



Hoe Grange Time Travellers Trail



Transport



Distance

12.5km
8 miles

Allow

4+hr
on foot

Difficulty



Trail Summary

Mostly easy going, largely following surfaced bridleways, farm tracks and minor roads. Two potentially rough and muddy sections, boots are a good idea. There are numerous farm gates – please leave gates and property as you find them.

Start and finish:

Minninglow car park, about 1 km (half a mile) south of Pikehall. OS White Peak Explorer. Map, OL 24. SK 195 582.

Access:

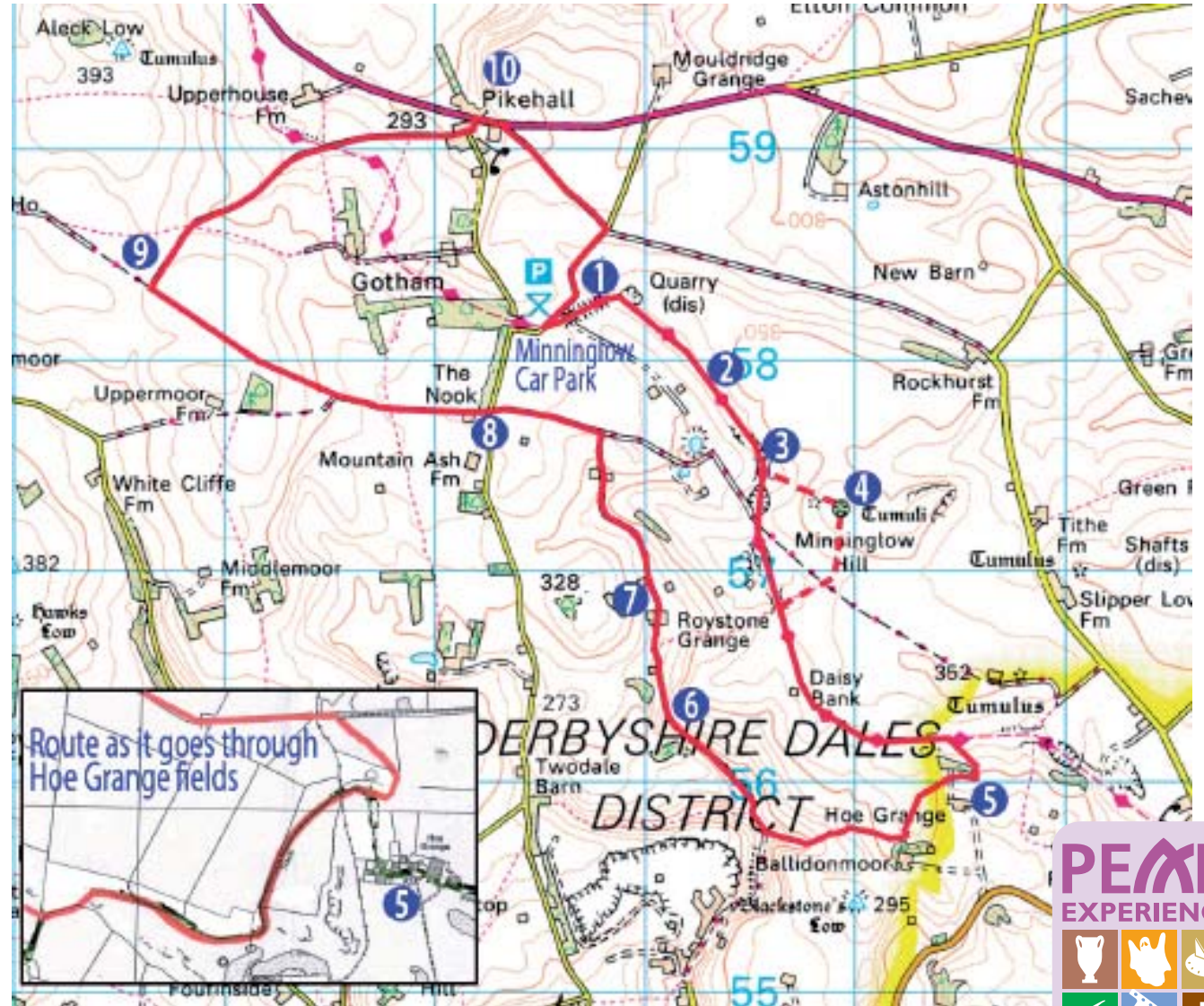
You need your own transport to get to this trail. Once here, there are farm stay B&Bs available and you can even bring your own horse to stay at Hoe Grange to enjoy the local bridleways. **By car:** Park at Minninglow car park. Pikehall is on the A5012 Cromford to Newhaven road.

Discover what archaeology can tell us about the history of the land. The route is steeped in history from Neolithic farmers to Victorian Railwaymen.



Part-funded by the European Union European Regional Development Fund

Meet the ancestors of Hoe Grange



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Hoe Grange Time Travellers Trail



Start: Minninglow Car Park

Meet the ancestors of Hoe Grange. Your route today is steeped in farming and industrial history. From Neolithic, Bronze Age and Romano-British farmers to medieval monks, Victorian railwaymen and modern-day farmers, they've all had a hand in creating the landscape you travel today.



Roystone Grange

Leave the car park at the opposite end to the woodland path. Cross the road and join the High Peak Trail/Pennine Bridleway, signed to Middleton Top.

1. Viewing prehistory

The hilltops you see for the first mile or so were once home or work sites for prehistoric farmers and hunters. Archaeologists found delicately worked flint tools here, where Neolithic and Bronze Age people dropped them.



Minninglow Neolithic tomb seen from the High Peak Trail

Keep going along the surfaced trail. Notice the built up embankments in the valley ahead.

2. High Peak Trail

Can you guess what this contraption used to be? (Toot toot!) The High Peak Cromford to Whaley Bridge rail line opened in 1831. Trains carried milk from local farms to the big dairies, and limestone, silica sands and bricks. Railway workers dreaded the steep inclines and notorious tight curves. It could take 16 hours to travel 33 miles. They latched on to stationary steam engines that hauled the carriages up on hawsers (pictured below). One winter it took over 300 men to clear snow off the line!



Continue along the trail.

3. Brick Kilns and Limekilns



Limekiln (top left corner of photo)

The quarry opened soon after the railway - as soon as stone could be taken for sale. Victorian quarry workers drilled out the limestone, and used narrow gauge trolleys to take it to the main rail line. The dolomite-rich limestone made good building stone. Most quarry workers farmed locally too.

Look for the Victorian limekiln below you to the left of the embankment (pictured above). Burnt lime fertilized the fields to improve pastures and agricultural yields.

The circular brick kiln with the brick floor on the other side of the trail also dates from the mid 1800s. Nearby Minninglow Farm boasts special silica-rich sands that are very resistant to heat. The



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heat-resistant bricks made ideal furnace linings for nearby Sheffield's many steelworks.



Brick Kiln

If you are on foot, you can take a detour to explore Minninglow Neolithic chambered tomb. Go left off the main trail, signed as a concession route to Minninglow.

If you are on a horse or bike, continue along the bridleway to point 5, pick up the trail directions when you reach the DCC High Peak Trail sign.

4. Minninglow Burial Barrow

Distinctive, flat-topped, Minninglow is visible from many of the major prehistoric sites in the Peak District. Take your time to explore the site.

Neolithic people created impressive chambered tombs to stake a claim to the land and honour their

ancestors.

When Victorian antiquarian Thomas Bateman excavated Minninglow in 1851, he discovered someone had been there before him. He found only a few pieces of ancient human bone, many recent animal bones and some Romano-British coins and pottery sherds.



More recent excavations have found skulls without bodies, perhaps Neolithic. At this time it was common to bring the bodies of dead ancestors to community celebrations.

To rejoin the bridleway either retrace your steps, or follow along the field wall under the barrow to a tall wooden waymarker. Turn right and cut down through the field to join a farm track. Turn right along this rutted track and follow it back to the High Peak Trail. Turn left on the trail.

Stop just after the **DCC High Peak Trail sign** at the Hoe Grange wooden gate on your right, and look down to the farm below.

5. Hoe Grange Farm

This beautifully located working dairy farm

offers accommodation for guests and your horses! Stabling and livery facilities complement the recently built eco-lodges. You can even arrange to use a hot tub under the stars. (Day visitors as well as staying guests can arrange this by phoning in advance.)

www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk

Cyclists should dismount for this section through farmland and all visitors should shut all the gates behind them. There will probably be cows grazing here.

Go through the Hoe Grange gate (marked private) and cut diagonally across the field heading for the bottom far left, skirting a clump of trees to your right. Turn right after the trees, through a metal field gate and join the pale stony farmtrack. Follow the track up hill passing through a few further gates. As the track peters out, you are facing vast Ballidon quarry.

The large fields on your right have been farmed for many generations and you can still see traces of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing marks when the grass is low. Medieval walls were removed one generation ago to create large fields for machine ploughing.

Follow the line of the wall to a clump of trees below you passing 2 ponds to your left. Curve round the trees towards the quarry to the bottom field wall. Follow the wall down to the bottom corner gate. Go left and follow the stony

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track down hill to join the Roystone Grange tarmac road. Turn right along the road, until you reach a chapel-like building on your left.

6. Medieval Grange and Pump House



The chapel-like building (pictured above) housed a large pump. An interpretation board on the pump house tells you more about how to discover traces of the old medieval farm in the lumps and bumps on the ground here. The farm was excavated by archaeologists from the University of Sheffield (pictured above right).

There's been a farm in this area for at least 1,000 years. The medieval Grange was owned by

Cistercian monks and farmed by members of the monastic order or tenant farmers, such as Rowland Babyngton in the 1530s. In the 1300s farming grew harsh. Wool prices dropped in Europe, there was a wave of bad summers



and the Black Death took so many lives that a heavy burden fell on those who remained. In some cases whole farmsteads or villages died.

Continue along the road and pass through the farm.

7. Romano-British Farmstead

Here landscape clues reveal a Romano-British farming community. These farmers were almost certainly local people living under the new Roman rule, not foreign invaders.

Archaeologists found remains of round-cornered, rectangular, aisled-houses dating from the 2nd century, including an impressive manor house about 20 x 12 metres. You can see this preserved as a terraced platform with short posts marking the original timber posts that supported the roof. They found a coin dated AD77 and imported red Samian pottery.

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In the 3rd to 4th centuries a smaller building was built over the manor. We don't know whether it had turf or limestone walls. By then, the luxury foreign goods were gone, replaced with cheap local imitations of fashionable pottery!

Excavations revealed Romano-British terraced fields on the hillside to your left. You can also see traces of lead mining on the opposite hillside (as hollows in the ground). Peak District lead was a great attraction to the Romans.

Continue along the road. Riders beware the cattle grid! There is a gate to the left of it. Minninglow barrow is now to your right. At the T-junction go left along the surfaced road. At the next junction there's a choice. Tired walkers could simply go right to return to Minninglow car park. To follow the route map, cross the tarmac road and continue on the bridleway signed to Biggin.

8. The Nook (farm on your left)

The 1841 Census mentions 3 families living at Cobbler's Nook near Gotham, all with the surname Richard. The eldest couple are farmers and, confusingly, two 30-year-old John Richards are listed separately as a wheelwright and farm labourer. Each is married and they have four children apiece – were they brothers with the same name?! A manservant and maidservant are

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the only non-Richards in a hamlet of 18 people.

Continue along the track. At a fork, turn right off the track, go through a metal gate or over the wall stile. Join the straight track to the hillcrest, where you pass woodland on your left. At the hill-top, pause and look back at Minninglow opposite.

9. Enclosure Movement Fields

The large high fields were enclosed for livestock pasture in the 1800s when common land was abolished. They are later than small valley-bottom fields.

At a three-way junction, go right, signed Green Lane. Cross over the cycle way to Gotham and go all the way to Pikehall.

To avoid the brief section of A-road at Pikehall, you could go right and return to Minninglow car park on the cycleway via Gotham.

10. Pikehall

This small hamlet is unusual for being split between several parishes. The community hosts two highly entertaining Harness Racing events each year (June and July), and a 3-day music festival.

For dates, see:
www.parwich.org/village/pikehall.

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The hamlet grew up around an ancient crossroads, where the Roman Buxton to Derby road (The Street) crossed the later turnpike road, the Via Gellia. Many of the village houses began life as coaching inns or pubs to serve travellers.

Turn right along the A-road, go past a farm and turn right up a wide farmtrack. Follow the track all the way to Mouldridge Lane country road. Turn right onto the road and it's a few hundred metres (uphill!) back to the car park where you started.

Credits.

Text: Georgia Litherland. **Photos:** Georgia Litherland, Bill Bevan, Felicity Brown, Bob Turner, Ray Manley (PDNPA) and PDNPA Cultural Heritage Team.

If you would like to stay at a guest house of B&B in this area please visit www.visitpeakdistrict.com for a list of accommodation.

Hoe Grange is a working farm where you can stay in one of their eco-lodges. They even have stables so that you can bring your horse and make the most of the area's network of bridleways. See www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk for details.

For more information about the archaeology of the area, especially the many different sites surveyed and excavated on Roystone Grange, visit www.peak-experience.org.uk. The Grange has its own walking trail available to download online which contains more details of the archaeological discoveries.

We hope you enjoyed your trip! Please tell your friends.

There are more Peak Experience self-guided trails for you to download at www.peak-experience.org.uk

Inspired by the landscape? Send us photos or stories from your walk to share with others on www.MyPeakExperience.org.uk. And if you or your children were inspired to create poetry, songs, paintings or drawings we'd love to see them too.