

# Today's Journey

## FOX HOUSE, BURBAGE, CARL WARK

The last time we attempted this journey we were driven back by millions of midges. Although the sky was blue the sun a golden yellow and the heather all shades of purple the black shiny midges forced us off the moor. In fact we never got off Houndkirk Lane. Today we hoped it would be different.

We made our way to Matlock and as there is a lack of shopping facilities on the moors above Hathersage, unless someone has built a Supermarket without planning permission, it was decided I should run into one in town, pick something up and head for the bus.

They'll do I said. Every kiddies favourite, Pieces of ham, slices of cheese and a row of crackers for good measure, all nicely packaged into a square lunchbox. What's more it was buy one get one free. Bargain. What a start to the day.

We caught the bus to Bakewell, our driver is George who is learning Chinese. I think he must be wanting to start a rickshaw business in the New Territories.

Soon we pass Darley or as George must see it Dar Lee. Not long after George takes us over the bridge at "Rows Lee". The eight mile trip is complete when we finally reach Bakewell or to George, Bei Kwell. I had thought, as we got off the bus, to bow down to him and wish him adios, but as he was sitting in the drivers cab I would have had to bow down very low and may have emptied the contents of my rucksack on his head in so doing. Apart from that my Lunchboxes we needed to sustain me. I didn't want George to get his hands on them.

The thought was frightening, George, Chinese and crackers!

Bakewell is a small market town, the market is on Mondays and is well attended. Twice in the last month I have run the gauntlet of stallholders with Patricia. It has not been easy, but it could have been worse. I did manage to find here a pair of socks that enable your calf to retain its shape, rather than, at the end of the day, look like someone has tried to strangle it. Unfortunately all they have to invent now is non strangulating socks that don't slowly but surely come of your feet! There's a good four of five inches of cotton stacked up in the toe end of many a blokes shoes at the end of the day.

Today Bakewell is busy as usual, but pleasantly so, not overcrowded, but just right. It is also a little on the nippy side. Knowing we are going to be a little higher I decide to get some gloves. Patricia who suffers from Raynauds already has hers. Unfortunately they are in the bottom of her rucksack and the cold has set in.

"Feel my hands" she says. I stroked her fingers and immediately frost bite set in. I need some gloves quick. We dived, well walked into a shop and there they were. Those gloves that are about three inches long that stretch to the size of a sleeping bag and are just as warm. Now we are equipped for the moor.

The Sheffield bus is in on time. This driver is also very talented. In fact he's a comedian. He must be because he made a fool out of me. He seemed to take great delight in suddenly hurtling me down the aisle as he set off. I saw Patricia but for a brief moment as I made my way uncontrollably eight seats further back. I made my way back using all the skills I had seen others do when bobsleighting. Now I knew there is a point in watching the Winter Olympics.

Everyone who got on seemed to ask for Fox House. So you sit there waiting for someone to press the bell. No one did, so quickly we shot up, pressed the bell on the pole a few seats away and were sent once more into orbit.

Welcome to Fox House.

Fox House on the Derbyshire Yorkshire border is a large well known watering hole. It is usually very busy, situated as it is miles from anywhere and on a major road. It serves food but there is no need to call there today for I have my own "buy one get one free" lunchables. Patricia being coeliac doesn't bother eating anyway. A slight understatement, but to go through the rigmarole of asking what each meal is made with is a bit off putting, more for the chef I would have thought than Patricia.

So we set off up the road onto the Houndkirk Lane as we had done a few weeks ago. It was a glorious day, warm clear blue sky, golden sun, the heather now sadly almost a brown colour with the odd patch of purple. In all of this only one midge dared to venture forth. One other thing, it is fresh. Beautiful cool air, exhilarating, making you feel awake and tingly clean, as if you've just been scrubbed with a brillo soaked in tea tree oil!

Some sheep were being rounded up by four by four, nearby a sheep dog, being taken a walk by its owner was straining at the leash. No doubt wanting to take a chunk out of the tyres of the four by four for doing it out of a job.

In the distance Mam Tor could be seen shivering in the cold, and the Hope cement works towering chimney shifting out smoke to drift along the Hope Valley.

**Sarah BURDEKIN** had the "Cheshire Cheese" pub in Hope around 1835, what would she have made out of the massive works that dominates the valley. The chimney can be seen for miles.

Across the other side we have extensive views of Sheffield, and many a Sheffielder must have been here.

We take a turn, which according to Patricia is the turn mentioned in a guide book we have, I am a little sceptical.

We take the path through the heather and get overawed by the sheer size of the place. People in the distance looking like the midges we tried to avoid last time. People walking across the moor, suddenly disappearing in the vastness until the eye focuses again and they re-appear. In winter this must be a very bleak and dangerous spot and no doubt within the churchyards around the moor will lie the remains of some unknown traveller who lost his way.

Not like us, or one of us, Patricia is confident we are following the route. Although we can see exactly where we are heading, we are trying to follow the route as described. Or at least I am.

Seeing a large outcrop of rock, table shaped, Patricia decides it would be a good place to stop for something to eat. The burger van doesn't get up here very often so I agree we'll stop for some goodies. I have after all my lunchables.

The birds are flitting about merrily overhead, full of the joys of an Indian Summer. The wind blowing gently now, a warm breeze wafting over us. A few sheep saunter by, stopping now and again to munch on the grass hidden by the heather. Idyllic.

I peel back the cover on my lunchables to be met by two round rubber discs. The sort of thing you put in the bath to stop you slipping. Do I need a microwave I thought, I hope not, for I have forgotten the extension. I checked for any suggestions as to how to cook or eat this thing. It was not only that there were two round rubber discs, this box held other delights, like eight small pieces of ham, the size of a fifty pence coin and when altogether about the same thickness and a stick of yellow cheese, that took an eternity to peel the wrapper off and even longer to break. It looked like a piece of blue tack in disguise and stretched like a piece of elastic, ...but no crackers.

Patricia took one look at it, and said, "it looks like something you take to the moon".

Even Ray Mears and the bush tucker man would have been scratching their heads in despair, and would more than likely have made a tent from it rather than eat it.

After that astronomic delight we sallied forth down to a turn that according to the book

stated we should now see a clearly defined sign post!

All we found was a piece of garden trellis, a black peaty pond and a piece of inner tube, about eight inches long from of a mountain bike. At least the biker had some water to check to see if he a puncture. Looking at the remains of the inner tube, it is doubtful if he had any remains of the bike. We called it Pond Trellis corner and followed the book as suggested entirely opposite to the way Patricia wanted to go.

It soon became obvious as we came upon a clearly defined signpost that we had taken a wrong turning. Before we had even reached the table rock.

In the distance we saw a walker who clearly knew what he was about. I hailed him and said, "excuse me, you look like a true son of Whicker". Can you help us, according to our guide book we are lost. He looked bemused as if anyone could get lost up here, after all there are only five million paths made by man and animals.

He took out his map and then looked at the guide book. After contorting his neck this way and that he concluded that although the guide book did mark a path it wasn't really in the right place.

Then he added the line that I will remember for a long time. "Of course" he said in a voice Margot Leadbetter would be proud off, on days like this one must remember that you have an additional compass, for when the sun is in the sky at this time of day it will be in the south". He then pointed us back to the way we had come. "Cheerio, enjoy your walk", he said, and proceeded the same way as us, only faster. He didn't want to be seen with such amateurs.

We re-traced our steps, climbing the boulder strewn bank until once more we were on the plateau. Passing Pond Trellis corner we had before us the massive outcrop of Carl Wark. You can't miss it. It was there the moment we got of the bus I just haven't told you until now. "It's an iron age fort" I said. Patricia said she was still in the iron age, having stood the night before with a basket of washing. I promised myself I would have her no more slaving the way she does and made a mental note to get her an iron with a plug.

We were now heading in the right direction, but veered away, purposely to walk above Burbage Rocks.

We climb the gentle slope that takes us along the top of Burbage Rocks. All manner of folks are walking up here ,but it is by no means overcrowded, its a bit like New Zealand. There are more sheep than people.

Some of these people must be staying overnight as they have brought their own mattresses. Until we realise it's what the climbers fall on.

Some are sat on the edge pulling on different coloured ropes, gently hauling in, fishermen fashion, colleagues climbing the cliffs.

Some people are to be seen running with back packs on the path below the edge. Are they running for a bus? Then some more are running after them, then some more. Then some more.

There's a solitary man, head down, walking past us at a rate of knots. Soon he is in the distance.

Carl Wark stands out like something out of the film Zulu. The outcrop looking more and more like Isandlwana as we get nearer.

Suddenly a shot rings out, I look around for Cetewayo but it seems it's someone out shooting at pigeons.

The moor is extensive, peaty ground smothered in a brown heather for as far as the eye can see. Down in the dell there a couple of good plantations and the Burbage brook running through the middle, cascading over large stones smoothed by time and feet.

The 1830 Enclosure for Hathersage shows this area to be the domain of the **Rev. Thomas BINGHAM**. It is actually listed back in 1830 as part of the Township or Hamlet of Derwent.

Today this is Yorkshire.

Patricia spots in the distance an ice cream van. She wants an ice cream without the cone, which she can't eat, but as it will set off her Raynauds I persuade her to have an iced lolly. Still we are not there yet and we have to cross the peaty streams emanating from the two Upper Burbage bridges, separated by yards, the bridges support the road that runs from Ringinglow and down past the musically termed Fiddlers Elbow. They are built of blocks of stone and the two separate streams flowing under them merge a few yards down the hillside. We cross the streams by means of stepping stones and clamber up the hillside to collect our lolly.



Callow Bank from Higger Tor, Hope Valley in the distance

We now take the path to Higger Tor and from here we look back on Burbage rocks, impressively stretching across the moor, and dotted here and there with climbers pulling stretching clambering and swinging their way to the top.

In the valley below a few more runners with back packs are still running, but it's not for the bus, but on behalf of a Heart Charity.

From this height the sheep look tiny and high in the sky a bird, it's wings rust red and shining with the sun, hangs and hovers before diving into the bracken in a perfect drop. I don't know what bird it was, but it wasn't a sparrow, unless it's been at the chest expander. Higger Tor has numerous precarious rocks balancing upon one another and according to the Enclosure map we can now see Callow Neb, Mitchell Field and Toothill Bank. We can also see Carl Wark, and it is to there we make our way.



Our approach to Carl Wark is a nice gentle stroll across the moor, passing areas of bracken that Patricia thought were cabbages. I must watch what's being served up in future!

The way in is by a large wide drive up to the front door. A sign tells us that it was probably built in the Dark Ages, and they haven't made much progress since. Not a street lamp to be seen and no electricity when you get in. The windows, the glass has long gone, give a wonderful panorama, and you can see for miles

into the distance, giving you plenty of time to see just who is about to knock at the front door. Very handy if you see the rent man calling.

This older version of the bungalow is very much open plan and the furniture thrown about like bean bags and scatter cushions. The decor is well co-ordinated, everything being stone. Of course with today being hot I imagine the occupiers had rolled back the roof like the other Celtic home in Cardiff. The garden was a bit wild, but with no electricity up here yet the flymo was still boxed in the room near the back door. It all makes you wonder who lived in a house like this?

We go out through the back door, not your normal everyday back yard exactly. You basically have a choice on which boulder you would like to break your leg, or which path to take that will lead you to that one jump down, that is either to big, to narrow or to rocky. It's like climbing down a prehistoric rockery. You can take your pick at which height you may want to fall and bang your head.

Patricia however climbs down with the skill of an ibex. I on the other hand, take it more leisurely not wanting to knock the stones from their sockets. I am rewarded.

We don't know who lived in the house, but we have a pretty good idea who the young maiden of the house had her heart set on. For carved in stone on an enormous rock is a heart and the immortal words "I love Cyril "!



Somewhere, probably at Stonehenge a similar heart is to be found with "I love"..... , who knows who the young lady may have been.

Having finally got out of the house, we make our way across the Burbage Brook, a bit wider now that the two streams have joined forces. Strategically placed stones enable us to clamber upon a large rock and out of the "river" bed onto the bank.

Another huge bird flies overhead, this one has the wing span of a Pterodactyl but

looks friendlier. It's a large grey bird, bigger than the rusty red one seen earlier and it's wing beats per minute will soon have it flying over Manchester airport and putting air traffic control into a flap of a different kind.

We finally walk of the moor crossing the road from Hathersage and for the first time walking in Derbyshire. We end up at the National Trusts Longshawe Tourist shop and cafe.

We still have time to visit Hathersage and visit a shop called Outside. We go inside Outside, once inside Outside we have to go outside Outside to go round the side of Outside to get inside the cafe inside Outside. It is upstairs and we notice that after all we didn't need to go outside Outside to get inside the cafe inside Outside.

It is very neat and clean, the chips are good, the tea just what the doctor ordered.

It will soon be time to go, and leave Hathersage. Some in the past left Hathersage, only temporary to visit nearby Bradwell. They went there to have their children baptised at the Methodist Chapel there.

**Samuel IBBOTSON** was such a child, who was baptised in 1834. His parents **Henry**, a shoemaker and his wife **Betty** lived at Gate House, Outseats. Betty was a native of Hope . A year later **George** and **Ann WRIGHTS** son **Charles** of Bamford was baptised there. **Ann** was the daughter of **Christopher** and **Ann JOULE**.

As early as 1814 others made their way to Bradwell to be baptised. **Richard WORRAL** the son of **Thomas** and **Sarah** was born 28th Sep of that year and baptised 9th of October at

the Methodist Chapel.

Finally the bus arrives that takes us to Fox House. For some reason this place confuses Patricia who calls it either Fox Holes or Dove Houses.

Fox House was also **Thomas BINGHAMS**. Today we call in for a swift drink, before catching the bus to Matlock.

A word of caution, leave yourself plenty of time if needing to use the little room. They are down some stairs and at the end of a corridor that makes the long gallery at Haddon look like a box room.