

Wildmoorstone Valley

· Enjoy splendid views from the old Cromford & High Peak Railway ·

About the walk

Step back in time as you take a stroll along part of the route of one of the earliest long-distance railway lines in Britain, or indeed, the world. The 33-mile Cromford & High Peak Railway was primarily a goods line, opened between 1830 and 1831, and operating with steam locomotives from 1833. Bear in mind that it was only in 1829 that Stephenson's famous Rocket had won the Rainhill Trials, ushering in the age of mechanised mass public transport on the world's first formal passenger railway—the Liverpool and Manchester—itself opened in 1830. Apart from a brief official passenger service between 1874 and 1877, the northern part of the line (part of which you'll be walking along) remained in use solely as a goods railway until about 1890, by which time it was abandoned (a new connection from Harpur Hill to Buxton effectively superseding this section of the line). Every section of the original line had closed by 1967.

The first part of the walk is an easy stroll along the old track bed, almost completely level, as far as the north portal of the now-closed Burbage Tunnel. There are glorious views down into the Wildmoorstone Valley from here, and ample grassy banks and benches from which to enjoy them. The return takes you down into the valley, covering steeper and rougher terrain than the old railway, but rewarding with a real back-of-beyond feel, despite being barely more than a mile from the outskirts of Buxton. You can of course return the same way that you came—along the old railway—and this makes for an accessible outing for those with limited mobility, or wheelchair users. If anything, the views are even better in this direction!

Need-to-know

- Free parking (no toilet facilities [but a public toilet is available at Bunsal Cobb car park, a few minutes' drive away]; no height restriction; no overnight parking or camping). Sadly, there's **NO PUBLIC TRANSPORT** to this location.
- 2 miles (3 kilometres) circular walk
- 1 to 1½ hours at a leisurely pace
- Very easy going along the old railway line (Stage 1), suitable for mobility impaired and wheelchair users. Return via Wildmoorstone Valley (Stage 2—optional) includes some steep ground (grassy slopes, occasionally rocky) both uphill and downhill, and short sections of very muddy/boggy ground if there's been recent heavy rain.
- No stiles

Getting there

Start and finish at Goyt's Lane Car Park (arrowed on the following map). The following may help if you use a satnav:

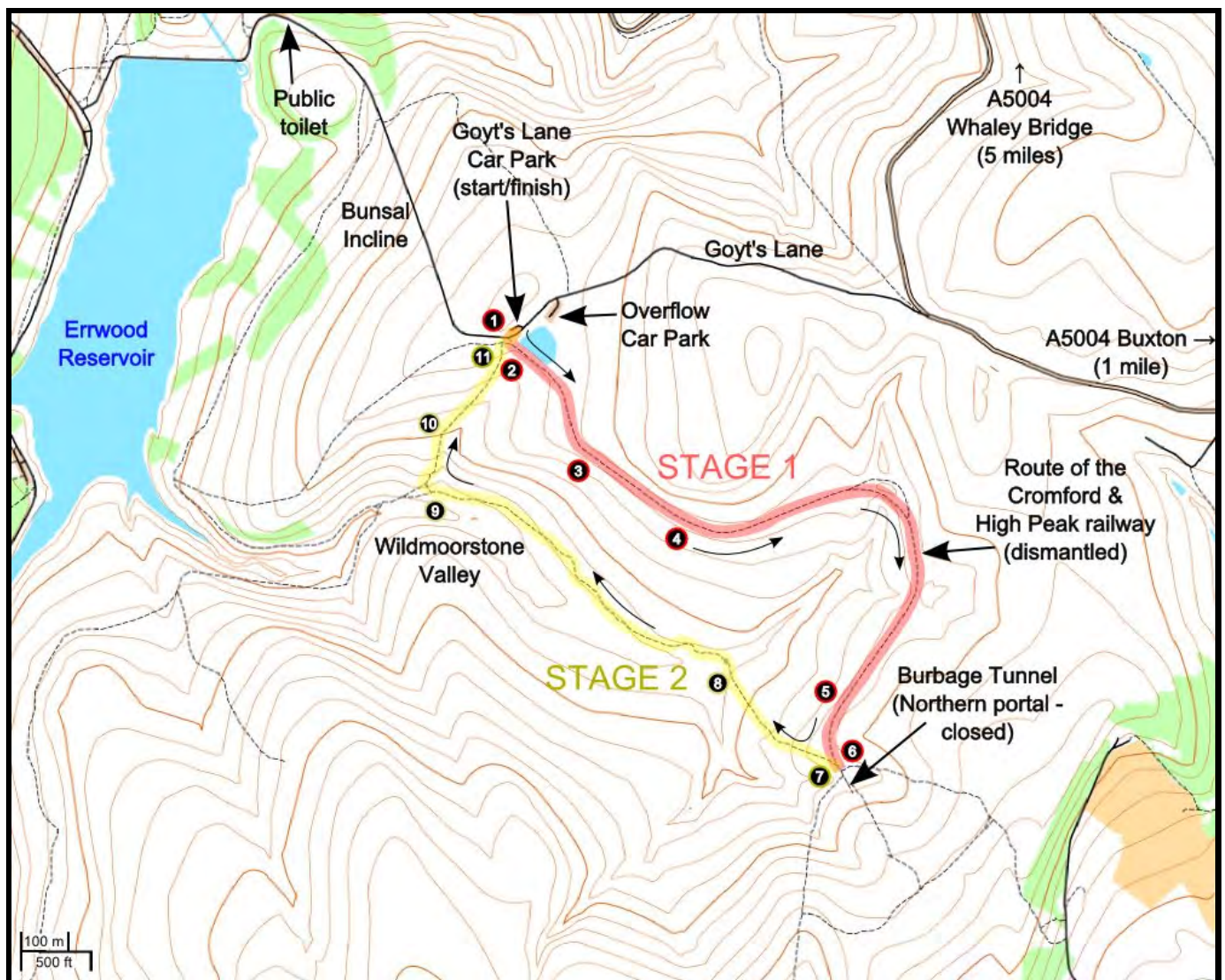
- nearby postcode: SK17 6GJ (this postcode is actually for the Errwood Sailing Club (private), which is 1 kilometre by road from Goyt's Lane Car Park. You should enter the latitude/longitude or Ordnance Survey grid reference figures into your satnav for a more precise location).
- Latitude, Longitude: 53.274, -1.967
- Ordnance Survey grid reference: SK 023 752

Map & directions

This simplified map provides guidance for the route described. The numbers refer to the numbered steps in the walk description. This map is not suitable for detailed navigation, for which you should use a copy of the relevant Ordnance Survey map.

The Ordnance Survey map covers a bigger area along with important information such as place names, official rights of way, and areas of Access Land.

For this walk, the ideal map is the Explorer Series Number OL24: The Peak District - White Peak Area (Buxton, Bakewell, Matlock & Dove Dale), which includes the whole area of the walk at 1:25 000 scale (4 centimetres to 1 kilometre).



Contour interval: 10 metres; index contours, 50 metres. North at top (approximate).

Map data © OpenStreetMap and available under the Open Database Licence. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright & database right 2014.

Base map generated by OpenOrienteeringMap (created by Oliver O'Brien). OpenOrienteering map is supported by British Orienteering.

Stage 1: Goyt's Lane Car Park to Burbage Tunnel

1.

There are two car parks at the starting point for this walk, just off Goyt's Lane. The one on the right-hand side (coming from the A5004) is more convenient, and provides level access to the start of the trail along the old railway, along with a couple of signed disabled parking bays. If this car park is full there's a second, larger car park, back towards the A5004 about 50 yards, and on the other side of the road.

To start the walk, go through or around the gates at the start of the trail where the minor road bends right, and bear left onto the old railway line.



2.

Start off along the old railway line—popular with local dog walkers—which stretches out ahead. Pass round the side of a metal barrier across the track after a hundred metres or so. The track surface is firm, level and even, so you can enjoy the extensive views out to your right as you go.



3.

There's a well sited bench about 400 metres from the start. Perhaps not far enough to warrant a sit down yet, but then again... if there's no hurry...



4.

About another 400 metres on from the bench, pass a lone tree on your left. The track then starts a long bend to the left, then loops back round to the right, over a high earth embankment. This was to avoid the railway losing height into the valley ahead.

You can see the track continuing on the other side of this small valley as you look ahead. Note that the track surface deteriorates somewhat as you proceed round the loop.



5.

About 1 kilometre from the lone tree, and having followed the track around the loop, you'll reach another straight section, and eventually a plank bench (pictured). By this stage, the track surface isn't quite as good as it was at the start by the road.



6.

Continue along the track, soon bending to the left, and within 200 metres you'll see that the track ends against the walled-off northern portal of the Burbage Tunnel. (You can go and take a look at the old tunnel entrance, but there's no way through here.) You should turn right off the track just before the tunnel—a fingerpost marks the way, signed to "Wildmoorstone Brook".

If you want to avoid the rougher ground and steep slopes that lie ahead if you continue via Wildmoorstone Brook, then you should return the way you came at this point, back along the old railway line.



Stage 2: Burbage Tunnel to Goyt's Lane Car Park

7.

Shortly after leaving the main track, continue along the grassy path ahead, and cross over a ruined stone wall. Shortly after the wall, the path descends steeply down a grassy slope (take care here if the grass is wet), before the gradient eases off a little, and the path bears to the right ahead.



8.

About 350 metres after leaving the main track, the grassy path you're on drops down to a short wooden bridge. Cross this, climb a short way up the steep slope on the other side, then continue to follow the path, which is now more earthy than grassy, and contours the hillside ahead. Note that the section of path close to the bridge can get very muddy after recent heavy rain—take care on these potentially muddy and steep sections.



9.

Continue to follow the path, which meanders up and down along the Wildmoorstone Valley (though with a general downward trend). There's one short section which can become very boggy after heavy rain, and you may need to divert to one side or other of the main path here, in order to keep your feet dry.



About 700 metres from the bridge, you'll reach a path junction with a fingerpost. Leave the main path here, and follow the smaller grassy track up to your right, signed to "Goyt's Lane".

10.

The grassy track rises quite steeply, and soon meets another track. Bear right onto this, and continue uphill, quite steeply in places, and over a short section of rocky ground. You'll soon rise above the small, deep-cut valley to your right (pictured, with tree), and continue climbing up across more open moorland.

**11.**

About 400 metres from where you left the main track in the valley, you'll reach a junction with a much larger track, close to the start of the old railway. There's a fingerpost here (signed "Wildmoorstone Brook" in the direction you've just come from).

Turn right here, and within a few strides, you're back at the start of the old railway, with the car park directly ahead, across the road.

