

Longstone Moor & Middleton Moor Geocross V26

Longstone Moor and Middleton Moor are in the White Peak to the west of the River Derwent. Limestone moors are usually dry, with most rainfall water running below ground in caves.

The valley of Stoney Middleton has a small stream called Dale Brook.

Between Middleton Moor and Longstone Moor is Coombs Dale, where the main source of water is from Sallet Hole lead mine.

Both these streams are subject to flash-flooding, becoming raging torrents after heavy rain. A special diversion tunnel has been built near the Stoney Middleton sports field to stop the Coombs Dale stream flooding the road above Calver.

Super Quarries

But it's not the lack of water which defines these moors. It is the industrial scale of the quarrying. Traditionally the White Peak villages have carried out small scale lead mining for centuries, but that all stopped at the end on the 19th century..

In the 20th century the mining became mechanised open-cast, and shifted from lead mining to quarrying limestone for roadstone. Very deep holes in the ground now form the over-riding character of the derelict mining landscape that remains.

As a young post-graduate research student in the newly formed Sheffield University Department of Landscape Architecture, I was sent to attend and report on one of the largest and longest running Public Enquiries affecting 'Landscape Character'.

The Tunstead Enquiry was for an extension of a limestone quarry into 150 hectares of the Peak District National Park. The principle at state was whether a new Super Quarry could be allowed within the Peak District National Park. The PDNP had refused permission, so the applicant asked for a Public Enquiry.



Following the 1975 Public Inquiry and a High Court case, the Secretary of State ultimately overrode the Peak District National Park Authority's decision to refuse consent. He granted permission for the super-quarry extension within the Peak District National Park. The Tunstead Quarry received national approval, despite being in Britain's most popular National Park.

Tunstead remains the largest producer of limestone in the Peak District, with about 5.5 million tonnes extracted each year.



At the time of the 1975 Tunstead Enquiry I was leading a Master student project for the 'unthinkable' expansion of the Hope Valley Cement Works.

Unthinkable in 1975 but at the present time, 2025, the Hope Valley Cement Works is making a planning application for a major expansion.

The Longstone and Middleton White Peak Moors above these dales are characterised by huge holes, hundreds of feet deep, now left behind after centuries of open cast mining.

We should quickly compare the scenic quality of the Dark Peak Moors with the White Peak Moors.

Simply put, the Dark Peak Moors remain magnificent natural scenery, untouched by extractive industry. The White Peak Moors have been ravaged by extractive industry, then abandoned. Dark is Good, White is Bad.



The Derbyshire village of Stoney Middleton in the White Peak can be traced back to Roman times. It's famous for its proximity to the plague village of Eyam and its location just due west of Middleton Dale meant it has also become a major centre for Peak District rock climbers.

Middleton Dale has been quarried for limestone for hundreds of years, most recently to produce lime and to provide stone for the construction industry.

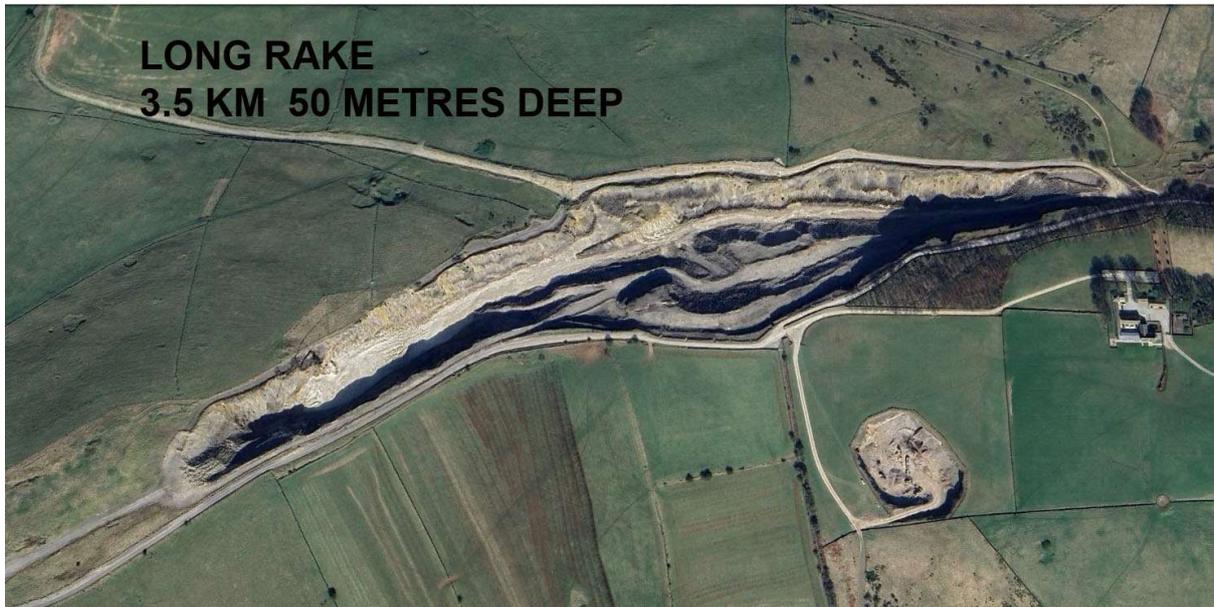
Early methods of quarrying were rudimentary and relied on manpower to split and break up the rocks with little mechanisation other than a horse and cart. The use of gunpowder in blasting at the beginning of the 19th century significantly increased production and led to the worked-out limestone quarries as we know it today.

Quarries like the ones in Stoney Middleton have led to the Peak District becoming Britain's largest lime and limestone producer. Unfortunately, when the quarriable stone has gone, so has the landscape.

Limestone quarrying leaves deep holes.

Long Rake is a good example. It is 3.5 km long and has been partially backfilled. The open part is 50 metres deep. The missing volume is 17.5 million cubic metres. That's about 175,000 articulated lorry loads.

High Rake is the large open quarry on Long Rake. To its east is Deep Rake, now partially filled and restored to farmland.



Rock climbers began to use the abandoned quarries above Stoney Middleton in the 1950s. They used metal pegs (pitons) driven into the rock to make it safer. By the sixties there were more than 200 climbs, mostly climbed 'free' without the use of hammers and pegs. Throughout the 1960 – 1980 period, limestone climbing in the Peak District was more popular than the traditional gritstone.

Mission Impossible

Just a few years ago in 2021, cometh the day, cometh the man. Tom Cruise's Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning (MI7) team saw something valuable in the Stoney Middleton Darlton quarries. A location to film a Train Crash!

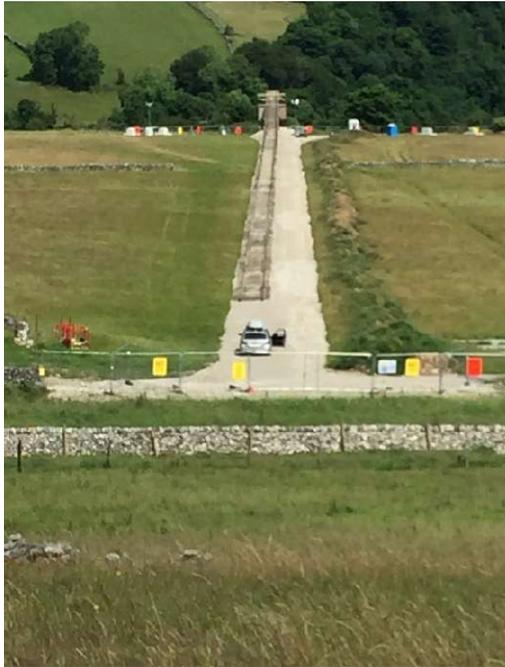


These quarries were already closed and had been restored to a scheme agreed with the Peak District National Park which would benefit wildlife and scenery.

Impossible that the restoration scheme could be interrupted?

The Mission Impossible team started building their film-set in fields high above Stoney Middleton Dale in early 2021. This 'secret' location was soon famous.

The stunt was filmed in August 2021. A large crowd gathered on the hillside above Eyam where they had a grandstand view of the train careering over the cliff-top.



The take off ramp was ready in July. A railway engine arrived in August 2021 and it soon hurtled over the edge. I think Tom Cruise was present but not in the train.



They say that Every Dog Has His Day. This was Darlton Quarry's Big Day.

In Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning Part 1 (MI7) there is a scene with a train hanging over the edge of a cliff. Wagons drop off the back as Tom Cruise does what he is best at, saving lives. But I'm not sure that this bit was filmed in Darlton Quarry. Maybe it will appear in MI:DR Part 2?

Location	OS grid reference	W3W		
		First word	Second word	Third word
1	SK 20880 73407	stolen	roosts	spine
2	SK 21314 73504	majors	ramming	fluid
3	SK 21455 73870	readings	donates	rationing
4	SK 20681 74195	essay	stole	humid
5	SK 20812 74291	pylon	shut	prospered
6	SK 21010 74681	desktop	cROUTONS	sober
7	SK 20684 74901	envy	hourglass	weary
8	SK 19342 74705	impaired	drifters	unfair
9	SK 19472 73361	bungalows	workshops	anguished
10	SK 18884 73293	silk	toasted	decimals
11	SK 19457 73176	keener	project	introduce

This Longstone Moor Geocross V26 is based on Longstone Moor and does not visit Middleton Moor. Each of the locations can be found on the route below. The locations are listed in order.



Start at Moor Lane parking layby on Longstone Edge, north of Great Longstone..

Location 1 OS ref SK 20880 73407

Longstone Edge trig point

W3W stolen.roosts.spine



Longstone Edge trig point stood at 391 metres height. It 'fell' into the deep quarry of High Rake sometime around 1990. The new 'summit' is made of quarry waste and is not in the same position! It is now about 50 metres WNW of its original location. It takes quite a lot of imagination to recognize that this wrecked lump of concrete was once a splendid trig point. Its brass metalwork has disappeared, perhaps stolen by trophy hunters.

The metalwork found on a trig point consists of a 'spider' on the top for mounting a theodolite and a 'flush bracket' on the side for identification and height reference.

The 1975 photograph shows a deep crack between the trig point summit and the rest of Longstone Moor. In 1990 this 50 metre high pinnacle of limestone fell away from the farmland and 30,000 cubic metres of roadstone landed in the quarry. I'm not sure whether this was an accident? An extra 750 lorry loads of roadstone was carted away and for 25 years one of the Peak District's 88 trig points was missing

High Rake, and the extensions east (Deep Rake), and west (Watersaw Rake) is 3.5km long. It was first quarried for lead, then reworked by open-cast quarrying to a depth of 50 metres for fluorspar. Nearby is the Cavendish Mill which is the largest fluorspar processing works in the Peak District. Lorries from High Rake can reach Cavendish Mill without using public roads.

The original trig point pillar, badly broken, was placed on top of the restored quarry in 2002. In 2023 it looked like this.

Location 2 OS ref SK 21314 73504

High Rake Quarry Danger sign

W3W majors.ramming.fluid



High Rake is a massive quarry on the crest of Longstone Edge. Most Peak District visitors would agree that it is a massive blight on the scenery and tranquility of the Peak District National Park.



Location 3 OS ref SK 21455 73870

Ruby's Chair

W3W readings.donates.rationing



Rubys Chair turns its back on High Rake Quarry, It does have a good view to Sir William Hill to the north.

Longstone Moor Farm was run by Neil Smart and his family from 1943 to 2020.

Neil and his young daughter Ruby were having a picnic on Taylor Lane and they decided to make a simple chair from a broken limestone gate post.

Neil made a copper plaque with Ruby's name and fitted the plaque to the chair.

If you sit on the chair you will see an iron ring set in rock on the other side of the lane.

Neil Smart set 8 rings in different parts of Longstone Moor and called them the 'Longstone Moor ringtones'.

Location 4 OS ref SK 20681 74195

Black Harry Gate sign

W3W essay.stole.humid



Black Harry lived near here in the 18th century. He was a notorious highwayman and thief, preying on the pack horse merchants who had to cross the wilds of Longstone and Middleton Moors to get their valuable goods to market.

Black Harry was caught at Wardlow Cop by the Castleton 'Bow Street Runners'.

Harry was hung, drawn and quartered and his remains displayed in a gibbet on a circular limestone knoll known as Peter's Stone at Wardlow Mires. His bones were picked clean by Ravensdale 'vultures' although crows and ravens may have been involved.

Today's passers-by are more likely to be splashed with mud by mountain bikers than held up by highwaymen.

Location 5 OS ref SK 20812 74291

Dew Pond east of Black Harry Lane

W3W pylon.shut.prospered



A concrete dew pond, essential for grazing animals. There are no natural ponds or streams on the upper fields of Middleton and Longstone Moors. This may have a pumped water supply.

Location 6 OS ref SK 21010 74681

Old reservoir bund wall

W3W desktop.cROUTONS.SOBER



Massive earth embankment 15 metres high. One of several man-made reservoirs high up on Middleton Moor. The water was used for processing quarried fluorspar tailings. How did they get the huge volume of water up here? This one is now dry.

Cavendish Mill is a fluorspar processing plant. Fluorspar is calcium fluoride and is created by volcanic intrusions into limestone. It is associated with lead deposits. To abstract pure fluorspar the ore is crushed, washed and heated to produce acid grade fluorspar. The waste tailings water is put into lagoons to settle. This is the only fluorspar production plant in the UK.

One of the tailings dams gave way on 22 January 2007 and a wave of water, mud and rocks swept down the narrow valley of Farnsley Lane, and then down into the narrowing valley of Stoney Middleton. No-one was killed but the damage to property was severe. Farnsley Lane is still closed.

Location 7 OS ref SK 20684 74901

Earth embankment

W3W envy.hourglass.weary



Another earth bank holding a tailings lagoon. The large body of water attracts birds and in particular large flocks of starlings who roost there in winter. The phenomena of huge movements of starlings is known as murmurations, and these draw birdwatchers to the area.

The nearby village of Foolow is a good place to view the starling murmurations.

Location 8 OS ref SK 19342 74705

Stile with no wall

W3W impaired.drifters.unfair



The wire fence disappeared some years ago but no-one has thought to demolish the stile.

Location 9 OS ref SK 19472 73361

Longstone Moor footpath junction

W3W bungalows.workshops.anguished



A high level crossing point of long established packhorse trails.

Location 10 OS ref SK 18884 73293

Tumulus on Longstone Moor

W3W silk.toasted.decimals



This Bronze Age burial mound (tumulus) dates from around 4000 years ago. It is sited at the high point of Longstone Moor at 395 metres AOD. This summit is one of the finest long distance viewpoints in the Peak District. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the protection of Historic England.

The lead mining area of the Peak Park is a tightly defined heartland of 35 x 24 kilometres. It has around 77 tumuli remaining on the 1988 OS map, but there are likely to have been many more. The boundary of the area with tumulus burials is very distinct, and tallies with the only occurring stone circles and lead mines. Within this area are 11 remaining stone circles and 25 summits named as 'Low' or 'Hill'.

Within the same area, 36 lead mines are identified on the 1988 OS map. Lead mining began at least 3500 years ago in the Early Bronze Age and melted lead has been found in burial barrows or tumuli. From the evidence of surface mine workings there would have been many hundreds worked over 3500 years, and of course the word must have passed back to Rome that there was lead to be mined here.

There is a theory that migrants from south eastern Europe first came in search of lead in the Early Bronze Age, bringing with them superior organisation and building skills. They may have enslaved the native tribes to work their mines, just as the Romans did 2000 years later. As builders familiar with the pyramids of Egypt and the temples of Greece, creating new features like the stone circle at Arbor Low would have impressed the native tribes. They may have defended their territory at key access points, and buried their dead in a different way to the native population.

I think the Longstone Edge Tumulus is one of the Ethels.

Location 11 OS ref SK 19457 73176

Guide post stone stoop by holloway

W3W keener.project.introduce



The holloway is no longer used as a track. It probably hasn't been used for 150 years.

It is a very well-formed 'V' shape, and near to a packhorse track junction between north – south and west – east travellers.