

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 designs on a clay base. In September the ceremony of 'clipping' is performed by the parishioners who link hands and circle the church.

Nestling 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 present here 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 rooftops



Market Place

## A Short History of Wirksworth

### 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 delight of both lovely countryside and the historic town of Wirksworth.

This all-day walk from Middleton Top is about 21 km (13 miles) long, although there is an option of halving this distance by not circumnavigating 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 words 'Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth'. However, the path around Carsington Water is waymarked with a yellow footprint. Keep all dogs on a lead.



Carsington Village

### 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.



Improving life for local people

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

### Circuit Walks Around Wirksworth

4

## Middleton Top - Carsington Water - Wirksworth - Middleton Top

21 or 8 km (13 or 5 miles)



Carsington Water Visitor Centre



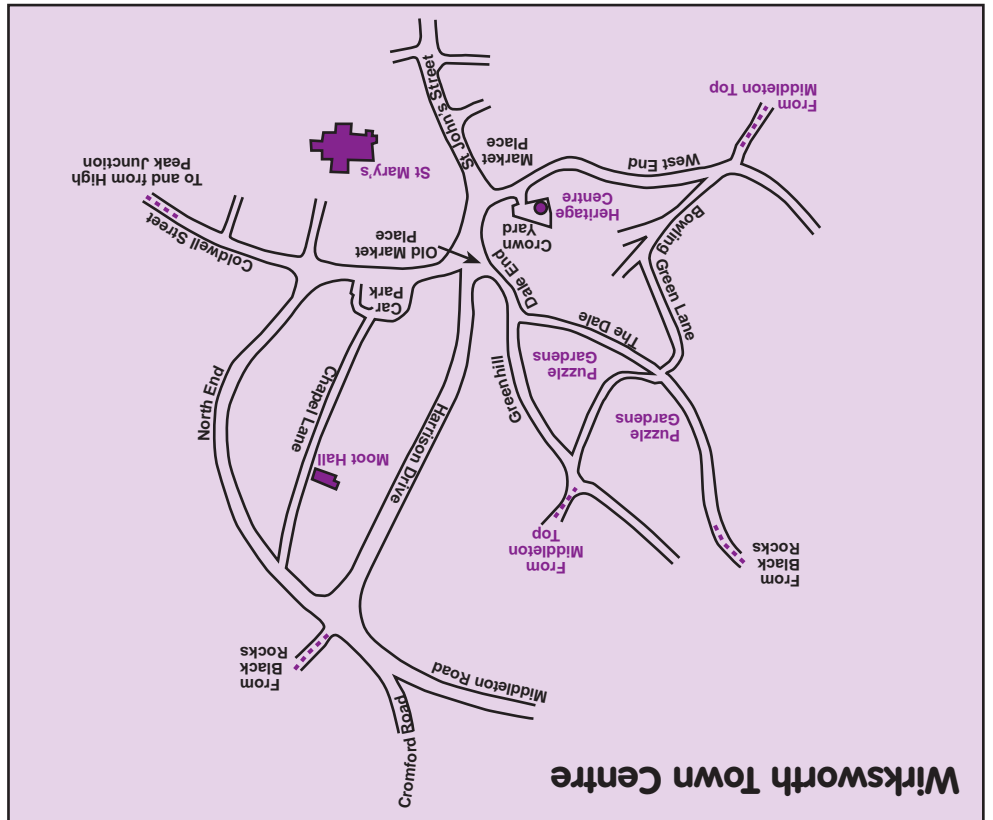
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Building in Church Yard



Church of St. Mary's



# Middleton Top - Carsington Water - Wirksworth - Middleton Top

## Middleton Top to Carsington Water

Start your walk on the High Peak Trail by heading westwards (left) away from the Visitor Centre, not downhill, and after crossing through the first pair of gates across the trail you will soon enter Hopton Tunnel (over 100 metres long). Out of the tunnel you will begin to climb Hopton Incline (435 metres long) which in parts was by far the steepest gradient worked by locomotives in the British Isles. At the top of the incline pass through another two gates on the trail, with a works service road between them, but don't go too far beyond the second, because it is at this point you leave the High Peak Trail at a signpost on your left marked to Carsington. Before you do, look ahead to your right to take in the view of Harboro' Rocks. At over 365 metres they will feature prominently on the skyline whilst you are walking on the eastern side of Carsington Water.

Cross over the main road and enter the field opposite, keep close to the stone wall on your left. This is Carsington Pasture and its pitted landscape shows evidence of past lead mining activity (Watch out for capped mine shafts).

Bear left at the head of the field, still keeping the wall close to you. You will soon have your first view of Carsington Water down below on your right. Keeping the wall to your left walk along the top of the pasture, passing a rock known as the King's Chair on your left, until you reach the woodland at the far end.

At this point turn right and head diagonally down the hillside making for the telegraph pole. From there go down to the right of the next pole, then to the left of the cottage below you at the bottom of the hillside.

Please be careful on this stretch. It is extremely steep and can be difficult in wet conditions. Pass through the wooden gate at the side of the cottage into what appears to be a private garden, but there is a public right of way. Turn left down the steps onto a metalled drive that brings you into Carsington village. Turning left onto the main road, you can now take refreshments at the Miners Arms.

## Carsington Village to Hopton

It is also at this point that, should you wish to take the shorter route, you can continue walking through Carsington and Hopton villages. If you do take this option, carry on through the two villages until you eventually pass Henmore Grange (farmhouse B&B) where you then turn right to follow Severn Trent's circular yellow waymarked route. This will take you across the Ashbourne road. Turning left and then right, you will arrive at a stile, **Point A** on the walk map.

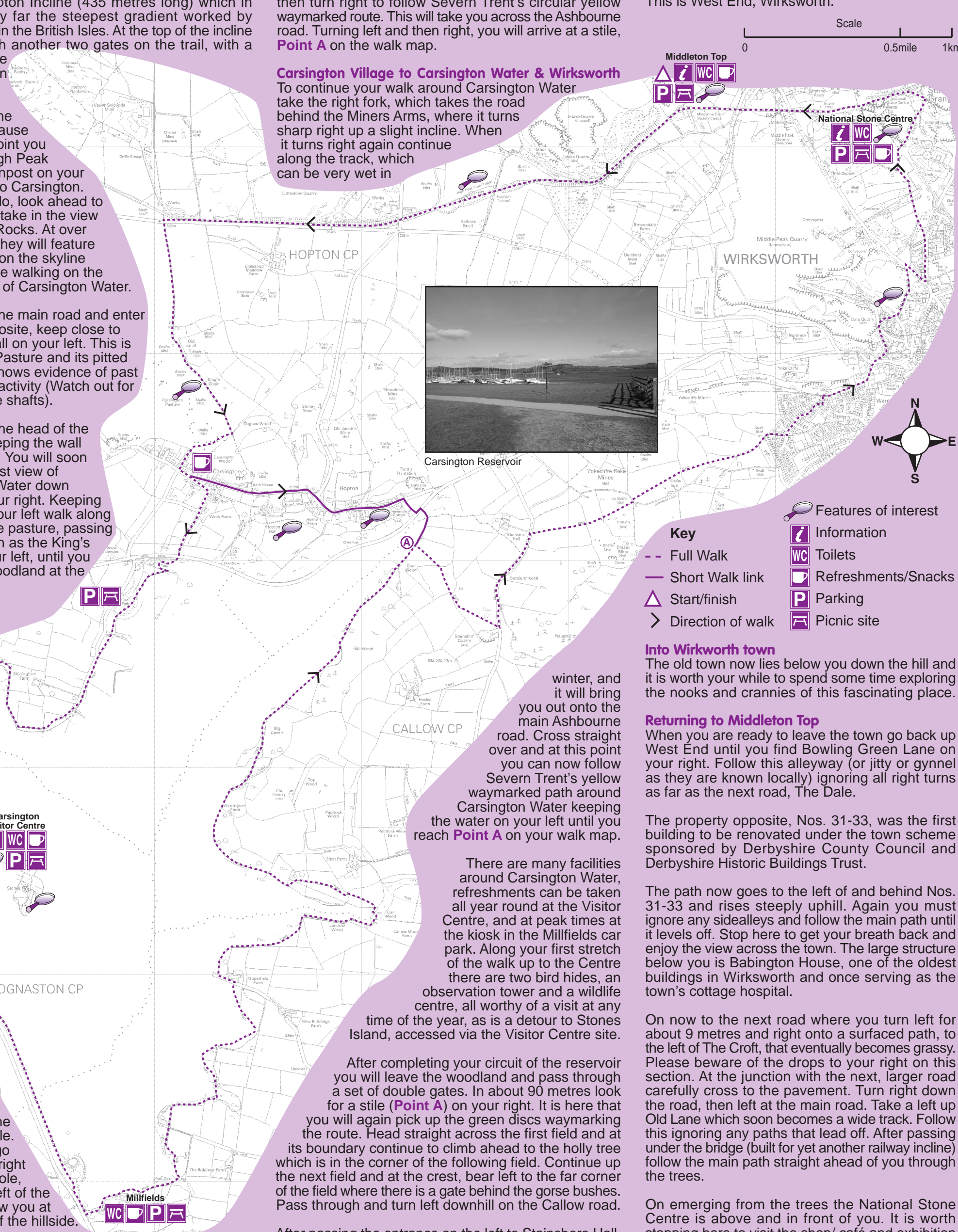
## Carsington Village to Carsington Water & Wirksworth

To continue your walk around Carsington Water take the right fork, which takes the road behind the Miners Arms, where it turns sharp right up a slight incline. When it turns right again continue along the track, which can be very wet in

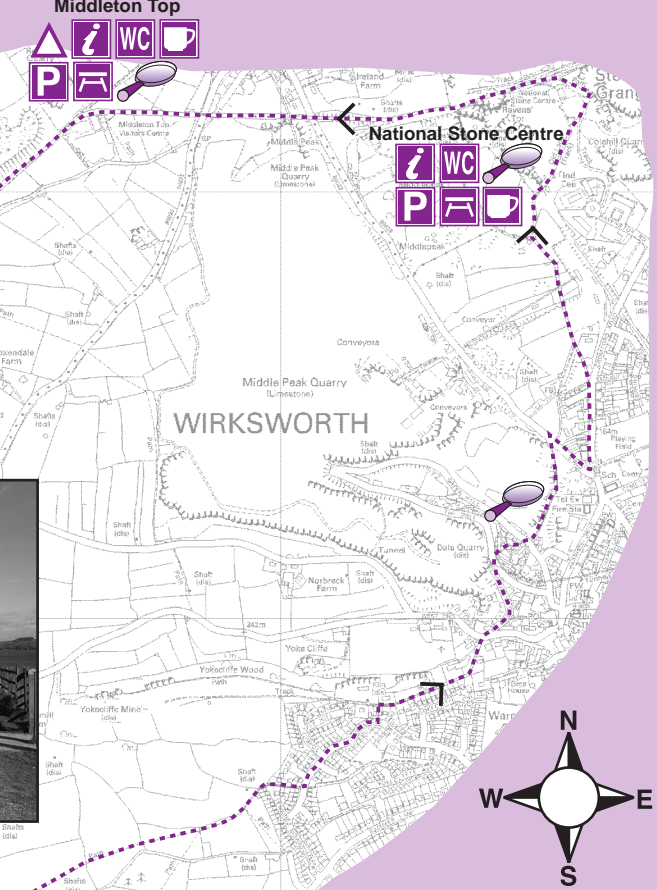


Carsington Reservoir

a footpath on to Yokecliffe Drive. 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.



Scale  
0 0.5mile 1km



- Key**
- Full Walk
  - Short Walk link
  - △ Start/finish
  - > Direction of walk
  - 🔍 Features of interest
  - 📄 Information
  - WC Toilets
  - ☕ Refreshments/Snacks
  - P Parking
  - A Picnic site

## 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.

## 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 the left of 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 that lead 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. 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 Middleton Top via the steep incline which soon looms in to view.

winter, and it will bring you out onto the main Ashbourne road. Cross straight over and at this point you can now follow Severn Trent's yellow waymarked path around Carsington Water keeping the water on your left until you reach **Point A** on your walk map.

There are many facilities around Carsington Water, refreshments can be taken all year round at the Visitor Centre, and at peak times at the kiosk in the Millfields car park. Along your first stretch of the walk up to the Centre there are two bird hides, an observation tower and a wildlife centre, all worthy of a visit at any time of the year, as is a detour to Stones Island, accessed via the Visitor Centre site.

After completing your circuit of the reservoir you will leave the woodland and pass through a set of double gates. In about 90 metres look for a stile (**Point A**) on your right. It is here that you will again pick up the green discs waymarking the route. Head straight across the first field and at its boundary continue to climb ahead to the holly tree which is in the corner of the following field. Continue up the next field and at the crest, bear left to the far corner of the field where there is a gate behind the gorse bushes. Pass through and turn left downhill on the Callow road.

After passing the entrance on the left to Stainsboro Hall, turn right on the track where there is a fingerpost and waymarker disc. Follow the track to the right as it gets narrower, ignoring a stile on the left. At the summit turn left over a stile opposite a wooden bench, entering a field from where you can get superb views of Wirksworth spread out below you. Head downhill through five fields passing more evidence of past lead mining activity. In the bottom field pass to the left of a stone barn to follow