright, pioneer of the industrial revolution).

Look west to a limestone quarry, first of many that supply our need for roadstone, cement and lime. A little further on, Black Rocks looms above the Trail - a popular attraction, with beautiful woodland walks. Discover the 'Story of Stone' at the National Stone Centre, in old quarries overlooking historic Wirksworth.

At the top of the next incline is Middleton Top Visitor Centre, (and cycle hire), on the edge of the White Peak limestone area with dry stone walls, isolated farms and open views - bleak but beautiful.



How to use this leaflet

This leaflet includes a 1:25,000 map of the Midshires Way between Duffield and Dowlow near Buxton. Together with the 'double acorn' waymarks and arrows along the Way, it is designed to help you follow the route. Some features of interest are also included in the map and text. It will help your appreciation of the area to use the leaflet in association with Ordnance Survey Pathfinder Map No. 811 Belper and Outdoor Leisure No. 24 both at 1:25,000 scale.

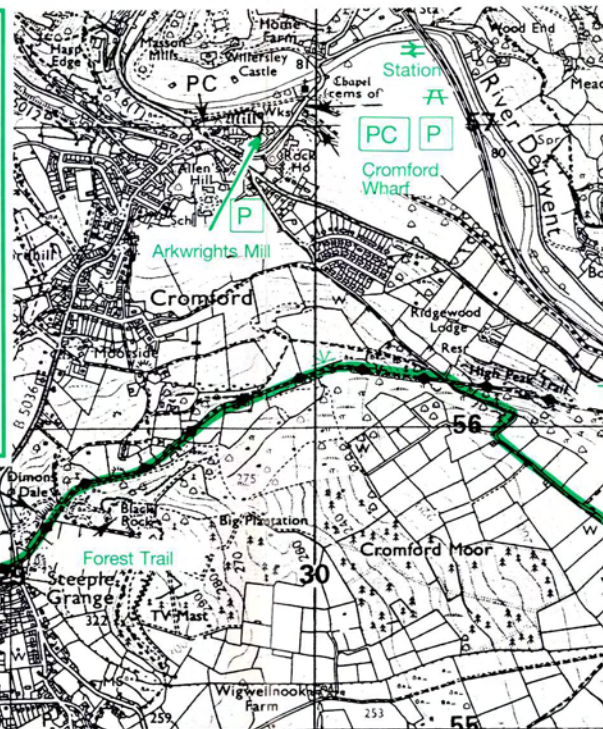


Ornamental Gate, Alderwasley

Middleton Top to Dowlow

Follow the High Peak Trail for 15 miles across the Peak National Park to Dowlow. Along the Way look out for: Longcliffe (short walk to Brassington); archaeological site at Mininglow; medieval Roystone Grange; Friden brickworks; and junction with Tissington Trail from Ashbourne.

Use the "Midshires Way - Derbyshire Section Three" leaflet from Dowlow to Buxton and beyond.



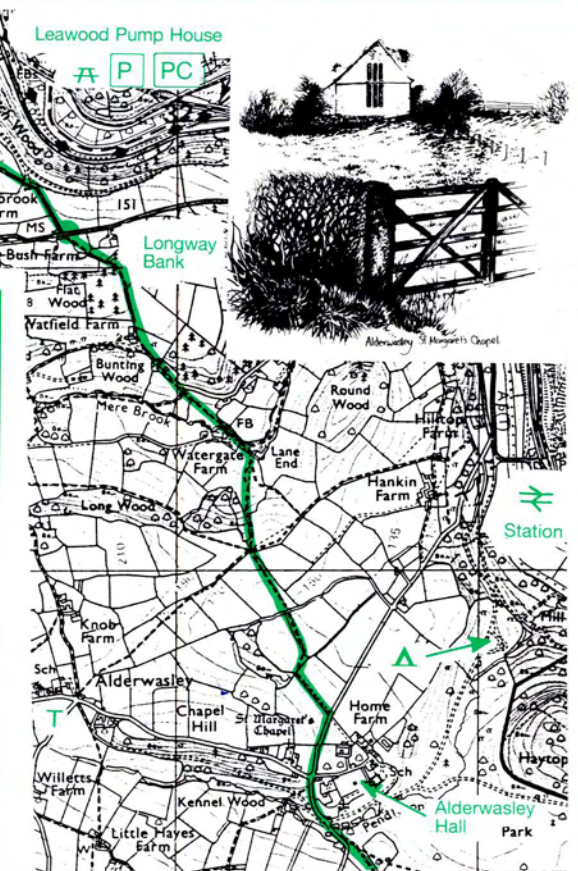
Longway Bank to Sheep Pasture incline

Cross Longway Bank road onto Intake Lane, once used by farmers to gather livestock. Follow it past a caravan site on the right. Turn right at the woods and then left down to meet the High Peak Trail at the archway. Turn left just before the arch to join the Trail. Turn left up a steep slope with a canopy of beautiful trees. The High Peak Trail was formerly the Cromford and High Peak Railway, designed like a canal, with level stretches and steep inclines like flights of locks. To find out more take a detour - turn right, downhill - to High Peak Junction Workshops and Visitor Centre.

From Sheep Pasture incline the Way follows the High Peak Trail for 17 miles. No more map reading but still plenty to look out for.

Alderwasley Park to Longway Bank

Walk down to the road in Alderwasley village, keeping Alderwasley Hall, now a school, on your right. At the road turn right, and straight on at a minor crossroads. After Home Farm (on your right) take the first track on your left, across fields. Follow waymarked field paths up the hill and enjoy good views across the Derwent Valley to the war memorial at Crich Stand. At the brow of the hill bear right through a gate and left down to Watergate Farm, a route once used by rag mill workers. Cross the stream on a walled footbridge. Bear left up the bank and across fields to a lane. Turn left, and bear right where a drive forks to the right, past the back of farm buildings and onto a path through plantation woodlands, then down through a paddock to Longway Bank road.



Scale 1:25,000



from Alderwasley
(continues from top of map overleaf)

Netherpark Farm to Alderwasley Park

Go straight across road and up a gated track into Shiningcliff Woods, long established and rich in wildlife. The track forks at an information cairn, turn left. At the next cairn go left through farm gate into the field and follow a field path, through an open birch woodland carpeted with bracken. Bear left onto the track through Alderwasley Park.



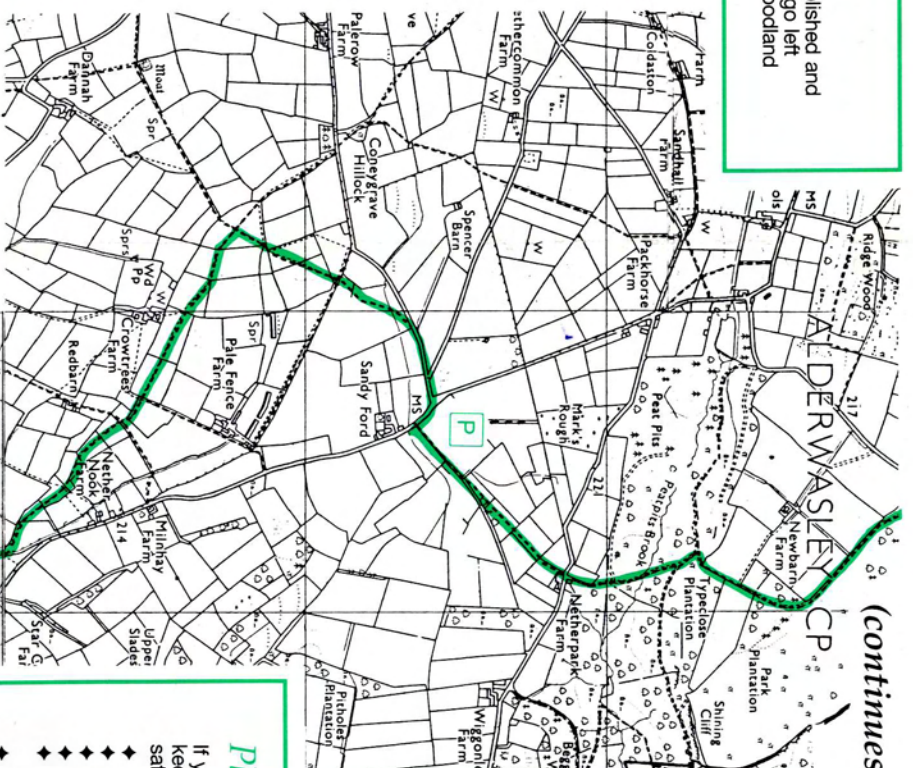
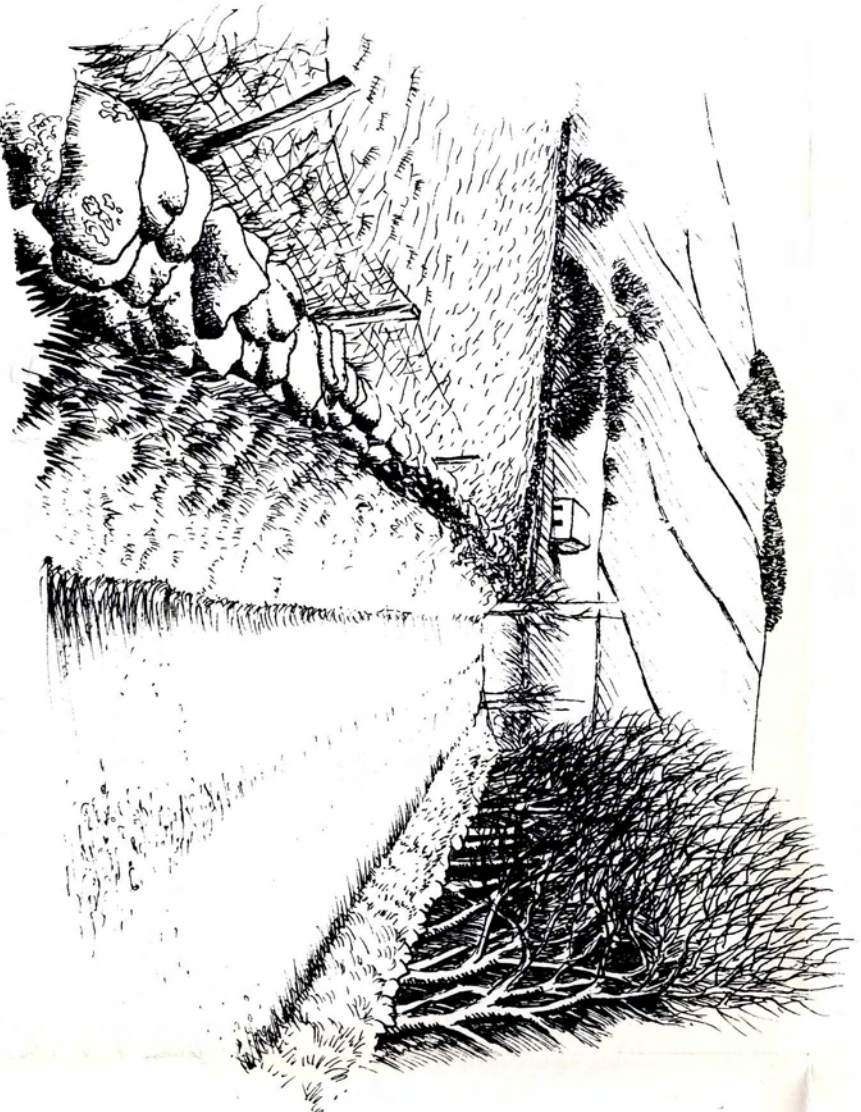
Blackbrook to Netherpark Farm

Turn right onto the main road and take the second left up Longwalls Lane - clearly signed with Midshires Way markers. Follow Longwalls Lane along the ridge, another mile of ancient trackway. Oak trees and wildflowers grow between the walls - typical of gritstone areas. Going north, the landscape becomes more rural, with less ponies and more sheep.

Longwalls Lane ends at a paved road on a sharp bend. Turn left downhill, and turn off right into fields just after the road crosses a narrow stream. Follow the grassy path across the fields from here. Look out for waymarkers and stone stiles ('knee trappers') from one field to the next. In Spring and summer, listen for skylarks calling and tractors making silage. Pass Crowtrees Farm on the left, with its old wind pump. Police aerials at Airport Heights are directly ahead here. Follow the waymarked field path to a lane, turn right and right again at the T-junction with a larger road.

Look out for a mile post in a lay-by on the left of the road, a relic of the Birmingham to Sheffield turnpike road. Just beyond the lay-by turn left into fields again, keeping a line of trees on the right, walk down through the farmyard of Netherpark Farm to a small road.

..... along ancient trackways



(continues onto bottom of Map overleaf to Alderwasley)

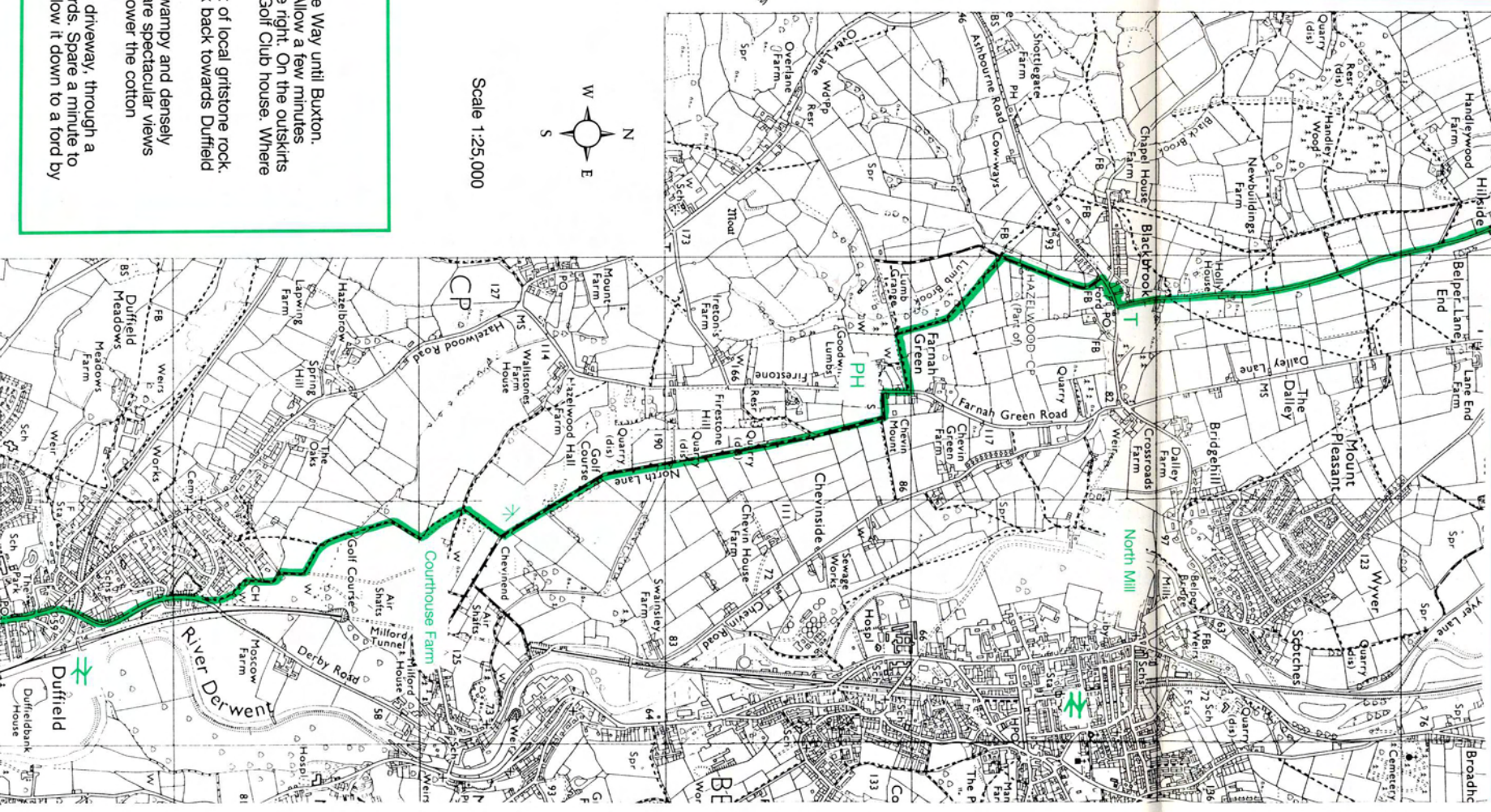
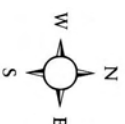
Please follow the Country Code
If you are a keen walker or just starting out please keep in mind the following guidelines aimed at safeguarding the countryside and its wildlife.

- ◆ GUARD AGAINST FIRE
- ◆ FASTEN GATES
- ◆ KEEP DOGS UNDER CONTROL
- ◆ KEEP TO PATHS
- ◆ AVOID DAMAGING FENCES, HEDGES AND WALLS
- ◆ RESPECT THE LIFE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE
- ◆ LEAVE NO LITTER
- ◆ SAFEGUARD WATER SUPPLIES
- ◆ PROTECT WILDLIFE, TREES AND PLANTS
- ◆ GO CAREFULLY ON COUNTRY ROADS

REMEMBER
ALL FARMLAND IS SOMEONE'S LIVELIHOOD.
PLEASE KEEP TO THE FOOTPATHS.

- Key**
- Midshires Way Route
 - PH Public House
 - P Parking
 - Beware of traffic
 - T Telephone
 - ☆ Viewpoint
 - Green Text Places of interest

Scale 1:25,000



Duffield to Blackbrook

From Duffield Post Office follow the main A6 road north. Take advantage of the shops - there are very few on the Way until Buxton. Duffield Castle, owned by the National Trust, is up a path to the left - it was a Norman fort with walls 15' thick. Allow a few minutes here. Duffield was the gateway to a Royal hunting forest and still has timber yards, one of which you pass on the right. On the outskirts of Duffield, leave the main road by turning left at Avenue Road and follow Golf Lane around the back of Chevin Golf Club house. Where the lane cuts across the golf course turn left into the fields and start to climb up a hill known as the Chevin.

Look out for Court House Farm on the right, where local assizes used to be held - one of many on the Way built of local gritstone rock. The Chevin is the most southerly of the gritstone ridges that fringe the Peak District. At the top of the climb, look back towards Duffield and the power stations on the Trent.

Turn left onto a walled track, North Lane, and follow it for a mile. This prehistoric route was used to avoid the swampy and densely forested valley. Saxons called it the Portway. It goes to an Iron Age fort, 40 miles north. From North Lane there are spectacular views over the Derwent valley. The view was changed by 18th century industrialists when they harnessed the river to power the cotton spinning mills. Strutt's red brick North Mill is still a landmark in Belper.

Stay on North Lane until you join the road at Farnah Green. Turn right onto the road, and after 100m left along a driveway, through a field and into a wood on the slope of 'Depth o' Lumb' - an ideal haunt for secretive woodland plants and songbirds. Spare a minute to relish it. Leaving the woods behind, cut across fields (and muddy paddock) to join Lumb Lane. Turn right and follow it down to a ford by the main road at Blackbrook.