

Buxton Circular (via Axe Edge Moor and Three Shires Head)			Buxton Circular (via AEM and 3 Shires Head) – Short Walk		
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Buxton Circular (via Axe Edge Moor and Three Shires Head)

Start & Finish: Buxton Station

Buxton Station, map reference SK 059 737, is 22km southeast of Manchester, 299m above sea level and in **Derbyshire**.

Length: 27.1 km (16.8 mi).

Cumulative ascent/descent: 687m. For a shorter walk, see *below* **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 8 out of 10

Time: 7 hours walking time.

Transport: Buxton Station is the terminus of the Buxton Line from Manchester, with two trains per hour Mon-Sat daytime and one per hour else. Journey time is 60 mins from Manchester and ca. three hours from London (chg. at Stockport). A faster connection can be obtained by taking a train to Macclesfield and bus 58 to Buxton.

Saturday Walkers' Club: The walk is doable as a daywalk from London with a train no later than 07.20 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 119 (Buxton & Matlock)

OS Explorer Map: OL24 (The Peak District – White Peak Area)

Walk Notes:

You rise steeply out of the spa town of Buxton up the now wooded Grin Low, a formerly heavily quarried hill, with its hilltop folly, Solomon's Temple, and a viewing platform. Continue through pastures higher up to the vast upland Axe Edge Moor, source of five of the most famous Peak District rivers: the Wye, Dove, Manifold, Dane and Goyt. The tops of all those valleys will be visited. The moor crossings are largely along broad grassy or gravel paths, but not without one stretch with 'proper' moorland terrain: bouncy to boggy, at times ill defined, paths passing groughs, cloughs and peat hags. Various remnants of historic mining activities are passed, some quite picturesque. On a good day the moor provides for fantastic views into the surrounding valleys, to neighbouring ridges and quarries and into the Cheshire Plain.

From the top of the Dove Valley, you continue to the lunch stops at Flash Bar and in Flash, England's highest village, to continue down into the very scenic Upper Dane Valley. Follow a rough track around Turn Edge to the very popular Three Shires Head, the meeting of four former packhorse routes by Panniers Bridge, with several waterfalls and surrounded by high mountains at the meeting point of three County boundaries.

You ascend along the Blackclough tributary up to the base of Cheeks Hill and follow it around to some large disused quarries and a former colliery, where you cross the Dane to begin the long ascent between Dane Bower and Whetstone Ridge to the Cat & Fiddle Road, the watershed to the Upper Goyt Valley.

Cross the quiet moorland valley with long views out to Combs Moss, Kinder Scout and Bleaklow, along a former turnpike road from Macclesfield, now a rough track. One last minor ascent lies ahead, to the pass separating the Goyt from the Wye Valley, and the descent back into Buxton is all that's left to do.

Walk Options:

Buses at the start

- **Bus Line 58** (Buxton – Macclesfield via Cat & Fiddle), with an hourly service Monday-Saturday and five buses on Sundays and Bank Holidays stops at:
Ladmanlow, opposite Leek Road, a 340m uphill walk away from the route near the top of the initial ascent out of Buxton (cut 4.3 km and 118m ascent). Continue up Leek Road and in 300m Grin Low Road joins from the left; in another 30m you reach a bus stop for Line 16 on the left. Pick up the directions at the asterisk *) on page 6.
- **Bus Line 108** (Buxton, Market Place – Leek – Ashbourne, 2 buses per day Mon-Sat) stops at:
Leek Road, adjacent Grinlow Road, where the route crosses the A53 (cut 4.6 km and 143m ascent), pick up the directions at the asterisk *) on page 6;
Flash, adjacent Summerhill Lane, cut 10.2 km and 320m ascent.

See the route map for the location of the bus stops.

A Shortcut follows the Dane Valley Way around Cheeks Hill and down the very scenic-in-its-starkness Black Clough. This cuts out the middle section of the walk, i.e.: 5.7 km length and 172m ascent (**6/10**).

A Minor Shortcut would be to cut the 350m each-way out-and-back to the early lunch stop at Flash Bar.

An Extension descends steeply from Axe Edge End into the Dove Valley for a stretch along a tributary of the Dove and across the Dove itself. This adds 1.2 km and 125m ascent.

A Minor Extension would be to add an 320m each-way out-and-back to the picturesque Derbyshire Bridge.

Bus Line 58 (Macclesfield – Buxton via Cat & Fiddle), with an hourly service Monday-Saturday and five buses on Sundays and Bank Holidays, **offers several stops on the route to shorten the walk by finishing the route early.**

- **A – Cat & Fiddle PH**, 7.1 km from the end of the walk.
- **B – Burbage, Level Lane**, 3.0 km from the end of the walk: **Last bus:** 19.08 Mon-Fri, 18.11 Sat-Sun/BH (09/2022).
- **C – Burbage, Burbage Way or Christ Church**, just a few minutes of walking further than the Level Lane stop, but by a pub (The Duke). **Note:** Mon-Sat the bus stops to the right of the pub (as you approach it), at the Burbage Way stop, while on Sun/BH to the left of it (Christ Church stop)!

See the route map for the location of the bus stops.

Elenvenses/Lunch (details last updated 07/09/2022)

Flash Bar Café and Shop The Annexe, A53, *Quarnford Flash Bar, Staffordshire, SK17 0TF (01298 27804, <http://www.flashbarstores.co.uk/>)*. Flash Bar Café and Shop are located 10.5 km (6.5 mi) into the walk. Open 08.00-16.00 daily. Flash Bar takes its name from the toll bar and house built in 1771 which is still in existence today. It was in operation on the site of the then road from Macclesfield to Longnor via Three Shires Head.

The New Inn New Road, *Quarnford, Flash, Staffordshire, SK17 0SW (01298 22941)*. The New Inn is located 12.1 km (7.5 mi) into the walk and England's highest village pub (the Tan Hill Inn in North Yorkshire is not in a village). **Open evenings only at the moment.**

Tea (details last updated 07/09/2022)

The Cat & Fiddle Macclesfield Forest, *Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0AR (01260 253 245, <https://theforestdistillery.com/cat-fiddle/>)*. The Cat & Fiddle is located 7.1 km from the end of the walk. Bar open 12.00-17.00 daily. Hot drinks available for takeout only! Tables must be booked in advance Mon-Fri! Built in 1813, and long England's second highest pub, it closed in December 2015 with an uncertain future. Robinson's Brewery have recently sold it to the Forest Distillery though, who opened it as Britain's highest altitude distillery, with a bar attached.

The Duke 123 St John's Road, *Burbage, Buxton SK17 6UR (01298 78781, <https://www.thedukebuxton.com/index>)*. The Duke is located 2.2 km from the end of the walk.

This pub is currently closed.

Numerous options in Buxton, either around the Market Place, or close to the Train Station. Some of the ones on the route are mentioned in the pdf.

Notes

Buxton

Buxton, a spa town in Derbyshire on the edge of the Peak District National Park, is the highest market town in England, some 300 m above sea level. Sights include Poole's Cavern, a limestone cavern, St Ann's Well, fed by a geothermal spring bottled by Buxton Mineral Water Company, and Georgian buildings around Buxton Crescent, including Buxton Baths. Also notable is the Opera House.

The area has been inhabited for at least 6,000 years: a settlement at Lismore Fields was rediscovered in 1984. The Romans developed a settlement known as Aquae Arnemetiae ("Baths of the goddess of the grove") and linked it to South Yorkshire via Navio in the Hope Valley to the Templebrough fort.

Built on the River Wye and overlooked by Axe Edge Moor, Buxton became a spa town because of its geothermal spring, which emerges at a steady temperature of 28° C.

The Buxton lime industry has been important for the development of the town and it has shaped the landscape around the town. Limestone has been used in several ways over the millennia: quarried as building stone, heated to produce lime (or 'quicklime'), a base for either lime mortar (a mix of lime, sand and water) for building or as a soil improver in agriculture. And before electric lights, lime was even burnt to light theatrical shows, putting the stage performers 'in the limelight'.

Modern quarrying is a high-technology industry using advanced machinery, supplying concrete and cement to the construction industry. Several active limestone quarries are still located close to Buxton, including the "Tunstead Superquarry" in Great Rocks Dale. It is the largest limestone quarry in the UK, producing 5.5 million tonnes p.a., a quarter of which is used by the cement works on site.

Dane Valley Way

The Dane Valley Way is a 77 km (48 mi) waymarked linear long-distance footpath through Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, rising from the Pavilion Gardens in Buxton over 5 kilometres to the source of the River Dane at Dane Head in Derbyshire and then follows rights of way along or near the course of the river - generally downhill - to its confluence with the River Weaver (a Mersey tributary) in Cheshire at Northwich.

The initial section from Buxton climbs through Grinlow Woods to Solomon's Temple at the summit of Grin Hill, providing superb views across the Dark Peak. The trail crosses Axe Edge Moor (over 500m high, the highest traceable river source in the White Peak area, and the watershed between the Irish Sea and the North Sea), where the River Dane originates at Dane Head. It passes the scenic Three Shires Head (where Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire boundaries meet) with its stone footbridge and cascades. The path continues along the wooded Dane Valley through the hamlets of Gradbach, Danebridge and Wincle. It leaves the Peak District and continues through the Cheshire Plain, later involving a high degree of road walking.

The Peak District (National Park)

The Peak District is an upland area at the southernmost end of the Pennines.

The Peak District National Park is one of the UK's most popular, and is located within the boundaries of five counties (Derbys., Ches., Staffs., Yorks. and Greater Manchester). Founded in 1951, it was the first national park in England. The Park spans an area of around 1,440 km² (550 mi²) and - despite its name - its terrain consists mainly of rolling hills, farmland, moorland and some gritstone escarpments (the "edges"). It is however significantly higher than much of the terrain in the surrounding area.

The Peak District is formed almost exclusively from sedimentary rocks dating from the Carboniferous period. They comprise the Carboniferous Limestone, the overlying Gritstone and finally the Coal Measures, though the latter occur only on the extreme margins of the area. In addition, there are infrequent outcrops of igneous rocks including lavas, tuffs and volcanic vent agglomerates.

The northern Dark Peak (whose geology is gritstone) is one of the most famous landmarks in the Peak District National Park, known for its exposed and isolated tracts of moorland, as well as its expansive rolling plateau which is covered by cotton grass bogs and heather moorlands. The soil of the area is composed of moorland peat which provides the perfect environment for the plant life in the area. The areas to the flanks of the high moorland host numerous copses which are composed of Oak and Birch.

The southern White Peak (whose geology is mainly limestone) is another distinctive area within the park due to its gently sloping Limestone plateau, crisscrossed by the Limestone Dales. The Dales provide the areas' drainage and vary in steepness throughout the area.

Axe Edge Moor

Axe Edge Moor is the major moorland in the Peak District. It is mainly gritstone. Its highest point at 551 metres above sea is slightly lower than Shining Tor, some 5 kilometres to the northwest, across the incipient Goyt Valley. The moor is the source of the rivers Dove, Manifold, Dane, Wye and Goyt and it boasts England's second-highest public house (the Cat and Fiddle Inn). The moor is shared between the counties of Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, which meet on its southwestern flank at Three Shires Head on the Dane.

This area was also the southernmost tip of a coalfield that ran all the way to Oldham in the north. Mining the coal may have begun as early as medieval times, but by the early 19th century, large-scale mines were in

operation. The scars of this once massive endeavour are still visible to this day, although most of the workings were closed before the end of the 19th century.

The Axe Edge itself is on the south eastern edge of the moor, near the source of the Dove.

Wye Valley/River Wye

The River Wye is a 24 km (15 mi) long river in the Peak District, and is one of the major tributaries of the River Derwent. It is predominantly a limestone river, although the furthest source originates on the (gritstone) Axe Edge Moor west of Buxton. Another arm off the moors flows underground through Poole's Cavern in Buxton before rising at Wye Head and flowing through the Pavilion Gardens, where the two arms join. It then flows east through the limestone dales of the Wye Valley and through Ashford-in-the-Water and Bakewell and joins the Derwent at Rowsley, just after the Wye's main tributary, the Manifold, has joined.

Dane Valley/River Dane

The Dane River is a 56 km (35 mi) long tributary of the River Weaver (and therefore the Mersey) that originates in the Peak District at Dane Head on Axe Edge Moor, close to the source of the River Goyt, just to the south west of Buxton. Flowing southwest, it forms county borders for around 16 km (Cheshire/Derbyshire, then Cheshire/Staffordshire), before flowing west through Congleton. The point on the river where the three counties meet, at Panniers' Pool Packhorse Bridge, is called Three Shire Heads. The bridge and the waterfalls on the River Dane southwards are very picturesque, and frequently feature on calendars.

The name of the river (earlier *Daven*) probably derives from the Old Welsh *dafn*, meaning a "drop or trickle", implying a slow-moving river.

The Dane is the longest, cleanest and possibly fastest flowing river flowing through Cheshire. It can optionally share its outflow between the Irish Sea and the North Sea with the aid of canal feeders.

Dove Valley/River Dove

The River Dove is 72 km (45 mi) long and the principal river of the southwestern Peak District. It rises on Axe Edge Moor near Buxton and flows generally south to its confluence with the River Trent at Newton Solney. For almost its entire course it forms the boundary between Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

En route it cuts through a set of stunning limestone gorges known collectively as Dovedale: Beresford Dale, Wolfscote Dale, Milldale and Dovedale, i.e.: the name Dovedale is also – and now more commonly – used for just the 5 km (3 mi) stretch between Milldale in the north and a wooded ravine near Thorpe Cloud and Bunster Hill in the south, before its major tributary the Manifold River joins the Dove.

The river's name is derived from Celtic "dubh" = dark and although it is now usually pronounced to rhyme with "love", its original pronunciation rhymed with "rove".

The limestone rock that forms the geology of Dovedale (known as reef limestone) is the fossilised remains of sea creatures that lived in a shallow sea, about 350 million years ago. During the two ice ages, the rock was cut into craggy shapes by glacial meltwater, and dry caves such as Dove Holes and Reynard's Cave were formed. Around 13,000 BCE, after the last ice age, the caves were used as shelters by hunters, and Dovedale has seen continuous human activity since.

The Manifold Trail

The Manifold Trail is a 37 km (23 mi) waymarked linear long-distance footpath from the Traveller's Rest Pub in Flash Bar to the Dovedale car park near Ilam. It follows the river Manifold from its source to its confluence with the river Dove and passes through classic White Peak limestone scenery.

It is not to be confused with the Manifold Valley Cycleway, which follows a dismantled railway line along parts of the Manifold Valley, and is also often referred to as The Manifold Trail.

River Manifold

The River Manifold is a 19 km (12 mi) long tributary of the River Dove in Staffordshire. It rises at Flash Head near Axe Edge, less than a kilometre south of the Dove itself. While initially passing through some gritstone landscape, its most picturesque sections are in limestone country, where – for part of its course from Wetton Mill to Ilam – it runs underground when not in spate. Its only major tributary is the River Hamps.

The name may derive from Anglo-Saxon *manig-fald* = "many folds", referring to its meanders.

Upper Goyt Valley/Goyt River

The Goyt River is 49 km (30 mi) long and originates in the Peak District on Axe Edge Moor, close to the source of the River Dane just to the south west of Buxton. It joins the River Tame at Stockport to form the River Mersey.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Leave **Buxton Station** onto its forecourt and *turn right* along **Station Road**, opposite a **bus stop for services to Ladmanlow**. In 40m *turn left* to cross Station Road at a set of lights and continue downhill to the right of a high stone wall, away from the road. You follow **Station Approach** and in 50m pass **Conways DIY Centre** on the left. Curve to the right with the road towards the Georgian Centre of (Lower) Buxton and cross **The Quadrant** at a set of lights to continue along **The Crescent** to the left of Cavendish Shopping Arcade, the **Old Buxton Baths**, with **The Slopes** rising on the left. In 50m you pass **The Buxton Crescent Hotel** on the right, by the former **Pump Room** (now Tourist Information Centre) and then **St. Anne's Well** on the left. In 25m you pass the **Natural Mineral Baths** on the right, the location of the original **Roman Baths**. In 40m, at the corner of the **Old Hall Hotel**, cross **The Square** and continue in the same direction along **Broad Walk**, a wide tarmac path running to the left of the **Pavilion Gardens**.

Ahead in the distance, you can see the wooded **Grin Low**, the ascent of which is the immediate aim. The **Dane Valley Way** (DVW) joins unmarked out of the Gardens, and by a footpath signpost at the far end of the Gardens, you cross **Burlington Road** and *turn left* along its opposite pavement towards a main road. In 50m cross **Macclesfield Road** (the B5059) at a set of lights on the right and *bear right* along the pavement of **Temple Road** (signed 'Poole's Cavern'), ignoring the left curving College Road between trees. In 420m **[!]** *turn left* with **Temple Road**, where the more obvious continuation of the road bears to the right as Milldale Avenue. In 70m cross **Green Lane** and enter the car park of **Poole's Cavern and Buxton Country Park**. In 20m *fork right* towards the ticket office and shop and follow the pavement past them. In 40m, just before a map of Grin Low and the Country Park, *turn right* up a stepped railed path up into the wooded hillside.

At the top of the steps, at a T-junction by a two-way signpost, *turn left* ('Solomon's Temple', 'Grin Low'). You pass a wooden sculpture of some ammonites and immediately *fork up to the right* (170°) along a broad gravel path, ignoring a continuation on the level. The path veers to the left and then curves to the right and you ignore gravel paths to the left and right. In another 30m pass a bench on the right and in 100m a wooden sculpture of a **lime burner** and a subsequent info panel. In 80m ignore a left turn on the level to keep ascending and in 150m by a two-way signpost, ignore a continuation in the same direction ('Solomon's Temple', 'Grinlow') and **[!]** *turn left* on the level. Ignore any minor paths and tracks and in 340m leave the wood through a stepped gap to the right of a wooden field gate into the open countryside. Continue ahead and in 60m *turn right* at a T-junction with an earthen path coming up from the left. You ascend the hill through some disturbed ground, revealing the history of the hillside as a much-quarried place. In 130m go through a stepped gap in a drystone wall and in 80m you reach **Solomon's Temple**, a folly and grand viewpoint. There is a spiral staircase to climb up to the viewing platform, which gives you surround views to hills, moorlands and quarries, and down to Buxton.

To continue, *turn hard right* from the previous direction (305°) through the grassy area and in 150m pick up a gravel path about 50m to the left of a drystone wall. In 50m ignore a footpath turning right through a wooden gate into the wood and continue parallel to the wall. In 110m you pass a fenced shaft (with an info panel on **limestone burning** up away top the left) and in 20m ignore another footpath turning right (with an info panel on **Solomon's Temple** on the far side of the fence). In 50m go up some steps and through a wooden gate and *turn left* at a path T-junction with a DVW marker. In 50m *turn right* with a two-way footpath signpost and in 90m you pass a rockface on the right. In 40m *veer right* with the path to the right of a car park. In 50m pass a toilet block and in 40m continue gently uphill along a drive from the right out of a caravan site in a disused quarry.

In 200m the terrain levels out and in 150m you *bear left* with the drive, with views of **Axe Edge Moor** (and the A53 below it) ahead and the **Wye Valley** to the right of it. The car wide track to the right of the A road is the afternoon return route. Pass some rock outcrops in the grassy areas to the left and right and start to descend. In 210m cross a cattle grid and in 100m, just before the busy **Grin Low Road**, *turn right* along a gravel path parallel to the road, in 30m going through a wooden gate. In 150m, where the path turns right, you *fork left* along a gravel path through trees to in 20m cross Grin Low Road and *turn right* along its opposite pavement through **Ladmanlow** hamlet. In 60m *turn left* along the A53 **Leek Road** at a T-junction. In 30m you reach a **bus stop for services from Buxton**.

*) *Turn right* across the road and *turn left* along the opposite pavement. In 20m *turn right* through a metal gate with a footpath signpost into a large pasture and *turn left* through it (255°), uphill to the right of a walled reservoir 100m away and clear to the left of the wooded top of **The Terret**. In another 100m from the far end of the reservoir, you go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate with a DVW marker and enter the **Peak District National Park**. In 60m the A53 turns away to the left and you continue in the same direction uphill the pasture. In 250m continue in the same direction along a gravel track at a bend, still uphill, now with a fence on the left and the **Access Land of Featherbed Moss** behind, part of **Axe Edge Moor**. In 50m go over a brow, now with the **A54** visible on the right below. You descend for 130m to cross the first of several streams on this stretch that together form the gritstone arm of the **River Wye**. In 100m you go through a metal field gate and in 80m meet the A road by a Byway Open to All Traffic signpost on the left.

Cross the road carefully, entering **Access Land** in the process, and continue in the same direction further uphill along its right-hand grassy verge with a fence on the right. In 160m, where the road bears away to the left, continue along the fence with a footpath signpost. In 70m ford another Wye tributary and in 160m, by a stile on the right, just before a layby and some fenced off areas to the right (the **Bucket Engine Pitt**, a shaft mine entrance with three shafts), *turn left* towards the road with the DVW. In 10m *fork left* and in 40m cross the **A54** a little to the left and go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate. There is a note on the gate on this being a **ground nesting bird protection area** (19/09/2019 - 18/09/2024), meaning dogs have to be kept on a lead away from rights-of-ways and under effective control on them. Follow a car wide grass track uphill through the open moorland, in 30m turning left in a southerly direction and continue uphill towards the obvious brow. That brow is the **watershed between the Wye Valley and the Dane Valley**, i.e.: the British Watershed between North Sea and Irish Sea. In about 400m *fork left* along a grassy car wide track past a notable circular depression on the right (a collapsed and filled-in, 'ginged' (i.e.: stone lined) coal mineshaft).

You have fine views back on the left (in good weather) to Buxton and – in the distance – to Mam Tor and Kinder Scout, as well as on the right into the Upper Goyt Valley and up to The Cat & Fiddle and its transmission mast. The **trigpoint on Axe Edge Moor** (at 551m above sea) is visible away on the left across a shallow valley (the very **top of the Wye Valley**; 115°). In 90m you pass a large disturbed area on the right (an old coal mine, shown on the OS map) and soon enough the terrain levels out (at spot height 532m above sea) and you have a large fenced-in area away on the left on the moor (also on the OS map). The views ahead range from **Axe Edge** on the left, **Oliver Hill** nearby ahead (passed later), to **The Roaches** far away on the half right, the **Cheshire Plain** on the right and the **Reeve-edge and Danebower Quarries** down on the right (walked through later) with the **Whetstone Ridge** towering to the right of the quarries. You gently descend into the Dane Valley and over the next 100m pass several ex-mining areas on the right (mostly part of the **Thatch Marsh Colliery**), including a fenced-in mineshaft 40m away.

The path bears to the right and in 170m you reach a two-planked wooden post on the right, where a broad path joins from the right behind. *Bear left* towards a wooden gate onto a road 50m away, ignoring the right forking broad track leading to a metal field gate. In 60m go through the gate with a yellow marker on the reverse and *turn left* along the road (**Old Coalpit Lane**) with the DVW. Be mindful that despite its very remote location **this is a rat-run between the A54 and A53**. In 140m you cross the infant **River Dane** on the road, where another public footpath joins from the left out of the moor. In 150m, just before a brow (the watershed to the **Dove Valley**), you *turn right* with the DVW by a low footpath marker post along a well-defined path through the tussocky, heathery ground (260°, broadly in the direction of Croker Hill's transmission mast). There is a large spoil heap away on the left with a fenced-in shaft to the right of it, these are the remains of **Burbage Colliery**. In 140m you pass a deep grough on the right, the beginning of a tributary of the Dane (on the OS map). In 20m go through a short boggy section and *bear left* at a faint T-junction (190°), gently uphill. The colliery is now on the left.

In 120m you *fork left* with the path (165°) on the level, ignoring the continuation gently uphill towards a couple of fence posts. In 30 you pass a single fence post on your right, by a small mire 20m away to the left. In 70m you reach another fence post by a small mire on the right, where a strip of tussocky grass starts. *Veer left* to continue to the left of the grass, as the right-hand side is somewhat boggy. In 70m, at the end of the tussocky grass strip, a path forks to the left, and there is another fence post to the right a few metres ahead and also a clear path continuing in that direction. You can see some farm buildings dead ahead. The terrain on the left gently descends and forms the shallow top of a clough, whose stream outflow eventually joins the Dane at Three Shires Head.

Here you have a choice:

For a Shortcut, following the Dane Valley Way around **Cheeks Hill**, continue in the same direction (225°) past the fence post and along the path to the right of the infant clough. Pick up the directions below under **Shortcut**.

For the Main Walk, *fork left* (175°) along an unmarked public footpath into the infant clough and in 30m cross the infant stream, by a deep grough on the right. As you rise out of the clough on this bouncy but not boggy path, the top of **Shutlingsloe** becomes visible on the right, as does **The Cat & Fiddle** from a little further along. In 100m you pass a lone fence post 30m away to the left, then three more, close together some way away to the right, and in 200m at the top of the rise, you *bear right* with the path, with **Axe Edge** rising over on the left across another shallow valley. The path bears to the right of a minor top and in 110m reaches the **Five Stones**, possibly glacial erratics. *Bear left* and in 30m *fork left* (120°) off the infant **Drystone Edge** into the shallow valley and in 90m the path levels out. You cross a grough (the beginning of a stream you will cross later, near Wicken Walls Farm) and in 80m negotiate a boggy area (skirt to the right).

In 70m cross a tributary stream to the one earlier and you follow the path to the left and in 70m walk to the left of a fence with a metal field gate on a track from some cottages at the bottom of **Drystone Edge**. In 20m join the car wide gravel drive and *bear left* along it. In 300m *turn up to the left* with the track around **Axe Edge End**, ignoring a public footpath ahead through a metal field gate. In 75m you reach the brow of the rise, the **watershed between Dane and Dove**. In 25m at the edge overlooking the **Upper Dove Valley** (and the busy A53), a public footpath turns right through a metal field gate and continues as a track to the left of a cottage. The large farm to the right below on the A53 is **Dove Head Farm**, where the **River Dove** springs out of the hillside. The hills ahead are **Hollins Hill**, **Chrome Hill** and **High Wheeldon** (SWC Walk Buxton Circular via the Dragon's Back).

Here you have a choice:

For an Extension, *turn left* with the track down towards the A53, with **Mam Tor now visible** dead ahead. In 300m go through a metal field gate **out of the Access Land** and in 30m cross the A53 to the opposite verge. The signposted footpath continues down **Wallnook Farm's** drive and through a metal field gate (often locked) and to the left of the house with a yellow marker on a fence post, then to the right and in 20m through a gate. *Turn left* downhill through an overgrown fenced area, which you leave at the bottom over a stile and continue downhill along a track through a pasture. At the bottom of the drop go through a metal field gate (a public footpath joins from the left) and cross a **tributary of the Dove** and *turn right* over a stone slab stile on the right with a footpath marker on a fence post into a pasture and follow its bottom boundary, parallel to the stream. In 140m leave the field through a wall gap (a missing gate), with **Dovehead Farm** away on the left, and in 60m go through a metal gate to the left of the fenced **Dovehead Cottage**. In 50m pass a yellow marker on a gate post and go down a stepped path to in 20m *turn left* along the cottage's drive. In 25m **[!]** ignore the right of way over a stone slab stile into a small field (the going is rough and very mud-prone) and follow the drive to a road.

Turn right along the road and in 20m *turn right* with the road, where a gravel track joins from the left. In 50m the right of way joins from the right along Brook House's drive and in 70m you cross the **River Dove** on the road and **enter Staffordshire** (ignore a footpath joining from the right from Barn Farm). You start to ascend out of the infant Dove Valley and ignore several footpaths to the right into fields and a couple of farm drives on the left. As you rise steeply further out of the valley, the distinctive ridges of **Chrome Hill and Parkhouse Hill** (SWC Walk Buxton Circular via the Dragon's Back) rise on the left. In 900m *turn right* further uphill along a lane at a T-junction. **The Manifold Way** runs along the lane and the sloping fields on the left are the location of the **Head of the River Manifold**. In 30m you reach the A53 by **The Knight's Table** (a former pub) on the left and the **Flash Bar Café and Shop** on the right. The Main Walk joins from the right along the A53. Pick up the directions below at the double asterisk ******).

For the Main Walk, *turn right* through the field gate with footpath and **end of Access Land** markers and follow a gravel track past **Hill Top Cottage** to its left. In another 70m pass **Curlew Cottage** and in 50m *bear left* downhill along tarmac at a three-way junction of tracks. You have entered **Staffordshire**. In 50m you are level with **Dove Head Farm** below on the left and in 200m at a T-junction with a road opposite **Hilltop Farm**, *turn right* uphill. Go over a brow and in 70m *bear left* with the lane to descend to another lane at a T-junction 125m away, with **Oliver Hill** rising ahead. *Turn up to the left* and in 230m a signposted footpath turns right over a stile into Access Land. **This will be the onwards route** after a 350m each-way out-and-back to the lunch stops at Flash Bar. Continue uphill and in 120m go over the brow by **New Lodge Farm** on the left. In 80m *fork right* along a tarmac path, where the lane bears left to the A53. You pass a bus shelter in 30m and cross the A road and *turn right* along it to in 100m reach **The Knight's Table** (a former pub) on the right and the **Flash Bar Café and Shop** on the left.

******) To continue the walk, *turn right* along the pavement of the A53 and in 100m *turn left* across it and follow a path that links to a lane turning off the A road. You pass a shelter of the **bus stop for services to Buxton** and in 30m continue along the lane. On the brow of the gentle rise, you pass **New Lodge Farm** with **Axe Edge** rising on the right behind it and the top of **Shutlingsloe** dominating the view ahead. In 120m *turn left* with a signpost over a stile into **Access Land** and follow a left-hand fence up along the flank of **Oliver Hill**. In 70m go over a stile and in 80m continue in the same direction along a clear grass path where the fence turns down to the left. In 120m *turn right* along a car wide track

along a fence and in 30m, by a fenced-in reservoir up on the right, you *turn left* over a stile and go down a small pasture towards the right-hand corner of the garden fence of a house.

In 60m go over a stile and follow a fenced-in path and *turn right* to pass a pond on its right. Go through a couple of wooden gates and follow a drive past a house (Old Police House) to the A53. Cross the road and *turn right* along the opposite pavement. In 50m *turn right* across the road and follow a quiet lane into **Flash, England's highest village**, signposted 'Gradbach Mill', with Oliver Hill rising on the right. In 10m you can see away on the left ahead: Gradbach Hill, Ramshaw Rocks, Hen Cloud and the Roaches (SWC Walks Upper Hulme to Macclesfield and Macclesfield to Leek) and in 200m pass a village sign proclaiming its status as the **highest village at 463 metres above sea** (just joking: this is rural Staffordshire, of course it's 1518 ft!). You pass the village hall and the Old Police Station and then reach the highest village church in England, **St. Paul's, Quarnford** [The village is officially called Quarnford, but is known as 'Flash'.] At the far end of the churchyard continue in the same direction on the level, ignoring a descending left fork.

In 25m you pass **The New Inn** and in 50m the **Wesleyan Chapel** from 1784. In 60m ignore a signposted footpath from the right, down from Oliver Hill. In another 50m you go over the brow of the rise, at 471m above sea, crossing from the Manifold catchment area into the **Upper Dane Valley**, in the process re-crossing the British Watershed between North Sea and Irish Sea. In all but the worst weathers, a splendid vista greets you, with the nearby hills **Shutlingsloe, Bosley Cloud** and **Gun** dominating it. In very fine weather you can also spot three distinctive tops further away on a bearing of 260°; they are just beyond the border, near Wrexham in Wales. In 200m you pass **Back 'oth Cross Cottage** and in 60m *turn right* with a signposted footpath up some steps over a drystone wall and through a wooden gate and then a set of wooden gates 10m away in a drystone wall. The path heads steeply down to a tarmac drive leading to **Axe Edge Green Farm** on the right.

In 100m go through a wooden gate and *turn right* along the drive and in 120m *turn left* through a wooden gate into a pasture and follow a clear path. In 100m go through a wooden gate and *veer ever so slightly to the right* through another pasture and in 110m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall. You follow a grass path along a left-hand wall and in 130m, by a metal field gate on the left leading to some buildings of **Far Brook Farm**, *veer right* with a public footpath, ignoring a right turning Concession Path to the Access Land of **Wolf Edge**. In 70m go through a wooden gate and down some steps through a wooded area and at the bottom of the drop cross a two-railed footbridge over a tributary of the Dane (you crossed it much earlier, high up on the moor, between Drystone Edge and Axe Edge). There is a little waterfall away to the left as you pass a **Peak and Northern Footpaths Society** sign ('Flash' backwards, 'Three Shires Head' onwards).

Cross of a bridleway and clamber up an incline onto a grassy shelf and *veer right* with the path, passing a jumble of large boulders away on the left (a training course for off-road motorbikes), towards a stile to the right of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction towards **Wicken Walls Farm**. In 80m *turn right* through a wooden gate (signed 'Road') and follow a gravel drive up to a road. In 70m continue in the same direction where a tarmac drive joins from the left and in 60m at the road, *turn hard left* back on yourself, past a sign saying 'No Access By Car To Three Shires Head – And No Parking'). You now follow this Public Lane (an old packhorse route) around the bottom of the wooded slopes of **Turn Edge** up the Dane Valley for 1.7 km all the way to **Three Shires Head**.

In more detail: in 300m go through a metal field gate; in 120m you pass the post box of Turn Edge Farm by **Cocket Knowl Farm** and continue along a gravel track; and in 40m *fork right* with the main track, ignoring a left forking public footpath through a wooden field gate; in 110m pass a bay on the left, now with **Cut-thorn Hill** looming ahead on the far

side of the Dane Valley, with the distinctive top of **Shutlingsloe** up on the half left; in 60m a public footpath joins from the left through a wooden gate; in 30m ignore a car wide track forking up to the right (the drive to **Turn Edge Farm**); in 65m ignore a footpath forking left through a squeeze gate left of a wooden field gate and in 200m another signposted footpath joins along a farm track from the left (the DVW runs along it); by a wall corner on left, you enter **Access Land**, and in 60m ignore a footpath forking right uphill; in 450m you go through a metal field gate where another footpath joins from the left below and go up onto the bank on the left for better views. The Dane is below, with a little waterfall, and ahead are the packhorse bridge and some of the waterfalls at **Three Shires Head**.

Four former packhorse routes converge at **Panniers Bridge over the River Dane**, and it is a busy place most times for its undoubted picturesqueness and swimming opportunities. **Panniers Pool** and some stretches of the river are usually deep enough for a swim.

[Notice **the typical packhorse bridge design** feature: the walls are relatively low so that two horse trains could pass each other without the panniers having to be taken off!] The location is called **Three Shires Head**, as the **Cheshire/Staffordshire County Boundary** runs along the Dane hereabouts, and the **Staffordshire/Derbyshire Boundary** runs along the tributary stream joining (in a waterfall) down from the right out of Blackclough. **To continue the walk**, cross the tributary and *turn right* this side of Panniers Bridge, through a metal field gate and up a track to the left of the Dane tributary out of **Black Clough** (30°), i.e.: **back in Derbyshire**. In 140m the track almost levels out and in 120m you *turn left* by a footpath signpost with the track and the stream, ignoring a right turning path through a metal field gate (on the map as a 'Public Road'). You continue up the tight and twisting valley and in 300m, 60m before a metal field gate, **[!] turn hard left** back on yourself up a car wide grass track (240°).

*****)** In 90m the track turns to the right through the open grassy hill and you continue along a faint track, further uphill (330° initially). In 40m aim for a drystone wall ahead (5°) and in 90m continue to the left of the wall. With the quite scenic **Blackclough** on the right, you gently rise through a pasture, in 150m continuing ahead where the wall turns right. In 125m *bear left* at a T-junction with a broad grassy track and in 50m go through a metal gate-within-a-metal field gate onto a gravel car wide track and *turn left* along it, curving to the right around the base of **Cheeks Hill** (ignore a right fork onto the top plateau). You are back on the DVW and **the Shortcut has joined from the right**. The track runs high above the Dane Valley, with the **A54** visible on the other side of it, and with **Dane Bower** (hill) rising beyond it on the Cheshire side. In 500m you enter **Reeve-Edge Quarry** through a metal gate-within-a metal field gate, with a notable chimney on the far side of the valley; this belongs to the disused **Danebower Colliery**. In 80m you reach a fork by a footpath marker post with a DVW marker on the reverse.

The route continues in the same direction downhill, but it is worth exploring the quarry site away to the right for about 200m, all the way to the quarry face. The sandstone quarry was used for the **production of roofing slates**, and it has left some **enormous spoil and waste heaps**. Its busiest period was the 2nd half of the 19th century. In 300m you *turn left* to ford the Dane **into Cheshire** (with fine views up on the right to the moors at **Dane Head** walked through earlier) and follow a steep path up through **Danebower Quarry**, in 30m *turning up to the left* steeply with a two-way footpath signpost and a DVW marker and in 40m continue in the same direction on the level. In 400m, you reach the 'chimney' (in fact a stone-built ventilation shaft for the colliery furnace). [For the curious: there is an adit entrance to the mine shaft (now blocked up for safety reasons) about 20-30 height metres below the chimney on the hillside below [*adit = a horizontal passage leading into a mine for the purposes of access or drainage*].]

[!] *Turn right* steeply uphill a gravel gully towards a fence post visible high above. From the post, *veer left* to cross a stile by a footpath signpost and a subsequent crash barrier to carefully cross the **A54** and go through a metal gate with a signpost opposite. You now follow a good gravel track **for 2.4 km to the A537 by The Cat & Fiddle**, initially gently uphill between the **Dane Bower** (hill) on the left (with a ditch on the near left) and the **Danebower Hollow** on the right, with the **Whetstone Ridge** rising beyond it. Some grouse butts are visible about 200m away on the right. As you rise further, **Shutlingsloe's** top reveals itself on the left, beyond the valley of the Clough Brook (a Dane tributary). **Jodrell Bank's Observatory** will be visible in the Cheshire Plain on a good weather day (270°), as will be Croker Hill with its BT mast. In 1.2 km from the road, a footpath joins from the left out of the clough of the **Cumberland Brook**, by a Peak & Northern Footpaths Society sign. From here you have a fine view in the back towards **The Roaches**.

The track curves to the right, with the top of the Whetstone Ridge just a little above on the right, at 547m above sea level, and in 330m you go through a metal gate-within-a-metal field gate. The track straightens in 40m and now leads directly to The Cat & Fiddle with its transmission mast. **Shining Tor** and its ridge leading out to Cats Tor dominate the view to the left ahead. **Greater Manchester** may be visible on the half left. You cross a two-railed bridge over a stream (a Clough Brook tributary) and eventually the higher parts of the **Macclesfield Forest**, as well as **Tegg's Nose** near Macclesfield come into view on the left. Finally, walk past a car barrier by a bridleway signpost onto the **A537** opposite **The Cat & Fiddle**, by a **bus stop for services to Macclesfield** on the left (Buxton buses stop opposite). Cross the road and *turn right* along the opposite verge.

In 220m *turn left* along a tarmac lane, signposted 'Derbyshire Bridge (only)'. You gently descend from the ridge into the **Upper Goyt Valley**, back into **Derbyshire**, with fine views down the moorland valley towards Combs Moss, Kinder Scout and Bleaklow. Ignore various gates on the left into Access Land and you eventually find some streams gurgling away on the right; they are some of the furthest tributaries of the **River Goyt**. In 1.1 km from the **Cat and Fiddle Road**, the lane crosses the Goyt and in another 125m you ignore a right turning tarmac lane up to the A537 and the A54. Continue downhill, cross another Goyt tributary on the lane and in 270m reach a three-way lane junction by a large car park and an interesting info panel on the right. [For a 320m each-way out-and-back **to the picturesque Derbyshire Bridge** across the Goyt in a pretty and tight green valley (the river used to be the County Boundary until 1936), *turn left* along a tarmac lane on the left (one-way traffic, and closed on summer weekends).]

You continue in the same direction up a broad gravel track (the old **Macclesfield – Buxton turnpike**), which you follow all the way **to the fringes of Buxton**. **In more detail**: in 150m continue on a rough, cobble-filled level track and in 80m ignore a right turning public footpath over a stile 30m away. The track is ever so gently ascending through the moorland, with **Axe Edge Moor** rising on the right, and **Raven's Low Flat** jutting out into the Goyt Valley on the left. The Cat & Fiddle and Stake Side dominate the view behind. In 200m ignore a gate on the left into the moorland and in another 200m there is a wide gap in a drystone wall on the right with a wooden field gate behind, with a noticeable overgrown spoil heap on the moor on the right: this was an airshaft for the **Goyt New Tunnel**, driven in the 19th century as an extension to the 18th century **Burbage Upper-Level** tunnel to link to the **Goyt Coal Seam**. In 250m ignore another gate on the right, where a wall turns away to the right. The track descends through a shallow dip, where in 50m you cross the infant **Berry Clough** stream (a Goyt tributary), in 100m you pass a **milestone** of the turnpike road on the left (well weathered and difficult to read) and rise in another 80m to the pass separating the Goyt Valley from the Wye Valley, i.e.: the **Great British Watershed**, at 479m above sea.

A public footpath from lower down the Berry Clough joins from the left through a wooden gate to the left of a double wooden field gate. Continue downhill along the track, with **Burbage and Buxton** visible below and with the chimney in **Tunstead Super-quarry** rising beyond them (SWC Walk Buxton Circular via the Wye Valley). The wooded **Grin Low** rises to the right of Burbage. **Solomon's Tower** is visible on 100°. The wooded hill on the right is **The Terret**, the outbound route led along its base on the far side. In 40m ignore a signposted footpath turning right over a stepless stile to Axe Edge Moor. Various streams start forming on the left and right, one of which you cross in about 500m. They are all tributaries of the **gritstone arm of the River Wye**, whose main tributary comes from the highest parts of Axe Edge Moor and runs down the picturesque valley on the right, this side of the A54. In 110m a public footpath joins from the right behind (it passes the location of the entrance to the **Burbage Upper-Level Tunnel**) and in another 110m you ignore a footpath turning right over a stile. In 100m a path joins down from a gate on the left, by a **Peak & Northern Footpaths Society** sign ('Lamaload via Shining Tor'). SWC Walk Macclesfield to Buxton joins along it. You have left the **Access Land**.

Continue downhill along the broad gravel track, **Macclesfield Old Road**. The infant valley of the **gritstone arm of the Wye** is now off to the right. You immediately cross a dismantled railway line on the lane and in 40m ignore a left fork through a double metal field gate towards the railway line. You have **left the Peak District National Park**, and continue towards **Goslin Bar Farm**. In 80m the road continues tarmacked and in 200m you ignore a left turning signposted public footpath by the first houses on the left, where **Level Lane** joins from the right (the location of the entrance of the 'Duke's Level', later named **Burbage Lower-Level Tunnel**). There is a **bus stop for services to Buxton** 20m on the right. In 250m you pass another bus stop on the left. In 170m ignore a left turning footpath and cross the Wye on the road and in 250m reach a five-way road junction by **Christ Church, Burbage** on the left and **The Duke** pub (**currently closed**) 50m away down the road. *Turn left* into the churchyard, either through a car wide gate or through the lychgate. Follow a gravel path towards the church and in 10m *turn left* downhill along a gravel path. In 50m curve to the right with the path and in 150m leave the churchyard onto **Nursery Lane** and *turn left* along it.

You pass Burbage Band's house and the Burbage Institute and *turn right* at a T-junction with **Bishop's Lane**. In 150m continue along the left-hand pavement of the A53 St. John's Road. In 150m cross **Otterhole Close** and in 130m *turn left* along **Gadley Lane**, with a wildflower meadow on the right. In 60m *turn right* along a signposted footpath through the narrow **Serpentine Wood**. In 140m cross the A53 and enter **The Serpentine** to the right of a road bridge over the Wye along a descending tarmac path (ignore a signposted footpath turning right down a gravel drive). In 30m the path continues on gravel and in 100m you *turn left* over a bridge across the river to *turn right* on the opposite side, ignoring a left fork to a road. Follow the path through an open riverside meadow with several river weirs audible on this stretch, and in 200m *turn right* with the path back across the Wye and *turn left* out of The Serpentine. Cross **Burlington Road** and enter the **Pavilion Gardens** along a broad gravel path, with the **gritstone arm of the Wye** on the left. The aim now is the far-right corner of this narrow park. Ignore a first right turning path but turn right along a second path, some way before a bridge over the river. In 30m *fork left* and in 20m you reach a multi-path junction, with a pond visible ahead. This is one of a string of ponds on that side of the Gardens, fed by the **limestone arm of the Wye**.

Turn left ('Railway Station') and in another 40m *veer left* at a T-junction, with a miniature railway on the right and the **gritstone arm of the Wye** on the left. In 70m *bear right* at a T-junction by a bridge on the left and the **Pavilion** on the other side of the river, and in 35m *fork left*, **now between the two arms of the Wye**. In 50m fork either way around the **Spiral Mound** (with an interesting info panel) to leave the park in its right-hand corner

and *turn right* along **Water Road**. In 20m by the **Old Hall Hotel** on the left, *turn left* along **The Crescent**, with **The Slopes** rising on the right. In 40m you pass the **Natural Mineral Baths** on the left, the location of the original **Roman Baths**, just before **The Buxton Crescent Hotel** on the left and **St. Anne's Well** on the right, followed by the **Pump Rooms**. In 75m you reach the **A515 Terrace Road**. Now, **either** cross the road and go up to the left along **Station Approach** to a set of lights across Station Road, **or** *turn left* along the road past **several cafés and restaurants** and *turn right* to cross the road at some lights and *turn right* up along **Station Road** to a set of lights 110m away.

Buxton Station is 30m further along Station Road on the far side of the road.

Shortcut (cut 5.7 km and 172m ascent/descent)

You are heading to a wooden field gate in a drystone wall coming down from the right from the top of **Cheeks Hill**. This marks the **County Boundary** between Derbyshire and Staffordshire. In 150m go through an initially unseen wooden gate to the right of the wooden field gate and *turn left* to continue in the previous direction along a clear path. In 80m cross a streamlet (skirt to the right if too muddy) and pass through a small grassy area. Note the small concrete 'plug' (it looks like a base for a lamppost or similar). There are several of these in this area, they are **caps marking former small diameter coal shafts** that have been infilled. *Bear left* along a clear grassy track and in 70m pass another one of those plugs (10m after an unmarked public footpath joins from the right above). The path now descends more clearly, with **The Roaches** visible ahead, and the infant stream on the left forming a deep clough, starkly beautiful with some exposed peaty banks, and with **Orchard Common** on the far side rising to **Drystone Edge**.

In 265m a grassy track joins from the right from a disused quarry and in another 450m you **leave the Access Land** through a wooden gate with a footpath marker to the right of a cattle grid and in 20m *turn left* along a tarmac drive at a bend, leading on the right up to **Orchard Farm**. In 180m *bear left* with the drive to cross the stream and continue to the left of it, gently ascending. In 60m, at a road junction, *fork right* downhill back to the stream level (with a sign for 'Blackclough Farm'), ignoring the left fork uphill. In 80m you have an intact drystone wall on the left and a collapsed one on the right and follow the stream downhill through a very scenic narrow gorge. In 50m the lane crosses the stream and you ignore a signposted footpath (and the DVW with it) forking right uphill a grassy slope. En route downhill you can briefly spot the far away **A54** crossed later, and in 270m, where the lane bears to the right, you can see **Blackclough Farm** up ahead.

In 160m you reach a meeting of four public footpaths and two streams, with the farm up ahead. Ignore a footpath joining down from the right, the drive to the farm very steeply ahead and a concrete drive on the left to a wooden field gate (both also public footpaths). Instead, **[!]** *curve left* downhill along the right-hand side of the stream along a car wide track and with a footpath marker on a wooden field gate leading to Blackclough Farm, in the process **re-entering Derbyshire**. In 115m you pass a redundant metal field gate and in 60m reach a fork in the path. The Main Walk comes up from the left from **Three Shires Head** (570m away) and continues to the right up a car wide grass track (240°), back **into Access Land**. Pick up the directions above at the triple asterisk ***).