

Burbage North Geocross V2

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BURBAGE VALLEY – HIGGAR TOR & CARL WARK

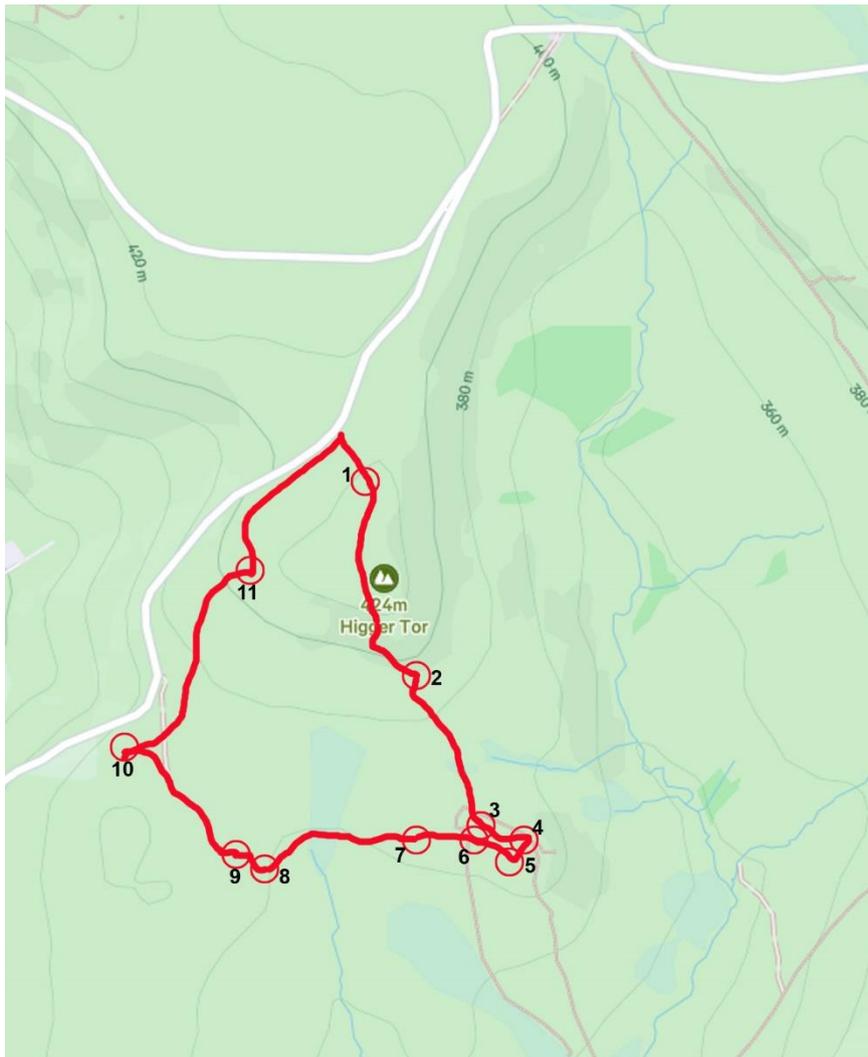
This is the second of four Geocross Trails around the Burbage Valley.

Higgar Tor and Carl Wark are the main features and are two of the most distinctive tors in the Peak District.

Higgar Tor is not massive but it manages to make a big impression on visitors due to the Leaning Block.



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

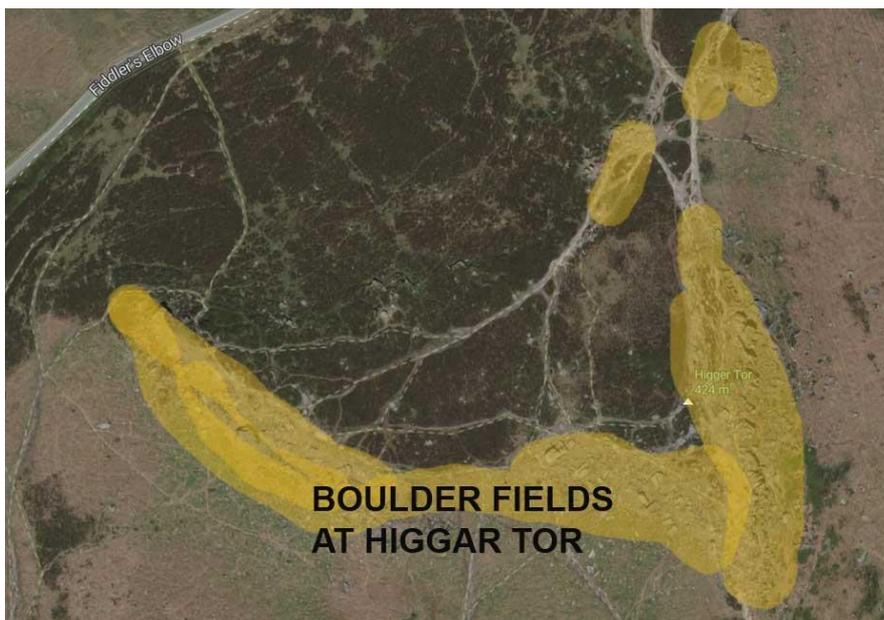


Start and finish at Higgar Tor car parking

Location 1 OS ref SK 25689 82085

Higgar Tor Rock Basin

W3W movies.tones.patrol



The summit plateau of Higgar Tor has masses of naturally wind sculpted gritstone.

Rock basins were useful to early man as a reliable source of clean rainwater. Wind would swirl small stones until they carved out a 'basin'.



The boulder fields of Higgar Tor have recently become very popular with Outdoor Activity courses. Instructed groups arrive by minibus with young people kitted out with helmets and overalls. These guided groups carry out an activity called 'weaselling' This is like above ground caving.

Location 2 OS ref SK 25733 81874

KitKat Stones

W3W nobody.driven.shuts



KitKat bars were made by Rowntree of York. They are now made by the world-wide Nestle Group.

These aptly named gritstone 'fingers' have split along bedding planes. The four fingers are 300 – 400 mm wide and surprisingly uniform in length and width.

The magnificent view to the south is of the plateau of Cark Wark

Carl Wark is very well protected by a north-east facing boundary of vertical crags.

Location 3 OS ref SK 25896 81513

Carl Wark defensive wall

W3W digit.ties.office



This man-made defensive wall is on the west side of Carl Wark hillfort. The site is thought to have been fortified in the Iron Age although it stands amongst Bronze Age (4000 years ago) cairns and field systems and may even have been in use during the prehistoric Neolithic period (6000 years ago).

The defensive hillfort site is about 1ha and is strewn with boulders. It would have been difficult to build structures for a permanent settlement so it may have been primarily a defensive site to retreat when threatened by invaders.

The thickly wooded River Derwent valley down below allowed groups of invading tribes to approach hilltop defensive sites unseen.

Location 4 OS ref SK 25979 81474

Domed Millstones

W3W fresh.also.simple



About 100 metres north-east of the Rocking Stone is a steep gully. Muddled in the gully is a trio of dome topped millstones, tipped downslope, perhaps to be carted away. They had jammed, and wedged on top of each other, and were unlikely to ever be moved again.

There are many abandoned millstones in the Burbage Valley. In the heyday of millstone carving it would have been a very noisy place.

Location 5 OS ref SK 25925 81459

Rocking Stone

W3W slowly.sleepy.depend



There are less than 20 Rocking Stones in the Peak District. There may have been more, but they offer a challenge to boisterous young people who like to topple them.

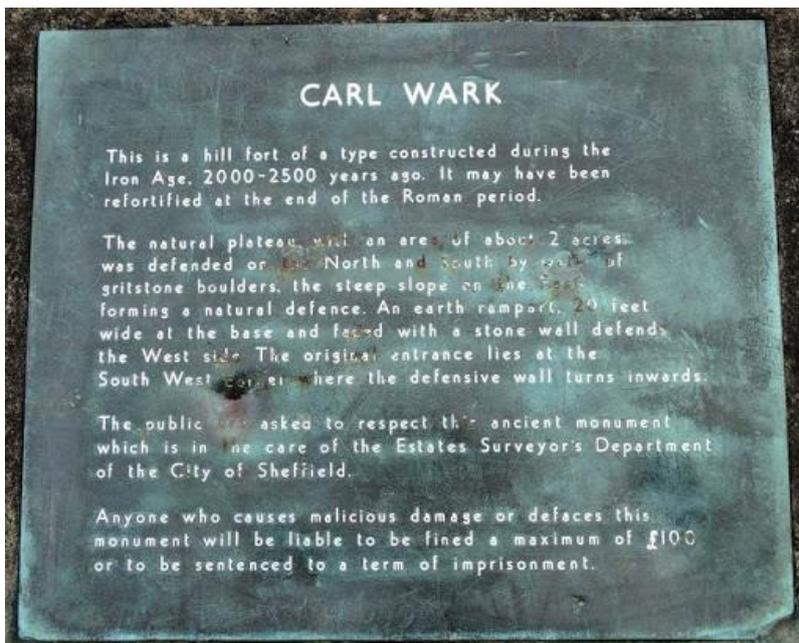
I've been over Carl Wark hundreds of times but only found this rocking stone in 2023. I suspect the weaselling groups discovered it before me and used social media to spread the word.

One person can get it rocking quite easily.

Location 6 OS ref SK 25846 81485

Carl Wark sign

W3W safety.mouse.faces



The sign was erected before the Second World War. The whole of the Burbage Valley was handed over to military training. This plaque was possibly placed to warn the military training soldiers away from causing damage.

Anyone who causes malicious damage or defaces the monument will be liable to be fined or to be sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

Location 7 OS ref SK 25800 81460

Carl Wark west entrance

W3W report.hoot.notice



Part of the defensive hillfort. There would have been a wooden fence to link the gate to walls and natural rock defences.

Location 8 OS ref SK 25392 81405

West end of rock escarpment south of sheep-pen

W3W kept.late.line



Overlooking the walled field. A local climber and PE teacher brought several generations of schoolchildren to this position. He told them that this field was Sheffield Wednesdays secret 'high altitude training ground'.

Location 9 OS ref SK 25340 81436

Wall corner orienteering course

W3W note.exists.hits



Most shooting estates had a walled field for growing fodder crops. They had to be walled to keep sheep out. Burbage Moor was once owned by the Longshaw Estate, which had five fields which were used for growing black oats as a fodder crop for grouse.

Current best practice is not to grow fodder crops for the grouse. They eat young heather shoots in spring which ties in with their breeding season. Young shoots are encouraged by 'brashing' the older leggy heather in random shaped blocks.

The Longshaw Estate now belongs to The National Trust, and Sheffield City Council own Burbage Moor which is also managed by The National Trust. Grazing by sheep and cattle is part of the management regime.

On other commercially managed grouse moors nearby, sheep and cattle are excluded because they might trample the nesting grouse and disturb their main money-making activity.

There is no grouse shooting on Burbage Moor and this small walled field is now used as a sheepfold. Comparing this photograph with one taken 4 years previously, it is clear that the wall corner and the sheep stoop has been rebuilt.

This orienteering course might have been set up for military navigation training during World War 2 when Home Guard and Canadian Infantry trained in the Burbage Valley. It has since been 'adopted' by the nearby Parsons Farm Outdoor Activities Centre. This easily found 'Wall Corner' was part of an permanent orienteering course with 18 checkpoints spread around the Burbage Valley. Each was identified by a unique carved symbol on an unmoveable rock.

Location 10 OS ref SK 25220 81607

Higgar Lodge gate post

W3W score.cafe.crew



The site of one of nine gamekeepers lodges for the Duke of Rutland's Longshaw shooting estate.

Location 11 OS ref SK 25475 81948

Higgarr Tor Leaning Block

W3W power.lows.rating

The massive Leaning Block on the west side of Higgarr Tor is a very well known feature. For rock climbers it's the Main Event on Higgarr Tor.

This 14 metre high and 12 metres wide block has become detached from the massive gritstone of Higgarr Tor and is moving very slowly downhill.

This process is called 'mass wasting' and is like a very slow moving landslide. It is happening on the slopes below the main gritstone crags of the Eastern Edges in the Peak District. Very slow means thousands of years.

Some of these blocks have names and some are popular with climbers for 'bouldering' short and usually very hard climbs.

This one is simply called The Leaning Block. It weighs more than 4000 tonnes and leans at an angle of 17 degrees. Prospective climbers are usually intimidated when they arrive at the base of the climb.





The aptly named Leaning Block of Higgar Tor has a number of fierce climbs up the overhanging face. The face is currently about 17 degrees overhanging. Some climbers believe that it has become steeper in their lifetime.

The iconic climb of The Rasp tells you something about the texture of the rock. Don Whillans climbed it in November 1956 with Joe Brown and Nat Allen, members of the legendary Rock and Ice climbing club. These were the Hard Years, and they were

the best of the 'hard men'. They probably climbed in plimsolls and had very primitive climbing equipment.

Modern camming devices make it much quicker to climb, but hanging from your arms to climb up 14 metres on this Leaning Block is a daunting prospect.