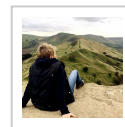


Stoney Middleton Walk

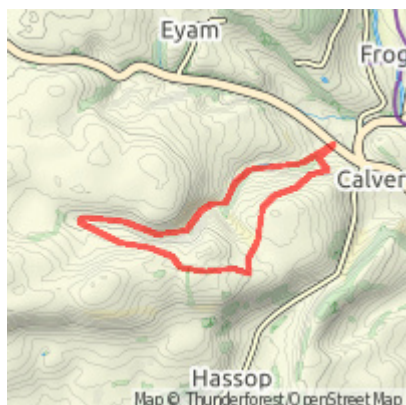
Let's Go Peak District II



Route Summary

This lovely circular walk takes you into a hidden, secret valley, Coombs Dale, a place where you're almost guaranteed peace and quiet. It follows well-made paths to Black Harry Gate, once the hunting ground of a notorious highwayman, before returning along field paths to the starting point.

Route Overview



Category: Walking

Length: 7.520 km / 4.70 mi

Last Modified: 26th July 2019

Difficulty: Medium

Rating: Unrated

Surface: Undefined

Date Published: 26th July 2019

Description

Stoney Middleton to Black Harry Gate via Coombs Dale Walk (4.75 miles)

Details

Distance: 4.75 miles

Time: 2 hours

Terrain: Grassy footpaths and country lanes

Accessibility: Easy - gates, no stiles or squeeze stiles, some uneven terrain on field paths

Start and end grid reference: SK 23566

Downloads:

Introduction

This lovely circular walk takes you into a hidden, secret valley, Coombs Dale, one of the lesser known Peak District dales, and a place where you're almost guaranteed peace and quiet. It follows well-made paths to Black Harry Gate, once the hunting ground of a notorious highwayman, before returning along country lanes and field paths to the starting point.

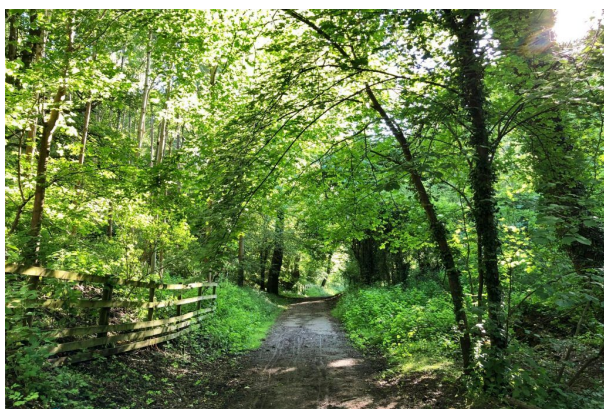
This is a walk of 4.75 miles. The paths are well-made for the most part, although there is some uneven terrain in places. There are no terribly steep ascents, although there are steps down in one area. There are no stiles or squeeze stiles.

The walk starts and ends in the lovely village of Stoney Middleton, which has a good fish and chip shop and a great pub. There is free public car parking at the start of the walk. Allow 2-3 hours to complete this walk at a moderate pace, more if you allow for rest stops.

A there-and-back wheelchair-accessible alternative to this walk is available, following the trail into Coombs Dale as far as Black Harry Gate and back.

The Walk

1. Park in the small car park next to the football field and children's playground on the approach to Stoney Middleton (SK 23566, S32 4TB), accessible off the A623. The route starts on the concessionary bridleway, signposted to Black Harry Gate, that runs to the left hand side of the playground.



2. Follow this well-made trail for approx. 2 miles, ignoring all footpaths off. The trail winds beneath shady ash trees, at times alongside a stream, and eventually emerges into the beautiful limestone valley of Coombs Dale.



Coombs Dale covers an area of more than 230 acres. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), recognised for its nationally important wildlife habits. Look out for a variety of wildflowers, including rare lizard orchids, as well as endangered butterflies.

3. Continuing on the path through Coombs Dale, you will eventually reach an obvious crossroads of bridleways at Black Harry Gate. This is where the path meets Black Harry Lane, once an ancient packhorse route over the moors.

Black Harry was a notorious highwayman who attacked and robbed travellers in the early 18th Century on the old packhorse routes between Tideswell and Bakewell. After his eventual capture and arrest, Black Harry was hung and gibbeted on the Gallows Tree at nearby Wardlow Mires.

4. At the crossroads turn left through a metal gate. After approx. 50 metres turn left again through a further gate, again following the bridleway.

5. This path now leads you back the way you came in, but follows the track along the top of the dale, providing wonderful views across the surrounding landscape.



6. Where the bridleway eventually meets a small lane at a junction with a farm, turn left and follow the lane, ignoring footpaths off. This quiet lane tracks alongside woods. Look out for the Double Dyke on the right, an ancient boundary marker, now a scheduled monument.
7. After passing a farm on the left, look out for a gate in a wooden fence. Turn off the lane and go through this gate, heading down on field paths, passing the farm buildings on your left.
8. Go through a further gate just beyond the farm buildings and follow the path to an obvious fork in the path. Take the right hand fork, and follow the line of the fence around, keeping the fence on your left, ignoring paths off to the right. This path soon heads out into wide grassy fields, now with a stone wall on your right. The views back into Coombs Dale on your left are superb.



9. Follow this obvious path through a gate. The dry stone wall ends and you again follow the line of a fence to your right. The grassy path eventually starts to drop down and tracks between two dry stone walls, narrowing and becoming rocky underfoot as it passes through arches of hawthorn trees. Again, there are wonderful views to your left and ahead.



10. Just before a wide metal gate, look out for a public footpath sign that goes off to the left. Follow the path across fields, heading for a small wooden gate in a fence directly ahead. Go through the gate and follow the steps beyond, down through pretty woodland.



11. This path eventually rejoins the bridleway that you started on. Turn right on to the bridleway to retrace your steps back to Stoney Middleton and the car park on your left.

Waypoints

