

Froggatt Moor Geocross V85

FROGGATT MOOR

Froggatt Edge and the moor above is very easily accessible today. There are car parks to the north on the National Trusts Longshaw Estate, and a car park at Curbar Gap at the south owned by the Eastern Moors Partnership. There are also good public service bus routes.

It's the closest moorland to the city of Sheffield.

If you walk along the 'Green Drive' which was described as the 'most beautiful three miles in Derbyshire' you will meet many people out walking with friends, families and dogs. There will be outdoor sports enthusiasts, runners, cyclists and climbers.



Yet not so many years ago, Froggatt Moor was a frontline battleground for access.

Many people thought that the sale of the Duke of Rutland's moorland shooting estates in 1927 meant that public access was immediately available. Not so, although Sheffield City Council did quickly allow public access to Burbage Valley and Moors.

Sheffield Clarion Ramblers were founded in 1900 and immediately became heavily involved in regaining lost rights of way across the moors. They helped raise money to

Between them, members of SCR collectively knew more about the moors than the shooting landlords. This detailed map of the Lost Bridle Roads on Froggatt and Big Moors is from the 1944 SCR Handbook hand-drawn by GHB Ward. It is one of several maps he drew over a 40 year period covering Big Moor. It shows all the traditional rights of way which had been blocked off by the shooting landlords.

This cart track across Froggatt Moor is labeled Drive and Old Millstone Road. It runs from Curbar Gap to Stoke Flat and the Grouse Inn.

In the 1927 edition of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Handbook, GHB Ward wrote a short article about the Old Millstone Road. He says it was established before 1816, one of the 'most beautiful three miles in Derbyshire'. It was closed again in 1926 and most pedestrians were 'turned back' by 'watchers'. The next year, 1927 was the year when the Longshaw Estate shooting moors were sold to Sheffield City Council and the National Trust.

Two years later, writing in the 1929 Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Handbook, GHB Ward writes that the shooting rights on Froggatt, Curbar and Big Moor have been leased to William Wilson for a five year period. Wilson, a Sheffield snuff manufacturer, owned other shooting moorland including Stanedge Lodge and Hallam Moors near Redmires Reservoirs.

In 1932 the mass trespass protest on Kinder Scout was a clash between gamekeepers and ramblers. Some ramblers were arrested and imprisoned.

I think it can be certain that clashes between gamekeepers and ramblers were a much more frequent occurrence on Froggatt Moor. There are only a few points of access. The infamous white gates were kept locked and footpath entrances didn't exist.

Bert Ward and his Sheffield Clarion Ramblers had been trying to amicably negotiate access to Froggatt and Curbar Moors and Big Moor. But these moors were now in the hands of William Wilson, an enemy of public rights of way, as he had shown by blocking up footpaths and removing historic guidestones on Bamford and Stanage Moor.

By 1937 SCRH GHB Ward is much more positive. He reports that North East Derbyshire Water Works have bought the lease to Froggatt and surrounding moorlands. As a Civil Servant himself, Ward is certain that the NEDWW (public sector) and will be obliged to listen to his argument about long established access rights.

It was to be another 14 years before Ward won his access campaign. This came by the creation of the Peak District National Park in 1951, with a remit to provide public access.

Rock Climbing on Froggatt and Curbar Edges

The production of the first definitive climbing guidebook to Froggatt Edge began in 1933 by Eric Byne, Secretary of the Sheffield Climbing Club. It took 18 years to complete.

In 1951 Climbs on Gritstone Sheffield Area was published. It is recorded that 'Unfortunately Froggatt and Curbar Edges were closely guarded by gamekeepers and it was not possible to secure permission to explore.....'

Exploration without permission had in fact proceeded through the 1930s and 1940s. In 1933 the first ascent of Froggatt Pinnacle was completed. But it wasn't until the post-war year of 1948 that the Valkyrie Climbing Club thoroughly explored Froggatt Edge and paid no attention to hostile gamekeepers. The historic photo shows Joe Brown on the first ascent of Valkyrie on Froggatt Pinnacle.



By 1950 the mysteries of Froggatt and Curbar Edges had been thoroughly explored and recorded by members of the Valkyrie and Oread Climbing Clubs. Famous Valkyrie climbers Joe Brown and Don Whillans were not put off by gamekeepers' threats!

THE LEGEND OF JOE BROWN by Tom Patie (verses 1 & 2)

Many tales are told of climbers bold
Who perished in the snow,
But this is a rhyme of the rise to fame
Of a working lad named Joe.
He came from good old Manchester,
That quaint old-fashioned town,
And his name became a legend—
The legend of Joe Brown.

We've sung it once. We'll sing it twice.
He's the hardest man in the Rock and Ice.
He's marvellous. He's fabulous.
He's a wonder man, is Joe.

He first laid hand upon a crag
In the year of forty-nine.
He'd nowt but pluck, beginner's luck,
And his mother's washing line.
He scaled the gritstone classics
With unprecedented skill.
His fame soon reached the Gwryd,
Likewise the Dungeon Ghyll.

Climbing the very hard 'Gritstone Classics' on the Eastern Edges was dominated by Joe Brown and Don Whillans. When a group of climbers arrived to spend the day exploring Froggatt and Curbar Edges, no gamekeepers would be able to throw them off. This was not a deliberate challenging mass trespass like the 1932 Kinder trespass. It was the arrival of post-war groups of strong young men, many out to make a name for themselves as rock climbers. They had no fear of entering previously forbidden land.

The British Mountaineering Council took over production of definitive rock climbing guides to the Peak District in 1970. I became involved with these guidebooks since 1970 when Series Editor Dave Gregory asked me to draw the location maps for Froggatt and Curbar Edges, which are so difficult to see from the ground. I had access to Sheffield University's photogrammetry equipment to produce accurate 3D images.

The Sheffield-Froggatt Area climbing guide came out in 1970 and included a chapter about Access written by Dave Gregory and The Peak Park Planning Board. The first sentence states 'designation of the National Park does not confer any right to access.' All subsequent guidebooks have taken Access very seriously.

By 1970 Froggatt Edge, Curbar Edge and Baslow Edge had become the property of the North Derbyshire Water Board. They were covered by an access agreement. However, that agreement allowed '*Withdrawal of rights of access from 12 August to 10 December during the grouse shooting season.*'

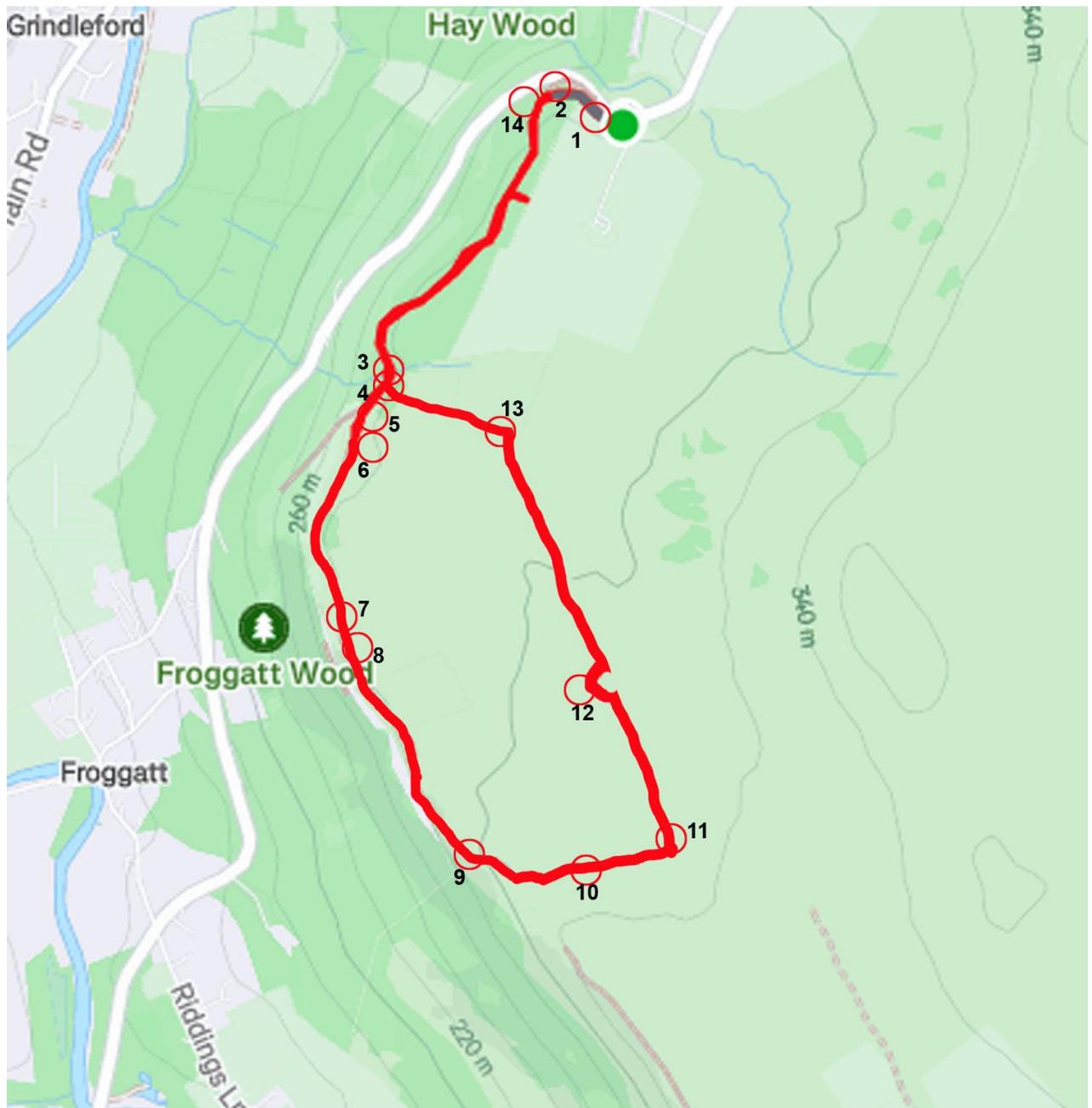
By the 1978 edition of the Froggatt Area guidebook the land had become the property of Severn-Trent Water Authority and was still covered by an access agreement.

The 1985 edition of Derwent Gritstone (including Froggatt and Curbar Edges) makes no mention of closure during the grouse shooting season, probably because the North Derbyshire Water Board didn't allow shooting. It also states that the Peak Park Joint Planning Board are about to become owners of the land.

The British Mountaineering Council appointed their first dedicated Access Officer in 1987.

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

Start from the Grouse Inn or roadside parking



OS ref SK 25446 77582

Froggatt Edge White Gate

W3W risen.wiping.player



Before 1927 the Duke of Rutland owned seven game shooting moors close to Longshaw Estate. These covered 11,700 acres and each one had a gamekeepers lodge:-

Houndkirk Moor

Burbage Moor

Totley Moor

Big Moor

Froggatt and Curbar Moors

Ramsley Moor

Leash Fen

All the shooting moorlands had white painted gates. They were kept locked, and the Duke instructed his gamekeepers to keep the public out.

In 1927 the Duke was forced to sell all his shooting moorlands to clear debts.

The Peak District and Yorkshire Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England were able to help Sheffield City Council buy the entire Longshaw Estate.

It was pre-agreed with Sheffield City Council that the Longshaw Estate would be given to the National Trust. It took four years to arrange the details of this deal.

In 1927 - 1928 the purchase of The Longshaw Estate was concluded and in 1931 Ethel Haythornthwaite was able to give Longshaw Estate, to the National Trust.

OS ref SK 25380 77597

Froggatt Edge path

W3W racing.soda.invite



The path onto Froggatt Edge had been well-made, here with flat topped stones called causeys. Like the well-known Green Drive in Burbage Valley, this Green Drive was for invited guests on shooting meets. Members of the public were not allowed here, and even after the 1927 change of ownership, it was going to be another 24 years before access was allowed.

OS ref SK 25010 76968

Stoke Flat stream bridge

W3W wobbles.excuse.shade



There are three sets of walled moorland enclosure fields on the Duke of Rutlands shooting moorland above Froggatt and Curbar Edge. At the north of Froggatt Edge at Stoke Flat are 10 fields.

At Curbar Gap there are two sets of walled fields, Curbar Fields to the west and White Edge Fields to the east. Both are early 18th century 'Enclosure of Commons' and

comprise eight fields. Siddall was a farmer from Curbar who cleared and enclosed White Edge Fields and then rented the land from the Duke of Rutland for £2 4s 6d a year.

There are similar fields on both sides of the A625 around the Grouse Inn (11 fields). South of Curbar Gap on Eaglestone Flat there are another 10 enclosed fields.

The Duke of Rutland benefitted by having part of his easily accessible land nearest to roads made into improved enclosed fields. The rental income was useful. In the long term he was achieving an increased value of moorland which was now suitable for grazing and crops.

Stoke Flat was a marsh and substantial drainage ditches had to be dug. There is a small seasonal pond which has not been successfully drained.

The water drains mainly north but there is a minor stream which passes below the Green Drive near the next gate.

OS ref SK 25025 76953

Green Drive pedestrian gate

W3W solid.wolf.rotation



The main gate is locked but emergency vehicles have a key.

The pedestrian gate has the warning notices. No fires or barbeques. And Beware of Adders. I have seen adders basking on this path.

There are now many more adders on the Peak District moors than there used to be.

Adders are mainly eaten by birds of prey, crow family (crows), and pheasants.

Possibly because there are few places for raptors roosting on this moor. They used to eat adders and other small amphibians, rodents and reptiles.

OS ref SK 24958 76796

Froggatt Stone Circle

W3W handlebar.bonkers.supply



Froggatt Edge Stone Circle is also known as Stoke Flat Stone Circle. It has an upright pillar with a sometimes water filled basin on top, where small money offerings are often present.

It is one of the best stone circles in the Peak District and has Bronze Age origins some 4000 years ago. Because it has very easy access, just 20 metres from a well used path, it is now very heavily worn.

OS ref SK 24927 76740

Stone Borrow Pit

W3W after.superhero.marketing



Before 1927 the Green Drive above Froggatt was used by coaches and carts for the Dukes shooting parties. It had to be kept in perfect condition. To carry out repairs the road workmen would dig gritstone out of small pits by the roadside. These are frequent and equally spaced out, roughly 20 metres apart.

OS ref SK 24935 76347

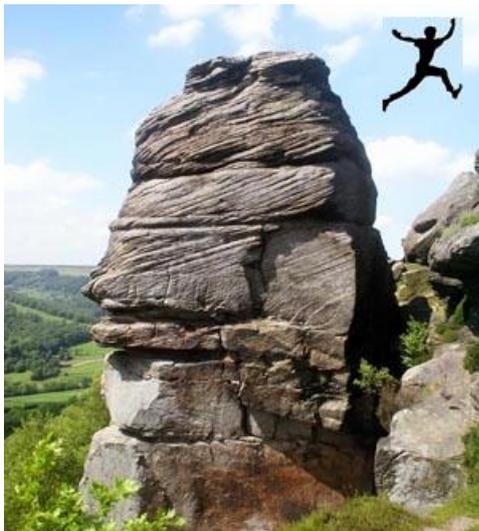
Froggatt Gates

W3W croutons.footballers.everybody



This gritstone tor above Froggatt Edge is a cluster of large boulders, part of the underlying bed of gritstone. The Green Drive has been cut through the middle.

When it was regularly used by carts it was much smoother but now its only used by walkers and mountain bikers. Its very lumpy.



On the right hand side is Froggatt Pinnacle, a landmark which stands out from Froggatt Edge as a free-standing tor.

There is a famous jump from Froggatt Pinnacle back to the top of the main crag. This is named Cooks Leap. Chuck Cook made this leap around 1950 for a small bet. Climbers sometimes attempt it. The top of Froggatt Pinnacle is quite a lot higher than the main crag and this leap has claimed quite a tally of broken legs. Wise climbers abseil off.



OS ref SK 24975 76290

Gregorys Field

W3W banter.converged.dilute



Most shooting estates had a walled field for growing black oats as a fodder crop. They had to be walled to keep sheep out. The black oats encourage the grouse to stay on this moor. Gregory may have been a gamekeeper.

There is now no grouse shooting on Froggatt Moor.

OS ref SK 25208 75905

Footpath junction

W3W snooping.planting.initiated



Footpath junction. The left path follows the Green Drive round a hairpin bend as it rises up onto Curbar Edge. The right path is rocky and has the best views over the Dewent Valley

OS ref SK 25558 75751

Footpath Guide Stone

W3W cure.thuds.watchdogs



This unsigned footpath can be boggy but it is well trodden. It heads east to the summit trig on White Edge.

OS ref SK 25860 75992

Old Millstone Road

W3W stormy.behalf.bared



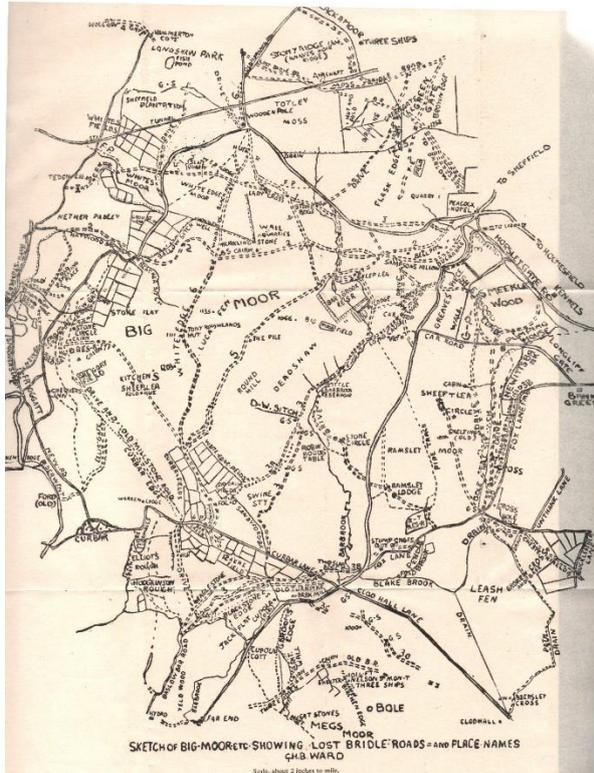
The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers were active campaigners for access to the countryside. Their Founder, GHB (Bert) Ward, lived close to Big Moor and Froggatt and Curbar.

This cart track across Froggatt Moor is labeled Drive and Old Millstone Road. It runs from Curbar Gap to Stoke Flat and the Grouse Inn.

In the 1927 edition of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers Handbook, GHB Ward wrote a short article about the Old Millstone Road. He says it was established before 1816, one of the most beautiful three miles in Derbyshire. It was closed again in 1926 and most pedestrians were 'turned back' by 'watchers'. 1927 was when the shooting moors were sold to Sheffield City Council and the National Trust

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The map was redrawn by GHB Wards son in 1964 entitled 'NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE JOINT WATER COMMITTEE. Plan Showing Authorized Tracks and Drives on Moors. That give it an official recognition by an appointed 'Public Body'.

The map has the name David Cuthill AMICE AMIWE Water Engineer in the bottom right. To people who read engineers drawings, this bottom right is the position of Authority.

The use of Capital Letters also adds Authority!

OS ref SK 25610 76207

Shelter walls

W3W decisive.buck.automate



This cross configuration of stone walls is a freestanding sheep shelter. For any wind or snowdrift direction there is always shelter for sheep. It was rebuilt recently. This is the only one of its type in the Peak District. The map labels this Kitchens Sheeplea Fold.

OS ref SK 25297 76703

Stone working area

W3W upstarts.launch.herb



The Old Millstone Road takes a sharp turn to the west at its northern end.

There are heaps of partly worked gritstone blocks, possibly an easily accessible stone masons workplace. This might be the remains of the Stoke Flat field stone which was cleared to make them into cultivatable land..

OS ref SK 25354 77591

Labrador Rock

W3W dragon.intend.photo



At the north end of Froggatt Edge is this curious boulder, It looks like a Labradors head looking out over the Derwent Valley. Popular with picnics and boulderers.