

Lawrencefield Geocross V9

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LONGSHAW ESTATE

Longshaw Lodge was built in 1827 as a 'shooting box' by John Henry Manners, 5th Duke of Rutland, as the centrepiece of his moorland shooting estates.

Longshaw Estate is split into two parts by the Grindleford – Fox House B6521 road. The East side is Longshaw Park where Longshaw Lodge is located.

The West side is Lawrencefield and Bole Hill.

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.

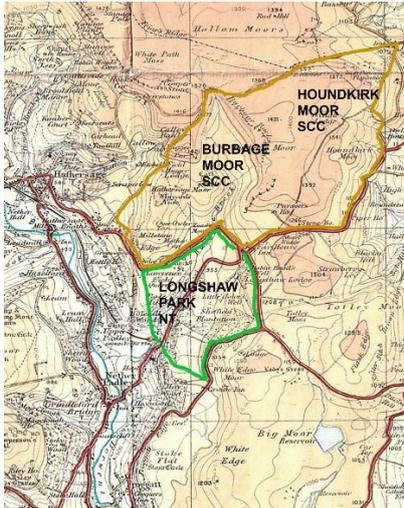
There are no signs of shooting moorland management on Longshaw Park, and none on Lawrencefield.

In fact the largest part of Lawrencefield, the moor of Owler Tor, has hardly changed since the 11th century when a medieval field system with long houses were present.

But the tiny part that has changed significantly is Bole Hill which became a 'Super-Quarry' between 1901 – 1912, to provide the gritstone blocks which create the castle-like faces of the Howden and Derwent Dams. Interesting that this superquarry is not visible from the Dukes Longshaw Lodge, but was highly visible on the skyline to the whole of Hope Valley.

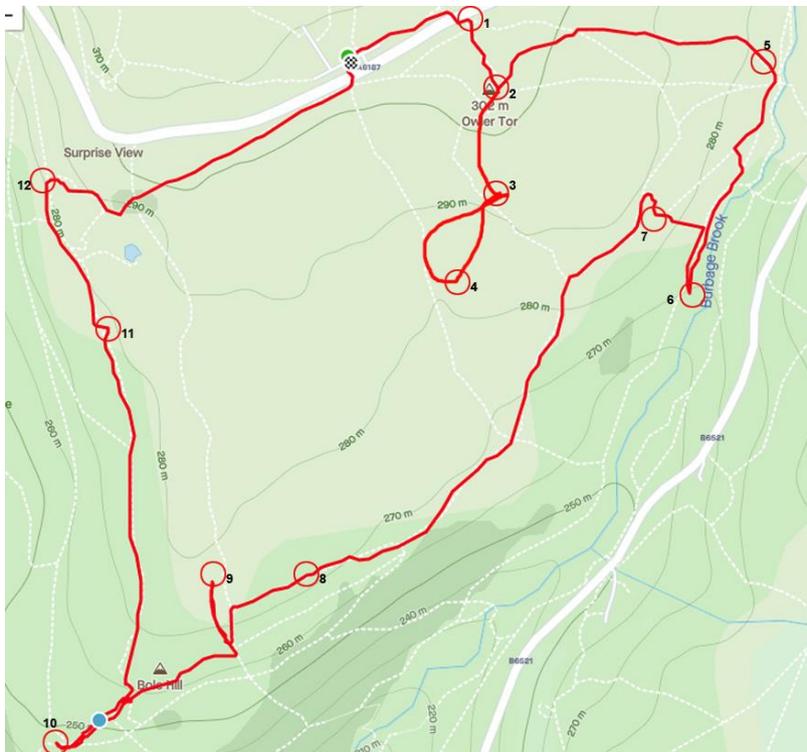
The Longshaw Estate went up for sale and Sheffield Council, with the help of public funds raised by local campaigners, purchased Longshaw Estate and Longshaw Lodge and 3,000 acres of its associated moorland in 1927.

One of the contributors to the appeal for money was the widow of journalist Richardson Evans whose name appears on a plaque on Owler Tor.



This Geocross visits a number of interesting locations on the west side of Longshaw Estate and Bole Hill Quarries.

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



Start and finish at Surprise View car park

OS ref SK 25327 80140

Hollowgate stone gateposts

W3W being.bright.motion



The sawn stone gate posts to the ancient packhorse trail 'Hollowgate'. These probably date from 1827 when the land was acquired by the Duke of Rutland as part of his private estate. He was very keen on gates. His shooting moors still have his signature white painted gates, usually kept locked.

I cant remember having seen any signs of shooting management on Lawrencefield moor, and there wasn't a gamekeepers lodge on this moor.

The gate is now missing. After 1827 it was probably only open to authorised users.

OS ref SK 25379 80044

Owler Tor 1928 plaque to Richardson Evans

W3W notion.keys.weds



Richardson Evans was a journalist and author born in 1846 and died in 1928.

After military service in India, he returned to London in 1876 and worked as a journalist. He became known as a pioneer in promoting the preservation of natural beauty, using his position as a journalist to campaign on environmental issues.

Today, environmental issues are very much on the agenda, but in 1876 Richardson Evans was a man well ahead of his time. Evans believed there should be regulation, allowing local bodies to control advertising, 'to schedule scenes of remarkable beauty or interest and to protect them from desecration by a general Act'.

In the 1920s the 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 help purchase the 747 acre Longshaw Estate which was threatened with development.

In 1927 - 1928 the purchase of The Longshaw Estate was concluded. Three years later she was able to give Longshaw Estate including the Lodge and Park into the ownership of the National Trust.

Richardson Evans widow contributed £500, a considerable sum in 1928 (worth £40,000 in 2025), towards the purchase of the Longshaw Estate for The National Trust.

The memorial plaque on Owler Tor has this inscription:-

'This viewpoint and 25 acres around forming part of the Longshaw Estate are given in memory of Richardson Evans 1846–1928'

The rocky summit of Owler Tor is popular with visitors, being an easy walk from the Surprise View car park.

I remember attending a British Mountaineering Council Peak District Area meeting in the 1980s when the Peak Park stated their intention to 'improve' the well-used climbers car park which served Millstone and Lawrencefield Quarries. The climbers sent back the message that we didn't need improvements which might end up with car parking charges. We just wanted better security for our cars which often held hundreds of £s worth of climbing equipment. At that time the informal car park was often paved with broken glass from car break-ins!

We still haven't got security, but we do have car parking charges.

OS ref SK 25369 79951

Rocking Stone

W3W quite.ranks.sculpture



It looks as though it has been placed there. Not a natural position. It has stopped rocking and is now settled.

There were many rocking stones throughout the Peak District but over the years many have been rocked or toppled..

This is one of the most accessible 'rocking' stones in the Peak District, just 300 metres from the Surprise View car park. It doesn't rock any more though.



Immediately adjacent is another balanced rocking stone, supported on three points of contact.

Too much of a coincidence? They both look as though they have been deliberately placed there in un-natural position.

The Duke of Rutland owned Lawrencefield as part of his the Longshaw Estate. He was not averse to making artistic modifications to natural features in order to impress visitors. Having a Rocking Stone on one's estate was very desirable. Having a couple in such an easily visited location was perfection!

OS ref SK 25321 79807

Lawrencefield Standing Stone – Stone Circle

W3W thus.sings.chef



All that remains of Lawrencefield Stone Circle. The OS map has this in the wrong location.

It is likely that the other stones have been taken away for building stone.

OS ref SK 25734 80080

Hollowgate southeast entance

W3W hatch.areas.lungs



Hollowgate is one of the best holloways in the Peak District. This packhorse trail led to a ford across Burbage Brook and cut a corner off the route to Hathersage. It is so narrow that only packhorses could use it. A horse and cart would have no chance.

OS ref SK 25633 79784

Padley Gorge Money Tree

W3W poet.arrow.level



The 'barely alive' Money Tree is on the main footpath up Padley Gorge. It is above Burbage Brook on the true right bank main footpath. There is a second 'money tree' a few hundred metres lower down, but this is just a leaning dead tree propped up by a branch.

Passers-by would hammer their copper coins into this badly treated tree. It has got smaller and heavier over the years.

I havent noticed anyone hammering coins into it recently. Perhaps low value copper coins are not carried any more?

OS ref SK 25584 79888

Upper Padley Gorge Millstone Quarry floor

W3W digs.bill.gazed



Padley and Bolehill Quarries were an important source of gritstone millstones. They were perfectly located to deliver to the cornmills of the Derwent Valley or the industrial mills of Sheffield. In fact the two quarries at Surprise View, known to rock climbers as Millstone and Lawrencefield Quarries were a major source of good quality millstones.

But the bottom fell out of the market when people gained a liking for the white bread that soldiers had eaten in France, where they milled their bakers flour using white millstones. From 1850 most cornmills had a pair of French Burr millstones to make white flour.

Heaps of unwanted millstones abound beneath Stanage and Burbage Edges. But the biggest stockpile is at nearby Lawrencefield Quarry at Bole Hill.

OS ref SK 25174 79433

Medieval field wall

W3W elder.goats.push



Within the birch wood at the south of Lawrencefield are a number of ancient wall boundaries to an old medieval 11th century field system.

OS ref SK 25012 79408

Hearth and chimney

W3W intend.voltages.crouch



Possibly a quarryworkers shelter and fireplace.

To the west are the vast Bole Hill quarries. A nightwatchman might have been placed here to guard the workings, or the smeltings of lead ore.

A "bole hill" is a historical term referring to a place where lead was smelted in the open air, often on a windy hilltop. They needed strong winds to aid the smelting process. These sites were typically characterized by a stone-walled enclosure where lead ore was stacked, covered with wood, and ignited to extract the lead. The walling was to protect the lead ore from theft

There are many lead smelting sites on the moorland edges above the Derwent Valley, some known as the bole hills.

They often consisted of a stone-walled enclosure, usually 5-6 yards in diameter, open on the side facing the prevailing wind.

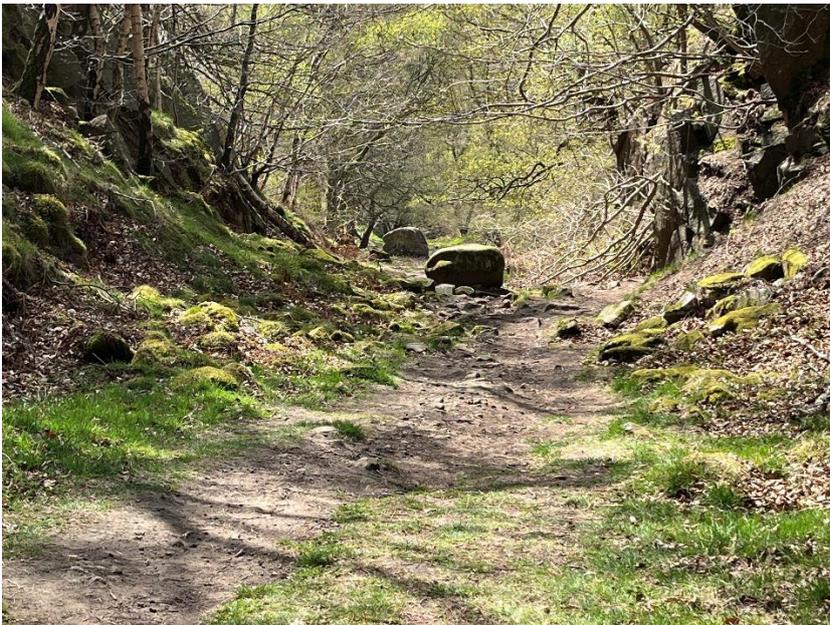
Ore was stacked within the enclosure, covered with brushwood and larger pieces of wood, and then ignited. The molten lead would then run down channels to be collected in hollows prepared to make the lead 'pigs' of a size suitable for packhorses or carts to carry away.

Bole smelting was a common method before the development of bellows-blown hearths in the 16th century.

OS ref SK 24803 79197

Bole Hill Quarry wheelhouse at top of incline

W3W probably lessening.cheater





The view up the incline will be familiar to anyone who has completed the Hathersage Hilly Triathlon. This is the 'killer hill' on the run stage.

One competitor told me his running training routine. He would place 10 stones at the foot and carry them one by one to the top, running up/down ten times!



The long incline was engineered for railway wagons to be lowered down to sidings at Lower Padley. Two massive stones on the slope provide intermediate additional anchorage when required.

Between the stone walls at the top was a massive winding wheel.



The large platform where the top wheelhouse was sited was used for 'dressing' the massive stones, shaping them to the required size for the dam faces.. The ruins of old stone buildings are now hidden in the bracken. The slopes below are made up of the chipped stone waste.

The quarrymen said that the freshly quarried gritstone was easier to carve straight away. If left to weather it became much harder to shape.

The wheelhouse counterbalanced the weight of railway wagons loaded with facing stone being rolled down the incline to join trains heading for the Derwent Valley dams construction sites. The upgoing wagons carried water.

All the stone was destined for facing the castle-like Howden and Derwent dams which were built between 1901 - 1916.

OS ref SK 24863 79723

Stone trough

W3W [yachting.violinist.audibly](https://www.yachting.violinist.audibly.com/)



An abandoned project, a drinking trough for farm animals. There are other abandoned troughs at nearby Burbage Valley.

OS ref SK 24797 79913

Abandoned millstones at Lawrencefield Quarry

W3W pursue.moderated.rhino



There are over 100 millstones which still lie prepared as they were in 1901. They were ready for sale. Traditionally a buyer would select a pair, have central holes

prepared to suit the intended use, and arrange a carter to pick them up and deliver to the mill.

These had already been abandoned for many years, when the market changed almost overnight to cleaner French millstones. The fashion for white bread led to millers abandoning their 'brown bread' flour produced by Derbyshire millstones.

But the glory days of the Bolehill Quarries took off in 1901 when the Derwent Valley Water Board developed Bolehill into the largest 'Super Quarry' in the Peak District. In November 1901 the Board purchased 52 acres of land at Bolehill from Mr Shuttleworth of Hathersage.

A small shanty-town of quarrymen and their families quickly grew up in Upper Padley, above Grindleford Station. When the stone faced dams were completed many families stayed on to live and work in the Derwent Valley.

The Bole Hill beds of gritstone were near to the surface and a tiered slope of working faces delivered freshly cut stone to short runs of standard gauge railway which carried the stone to the head of the 300 foot incline.

A pump delivered 73,000 litres (16,000 gallons) of water a day to the Bolehill quarries while the Howden and Derwent dams were being built. This was needed for the steam driven traction engines and the haul engine. Water was stored in tanks at the top of the incline. The water was taken from the Burgage Brook and raised 111 metres by a ram pump.

The Glory Days of Bole Hill were short-lived. Only seven and a half years of large scale quarrying were needed to carve out enough facing stone for the first two dams.

After completion of the Howden and Derwent dams the Derwent Valley Water Board kept ownership of the quarries. For a few years they considered a plan to construct a housing estate in the Bolehill quarry workings.

This was not such a strange idea. The shanty-town at Upper Padley was close to a road and railway station. However, this did not come to fruition, as the Board considered it prudent to retain an option to quarry the still extensive resources of stone, just in case of any further developments in the Upper Derwent Valley. By the time the Ladybower dam was designed in the 1940s, an earth dam construction was preferred..

Unused and unsuitable for farming, the soil-less bare land at Bole Hill became naturally colonised by birch woodland and as the young trees grew taller the eyesore on the skyline when seen from the Hope Valley disappeared from view.

The Bole Hill quarry site was never re-opened. The old quarry with dangerous vertical faces of loose rock became something of a liability to the DVWB, who made a gift of it to the National Trust in 1947.