

4.2 miles (6.7 km)



trentbarton Sixes Bus Route

Wirksworth Circular Walk

Starting and ending at the trentbarton Sixes bus stop in the historic market town of Wirksworth, this lovely walk takes you through some of the most beautiful parts of the town and surrounding countryside. It passes the StarDisc and then winds through former limestone quarries and across fields to the High Peak Trail, a traffic-free former railway line. On the High Peak Trail it passes both the steam engine house at Middleton Top and also Steeplehouse Station, home of the Steeple Grange Heritage Railway, before returning to Wirksworth on quiet country lanes and field paths with wonderful views.



Start/Finish Point

The trentbarton Sixes bus stop on St John's Street in Wirksworth (DE4 4DT; ///poppy.fingernails.songbird)

A The walk starts on St John's Street as you alight from the trentbarton Sixes bus. Walk in a northerly direction up the hill towards the town centre. Ignore the roads on your left and right and continue straight on, passing the Hope and Anchor pub on your left. Walk past the row of shops at Market Place that includes the iconic Ironmonger's, and then take the next narrow road on your left, Dale End.

Where Dale End forks at a junction with The Dale after approx 100 metres, carry straight on up the hill. It's a steep climb but there are interesting Quarrymen's houses lining the road and magnificent views of the Ecclesbourne Valley behind you. Soon after the last of the houses, look out on your right for the StarDisc. Designed in 2011, this modern stone circle has the constellations carved into its surface.

Continuing the walk, carry straight on for a further 250 metres. The road eventually starts to turn back on itself to the left, at which point you should take the public footpath directly ahead of you up a set of steps and through a gate.

B This footpath with fencing on both sides takes you winding for half a kilometre through the now-disused Middle Peak Quarry. This area was mined for lead for around 2,000 years, and when the lead ran out limestone was quarried from the hills instead. The site closed in 1992 and its wooded slopes are now a haven for wildlife.

Walk through the quarry until you reach a kissing gate into a field. Go through the gate and turn immediately right, following the clear path around the field edge. The path continues for 350 metres through two squeeze gaps in stone walls, until it reaches a step stile that leads to a road (the B5035). Carefully cross the road and take the public footpath directly opposite, over a further stile and into a field.

Follow the clear path as it heads gently uphill over the fields, before finally reaching an enclosed path that meets a gravelled track. Turn left as you emerge onto the gravelled track, and then walk straight on for approx 30 metres to meet the High Peak Trail.

C Turn right on the High Peak Trail, going through a gate and following the signs to Middleton Top. The High Peak Trail follows the line of the former Cromford and High Peak Railway, which ran between 1831 and 1967. It's now a traffic-free trail that passes through beautiful Derbyshire countryside with wide-reaching views. After approx 600 metres you will reach Middleton Top. Pause to admire the restored steam engine house built to haul wagons up the Middleton Incline. There's a Visitor Centre here for more information, as well as toilets and a small café if you need a break.

Carry on along the High Peak Trail, following the signs to Black Rocks. After approx 500 metres you will pass through the National Stone Centre. This huge area of land, made up of six former limestone quarries, is now a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest criss-crossed with footpaths.

Continue following the High Peak Trail for approx 1.5km, ignoring paths off, passing Steeplehouse Station on your left. Soon after passing Steeplehouse Station, the Trail goes over a road (the B5036) and you will see a cemetery on your left. Take the next path off the Trail on your left, walking through a gap in a stone wall and heading downhill to meet the small entrance road to Black Rocks. Turn left on the road and then almost immediately left again onto Oakerthorpe Road. Go under the railway bridge with the High Peak Trail running overhead and emerge at a T-junction. Turn left to enter the village of Bolehill.

D Walk on the pavement into Bolehill. After approx 200 metres, take the narrow road on your right called Nan Gell's Hill. Follow this pretty road for 450 metres, with wonderful views ahead to Wirksworth. Ignore New Road off to the right and carry straight on, until you see a footpath sign soon after a red telephone box.

Turn right at the footpath sign, walking down a narrow lane that soon becomes a footpath. Follow this clear path for approx 550 metres. It leads through a wooden gate and into fields, before finally reaching a second wooden gate on the right that leads to a narrow lane back into Wirksworth. Walk up this lane, over the railway line and past the infant school, to reach a wide junction of roads.

Take the road on your left, North End, lined with historic buildings, including the Royal Oak pub on your left and the Northern Light art cinema on your right. At the T-junction after approx 350 metres, turn right on to Coldwell Street to return to the centre of Wirksworth. Turn left when you reach Market Place in the town centre, and then walk downhill to return to the bus stop on St John's Street where you began your walk.

VISIT PEAK DISTRICT & DERBYSHIRE

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