

CASTLETON and HOPE

Medieval Historical Landscape *a self-guided trail*



Explore Castleton and Hope's medieval and later past with this self-guided trail. You will discover the history behind the landscape and its routeways, fields, lead mines, defences and buildings. This trail is the result of the research of members of Hope and Castleton Historical Societies and other volunteers.

Start and Finish: Castleton Visitor Centre pay and display car park, grid ref. SK149830.

Distance: 4½ miles / 7 km.

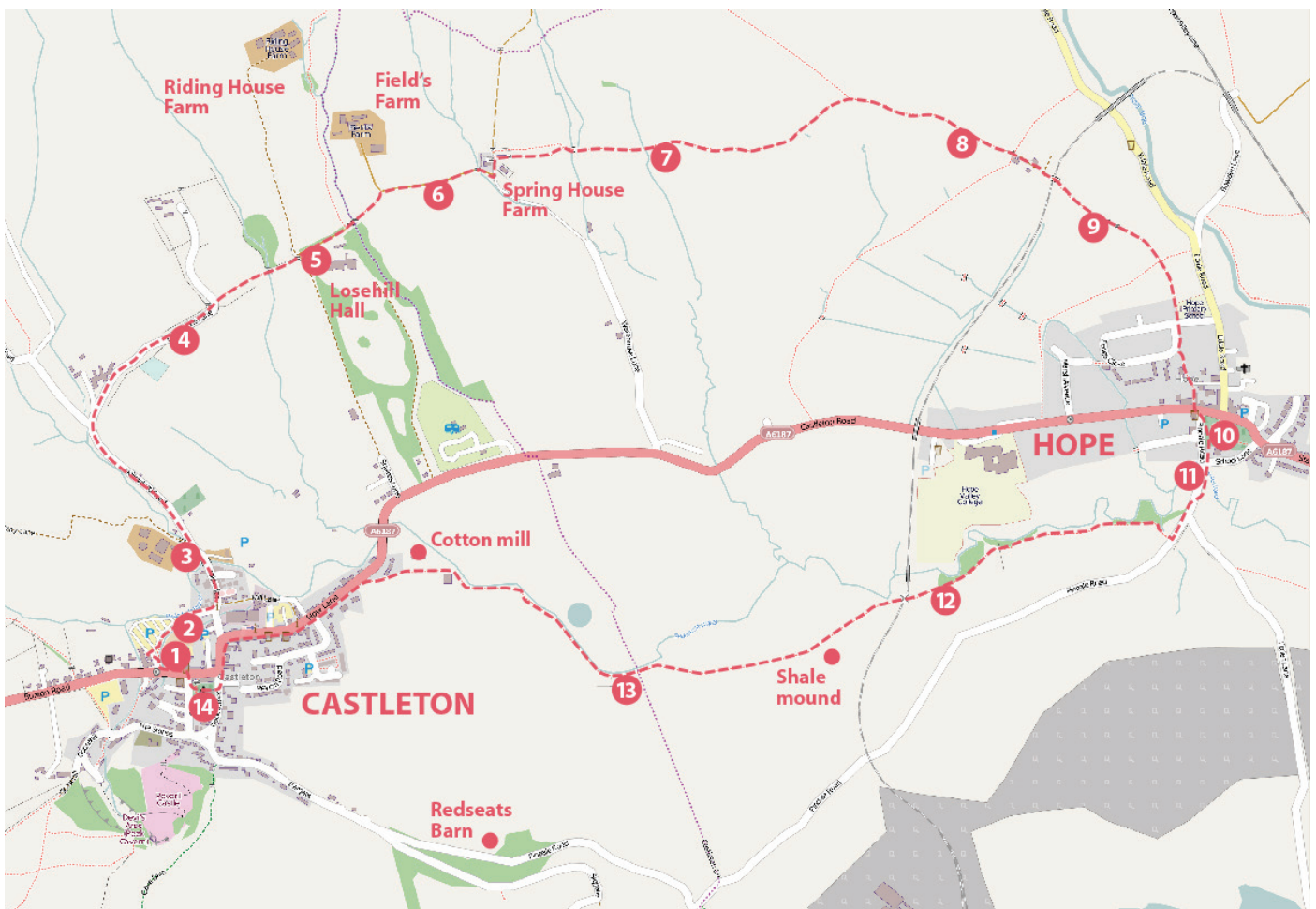
Time: Allow 3 hours.

Difficulty: Moderate.

Route: The route is along paved lanes and across pasture fields, which in places become muddy after rain. There are a number of step stiles along the route, some difficult for dogs.

Suitable walking boots and outdoor clothing are advised.

Please carry the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL1 Dark Peak with you for navigation.



1 Town Ditch

Look over the stream and wall by the car park entrance for the embankment in the small field. This is Castleton's town ditch and you are just outside the medieval village. The ditch was built during medieval times to protect the village and possibly collect taxes and tolls.

Castleton appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Pechesers. Castleton is first recorded as the village name in 1275. Peveril Castle was built soon after the Norman Conquest by the baron William Peverel to administer the Royal Forest of the High Peak.

Take the streamside footpath to the rear of the car park.

2 Mill Leet

This stream is really the mill leet, which carried water from Peakshole Water to power Castleton's watermill. Could this be the corn mill mentioned in 1243 and the same as the watermill recorded in 1472? One of Castleton's millers was Ellis le Cupere, who committed murder around 1281 and fled the scene of the crime as an outlaw.

Turn right out of the car park through the bollards then left on to Hollowford



Castleton and Hope had Medieval watermills which may have looked like this. © The British Library.

Road. As you walk you can see the valley's surrounding hills – Mam Tor with its distinctive landslip, Back Tor, Losehill and Winhill. Stop a few paces after the bridge.



Odin Sough.

3 Odin Sough

Odin Sough runs under the hedge and into the stream on the left-hand side of the road. The sough drains Odin Mine, the oldest named lead mine in Derbyshire. In 1280 John of Bellhag was brought to justice for hunting the wood at the entrance of Odin. The mine is not visible from here, and you can visit it by walking west out of the village in the direction of Mam Tor, past Treak Cliff cavern.

The lane on the left leads to Dunscar Farm. Dunscar may mean “Dunn's marsh” and the Dunn surname appears in Castleton documents as early as 1381.

Keep going along the lane and take the right fork in the road. The left fork continues over the ridge to Edale. This was a medieval coffin path before Edale had its own church and graveyard. Continue past the Hollowford Centre on your left until you reach fields on both sides.

4 Medieval Common



Ridge and furrow with Hope Cement Works in the background.

Look for the low, curving, parallel ridges in the field gently sloping down towards the cement works. These ridges and furrows were created when Castleton's medieval commoners ploughed strips to grow crops in the village common fields. Some medieval common field names survive such as Mamsitch, now a group of walled fields between Dunscar Farm and Hollowford Road, which derives from 'le Mamsechefylde'.

This is a good viewpoint for Castleton village, including Peveril Castle.

Walk to the end of the lane. Follow the public footpath through a field over the faint ridge and furrow. Cross the stepping stones over the small stream. Continue up the field, through a stile near Riding House Farm, and straight ahead along the next lane.

5 Losehill Hall

Losehill Hall is behind the wall on your right. Built by Robert Howe Ashton as a family home in 1882, the grounds are on the site of common fields belonging to the medieval hospital of St Mary in the Peak. Founded sometime before 1150 for the sick and poor, the hospital appears in records until the dissolution

of the monasteries during the 1500s. Hospital land can be located in field names such as 'Great Spittle', 'Little Spittle' and 'Spittle Pingle'.

Continue along the lane behind Losehill Hall and continue straight on at the first junction near Field Farm.

6 Routes, Farms and Fields

As you walk along the lane, known as Holbrook Road, look for three old stone gateposts hidden in the hedge on your right. The gates led into three separate strip fields, but their original boundaries have been ploughed out. It is possible to make out faint ridge and furrow looking towards the main road.



Continue to the next junction at Spring House Farm and turn left for 50 metres (125 feet) then turn right at the footpath sign in front of the Stables. Continue along the footpath known as Castleton Upper Road. Stop after crossing the wooden bridge over a stream, past the first stone squeezer stile - a pair of upright stones.

7 Castleton Upper Road

The squeezer stile is one of many along the path to Hope, built to allow people but not livestock to pass. The footpath runs above a natural break of slope and the damp ground below is known as the Marshes. It was common land until it was drained and enclosed in 1635. Remains of the old route can be found as faint terraces across streams, discarded gateposts, and old boundaries marked with hawthorn hedges or lines of trees.

This is a good viewpoint for Hope church and the cement works located at the junction between the limestone and shale.

Keep going along the footpath until you reach a stone squeezer stile next to a gritstone gatepost. The footpath swings to the right and follows a wide terrace, then through a metal gate where the path runs upslope of a wide holloway bounded on both sides by hedges (not accessible). The footpath enters the holloway after the next gate.



One of the squeezer stiles on Castleton Upper Road.

8 Emma Croft Road

This wide holloway suggests a long-distance route, probably for packhorses. But why is it so short? Have other parts of route been ploughed totally away later, or was this always an access track for fields upslope?

Follow the yellow or yellow and red arrows through the holloway, making sure you climb out of the holloway just after the muddy patch, over a stile to your right. Continue along the path, adjacent to the holloway, past the buildings and across the railway bridge.



The squeezer stile on 'abandoned' on a boundary bank.

9 Crofts and Fields

The footpath here gave access to the crofts associated with the older houses on Edale Road to your left.

The narrow fields with curving boundaries of earthen banks and hedges on the sloping ground below to your right preserve the pattern of strips in the medieval common field. Over time, common fields were rented out and divided among tenants, who built boundaries to enclose small fields. A squeezer stile, apparently abandoned in

midfield, stands on one of these curving boundaries.

Continue straight ahead into Hope, crossing Eccles Close on the way. As you walk into Hope you will go through several stone squeezer stiles. Enter the churchyard.

10 Saxon Hope

St Peter's church mostly dates from the 1300s, probably on the site of a Saxon church mentioned in the Domesday Book. The largest of three stone cross shafts inside the churchyard has figures and celtic strap-work, and may have been carved in the 900s to commemorate a treaty or mark a boundary. It was found when the old school was demolished and was later re-erected in the churchyard.



St Peter's Church, Hope.

Leave the churchyard by the gate opposite the church door. Turn left onto the road and continue to the bridge.

11 Watergate and the Pinfold

Watergates Bridge is on the site of an old crossing across the Peakshole Water. The crossing is on the route of the Roman road from Brough to Glossop and the Saxon Portway.



The shale spoil mound of Pindale Mine's sough.

The Pinfold opposite the bridge was used for collecting stray animals, until their owners paid a fine for their release. You can read the 1947 Pinfold rules as you pass by.

Further on is Eccles Lane, an old route from Bradwell and Brough which may get its name from an early Christian church at Hope.

Continue along the road until you find the Public Footpath sign number 36 to Castleton. It was originally erected by the Peak and Northern Footpath Society in 1908. Follow this footpath.

12 Fields, paths and local Industry

The path passes through four large fields. The last two are called the 'Ridings', their name implying this area was medieval clearance in the Royal Forest of the Peak. The Pindale Road, once known as the Peak Forest Road, runs from Hope to Castleton above these fields.

Look for the wood-covered shale mound after the railway crossing. It is one of a line of four created when an underground sough was dug to drain Pindale mine. The great cleft of Pindale is to the right of the cement works.

Continue along the footpath until it runs right beside the river. There are good views of Peveril Castle on the skyline above Castleton.

13 Redseats Barn

The barn by the trees in the distance, on your left, may be part of nearby 'Calumny mine' or an earlier farm called 'Redseats' or 'Reed Settes'. Redseats was linked with the Eyres, a local land-owning family for hundreds of years, until they leased it to Elias Staley in 1536. Martin Eyre of Redseyte was mentioned in 1412.

Keep walking until you are almost in Castleton. The 3-storey ruined building on your right is a derelict cotton mill from the late 1700s. The field next to the footpath is known as 'The Cunnery', suggesting there was once a rabbit warren here. Continue into Castleton as far as the church.



Redseats Barn..



The Norman arch in St Edmund's Church.

14 St Edmund's Church

St Edmund's church was built in 1100 AD, possibly on the site of an earlier church. You can still see an original Norman arch, font and piscina inside the church, which is usually open until 5pm.



Castleton Historical Society



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