

# Baslow, the Edges and Calver

**A lovely walk taking in some of Derbyshire's high gritstone edges, with their brilliant views, along with a couple of nice villages and a quiet walk alongside the river Derwent. Wonderful at any time of year, but especially spring and early summer.**

## Walk Facts:

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| Start      | Baslow (SK 258 721), on the A619 near Chatsworth Park  |
| Terrain    | Paths and tracks along gritstone edges, riverside field paths. There's an initial steep climb out of Baslow and a short but rough descent from Froggatt Edge |
| Length     | About eight miles  |
| Time       | Four hours or so   |
| Food/Drink | Shops, cafes and pubs in Baslow and Calver   |
| 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 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 - if you want to see it, take a detour now!

The path forks into two distinct branches, the right-hand 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 a mile and a half, 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 you pass through a stile by a gate, and immediately cross a small stream. You need to leave the main path here and turn left to enter the woodland. There's an indistinct path which follows the stream for a few metres, then branches. You need to take the right hand branch, so that you pass to the *right* of the small rock outcrop which is directly ahead. You now descend steeply down through the trees, taking great care amongst the slippery boulders. There's no obvious path here, you just need to make your way downhill. When you come to a wire mesh fence, turn right and follow it until the A625 road comes into view, then make your way down onto the road. Turn left and walk down the road, which is busy, for a few hundred yards until a side-road branches to the right into the houses of the village of Froggatt.

If you don't fancy (or aren't able to tackle) the rough descent through the wood, continue along the main path until it meets the road, then turn left and follow the road from there until you get the the side road. This adds a mile or so of distance, and involves more road walking, but is much less demanding.

Follow the side road and walk through the village, continuing downhill until the bridge over the river Derwent is reached. Cross the bridge and go through the stile on the left to join the riverbank path through a nature reserve, the Calver Marshes Wildlife Project, initially through trees then fields and finally trees once more. This is a lovely stroll alongside the quiet river, usually accompanied by ducks and water fowl. The nature reserve has many nesting birds and bog plants. In spring, look for long-tailed tits nesting amongst the willow trees. One of the aims of the project is to encourage water voles so you may be lucky to catch a glimpse of one, though I have to admit I've never done so! It's very interesting to compare the state of the riverbank in the areas where cattle have been excluded, with the areas where they still have access. It's a really good example of riverbank regeneration and should be applauded.

Eventually you rejoin the road alongside another bridge over the river. Cross the road but stay on the same side of the river, taking a track which goes straight ahead at the point where the road turns sharp left to cross the bridge. Follow this track through riverside woodland populated by squirrels and rabbits as well as many birds, until eventually you emerge into a large field with a campsite on the opposite side. Leaving the riverside, walk across the field to a gate alongside a building which looks at first sight rather like a chapel (but isn't).

After passing through the gate, walk down the campsite access road to reach the village of Calver (pronounced car-va). This village is interesting, dominated by the old mill which used water power to produce cotton but now has been converted to apartments. Cross the minor road, then follow the 'Subway' sign to take the tarmac path which heads for the riverbank and goes under the bridge carrying the main road over the Derwent. Pass behind a row of houses, to emerge into open fields.

Follow the riverbank again through a couple of fields to eventually get onto a track which skirts the edge of some woodland. Follow this track: you now have a field on the left and woodland to the right. When you exit from the woodland, continue along the obvious path across another couple of fields to reach a second track. Turn left onto this one and walk along it. Eventually the track turns into a road, which takes you back into Baslow. When a rather grand bridge over the river is reached, cross it and turn right to walk past the church, then cross the road and follow it past the traffic island to return to the car park and the end of a wonderfully varied walk.

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**This walk has been printed from <http://www.peakwalking.co.uk>**