

Froggatt's Edge and Wood

An easy walk out along the high gritstone edge above Froggatt, followed by a return through mixed woodland. Superb on a crisp, clear Winter day.

Walk Facts:

Start	National Trust car park at Hay Wood (SK 255 776), off the A625 Sheffield road above Froggatt
Terrain	Paths and tracks along gritstone edges and through woodland. Woodland will be muddy in wet conditions.
Length	Six miles
Time	Around three hours
Food/Drink	None en-route. Pub (Grouse Inn) near start/finish
Toilets	None en-route. Nearest are at the National Trust visitor centre at Longshaw Lodge (SK 265 800)

Route

The car park entrance is on the left, shortly after the road comes out of the trees. After parking, walk to the end of the car park furthest from the entrance, then continue along a path which descends to cross a stream before climbing again to the road. Cross the road and enter the access area alongside a white gate. Incidentally, there's a steep descent to the parking area and in snowy conditions it might be best to leave the car in one of the nearby roadside parking places instead and walk down the road to the white gate.

Follow the obvious path, at first through Birch woodland and then onto open moorland along the gritstone edge. You can forget about navigation along here - the path is impossible to lose as it continues with magnificent views opening up into the valley far below to the right and ahead to Chatsworth Park. The fountain at Chatsworth can often be seen, although it's several miles away!



Take time to linger and enjoy the views, which 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.

Froggatt Edge itself is a gritstone cliff which is popular with climbers and they can often be heard below if not seen. Much fun can be had from exploring amongst the huge, strangely-shaped boulders, **provided care is taken** as there are sheer drops.

After a couple of miles, the car park and road at Curbar Gap are reached. Turn right onto the road and follow it downhill until it turns sharp left. On the bend, take short track to the right leading to a gate with a stile alongside it. Cross the stile and follow the path which goes straight ahead, through bracken.

You are now walking below Froggatt Edge, along a path you may earlier have seen from above. It continues through bracken for a while, then enters woodland. The trees are mainly birch, with some oak and beech. It has a varied and (in Spring) noisy bird population.

Follow the path through the wood. At first there's a wall to the left which you eventually leave, only to rejoin by way of a dog-leg in the path at a point where the way ahead is obstructed by some carefully-placed stone blocks. Continue along the obvious path through the wood until it goes through a gap in a wall. Turn left here and descend to join a lower path alongside a green gate. Turn right onto this new path and continue following it in the same direction as before.

Continue straight on when another path makes a cross-roads. The strange stone constructions which are passed are not pill-boxes or nuclear shelters but access points to an aqueduct taking water from the Derwent Valley reservoirs to the Derby and Nottingham areas.

Eventually, you come to a point where a wall crosses the path you're on (take care not to wander onto another path which leads away diagonally right just before this point). There's a stile in the wall - cross it and then follow the path to the left, indicated by a rather curt "Keep to Footpath" sign ('please' wouldn't have come amiss on the sign: I do wish landowners would realise that most walkers *want* to keep to the paths and don't need rude signs!)

The path descends to join the road. Turn right and walk along it for a short while until a minor road leads off to the left (signposted 'Froggatt'). Walk down this for a few yards, then enter Froggatt Wood to the right, alongside a National Trust sign.

Walk through the wood, along a path which twists and turns and can be muddy, until a stream (which varies from a torrent to a trickle depending on the weather) is crossed by way of stepping stones. Just after this take the rather less distinct path which branches off to the right and climbs up through the wood. This is the really muddy bit! Eventually, you cross a small field and then enter Hay Wood through a gate. Hay Wood is the home of grey squirrels and of tame robins and chaffinches which will often take titbits from close by. Walk straight ahead through the wood until you cross a stream by a bridge over a concrete water race. Shortly after this is another of the aqueduct accesses. A hundred metres further on, at a cross-roads of paths, turn right and then climb up through the wood, turning right again when another path is reached, to eventually arrive back at the car park.

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