

Burbage East Geocross V5

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BURBAGE MOOR

This is the last of four Geocross Trails around the Burbage Valley.

It features the Ox Stones, Lady Cannings Plantation and the rarely found Burbage Moor trig point

This land is now Countryside Rights of Way (CROW Act) free access but 100 years ago it was private and strictly managed by gamekeepers who were under instructions of the Duke of Rutland to keep people off his shooting moors. They were closed to the public until 1928.

Until 1928 the Duke had extensive game shooting moors covering 12,280 acres. Of these moorlands, Burbage Moor and Houndkirk Moor were closest to Longshaw Lodge.

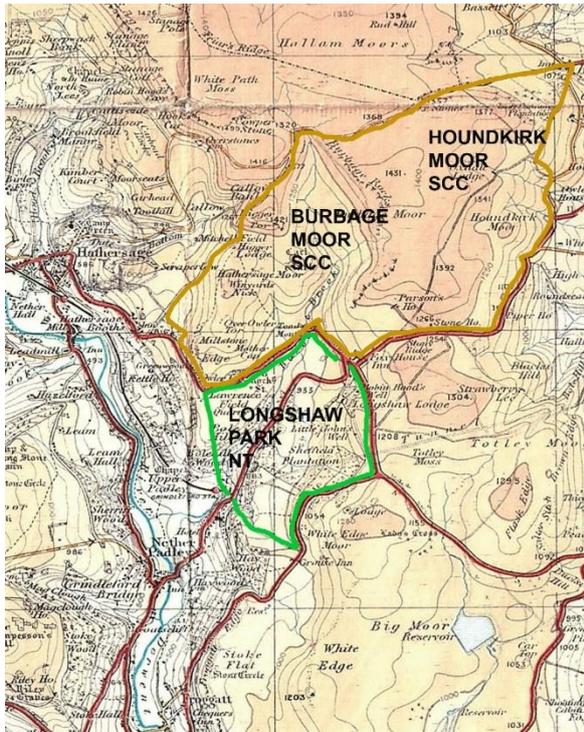
They were also closest to the expanding city of Sheffield, home of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Club.

By 1927 the Duke of Rutland was forced to sell his Derbyshire Eastern Edges shooting estates. Negotiations took place during the year with interested parties.

Sheffield Clarion Ramblers were at the forefront of campaigning for access to moorland, and one of the closest areas of moors to their base in Sheffield was Houndkirk and Burbage moors. Their founder, George Herbert Bridges Ward was prominent in helping secure public access to this land. He encouraged Ethel Haythornthwaite to raise public money to help buy Longshaw Estate. The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers contributed to the appeal for funds.

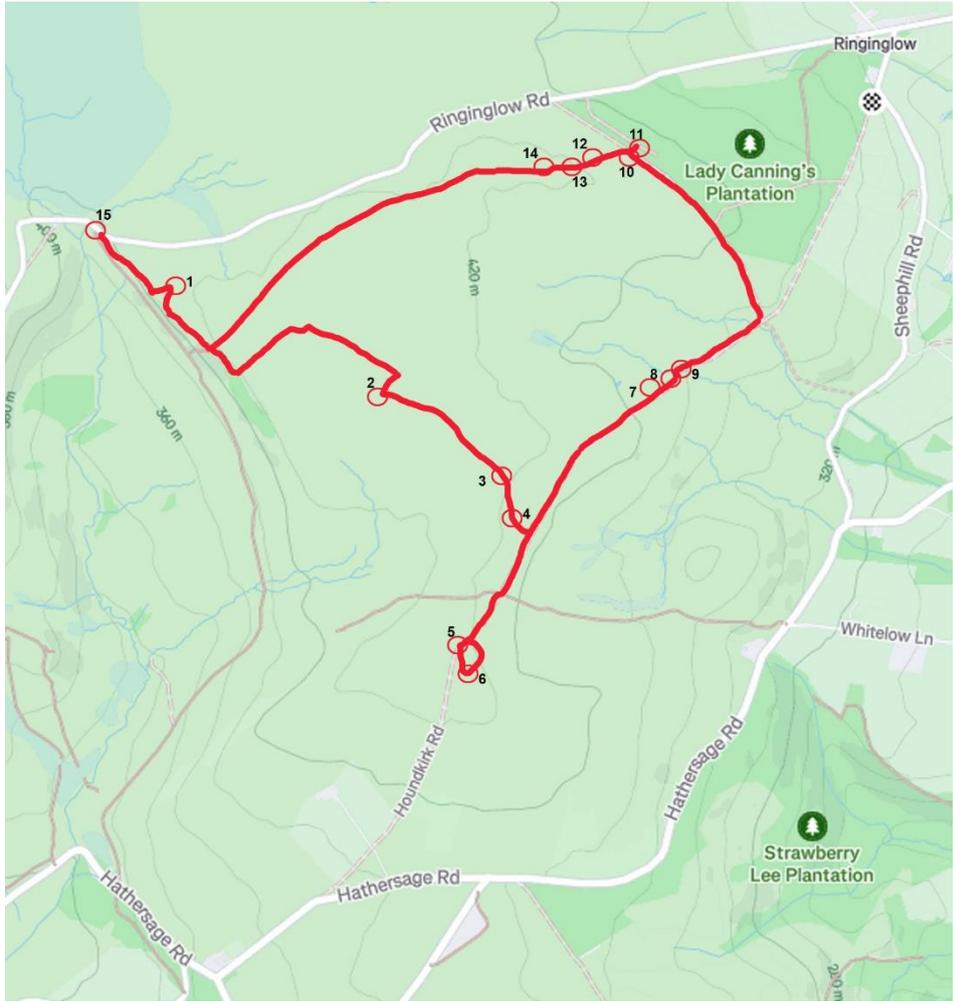
Peak District and Yorkshire Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England was set up as a countryside charity. Ethel Haythornthwaite was born into the Sheffield Ward family, daughter of one of the largest industrialists in the Steel City. She was very well connected and passionate about the countryside. She was also well educated and she knew how to use her connections to make things happen. One of her first major achievements was to raise a public appeal to purchase the 747 acre Longshaw Estate which was threatened with development.

In 1928 the purchase of Longshaw Estate was concluded. Ethel Haythornthwaite immediately gave Longshaw Hall and Park into the ownership of the National Trust.



What most people don't know is that Sheffield City Council bought Houndkirk and Burbage Moors in 1928 and still own them. In 1928 SCC had long term plans for a reservoir and a housing estate.

Each of the locations can be found on the route below.



Start and finish at Burbage North Bridge

Location 1 OS ref SK 26456 82794

Metal railing enclosure

W3W event.blend.tinsel



A rainfall recording station was situated here until the 1950s. This was part of the planning for the Burbage Reservoir which was never built. There is also a flow recording weir 3 km south on the Burbage Brook as it passes through Lawrencefield in Longshaw Estate.

Location 2 OS ref SK 27209 82421

Burbage Moor Mudge's Station

W3W handy.prep.topped



Colonel William Mudge became Director of the Ordnance Survey in 1791 century.

He instructed surveyors to mark the survey location by carving three permanent arrow benchmarks, of which this is one, to mark the position of a triangulation point. A line drawn from each benchmark would intersect at a 'Mudges Station'. Subsequent Ordnance Survey surveyors would use these to locate their surveying equipment in exactly the same place. Mudge's Stations covered the whole country before 1955 when the white painted concrete 'trig points' were constructed.

About 25 years ago a local expert placed a metal pole in a mound of stones to make the Burbage Trig Point more visible.

Location 3 OS ref SK 27594 82162

Ken's Cairn

W3W ruby.lions.labels



Ken thought this location deserved to have a cairn, so he built one.

Burbage Moor is quite featureless and little visited. There were 30 red deer keeping a low profile here in spring 2023. The four stags in the photograph were guarding the hinds lying down.

Location 4 OS ref SK 27744 81920

Houndkirk Angel

W3W lower.pirate limbs



A small crude carving of an angel under an overhanging rock. The angel is right of centre. It is best spotted at night with a torch.

It might have been carved by a WW2 Home Guard soldier on duty at the Starfish Decoy site?

Location 5 OS ref SK 27661 81650

Cairns path gate

W3W custom.trial.acheiving



The Cairns Path is an ancient crossing of the moors between Dore and Hathersage. The large cairns are useful in winter when the moors are deep with snow.

Location 6 OS ref SK 27680 81526

Wall Corner in site of WW2 Starfish Decoy

W3W merit.liner.shack



The Starfish Decoy was a very complex arrangement of tracks and ditches, designed by an artist who had seen Sheffield from the air at night. This was built to give enemy aircraft the impression that this was the Sheffield steelworks, and encourage them to drop their bombs on the moorland. At night fire baskets were lit and 'streets' were lit to give the impression of furnaces glowing and the sparks of electric trams. It was set up in the early years of the Second World War. The equipment was controlled from an underground bunker 300 metres south.

The name given to these installations throughout Britain was Special Fire or SF sites. SF became StarFish.

There is no record that any bombs were dropped here.

Location 7 OS ref SK 28140 82320

Houndkirk Road Gate post with benchmark

W3W able.shelf.pardon



A gatepost to a stone walled field. Shooting estates usually had a walled field to grow black oats as a fodder crop for the grouse.

The field was later used by Oxdale Lodge Inn for resting drovers cattle overnight on their way to Sheffield markets.

Location 8 SK 28337 82493

Thieves Bridge

W3W wants.saints.placed



Thieves Bridge gained its name because it was a good location for highwaymen to waylay travellers on Houndkirk Road. It is far from habitation. The tunnel beneath the road gave a good hiding place for the thieves to lurk in.

Cattle drovers would have to cross Thieves Bridge on their way to Sheffield markets, and again on their return journey with the cash proceeds of their sale.

The name pre-dates the building of the inn at Oxdale Lodge. Once the Lodge was opened the thieves left.

Location 9 OS ref SK 28305 82494

Badger House barn

W3W grew.before.state



Badger House was one of 9 gamekeepers lodges on the Duke of Rutland's shooting estate.

Oxdale Lodge was an Inn on the Houndkirk Road turnpike, close to Thieves Bridge. It was a place for drovers to safely rest cattle overnight in small walled pens, on their way to be sold in Sheffield market the next day.

Oxdale Lodge was later divided into two dwellings and renamed Badger Houses. The historic 1920s photograph shows these two houses. The Duke of Rutland's gamekeeper occupied one of them until 1928. The large walled field was used to grow Black Oats, a fodder crop for grouse.

Location 10 SK 28138 83274

Lady Cannings Plantation

W3W stands.bumpy.org



Lady Canning was sister in law to the Duke of Portland, who was the grandson of the 4th Duke of Devonshire. The Duke of Devonshire had an interest in the shallow coal mining operation at Ringinglow.

When the coal ran out the land was abandoned. Lady Canning wanted to see it put to good use. She spent £100 on plantation experiments around 1820, aiming to restore the coal-mine workings to useful land. Lady Canning's Plantation has been replanted at least twice as conifers and is now being converted to a native broadleaf woodland.

In 1844 a wiremill was built in Ringinglow village because it was able to sink a shaft down to the coal seam below its own yard.

Location 11 SK 28149 83305

Mountain bike start

W3W share.storms.caller



200 years after the conifers were first planted, Lady Canning would be amazed to find that the coal-mined wasteland she helped transform into woodland has had a new lease of life as a very popular sporting venue.

Location 12 SK 27977 83211

Bellpit mine pond

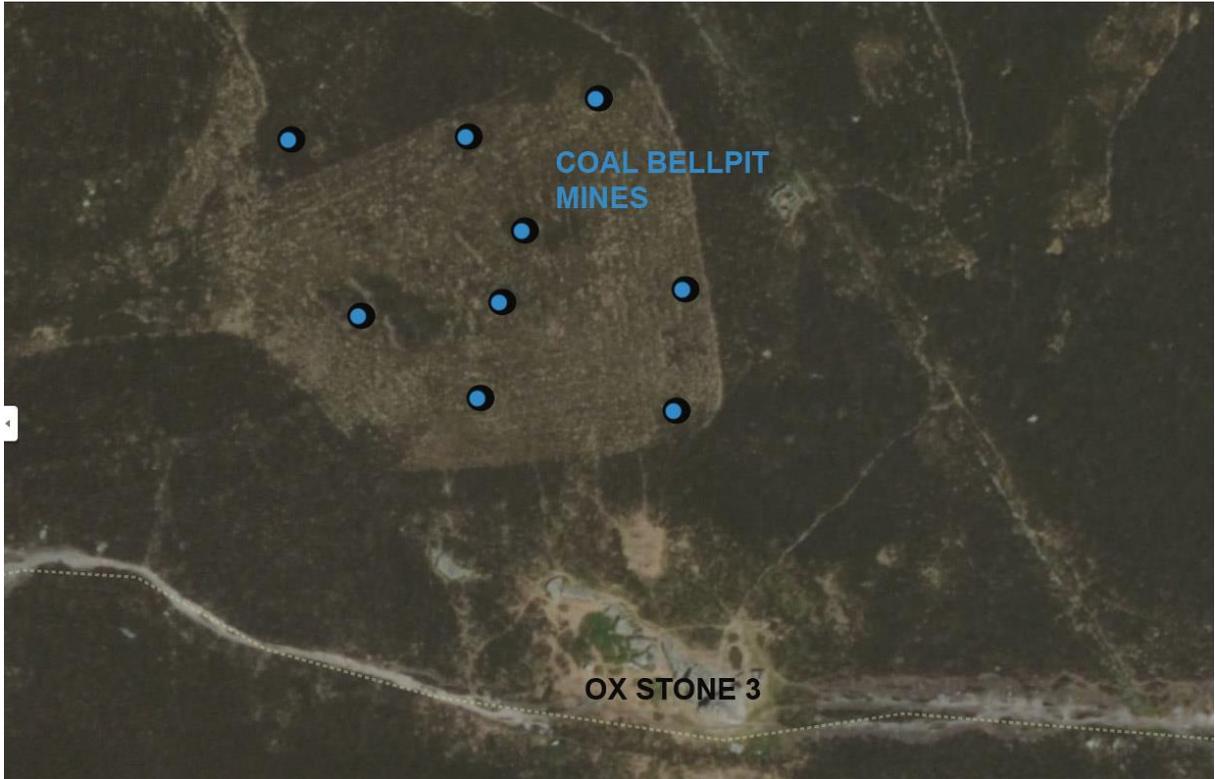
W3W waters.brush.sunset



One of many bellpit coal mines beyond Ringinglow Plantation. The coal seam was shallow and easy to mine. A shaft was dug and then mined out horizontally into the coal seam as far as safely possible. The coal miners worked the seam in all directions until they had made a hollow bell shaped cavern at the point of imminent collapse. It was then abandoned and a new shaft sunk nearby. The pit eventually collapsed into itself to form an inverted bell shape. They were also known as 'pudding holes'

The coal workings at Ringinglow extended far beyond Lady Cannings Plantation.

They often fill with water and become concealed by heather. I know that from a slightly frightening experience on a night running race.



They are virtually invisible until the heather has been cut down

Location 13 OS ref SK 27936 83157

Ox Stones 1 & 2

W3W fantastic.hobby.luxury



Two of the Ox Stones. The third is 200 metres west. These are windsculpted gritstone tors.

A very popular place for picnics and a bit of rock scrambling.

And a welcome landmark in bad weather.

Location 14 OS ref SK 27795 83162

Ox Stone 3

W3W grabs.data.bank



The third is the largest Ox Stone.

There was a major fire on Burbage Moor in May 2023.

Some incompetent picnickers lost control of their disposable barbeque close to this less visited Ox Stone. Strong wind took the fire west across the tinder dry heather moor until firefighters and volunteers managed to stop it reaching the Burbage Valley.



Location 15 SK 26184 82970

Burbage North Bridge Green Drive gate

W3W putty.commented.delay

The best surviving boundary stone wall on the Burbage Estate. Most of the other stone walls have collapsed or been 'removed' (stolen at night) for a new life as rockeries in the suburbs of Whirlow and Dore.

In October 1922 the Marquess of Granby, eldest son of John Manners the 3rd Duke of Rutland, exercised his right to close the Burbage Green Drive by walling up the entrance at the North Bridge. This did not go down well with the rambling community. 'Angry Passers By' threw the walls down in November.

Sheffield Clarion Ramblers were very keen on 'Ridding the Green Drive of the 'instructed' gamekeepers'. They achieved this in 1928.

Theft of quarry waste was reported in the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Handbook of 1937. Nighttime poaching building sand and rockery stones from the moors edges was a thriving business once the gamekeepers were gone. The new houses built for war heroes to live in were happy to buy cartloads of rockery stone for three shillings and sixpence a load.

Until 2006 a narrow pedestrian gate and a dilapidated field gate wrapped with barbed wire greeted visitors to this well-used gateway to the popular Burbage Valley. The Moors for the Future Partnership rebuilt the wall and gates about 90 years after the Marquis of Granby had walled up the Green Drive.



It still gets knocked down by careless drivers!