

As the lead mines became exhausted, quarrying became the main industry of the town. For over a hundred years stone was extracted, almost up to the centre of the town. Today, most of the quarries have closed but are being used in imaginative ways, for example the National Stone Centre and Stoney Wood.

The area around the Parish Church of St. Mary's is well worth exploring, with the Elizabethan Gell Almshouses and the former grammar school perfectly complementing the ancient church.

As well as many historic buildings, Wirksworth also boasts two famous ancient traditions. Spring Bank Holiday sees the town bedecked by well dressings - the art of constructing beautiful floral designs on a clay base. In September the ceremony of 'clipping' is performed by the parishioners who link hands and circle the church.

Nesting perfectly in a natural basin at the southern tip of the Derbyshire hills, Wirksworth is a small town with a rich history and proud inhabitants. Wirksworth was once one of the most important towns in Derbyshire, being the centre of the lead mining industry since at least Roman times. The Barmote Court, which still meets today in the Moot Hall, deals with lead mining matters as it has done since at least 1288 when, even then, it was described as being of great antiquity.

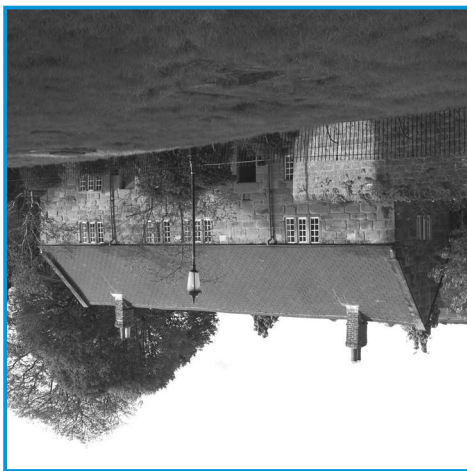


View over the town rooftops



Well dressings take place in May

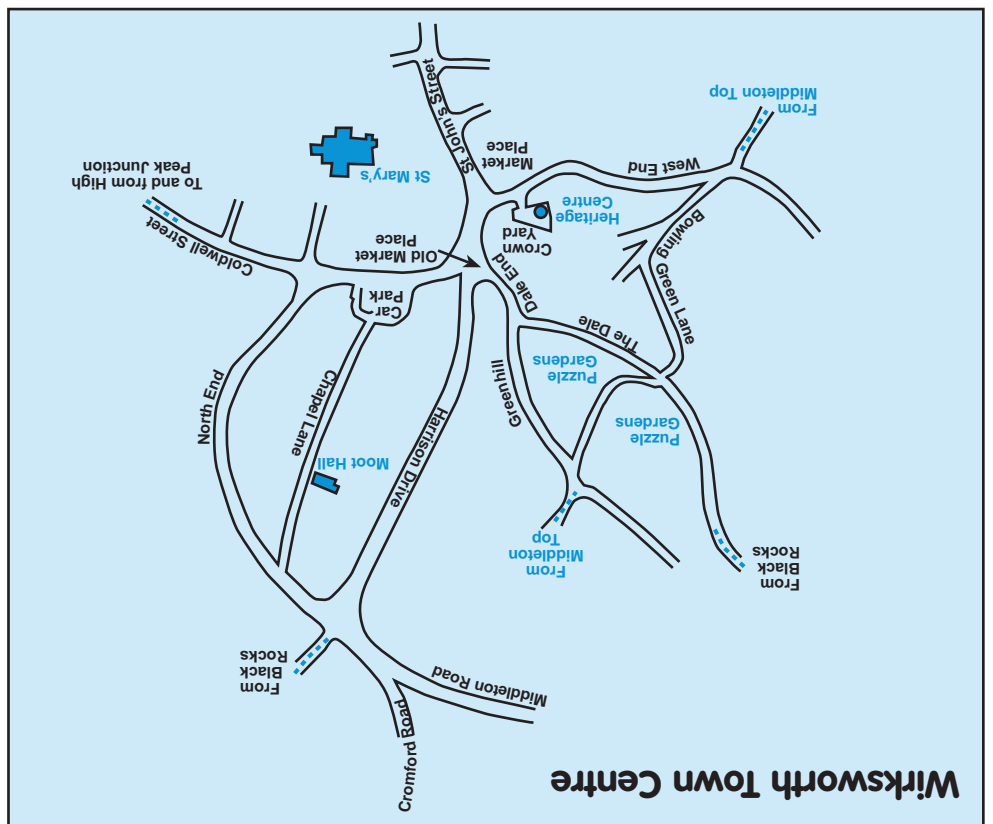
### A Short History of Wirksworth



Church of St. Mary's



Church of St. Mary's



### Walking around Wirksworth

The area around Wirksworth is criss-crossed by many little-known footpaths passing through some of the most beautiful countryside in Derbyshire. This series of four circular routes is designed to introduce the casual and experienced walker to the delights of both lovely countryside and the historic town of Wirksworth.

This walk from Middleton Top is about 7.25 kms (4.5 miles) long through gently rolling countryside with some magnificent views, including an excellent vista over Carsington Water.

The route should be easy to follow, but your enjoyment would be enhanced by carrying the Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure Map 24.

Whilst on the walk please remember to respect the countryside, wildlife and farmland. Stay on the footpaths, which have been waymarked in places to help you - look for a yellow arrow on a green disc bearing the legend 'Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth'. Keep all dogs on a lead.



Carsington Water

### Finding Out More

More information about this wonderful old town can be obtained from the Heritage Centre situated in Crown Yard just off the Market Place, phone 01629 825226.

### Any Problems?

Please report any problems with this walk by calling 01629 823204 or via our website [www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk)

### Follow the Countryside Code

- Enjoy the countryside, respect its life & work.
- Guard against all risk of fire.
- Leave all gates as you find them.
- Keep your dogs under close control.
- Keep to public paths across farmland.
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences & walls.
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.
- Take your litter home.
- Help to keep all water clean.
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- Take special care on country roads.
- Make no unnecessary noise.
- No cycling on public footpaths.

### Contacts

If you need to find out more please contact 01629 823204 (Middleton Top) or 01629 822831 (High Peak Junction), alternatively Call Derbyshire on 08456 058 058.

If you have difficulty in reading this leaflet it is available in other formats. Please contact us for more details.



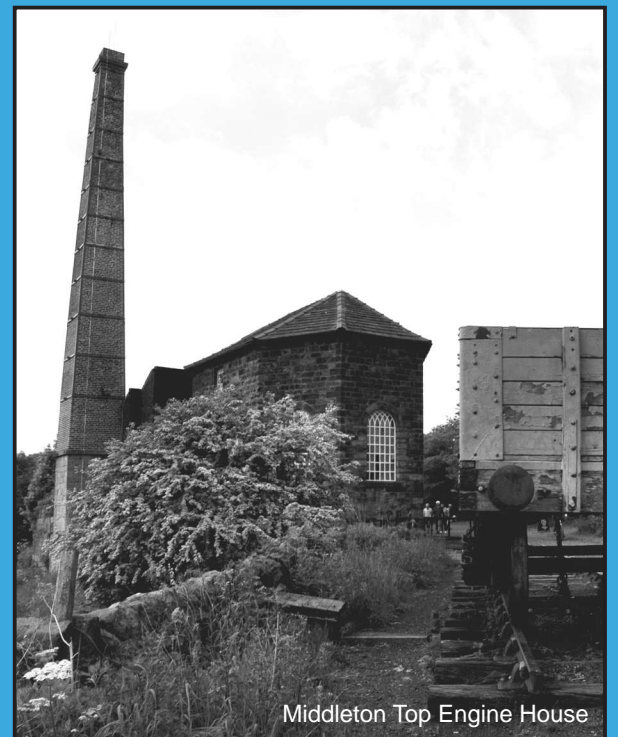
Designed and produced by Derbyshire County Council, Environmental Services Dept., Countryside Service, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG.

### Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth

1

### Middleton Top - Wirksworth - Middleton Top

7.25 km (4.5 miles)



Middleton Top Engine House



# Middleton Top - Wirksworth - Middleton Top

## From Middleton Top to Wirksworth

Start your walk on the High Peak Trail by heading away from the Visitor Centre and Engine House (if you go downhill you are going the wrong way!). At the first gate across the trail turn left on to an unsurfaced road and then immediately turn right down a public footpath stepping through some large rocks and follow the slope down to a set of steps.

Climb over the stile into the field and turn right. Follow the line of the fence, down the dip and up the other side, arriving at a ladder-type stile over the wall in the corner of the field. From here take the path which goes left to a stile by the gate leading onto a road.



Knee-trapper or Granny-stopper stile

Here you must turn right up the hill for about 70 metres before carefully crossing the road to climb through a stone 'granny-stopper' stile into a field (Locally these tight stone stiles are given wonderfully descriptive names - another is 'knee-trapper')

It is here that some Ordnance Survey maps are wrong for about 1 km, so please follow these instructions carefully. Go straight ahead across two fields (scarred by the humps and hollows created by the local lead miners centuries ago). Keep the stone wall to your left until you come to a wooden stile into the third field. The path now goes slightly downhill to a small stone stile in the fence opposite.

All along this walk you are rewarded with magnificent views - none more so than here with Carsington Water directly in front of you.

After pausing to enjoy the panorama head downhill towards the prominent waste heaps of T'owd Man (the affectionate local name for the lead miner). Keep the workings to your immediate left, follow their complete length and, as they start to curl away, look for an old gateway in front of you. This leads on to the old Tiermare Lane which was once the main road between Derby and Bakewell, now no longer any sort of public right of way at this point.

From the gateway turn left for a few metres and then right over a stile by another gateway and then keep straight ahead to a wooden ladder stile over a dry stone wall in the distance at the other side of the field. Carefully climb over this structure. The path now drops diagonally down the hill, to the right of a small clump of mature trees, to the road below.

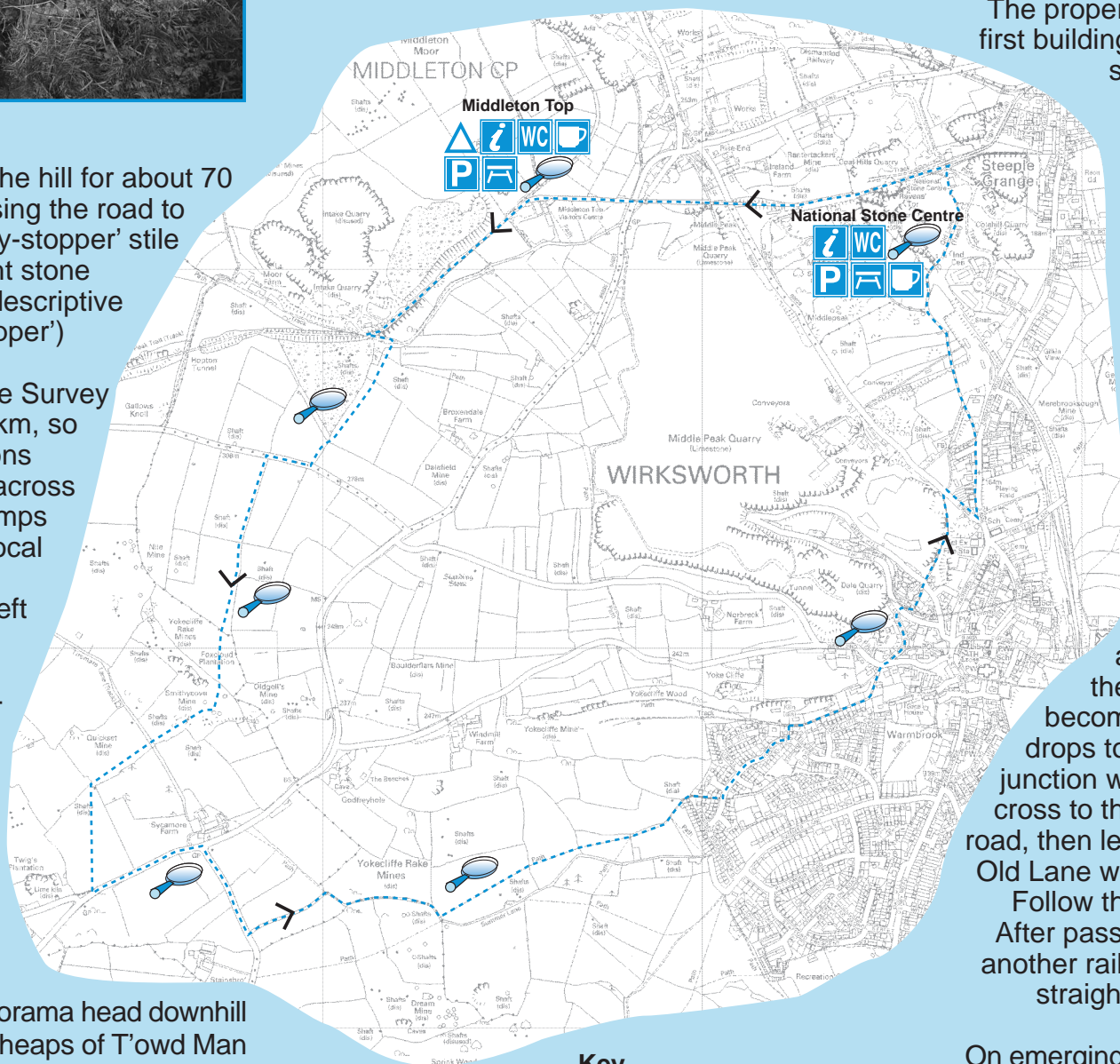
Once at the road, take extra care, turn left (signposted for Wirksworth) and go as far as the first junction where you must turn right (signposted Callow and Kirk Ireton).

Look here on the small island in the road at an unusual old mile post dated 1705. After walking about 180 metres on this road turn left onto a small track which is another section of Tiermare Lane, encountered earlier. Follow this track, as it gets narrower up the hill, to the summit. Just as the path descends climb over a stepover stile to your left opposite a seat. On a clear day the views from here are again superb with Wirksworth nestled in the dip before you.



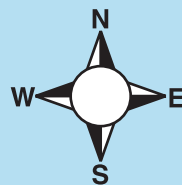
Milepost at Godfreyhole

Head down the hill following the path across four fields, the last stile being in the bottom left hand corner of the fourth field. The path now takes you to the left of the stone barn, soon joining a surfaced path running down the side of the houses on to a housing estate road.



- |  |                     |  |                      |
|--|---------------------|--|----------------------|
|  | Information         |  | Walk                 |
|  | Toilets             |  | Start/finish         |
|  | Refreshments/Snacks |  | Direction of walk    |
|  | Parking             |  | Features of interest |
|  | Picnic site         |  |                      |

Scale  
0 0.5mile 1km



Turn left here and head slightly downhill, ignoring 2 left turns. Continue until you are alongside some bungalows. At No. 34 turn left up a small alleyway between the bungalows which leads to a short flight of steps on to an old lane. Here you turn right (a short detour left will bring you to a fine example of an old lime kiln, once very numerous in the area) and follow this track to eventually arrive at a surfaced road. This is West End, Wirksworth.

## Into Wirksworth town

The old town now lies below you down the hill and it is worth your while to spend some time exploring the nooks and crannies of this fascinating place.



View over Wirksworth from Yokecliffe Rake area

## Returning to Middleton Top

When you are ready to leave the town go back up West End until you find Bowling Green Lane on your right. Follow this alleyway (or jitty or gynnel as they are known locally) ignoring all right turns as far as the next road, The Dale.

The property opposite, Nos. 31-33, was the first building to be renovated under the town scheme sponsored by Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust.

The path now goes to and behind Nos. 31-33 and rises steeply uphill. Again you must ignore any sidealleys and follow the main path until it levels off. Stop here to get your breath back and enjoy the view across the town. The large structure below you is Babington House, one of the oldest buildings in Wirksworth and once serving as the town's cottage hospital.

On now to the next road where you turn left for about 9 metres and right onto a surfaced path, to the left of The Croft, that eventually becomes grassy. Please beware of the drops to your right on this section. At the junction with the next, larger road carefully cross to the pavement. Turn right down the road, then left at the main road. Take a left up Old Lane which soon becomes a wide track. Follow this ignoring any paths leading off. After passing under the bridge (built for yet another railway incline) follow the main path straight ahead of you through the trees.

On emerging from the trees the National Stone Centre is above and in front of you. It is worth stopping here to visit the shop/ café and exhibition area telling the Story of Stone and its importance to all our lives. Trails over the site reveal the secret of how the rocks of the area evolved in tropical seas.



National Stone Centre

From the Centre go uphill and find the path to the right of the old stone arch. This leads directly to the High Peak Trail where you must turn left to return to MiddletonTop via the steep incline which soon looms in to view.