

Froggatt and White Edges

A long but easy walk along some of Derbyshire's high gritstone edges. Stunning views make this one a 'must' for a clear day.

Walk Facts:

Start	Baslow (SK 258 721), on the A619 near Chatsworth Park.
Terrain	Paths and tracks along gritstone edges and over heather moorland. Initial climb out of Baslow.
Length	Twelve miles
Time	Five to six hours
Food/Drink	Shops, cafes and pubs in Baslow. Pub (Grouse Inn) en-route.
Toilets	Baslow

Route

From the car park in Baslow, cross the A619 Chesterfield road using the pedestrian crossing and head up Eaton Hill. At the end of this road, fork right onto Bar Road and follow this road, which becomes a track after a little while. You pass a sign declaring this to be a "restricted byway". This is a relatively new type of right of way which is generally open only to walkers, horse-riders, cyclists and horse-drawn carts and carriages. However when these were created, pre-existing rights of access by motorised vehicle were preserved, so you may come across the odd car or tractor accessing properties along the way.

Continue along the track, which climbs steeply out of the village. As you struggle up the hill, you can take comfort from the fact that this is the *only* steep climb of the day! The track itself is interesting enough and eventually your effort is rewarded as you break clear of the trees and views open up down into the valley and across Chatsworth Park. Follow the lane until eventually you reach a gate marking the boundary of open country. This is Baslow Moor. The moor is grazed by longhorn cattle, which are fearsome-looking but usually placid. However, like all cattle they sometimes become aggressive when they have young calves with them, so keep your distance at these times especially if you have a dog with you.



After passing through the gate continue to follow the path, which curves right, until open heather moorland appears and the track divides. The structure straight ahead is the Wellington Monument but there's no need to visit it now as you'll pass it on the return leg of the walk.

The path forks into two distinct branches, one going to the monument and the other heading across the moor towards a huge boulder. Ignore both of these and look for a smaller path to the left, which doubles back the way you've come but on a higher level.

The chosen path takes you along the edge of the moor (pictured left), with views down into the valley. You walk on grass amongst boulders which have been carved into fantastic shapes by the weather. This is a magical spot and you should linger and explore. The many paths all lead eventually to the same place so don't worry about which you take. However, there's a steep drop on the left, so keep away from the edge especially if there's ice and snow around. As you explore, look across to those trudging along the path which crosses the moor past the big boulder and feel sorry for them - they're missing all the fun!

After a while you find your way, via a gate, onto the road at Curbar Gap. Cross the road and use a rough track to enter the moorland again, passing after a short while through a 'kissing gate' to the right of a white gate. This is Curbar Edge and the track is now followed for about two miles, firstly over moorland then eventually through thin Birch woodland. Somewhere along here the name changes to Froggatt Edge but you won't notice any difference. The path is so obvious that you'd have to be a genius to lose it. At one point there's a small stone circle a little way off the path to the right but this is only easy to see in winter when the bracken has died down.

This is a brilliant piece of walking, easy and with great views in all directions. Take time to linger and enjoy. The views are seasonal, with swathes of white cotton grass blowing in the breeze in late spring and summer, replaced by glorious purple heather in autumn. In late September or early October, during the 'rut' (mating season) you may catch a glimpse of herds of normally-secretive red deer out on the open moor, groups of hinds each guarded by a huge antlered stag bellowing to proclaim his territory. I once walked along here early on a misty morning during the rut, the bellows of the stags piercing the mist and echoing around the rocks, elemental nature at its best. Every now and then, the mist parted and I caught an occasional glimpse of a stag standing defiantly, head thrust back, truly the king of his particular castle. An unforgettable experience.

Eventually another road (the A625) is reached. Turn right and walk alongside it for about half a mile until you get to the Grouse Inn. Immediately past the inn, and on the other side of the road, a gate gives access to a field. Cross the field diagonally left, heading for a gate in the corner. Pass through this and follow the path through an area of thin woodland. At the end of the wood turn right (there's a finger-post for White Edge). Follow the path uphill, soon acquiring a rather ruined wall on your right. Follow the wall until you get to a gap by a finger-post then turn right (signed 'Curbar') onto White Edge.

Follow the easy path right along White Edge, again enjoying the views. This area is a wildlife reserve, so please keep to the path (this has the best views anyway!). In autumn it's a blaze of purple heather. There's a good population of red grouse up here, but you're only likely to see them if you inadvertently disturb them and they suddenly burst from the ground and fly noisily away!

Soon after passing an old trig point on your left, you come to a finger-post indicating a path to Curbar Gap heading away right. Keen observers of the map will have noticed that this walk can be shortened by parking at Curbar Gap and picking up the outward route there. If you've done that, you should follow the path indicated by the finger post. The rest of us, however, carry straight on towards Birchens.



The path now leaves the heather behind and crosses grassland, boggy in places, heading for a distant cross-roads. A few hundred metres before the cross-roads is reached, look for a path leading away right. This joins the Curbar road. Cross the road and pass through a gate leading onto a track - you're now back on Baslow Moor. The track takes you back to the Wellington Monument above Baslow, accompanied at first by a substantial dry-stone wall. In spring the longhorn cattle may be found with cute calves (pictured right): remember to keep your distance especially if you have a dog with you. The picture was taken from some distance with a telephoto lens, in case you're wondering.

After passing the Wellington Monument, you soon come to the point where the paths across the moor meet up. Continue straight ahead and re-trace your earlier route down the lane and back to Baslow at the end of a long but delightful walk.

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