

En Route

A Very Brief Overview Of The LITTLE CASTLE (Bolsover Castle).

The castle was founded in the late 11th century by William Peveril, one of William the Conqueror's knights, but it was neglected from the mid-14th century. Its ruins provided the setting for the Little Castle begun in 1612 by Sir Charles Cavendish as a retreat from his principal seat at Welbeck, a few miles away.

The design of the Little Castle was intended to evoke a Norman great tower, which it clearly resembles viewed from a distance, rising sheer from the cliff. The interior continues the impression, with massive round Romanesque vaults in the basement and pointed Gothic ones on the entrance floor. The great windows of the upper floors were designed to give panoramic views across the landscape.

THE CASTLE TODAY

Since 1984 the castle has been in the care of English Heritage. The parapets on the wall-walk have recently been restored, offering views out over the landscape, and the Fountain Garden, with the Venus Fountain as its centrepiece, has been replanted with period plants. Horses are now once again a regular sight at Bolsover.

Route Description.

1. From the car park of the Royal Oak public house, **turn right** to walk up the road. After about 150m, at the road junction **turn left** to walk along Hillside. This rises slightly and then falls steeply. At the bottom of the hill, as the road does a 90° right turn, **you turn 90° left**. Walking firstly along the path with a wooden fence on your left and then open fields. After the third field you **turn right and immediately left** to continue on, following the line of the power cables as your guide, hedgerow on your right, open fields to your left.
2. This lane rises gently until you reach a metal gate with a stile to the right of it. **Cross over the stile and at the road turn left to walk downhill**. After approx. $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile, you reach a point along the road where a wood starts on the right. At this point you will see a stile and a fingerpost; here **turn right** as indicated by the gold arrow to walk up the field with a hedgerow on your left, open field on your right. At the top of the field you meet a couple of gates. Look slightly to your left and you will see a stile in the corner. You have also reached the top of the wood on your left. **Cross over the stile and turn 45° left to cross the field**, passing to the left of the pylon. Once across the field, you will meet a stone stile in the wall, **cross over on to a lane. Turn left and after 30m turn 90° right to walk up a track** which commences with a wall to your right, open fields to your left. After reaching the second field divide, you will see a post to your right. This instructs you to **turn 45° left**, as instructed by the gold, black and yellow arrows, to walk across the field along a well defined path which runs to the right of a pylon. At the far end of the field you **will cross over a stone stile** and once over you meet a main road – the A616. **At this point cross over the road**.
3. On reaching the pavement on the other side, **turn right**, heading to the village of Clowne. Once past the entrance to the village of Clowne, you will reach a crossroad. Here turn left on to Hollin Hill Road. After about $\frac{1}{3}$ mile, you will reach Church Lane on your right. Immediately after Church Lane, you will see an electricity sub-station across the road to your left. **Take the lane to the right hand side of it** which is bordered by hedgerow all along it. After about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, there is a junction of paths but **keep going straight ahead**, bending slightly left. After another 30m there is a lane joining the path from the left. **Keep going straight ahead on the main path**, slightly uphill. After a further $\frac{1}{3}$ mile, you will reach a junction; here **turn right** along the obvious lane. After about 300m there are buildings on either side. This is the area of the old Morefruita Fruit Farms. The lane leads down to meet the Clowne to Scarcliffe road.

4. At the road, **cross straight over to the single track road opposite**. At the start of this lane, if you look to the right there is a sign that says Oxcroft Estate, Nos. 23-26 with an arrow. **Walk along this lane for approx. ½ mile** until you reach a sharp left turn in the road. On reaching Limestone Farm, stay with the road which bears to the left. After a short while, the road again bends slightly right then round to the left again and you reach Oxcroft Farm. Just after Oxcroft Farm you will see a triangular piece of grass punctuated by a red post box.
5. **Here turn right to walk across the road** and you will see in front of you a public footpath finger post. At this, **cross over the stile and head across the field** towards the trees opposite. Here you have the first of the fantastic views you will get for the next 2-3 miles. Once across the field, you will see a stile hidden amongst the hedgerow/trees. **Cross over and continue straight ahead**, heading to the right of a white building. Once across the field you meet a gate to the right of which is a wooden stile. **Cross over the stile and continue down this lane to the next gate. Go through the gate, on to the road. Turn left.** This road is metallised at first and then becomes basic country lane. At the end of the lane there is a metal gate on the left.
6. To the left of the gate there is a footpath sign which may be quite hidden by foliage. **Cross over the stile and walk across the field, turning 45° right**, heading downhill towards some trees. On reaching the trees, **work your way down to the lowest hollow** and then cross a small stream. **Go through the woods for a few metres, to cross a bridge over the stream.** After a few paces through a hedgerow, **turn 45° left across the field** towards the left hand side of some farm buildings. **Cross over the stile and turn right. Walk up the lane** as indicated by the yellow footpath arrow. You now have farm buildings on your right, and after a few paces you meet a gate to the right of which there is a gap. **Pass through the gap and continue along this lane** which begins to rise to meet a road. You have in front of you magnificent views of the first of the Country's national parks, the Peak District. **Turn left along the road.** You will be walking along this road for some distance. All along you will have wonderful views to your right hand side.
7. When you reach the Bolsover Methodist Church, as you get near the town, straight opposite there is a gap in the wall in which there are some steps. **Cross over the road and go down the steps and follow the little jetty round to the left**, heading downhill round to the left. This gennel leads down to a pelican crossing. **Cross straight over then bear left and immediate right and then after a few paces bear left again. Follow the path uphill.** There is a wall on the right and to the left a building which used to be the Bolsover Sportsdrome. The path emerges on to a road to side of the Bolsover Adult Education Centre. **Continue straight ahead** passing the Centre on your right. Where this road swings round to the left, you **continue straight on onto Castle Lane**, walking along the footpath on the right of the road. You start to descend steeply.
8. The road bends round to the right and at the point where it starts to swing round to the left you will see a public footpath sign on your right. **Take this path which will mean that you will be continuing in a straight line.** This path has a fence on the left and hedgerow on the right, protecting a steep bank. You are now walking below Bolsover Castle. After a very short while, the path swings round to the left and then emerges at an open field. At this point **take the path to the right, turning 45° right**, to cross what was known as Castle Park. Here you have a fantastic view towards the Peak District and beyond. If you look to the left, in the distance you may be able to see some ponds. You are going to walk round those ponds shortly. This path that is crossing Castle Park is heading downhill all the time and it is leading you to the extreme right corner of the field. You need to be looking to your left for a post. Do not be tempted to follow the obvious path that disappears into the bushes but **turn slightly to the left to meet the post.** Here you will see a path that leads through the hedges into an open field. **Go through this and continue on the path**, crossing the open field which is continuing to head downhill. Once across the field, you will meet the end of a hedgerow. **Continue straight ahead** with the hedgerow on your left. The path goes slightly diagonally across the next section to meet a fingerpost by a road. **Head for this fingerpost.**
 - From the very beginning, at the top of the hill, as you look in the distance you can see a public house called the Castle Arms. You can use this as your target to help you across the right fields.

9. On reaching the fingerpost, by the road, **cross straight over to pass through the metal kissing gate into the next field.** Cross the field, heading diagonally right. This is a tarmac path. Once across the field **pass through the metal kissing gate** opposite where you emerge outside the Bolsover Castle Arms. At this point you are going to walk along the side of the main road for a short while, heading for the roundabout ahead of you. Walk along the footpath on the left of the main road (A632). On reaching the roundabout **cross straight over** heading for the Stockley Trail sign. Having crossed the road you will see on your left a squeezer stile. **Turn left to pass through the stile** and walk the obvious path which has a fence on the left and bushes on your right. This path winds to the right of the Auto-Supplies building and then bends left to the rear of the building to join a very wide track. **Join the track** which bends to the right and joins a more substantial track with a metal fence to your right and bushes to your right.
10. After approximately 300m you come to fork in the paths. **Take the right fork** which starts to climb uphill. After approximately 150m you will reach a viewpoint, giving you great views over Carr Vale Nature Reserve which you are heading for. Here the path bears 90° right. **Follow this path**, which at this point is bordered by hedgerow, which recedes after a short while. At a point where the path starts to head downhill, looking to your left you will see Scarsdale Hall on the horizon – one of your destinations. The track winds its way steadily downhill until you meet a path junction. **At this point turn left**, continuing along a very similar track. After a few metres, you will meet a gate and a Carr Vale Nature Reserve sign. Do not go through the gate but **follow the path 90° left along the obvious path.** After a few metres you pass a viewpoint and a hide. **Continue down to a squeezer stile** which you go through and you will have the first of the ponds on your right hand side. After a further 120m, you will see a path going up to your left. Ignore this and **keep to the lower path on the right.** Walk to the right of the barrier. After a further 30m or so the path will turn off to the right. Basically you will be walking clockwise around the pond, keeping the pond on your immediate right.
- As you walk along this path there are several opportunities to go off into hides to observe the wildlife but don't bother as you have another 34 miles to go so keep going on the path!
11. After walking along the path for about ¼ mile you will **cross a bridge over a dyke** and immediately after that you will pass through a squeezer stile. **Continue straight ahead.** You are now on open grassland. On your right you will see a pond and your left you will see a river. **Continue straight ahead for a further 200m.** After 200m you will see a squeezer stile on your left leading on to a bridge over the river, **here turn 90° right** to walk along a path which leads down towards a pond. It is not an obvious path. This path then goes clockwise around the edge of the pond. **Follow this path around the pond** for approximately 200m. Hugging close to the edge of the pond on the right you will notice another pond to the left, ignore this.
12. As you wander round the pond, after about 200m you will see, on your left, a path leading up to a wooden fingerpost which is attached to a stile. On the fingerpost is you will see a yellow arrow with Sutton Scarsdale written on it. **Cross over stile and as indicated by the yellow arrow and cross the field bearing 45° left** with Sutton Scarsdale ahead of you as your guide. Having crossed the first field going slightly uphill, you emerge at the corner of another field in the top left hand corner. Running across you now are power cables. **You need continue across the next field, bearing 45° left** to walk with the ruined buildings about 100m on your right. Use the farm building in the distance as your guide across the next field.
- For the walkers at the front you can turn round and see the walkers coming down the hill from Bolsover Castle behind you. For the walkers at the back you can look from Bolsover Castle and see all the walkers crossing the fields ahead of you – so get a move on!

13. Once across the field, you will meet a track that runs down to the disused buildings on your right. At this point, **turn left to follow the lane**. You now have a wooden fence on your right, open field on your left. After 75m or so the lane meets a metallised road. **Turn right to take the road** that goes over the M1 motorway. A little after the motorway bridge the road bends to the left and starts to climb steadily uphill. At a point where the road levels out slightly, and immediately before some farm buildings, you will see a public footpath on the right and an entrance to a gated track.
14. **Turn right here** and walk up the path with open fields on your right, hedge and fencing on your left. You are now walking on the Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Round Walk. This track climbs steadily towards the unmistakable Sutton Scarsdale Hall. About 100m short of the Hall you will meet a ha-ha and a track running round the building. At this point **turn right to walk anti-clockwise around the Hall**. At the far end of the building, **continue along the obvious track** leading through farm buildings. Having emerged at Rock Lane, **turn left** passing the entrance to Sutton Scarsdale Hall, continuing along the road through the little village of Sutton Cum-Duckmanton.
15. Just beyond the bus stop you meet a road junction . The main road bends round to the right. **Follow it round and continue straight ahead**. After a few metres you will see a fingerpost on the left hand side. At this point **turn left to walk along the edge of a field**, with a hedgerow on your left, open field to your right. The path goes slightly downhill heading straight to an electricity pylon until you are right underneath it. **Follow the path which goes to the left of the pylon and enter the scrub**. The path bears right and heads slightly downhill to meet a bridge over a stream. **Cross over the bridge and turn immediately left** to follow the path which meanders through a small copse. After 50m or so the path bears round to the right and meets a stile with a yellow arrow on a green background and the words Heath Village. **Cross the stile and continue straight ahead up the next field**.
16. Once at the top of the field, you will see a stile in the hedgerow. **Cross over onto a lane and go straight across to meet a stile in the hedgerow opposite**. **Cross over this stile and bear 45° left across the next field**, heading for a stile in the hedgerow opposite a few metres to the right of a power cable pole. Ahead you can see church steeple in the village of Heath which you are heading for. On reaching the stile, **cross over and bear 45° left across the next field**, heading for a gated stile in a hedgerow about half way down the field. On reaching the gated stile **pass through onto the lane**. **Turn left** to walk down the lane. Where the lane enters the conservation area **turn right immediately before it** to walk with the hedgerow on your left and open field on your right. The path starts to head downhill. After a short while the field hedgerow bends round to the left. Stay with this continuing along the path, heading downhill, hedgerow still on your left and open field on your right. When you reach the bottom of the field you will see a stile. **Cross over the stile**, which brings you down to a little bridge over a stream. **Cross over and go straight ahead** across the next field. Once across the first field, **continue straight ahead across the next**, considerably less wide, field. You will a yellow arrow on the pylon post. Once across the field you will see a fingerpost. At this point **turn 90° left** to walk up the track, open field on your left, fence on your right, heading uphill. (For the front runners with eagle eyes, you may even see the really slow walkers crossing Castle Hill Park!) After a short while the path rises to meet a lane. At the lane, **turn right** which takes you onto a bridge which leads over the Heath Bypass (A617). Once over the bridge the track turns 90° right and then after 15m or so, turn 90° left and starts to rise gently to lead you into the village of Heath. A few metres before you reach the end of the lane you will meet a gate. **Go through the gate and follow the lane up to the road**. At the junction with the road **turn right towards the Elm Tree Inn**.

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