

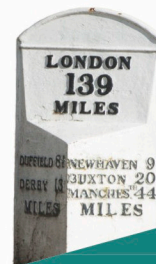
WELCOME TO THE WIRKSWORTH GRITSTONE FARMERS TRAIL

Wirksworth sits between gritstone to the east and limestone to the west.



On this walk you'll see local gritstone walls, medieval and Victorian farms, grazing livestock and some wonderful views.

EXPLORE THE GRITSTONE PERIMETER OF WIRKSWORTH



Derbyshire's gritstone flowed into the region as sand and grit in prehistoric rivers and settled over the ancient lagoon limestone.

Millions of years of erosion led to our current patchwork of dark coarse gritstone and the paler limestone that houses fossils and valuable minerals like lead.

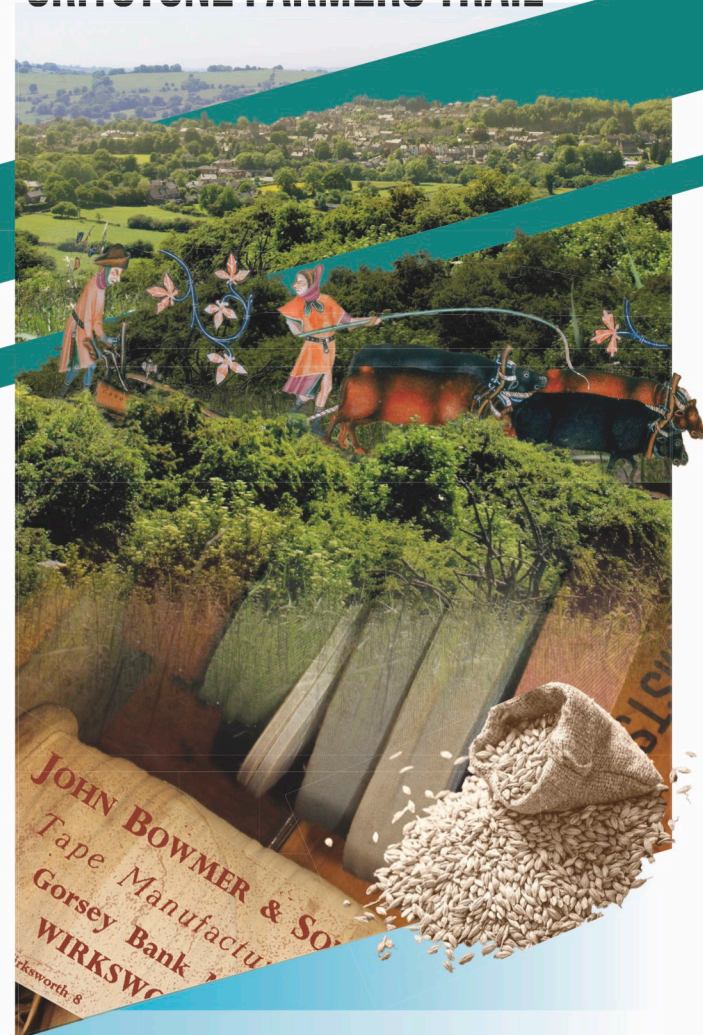
To discover more of Wirksworth's history, visit Wirksworth Heritage Centre, 31 St John Street, Wirksworth DE4 4DS.

01629 707000

www.wirksworthheritagecentre.org

WIRKSWORTH

GRITSTONE FARMERS TRAIL



INCLUDING TRAIL MAP



Distance

Approx. 8 km / 5 miles

Time

Allow 3 hours+ with a pub stop on the way

Difficulty

Steep hills. Some surfaces are stony, muddy and wet. Much of the route is along minor country roads, with a brief stretch on pavement alongside a busier road. Wear suitable boots and outdoor clothing.

Start

Wirksworth Heritage Centre

Finish

The Old Market Place

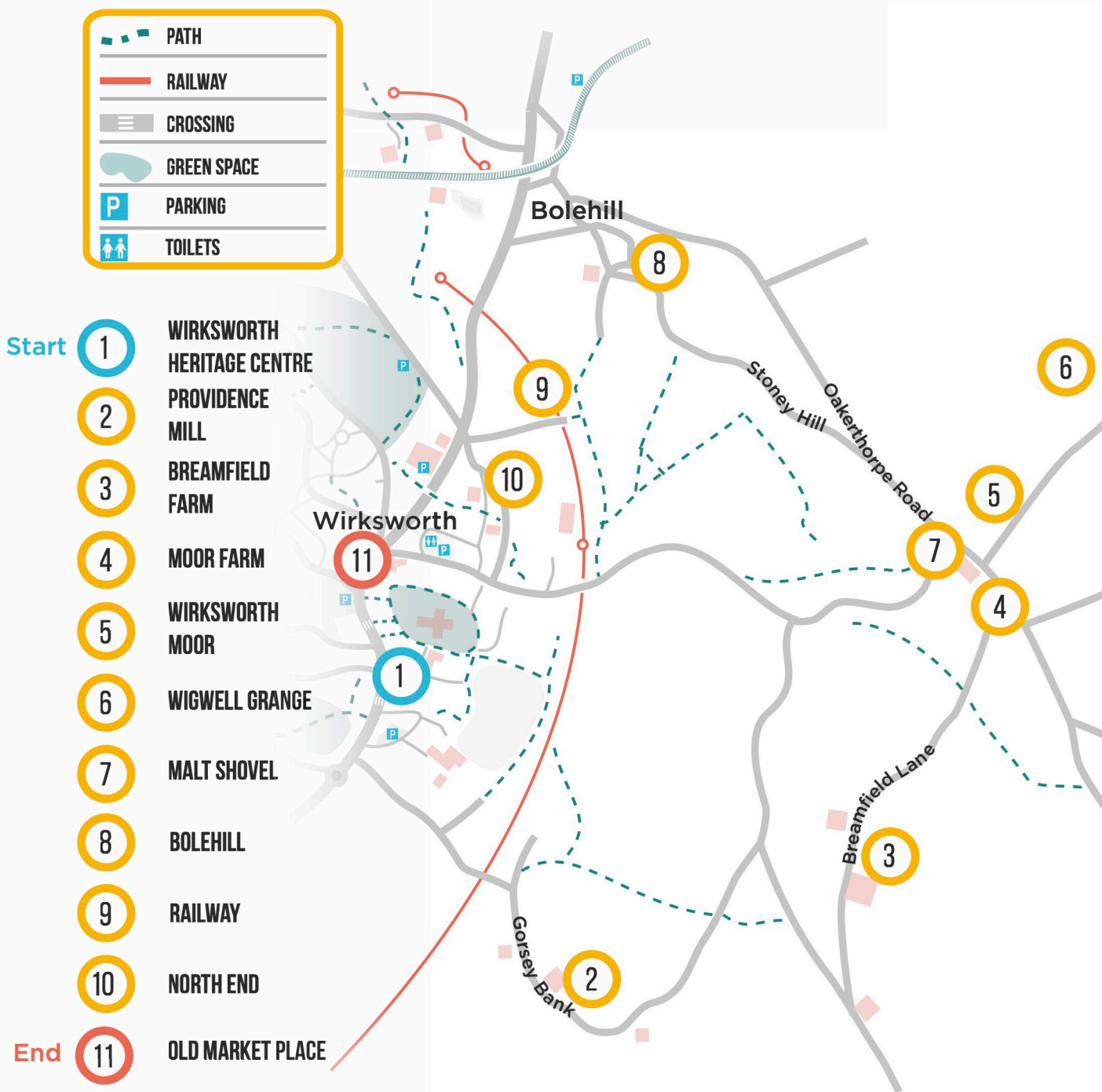
Toilets & Refreshments

Town-centre cafés and pubs. Malt Shovel pub on the Oakerthorpe Road.
Public toilets in the Barmote Croft car park, Coldwell St.

This trail is part of New Opportunities Wirksworth's Wirksworth Works project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and supported by Wirksworth Town Council.

Wirksworth Works is grateful to Muff Wiltshire and Walking for Health walk leader Dave Brown for sharing his knowledge. Derbyshire Dales District Council Walking for Health offers weekly led walks departing 9:45am every Wednesday from Wirksworth Leisure Centre.
The programme is published at:

www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk and
www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/derbyshire-dales



1. Wirksworth Heritage Centre 31 St John Street

Why not explore the exhibitions and refresh yourselves in Webster's café before or after your walk?



Directions

Take the small lane up the side of the Heritage Centre and follow it round to the left past former malthouse, the Maltings, to arrive at St Mary's church precinct.

Turn right and continue through the second set of bollards then straight down the path with a large stone wall to your left and school sports field to your right. Turn right and follow the path. Cross Hannage Brook and continue along Brooklands Avenue. At the junction, go left up over the rail track and turn right onto Gorsey Bank. At the Roman Catholic church and cemetery continue up the road past vast Providence Mill.



2. Providence Mill

This former tape mill made red tape to bind British government

documents until the 1960s, as well as ignitions for wartime bombs. The stone wall to your right is gritstone.

Directions

Follow the lane straight up the hill. Boggart's Inn Farm lies down to your left. The path becomes stony and is often wet. Impervious limestone underlies Wirksworth's gritstone, and water pours into the valley from the surrounding heights. This water once powered the mills that helped Wirksworth prosper.

Follow the byway round to your left and continue uphill until you meet a minor road. You will see more gritstone field walls and the holly and birch trees typical of gritstone geology. At the road, go right up St Helen's Lane.

Continue to the sharp bend at Hardhurst House on Hay Lane. Turn left around the hairpin bend signed towards Breamfield. Continue along this road.

3. Breamfield Farm



Breamfield could be one of Wirksworth's oldest cultivated fields. The name may derive from Anglo-Saxon 'field of the British', or come from the Welsh Bre, meaning hill, or Middle English breme, rugged ground.

Directions

Continue along Breamfield Lane and take in the views until you reach its junction with the next road.

4. Moor Farm



Three farms up here bear this name. All date from the 19th century enclosures of common upland grazing land. They have the regular fields with straight stone walls typical of enclosure farms.

Directions

Cross carefully at the dog-legged junction and get into the layby on the right, opposite the Malt Shovel pub.

5. Wirksworth Moor

You stand upon layers of time and stone. The standing stone in the field marks a prehistoric way that became a major Anglo-Saxon route called the Portway. The high-level route ran through Derbyshire from the Trent to the northwest, via Wirksworth.



6. Wigwell Grange

Wigwell Grange in the valley to the east takes its name from the Anglo-Saxon for Wicga's Spring. There was a monastic farm here by the early 1200s, the Abbot of Darley's 'summer place'. In the 1400s, this Abbey Grange had fishponds, a brewhouse, kitchen, refectory

and upstairs dormitory. The monastic estate ran all the way down to the River Derwent and included a farm, mill and pottery. Later, an elegant house stood here surrounded by parkland, the site of a 19th century murder of passion.

7. Malt Shovel

The Malt Shovel pub and farm grew no barley of their own, but took the name when maltster John Wilson married the pub landlady Esther Calton in the early 1800s. These days, it's a great dog-friendly place to break your walk with a drink or a meal. (Check opening hours online.)



Directions

Use the pavement along the left side of Oakerthorpe Road until you reach Stoney Hill no-through road, to your left. Take this lane and keep walking down the road. Walk on past the No-Through Road sign, through a sunken area that used to be the road to Little Bolehill.



8. Bolehill

Wirksworth's Bolehill is named for the bole hill where lead miners

once smelted their lead. Bole hill furnaces relied on the updraft of a steep hill to achieve the high temperatures needed for smelting. There are several former lead mines around Bolehill, including one near the sunken road.



Turn left when you get to the junction with the weight limit sign.

Walk down the road until you meet the stone track. Continue along this to join a path through pasture fields. You come to a small gate and stone bridge over the railway.

9. Railway

Wirksworth's railway was built in the 1840s. It carried local milk and limestone to Manchester for sale, and brought in wine and spirits for Wirksworth's merchant distributors, Wilson & Company and Charles Wright & Sons. It is now the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway.



Directions

Continue up Cemetery Lane. Near the metal gate in the cemetery wall is the headstone of Revd Dean, once the oldest man in Britain. At the road, turn left along North End.

Directions

Continue along Little Bolehill. You may see sheep, geese and goats.



10. North End

Until the Second World War, North End was the main route into Wirksworth. This busy thoroughfare was full of shops and pubs. John Wilson's malthouse now houses the town's independent Northern Light Cinema. Wilson had married Esther Calton of the Malt Shovel pub. The Wilsons also set up the Maltings you passed near the church.

Directions

Turn right up Coldwell St to arrive at the Old Market Place at the wide stretch of pavement outside the shops.

11. Old Market Place

When Edward I granted Wirksworth's market charter in 1306, he ratified an already thriving market. Victorian photos show a large marketplace of livestock and stalls covering the area outside the Red Lion to Marsden's.

