

Stanton Moor Geocross V18

Stanton Moor has the most prolific collection of man-made carved rocks in the Peak District. The OS map just names the Cork Stone. Surprisingly the Strava base map names four Stones, but neglects to name the Cork Stone which is by far the most famous.



Stanton Moor is a site rich in Bronze Age archaeology, particularly known for its stone circles and burial mounds. Major archaeological investigations have taken place in the past 200 years, including work by Peak District antiquarians in the early 19th century like Major Hayman Rooke and Thomas Bateman, as well as excavations by the Heathcotes in the 20th century. These diggings were however not to modern standards of archaeological survey!

The moor is home to the Nine Ladies stone circle and other prehistoric monuments.



The Nine Ladies Stone Circle was selected as one of 28 archetypal monuments in England and Wales in the Schedule to the first Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1882. That makes it a VIP Very Important Place. The Planning Inspectorate agreed in 2007 and rejected a planning application for quarrying which would have been damaging to the setting of the Nine Ladies Stone Circle.

The flat bedded Ashover Gritstone makes excellent millstones and building stone, so good that all the sides of Stanton Moor have been extensively quarried, particularly in the past two hundred years. But in the 1950s the quarries became too expensive to work and most were abandoned.

Stanton Moor is very popular with walkers and rightly so. Nowhere else in the Peak District are there so many man-made artifacts. They have been well made and have

stood the test of time. Ranging from quite recent memorial stones to 4000 year old standing stones.

Stanton Moor is the only moor in the Peak District where I have been told to reduce the length of my 2 metre dog lead. Breeding moorland birds was the reason.

Strangely rock climbers have been to the Stanton Moor Quarries, explored them, climbed a bit and then deserted them. Cioch Club climbers including Chris Jackson, Tom Proctor and Bob Conway took a slight interest in the quarries in the 1970s but then thought better of it. The recently quarried rock was considered to be too loose. This might be because the quarry operators used deep penetration blasting as commonly used in limestone quarries. Most of the quarries were then abandoned to nature although a few more routes were climbed in the 1990s. Meanwhile climbers have been prolific in other Peak District gritstone quarries such as Millstone Edge and Lawrencefield Bolehill Quarries

From 1999 to 2008 Stanton Moor quarries became national news. A protest camp was set up in the quarries to draw public attention to a proposed extension to the quarry by Stancliffe Stone. The protesters were concerned about impact on a precious wildlife area near the Nine Ladies Stone Circle, a Bronze Age monument which has stood for 4,000 years.

The protestors were very well organised. They used climbing techniques to rig up 20 tree houses and escape lines, and an underground labyrinth of tunnels. Attempts to force them to leave failed repeatedly over an eight year period.

By 2008 the protesters had moved out, having won the battle to have the planning application rejected.

The Duke of Rutland and the Thornhill family were key figures in the history of Stanton Moor in Derbyshire. They were the two largest landowners who, around 1809, divided the moorland between them.

The Duke of Rutland, as part of his Haddon Hall estate, retained a strip of land along the western side, including some of the scarp slopes, while the Thornhill family acquired most of the moorland.

The Duke of Rutland was granted land by the Enclosure Acts whose western boundary is along the current "Duke's Drive", It is now part of the National Trust's Stanton Moor Edge estate.

The village of Stanton in Peak is jointly owned by the Duke of Rutland and the Thornhill family. The Thornhill family owns the private Stanton Park and its descendants were responsible for building many of the village houses.

The Duke of Rutland developed his part of the moor for shooting and for sightseeing scenic drives, a fashionable activity for the wealthy in Victorian times. He was doing the same on his Longshaw Estate.

From 1809 the Duke carried out 'improvements', allowing his guests to visit carved rock formations. He also carried out major tree planting. His rampant rhododendron thickets are now over-abundant.

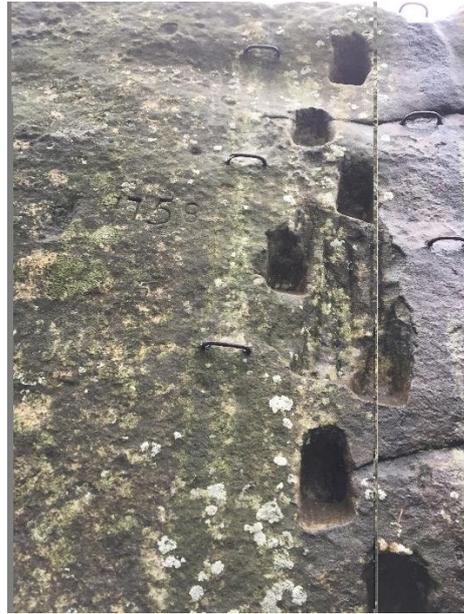
For lovers of stone circles, Nine Ladies is one of the best in the Peak District. Bronze Age people liked Stanton Moor so much there are at least three more stone circles there.

Another stone circle a stones throw west of Stanton Moor is Doll Tor at Birchover. It is 7 metres diameter and has six standing stones. It is the smallest stone circle in Derbyshire.



It would be a shame to visit Stanton Moor and not see Doll Tor and the Andle Stone. Both are on private land but there are well-used paths leading to both.

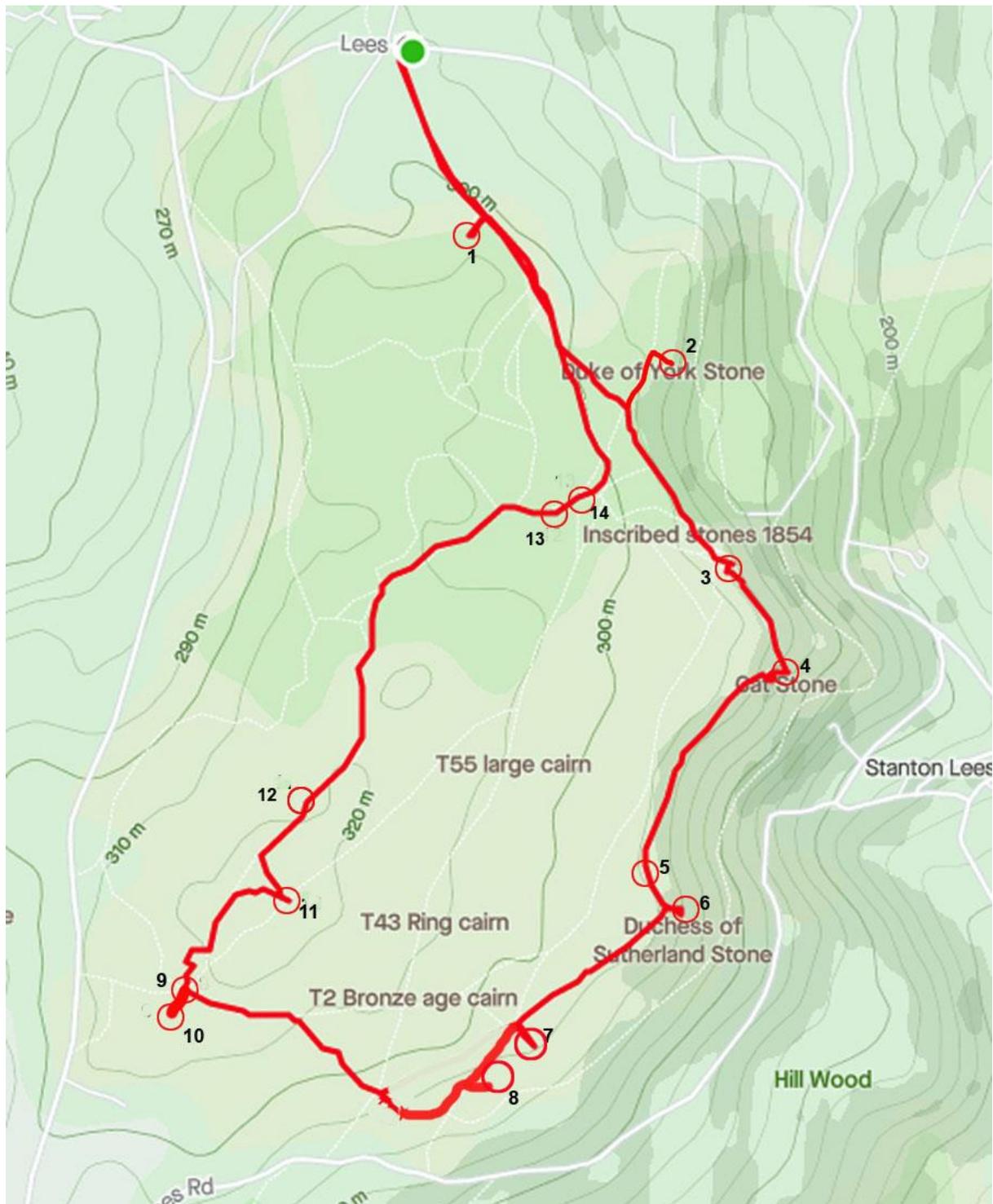
The Andle Stone is a large gritstone boulder on Stanton Moor in Derbyshire. The boulder is 4 metres high and stands within a rhododendron thicket in a low circular drystone wall enclosure to keep farm animals away. Like the Stanton Moor Cork Stone it also has a carved stone ladder, with iron rung handles. These handles might be 'Andles'.



There is a memorial inscription on the west-facing face of the boulder, commemorating the Duke of Wellington and Lieutenant Colonel William Thornhill (2nd son of Bache Thornhill of Stanton Hall) and the battles of Assaye 1803 and Waterloo 1815. The inscriptions read:-

FIELD-MARSHALL DUKE OF WELLINGTON DIED 14 SEPT 1852 AGED
82 YEARS

LIEUT-COLONEL WILLIAM THORNHILL 7 HUSSARS DIED 9 DEC 1851
AGED 71 YEARS



Each of the Stanton Moor locations can be found on the map above.

Start and finish north of Stanton Moor on Lees Road.

Location 1 OS ref SK 24749 63870

North quarry steps

W3W dozens.calendars.dialect

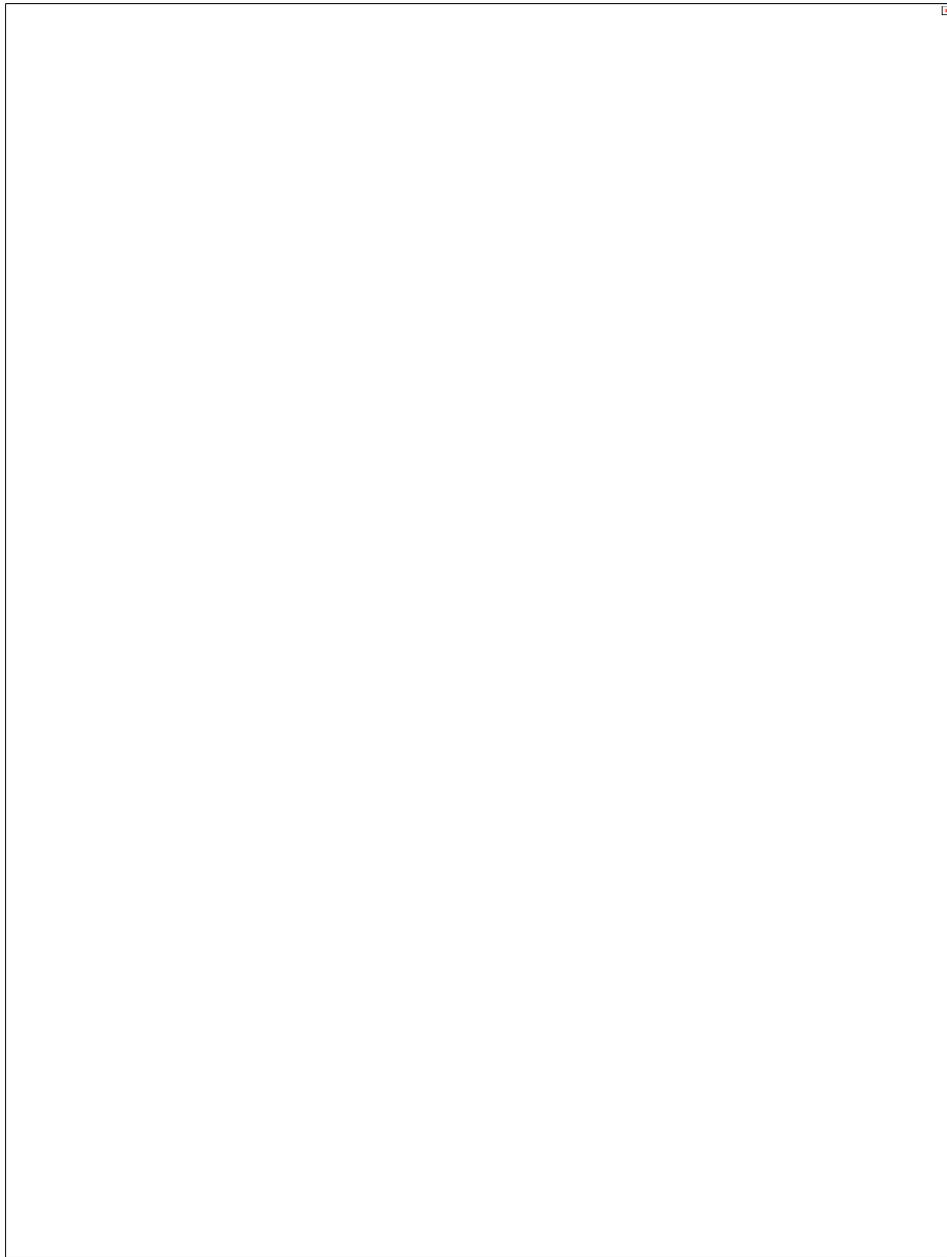


Stanton Moor is an outlier of the Eastern Millstone grit edges. The local stone here is known as Ashover Gritstone and was laid down 300 million years ago. On Stanton Moor the bedding is almost flat, giving pronounced horizontal rock. It is easily quarried.

Location 2 OS ref SK 25033 63710

Duke of York Stone

W3W imprinted.encoded.photos



The Duke of Rutland carried out other 'improvements' after 1809, allowing his guests to visit named rock formations. He also carried out major tree planting. His rampant rhododendron thickets are now over-abundant.

The Duke also created carved stones in honour of visitors. This Stone is for the Duke of York's visit in 1826.

Stanton Moor probably has the most desecrated gritstone rock features in the Peak District. Virtually every large boulder has graffiti of some sort. This 300 million year old moorland has been dramatically vandalised in the last 200 years.

Location 3 OS ref SK 25127 63398

Earl Grey Tower

W3W directive.restriction.maps



An expensive folly tower in honour of Earl Grey. Also called The Reform Tower. Prime Minister Earl Grey passed The Reform Act in 1832, a major change in voting legislation. During his tenure as PM, slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire in 1833..

Location 4 OS ref SK 25219 63248

Cat Rock

W3W configure.ramming.newer



There are carved steps up the back of Cat Rock, giving a small adventure for the Dukes guests. The carved inscription is EIN 1831.

Location 5 OS ref SK 25014 62966

Quarry building ruin

W3W twee.sporting.incisions



Ruins of 20th century quarry buildings. There is a deep fenced off quarry nearby.

Location 6 OS ref SK 25064 62898

Duchess of Sutherland Stone

W3W expecting.works.badly



Duchess of Sutherlands ducal coronet and date 1830 when she visited Stanton Moor.

The Duchess of Sutherland Stone stands off Duke's Drive 400m south of the Duke of York Stone. It bears the inscription HS 1830 and commemorates Harriet Sutherland-Leveson-Gower (1806–68), a close friend of Queen Victoria.

When Prince Albert died in 1861 the Queen spent the first few weeks of mourning with the Duchess of Sutherland as her only companion.

Location 7 OS ref SK 24838 62715

Gorse Stone Stanton Moor Edge

W3W hang.bribing.firming



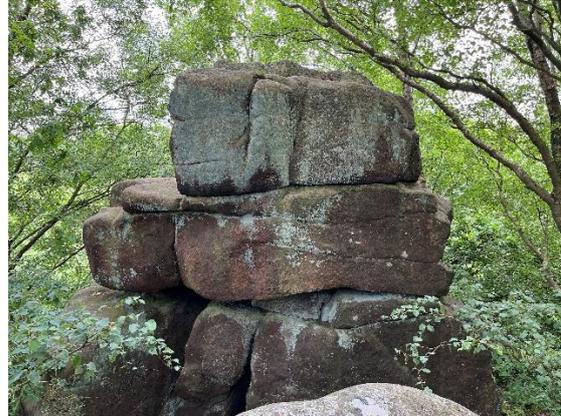
Another in a series of interesting wind sculpted rocks on Stanton Moor Edge. These would have been more easily viewed in Victorian times.

The Gorse Stone is a rarity on Stanton Moor. No dedicated carvings.

Location 8 OS ref SK 24761 62605

The Heart Stone

W3W painters.walled.portfolio



The Heart Stone looks un-natural; slightly man-made, an 8 metre tower of massive gritstone boulders. This was once said to have been a 'rocking stone', one of seven carved stones on Stanton Moor. Most are alongside Dukes Drive, the easterly of three paths which cross the moor from north to south.

Quarry operators sometimes needed to lift heavy blocks of stone, and this might have functioned as a crane. Its not impossible that it was assembled as a Rocking Stone feature. There is another similar man-made 8 metre rock tower at Ashover Common, just 8 km east. The un-naturally very well-stacked Robin Hoods Mark is at Turning Stone Edge, just 10 km east. You will see the quarrymans skill at placing large rocks on on top of another, especially the top two blocks.



Location 9 OS ref SK 24344 62785

The Cork Stone

W3W juicy.mainframe.loads



The most famous wind sculpted gritstone pillar on Stanton Moor. It has well worn carved holds on its south face with iron handles. Lots of graffiti.

It might be the most famous wind sculpted gritstone pillar in the Peak District!

There was no purpose in the carved steps; they were simply for entertainment.

It is easy to climb. Challenging to stand on the summit....then comes the difficult bit....

There are similar wind eroded tors on Bleaklow Moor, where the base is cut away by millions of years of wind blown sand.

Location 10 OS ref SK 24315 62729

Chair Stone

W3W preheated.chains.boasted



A deep quarry near the Cork Stone has this balanced chair shaped rock at its high point. On the quarry floor below are a stack of large millstones.

Location 11 OS ref SK 24496 62908

Stanton Moor trig point

W3W waistcoat.sandwich.pills



The high point in a heather moorland, surrounded by ancient burial sites, field boundaries and other signs of thousands of years of human settlement.

Location 12 OS ref SK 24570 63185

Windswept pine

W3W winters.pressing.pairings



One of the Duke of Rutland's tree plantings, a pine which was blown over many years ago due to wind exposure and poor rooting in the thin moorland soil, and continued to grow.

Location 13 OS ref SK 24876 63477

The King Stone

W3W driving.scorch.albums



The archaeological highlight of Stanton Moor is the Nine Ladies Stone Circle, and set 35 metres from it is the slightly underwhelming King Stone. It is smaller than it originally was due to having been hit by a vehicle.

Avoid visiting around the summer solstice!

Location 14 OS ref SK 24912 63494

Nine Ladies Stone Circle

W3W archduke.token.mining



The Nine Ladies Stone Circle was selected as one of 28 archetypal monuments in England and Wales in the Schedule to the first Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1882.

The circle is one of the finest in Britain. Nine small gritstone standing stones and a tenth one buried. The grass has been restored and now looks pristine. Before the Duke's trees grew, this stone circle would have had spectacular views to the Eastern Edges.

The site is owned by Historic England.

The boundary of the Scheduled Monument covers the whole of the fenced area of Stanton Moor, approximately one square kilometre. It's worth reflecting that early man settled on Stanton Moor 4000 years ago and in the next 3700 years they did nothing of great harm to the environment. In fact they created features which we recognize as having great cultural significance. There are at least four stone circles here.

The Nine Ladies became very well known when an environmental protest began in 1999. Stancliffe Stone tried to reopen a massive quarry on the east side, and to raise awareness the Stanton Lees Protest Group occupied the quarries by rigging ropes and living on tented platforms high in the air for nine years. They succeeded in creating national support and despite a High Court Order to evict them in 2004, continued their protest until the Peak Park revoked the quarry licence in 2008.