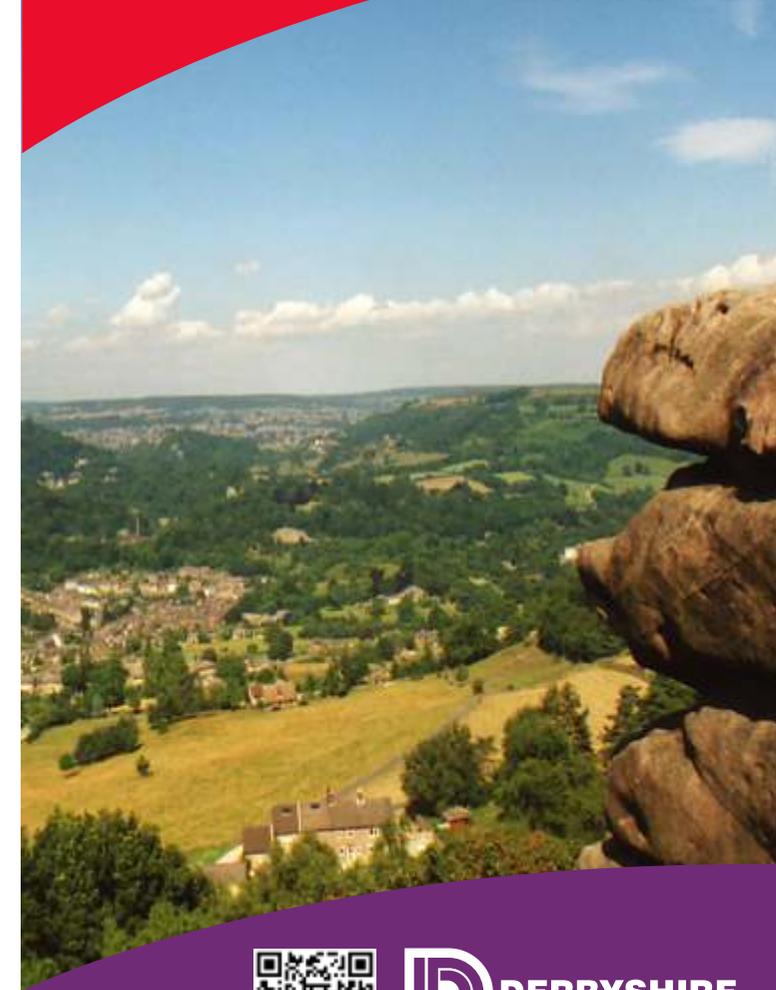


Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth

Black Rocks - Wirksworth - Black Rocks 5 miles

View from Black Rocks



Follow the Countryside Code

Respect, Protect, Enjoy!

Respect other people:

- consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths, unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment:

- leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors:

- plan ahead and be prepared
- follow advice and local signs

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code



Cycle Hire

Do you prefer to cycle rather than walk? Visit our Cycle Hire Centre at Middleton Top. The High Peak Trail offers 17.5 traffic-free miles of cycling through beautiful countryside, and connects with the Tissington Trail at Parsley Hay. www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/cycling/cycle_hire



Natural History of Black Rocks

Black Rocks is a weathered outcrop of Ashover gritstone. The site was mined for lead and the spoil on the scree slopes leading up to Black Rocks supports many interesting lead tolerant plants, such as Leadworts. Other habitats can be explored from here, since it is near the boundary between limestone and gritstone. Cromford Moor has heather moorland and various types of woodland. www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/countryside_sites/wildlife_amenity/black_rocks

Walking Around Wirksworth

With a fascinating history, and a maze of back streets to explore, Wirksworth is a thriving, vibrant and welcoming place to live and visit. There are plenty of cafés, coffee shops and pubs to help revive the weary walker.

The paths on this route may be rough and muddy at times, so be prepared and wear appropriate footwear. The route should be easy to follow, and is waymarked with "Circuit Walks around Wirksworth" discs. Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure Map No. 24 is recommended to enhance your walk.



How to Find Black Rocks

Black Rocks can be found just off the B5036 between Cromford and Wirksworth. Look out for the brown tourist signs. There is ample pay and display parking on site, as well as toilet facilities and a seasonal café.

Public Transport

For details on public transport in Derbyshire, visit: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport_roads/public_transport



More Information

If you need to find out more, please contact: **Middleton Top** on **01629 823204**, or **Call Derbyshire** on **01629 533190**.

For information on all our Countryside Sites go to: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside

If you have difficulty reading this leaflet, it can be made available in other formats. Contact **Call Derbyshire** on **01629 533190**.

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Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth Black Rocks to Wirksworth

3

This walk is one of a series of waymarked and easy to follow walks around Wirksworth and the surrounding area. Allow 2 to 3 hours.

1 The walk starts from the top car park at Black Rocks. There are toilet facilities here, and a café which is open during peak times. Go through the gate at the far end of the car park, and cross straight over the High Peak Trail. Take the track in front of you that curves up the hillside to the right signed Cromford Moor.

2 Keep to the right and head straight on uphill, keeping the impressive Black Rocks to your left. The rocks are a natural outcrop of gritstone, and have been a venue for climbers since the late 1800's. (If you are feeling energetic, a diversion to the top of the rocks is rewarded by magnificent views, but please be careful of the sheer drops.) Carry on up the remains of an old track. As it enters the Forestry Commission woodland, it curves round to the left to become a path. Where the path forks, follow the well-worn path, and you will find a wide set of steps cut into the hillside.

Go up the steps, and through a gate, taking your time to look over the fence to your right. Here you will see an old quarry, now overgrown with trees. Stone quarried here was used to make millstones. In fact, one or two can still be found on the quarry floor where they were abandoned.



From left: view from Black Rocks across Cromford, Middle Peak Quarry, Ecclesbourne Valley Railway at Wirksworth

At the top of the steps, take the path that follows the fence line leading off to the right. The path heads upwards, eventually leading to the trig point at the summit of Barrel Edge.

3 The views from the trig point are excellent. Looking out over Middle Peak Quarry, which you will walk through later, you can see Carsington Water in the distance.

From the trig point, continue along the well-defined path through the gate and along the edge, which soon begins the long descent into Wirksworth. Leave the woodland by climbing over a stile, and follow the path which goes diagonally left across a small field to another stile. As you cross the next field, stop and take in another magnificent view over the old town of Wirksworth before heading straight down the hill, following the waymarker posts, to Bolehill Road.

4 Take care! This stretch, and the steps near the bottom, become slippery in wet weather.

Go through the wicket gate at the bottom of the steps and, very carefully, cross the road. Then turn right down the hill for about 80 yards. A finger post directing you to Bolehill and Wirksworth will point you through a gap in a wall. Descend a few steps, and follow the path steeply downhill, passing to the right of a short row of terraced houses, continuing down until a wider lane is met. Keep on downhill, taking the obvious route passing the former Bolehill Methodist Chapel on your right.

Use the handrail if conditions are slippery underfoot.

5 At the crossroad junction, cross the road and go down the track opposite taking you past the red brick Bolehill Institute. Follow this track as it turns from tarmac to gravel and soon becomes a fenced path. Continue to follow the path as it curves to the left past some converted farm buildings on the right until it finally emerges into fields. Follow the path, which is now well defined and well surfaced, across the fields and through a couple of gates. Soon you will reach the bottom of a lane and a bridge over an old railway line.

6 Look to your left and you will see the bustling sidings of Wirksworth Station on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.

Into Wirksworth Town

A short walk over the bridge and up the lane will take you past Wirksworth Infant School and onto the main road. Take a sharp left turn here, and walk down North End. Head past the cemetery, the Northern Light Cinema and the Royal Oak Pub and turn right at Newton's Monument - the unusual lamp on the pedestal in the middle of the road.

7 (Turn left if you want to visit the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway Station.)

The town centre is now very close, with the old market place straight ahead of you. Spend some time exploring the old town, with its fascinating nooks and crannies before heading back to Black Rocks.

Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth Wirksworth to Black Rocks

3

Pictured from left: view down the High Peak Trail, Middle Peak Quarry and Carsington Water Reservoir, pit for the cable return wheel at the foot of the incline.



8 When you are ready to leave the town, head for the old Market Place (across the road from the Town Hall and Library), dominated by the imposing Georgian classical town house and its smaller Palladian neighbour. Follow the road that squeezes between the houses and a small row of shops onto Dale End. Greenhill heads straight up the hill, and The Dale heads off to the left. The area between the two is a maze of narrow alleyways and ginnels with part of it known as the Puzzle Gardens. Both roads meet at the top of the hill.

Follow the road up The Dale (or Greenhill if you want a steeper climb, with the option of a walk through Stoney Wood) until all the houses are left behind. If you follow Greenhill, stop and marvel at the Star Disc, a large artwork depicting the night sky, when you reach the very top of Stoney Wood. Where the two roads finally converge, look for a set of steps and a kissing gate directly in front of you, and follow the footpath into the quarry.

9 This restored path takes you through the currently inactive Middle Peak Quarry. Although the quarry itself is fenced off and out of bounds, you can marvel at the scale of the workings, and try to guess how many tons of stone were extracted. Disused quarries such as this can be havens for wildlife, as they are relatively undisturbed and soon reclaimed by nature.

At the end of the quarry section, turn right through a kissing gate and head across the field, following the well-trodden path to an old stone squeeze stile in a tumbledown wall.

10 Stop and turn around as you will have an excellent view down the valley towards the radio masts at Alport Heights. From here go diagonally across two more fields up to a road.

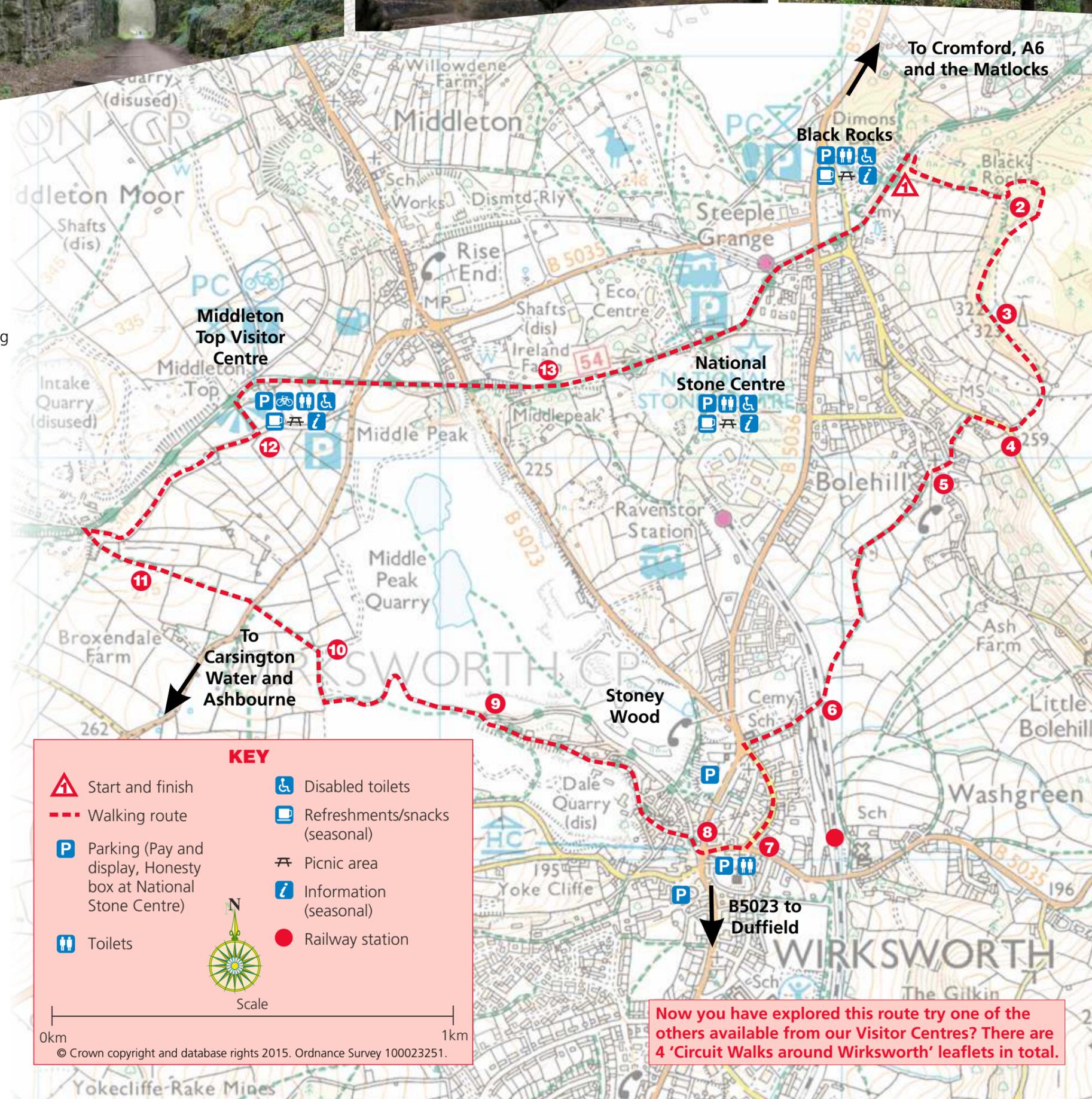
This road can be busy, and the traffic fast moving, so cross with care to the squeeze stile opposite. Go straight ahead over the fields, through a wicket gate and over another tumbledown wall, until you reach a field scarred by the characteristic humps and hollows **11** of T'owd Man - the old Derbyshire lead miner who would have once worked these hills. Keeping this disturbed ground to your left, carry on ahead to the remains of a stone stile.

The final wicket gate of the walk lies straight ahead of you. Go through this, up the steps and up a short slope to an unsurfaced track. Turn right and follow the track until it meets a surfaced road. Here you turn left for Middleton Top. This is an excellent place to stop awhile, especially if the Visitor Centre and Engine House are open.

12 The last part of the walk takes you along the High Peak Trail, following the line of the old Cromford and High Peak Railway. One of Britain's earliest industrial railways, it connected the Cromford Canal at High Peak Junction with the Peak Forest Canal at Whaley Bridge.

The Engine House at Middleton Top contains the only surviving example of the mighty Beam Engines that raised and lowered wagons up and down the incline. You must walk down the incline, which is 708 yards long with a gradient of 1 in 8 1/2. Imagine waggons passing up and down this hill at a sedate eight miles per hour - unless they were runaways heading to a spectacular doom at the bottom. At the foot of the incline you will find **13** the cable return wheel, lying in its pit, which last turned in 1963 when this section closed.

Pass on above the National Stone Centre - a great place to explore. Around the bend on your left is Steeple Grange Light Railway - well worth a ride when it's open. From here follow the trail straight ahead. There are excellent views to the north and east, including the imposing mass of Black Rocks towering above your finishing point.



Now you have explored this route try one of the others available from our Visitor Centres? There are 4 'Circuit Walks around Wirksworth' leaflets in total.