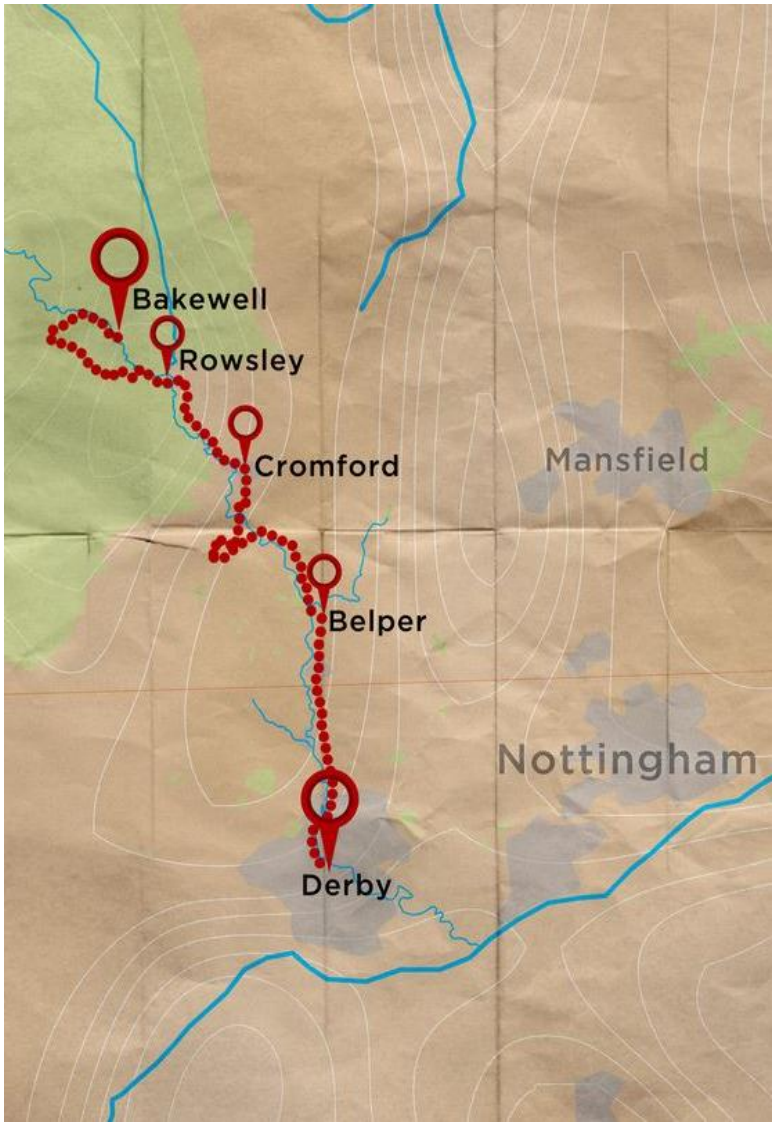
Programme 1

The Birth Of Industry

A spectacular 4-day walk into the heart of Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park. Stroll along the Derwent Valley to uncover the roots of the Industrial Revolution, the very spot where Britain was transformed from a nation of farmers into the industrial powerhouse of the world.

Our walk begins in the agricultural town of Bakewell and follows the course of the rivers Wye and Derwent, along a 44-mile stretch to the great railway city of Derby. Along the way we explore how, over one remarkable 80-year period from the 18th century, the landscape and resources of the Derwent Valley became the key to the birth of industry.



Please use OS Explorer Maps:

OL 24 The White Peak Area, OS 269 Chesterfield & Alfreton and OS 259 Derby.

All distances approximate.

Day 1 Bakewell to Rowsley, via Ashford-in-the-Water, Magpie Mine and Haddon Hall.

Distances: Total 15 miles

Bakewell to Ashford-in-the-Water and Sheep-wash Bridge to Magpie Mine – 3.5 miles

Magpie Mine to Haddon Hall – 4.5 miles

Haddon Hall to Rowsley – 7 miles

Day 2 Rowsley to Cromford, via Caudwell's Mill, Matlock, High Tor and Cromford Mill

Distance: Rowsley to Cromford – 8 miles

Day 3 Cromford to Belper, via Cromford Canal, Middleton Top and Wyvern Lane Bird Reserve.

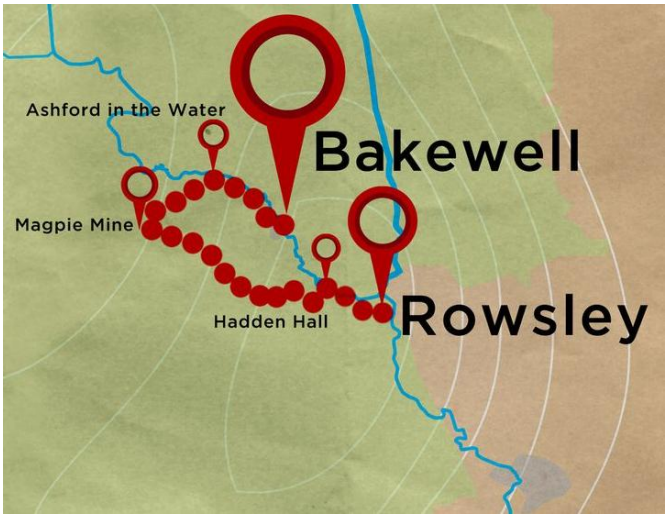
Distance: Cromford to Belper - 9 miles.

Day 4 Belper to Derby, via Belper North Mill, Derby Roundhouse

Distance: Belper to Derby - 9.5 miles

Walking Through History

Day 1: Bakewell to Rowsley, via Sheep-wash Bridge in Ashford-in-the-Water, Magpie Mine and Haddon Hall. 15 miles.



Begin in Bakewell at All Saints Church.

Bakewell

There is evidence of a settlement here since the Iron Age. The name Bakewell is thought to originate from 'Bad-kwell' meaning 'bath-spring', because the town grew up around mineral water springs.

For many years, sheep farming and lead mining were the area's most important industries. During medieval times, packhorses carrying wool and other goods would have bustled through its streets. Famous for its tart, known locally as 'Bakewell Pudding', Bakewell is now a thriving market town in the heart of the National Park.

Head north passing in The Old House Museum, before tracking the course of the river Wye and A6 to Ashford-in-the-Water, northwest of Bakewell. The route crosses the river at the main bridge into the village of Ashford-in-the-Water, and heads west past the church and two pubs (the Ashford Arms and the Bulls Head) to Sheep-wash Bridge.

Sheep-wash Bridge, Ashford-in-the-Water

Farming and agriculture supported the people of the Peak District since before the Doomsday Book. In the 1600s, just a century before the industrial age began, the national economy was still dominated by the wool trade. The Sheep-wash Bridge was originally a packhorse bridge, but as the name suggests it was also a place where sheep were washed. Lambs were penned on one side of the river and ewes were dropped in the water on the opposite bank. The ewes swam across the river to reach their lambs. Clean sheep meant a higher price for the sheared wool, so the shepherds made sure their herd had a good dunking! (Pictured, Tom Brocklehurst)

Continue and cross the A6 and head through Sheldon for just over a mile to reach Magpie Mine.

Magpie Mine

From the 16th century onwards the mineral and geological wealth of Derbyshire became increasingly significant. Following wool, Britain's second most important business was lead; required for all sorts of things, from shots in muskets to plumbing. Today, the Peak District is strewn with humps and hollows, evidence of the old lead mines. The most complete remains can be found at Magpie Mine. It's thought that lead has been extracted from the ground here for over 800yrs and you can still see the magnificent Victorian mine buildings (pictured).

From Magpie Mine, we follow the footpath southeast through Over Haddon, to Haddon Fields and from here you can see Haddon Hall east of the river.

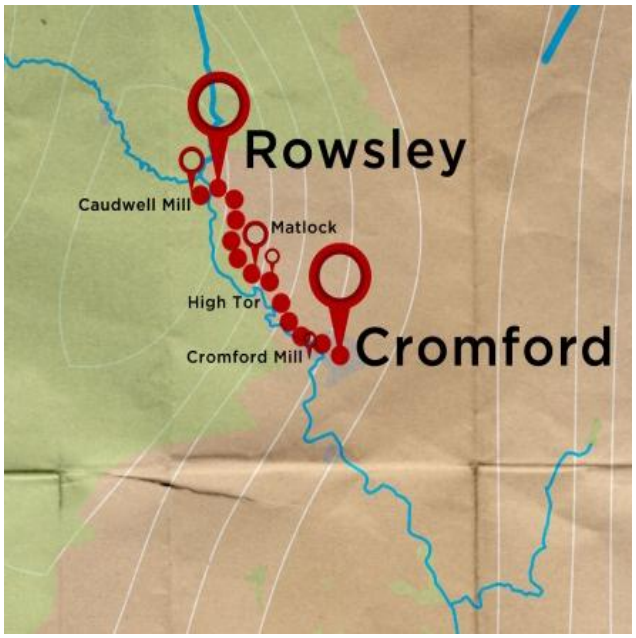
Haddon Hall

The lead mining industry helped develop the fortunes of the major landowners of the area. The beautiful, medieval Haddon Hall on the bank of the Wye was built by wealth generated from local lead mines, and was once owned by the Dukes of Rutland. Lead mining reached its zenith in the 18th century. Derbyshire landowners began investing their accumulated wealth in burgeoning industries, a key ingredient in the birth of the industrial age.

From Haddon Fields join the A6 into Rowsley, where Day 1 is complete.

Walking Through History

Day 2: Rowsley to Cromford, via Caudwell's Mill, Matlock, High Tor and Cromford Mill. 8 miles.



The walk begins in the southwest edge of the village of Rowsley at Caudwell's Mill.

Caudwell's Mill

Caudwell's Mill channels a rich source of power which is abundant in the Derwent Valley and it has served human enterprise for over 400 years. In the late 1700s, this power was about to be harnessed on a scale unseen anywhere in the world, because in its infancy the industrial revolution wasn't powered by coal, it was powered by water.

There's been a mill on the Rowsley site since 1591 and during that time the mill has ground corn, flour and animal feed, it has even been a sawmill. But the industrial revolution wasn't about producing the staples of life. The transformation to an industrial economy required a quite different product; cotton.

Leaving Caudwell Mill and Rowsley we join The Derwent Valley Heritage Way as it heads south downstream to Matlock and the favourite view point of High Tor.

High Tor

High Tor is a lofty limestone crag that towers over Matlock Dale. It is a perfect spot to admire the Derwent Valley as it stretches from north to south.

At the end of the 18th century cotton was set to clothe the masses. Anyone who could find a way to spin cotton on a large scale would open the door to a textile goldmine. The answer to the challenge lay not in the upper valley of the Derwent, which was dominated by wool, but in the lower valley in Cromford.

Continuing south from High Tor, the Derwent Valley Heritage Way leads us through an area that has been proclaimed a World Heritage Site to Cromford, and the key historic site of Cromford Mill, where the industrial revolution began.

Cromford Mill

The Derwent Valley had the workforce, the wealth and the power to drive a transformation, but the industrial revolution needed a moment of genius, someone to light the blue touch paper. That person was Richard Arkwright.

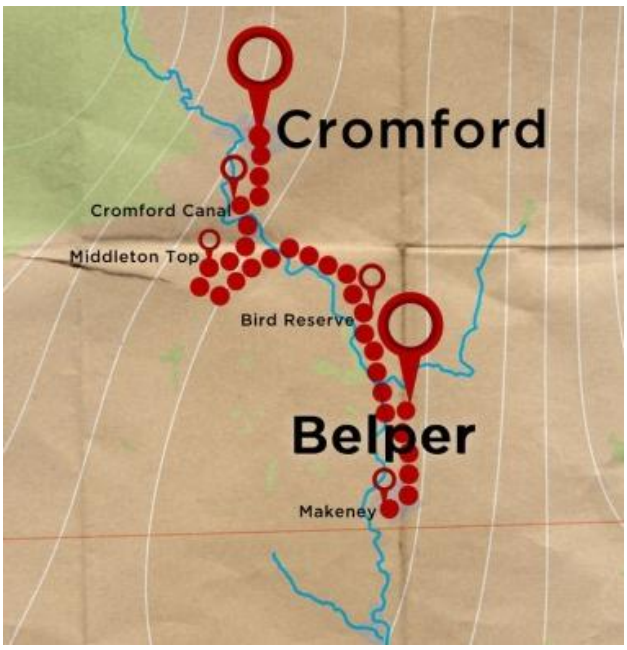
Conventional spinning machines needed a skilled worker to produce a single thread, but, by 1768 Arkwright had designed the spinning frame. This machine needed no skills and could spin multiple threads at once. At first horses powered it, but Arkwright's big idea was to harness water to drive the machines. By converting his spinning frame to a water frame, he took cotton production to a whole new level.

In 1771 Arkwright turned a handful of cottages and farm buildings into Cromford Mill. Here cotton could be mass-produced; it was the world's first water-powered cotton mill, and the world's first factory. The Mill helped Britain become the greatest textile producer on the planet.

We finish Day 2 walk in Cromford village.

Walking Through History

Day 3: Cromford to Belper, via Cromford Canal, Middleton Top and Wyvern Lane Bird Reserve. Plus a detour to Makeney, in total 9 miles.



Head out from Cromford on the Derwent Valley Heritage Way, following the river and then go south along the Cromford Canal.

Cromford Canal

Richard Arkwright built his empire in this remote and challenging landscape. He faced an obvious problem: how to get raw cotton into the valley, and how to get more and more finished products out.

Luckily for Arkwright, in the late 1780s, a new transport innovation was taking hold in Britain. It was one that would suit the Derwent Valley very well, the canal. Arkwright joined other investors in a project to link Cromford to the growing centres of the Midlands. For nearly 50 years, business on the canal grew steadily until it was carrying almost 300,000 tonnes a year. The industrial revolution marked the golden age of canals. Throughout the 1800s, the wharves of the Cromford Canal echoed to the sound of coal barges, limestone barges and the cotton industry. Today, it is conserved by the Friends of the Cromford Canal.

Leaving the Derwent Valley Heritage Way take the High Peak Trail, which follows the old track bed of the Cromford and High Peak Railway, and head west to Middleton Top.

Middleton Top

Middleton Top stands at one of the highest points on the Cromford & High Peak Railway. Remarkably, the engine that formed one of the world's first steam railways is here inside the engine house for us to marvel at 180 years later.

In the late 1820s, engineers just south of Cromford were working on an entirely new transport innovation, the railway. The canal had opened the Derwent Valley south and eastwards. A railway would open up an audacious corridor to the west – all the way to Manchester. The Cromford & High Peak Railway Company, established by an act of parliament in May 1825, linked the Cromford Canal with the Peak Forest Canal at Whaley Bridge.

When it was built in 1831 it smashed the previous record of 26 miles to become the longest railway at 33 miles. Not only was it the longest, but crossing Derbyshire's peaks made it also one of the highest. The railway used four sections of steep track to raise the line by 1000ft in less than five miles.

Retracing our route down the old railway line along the High Peak Trail we re-join the Derwent Valley Heritage Way and continue south, calling in at Wyvern Land Bird Reserve on the approach to Belper.

Wyvern Lane Bird Reserve

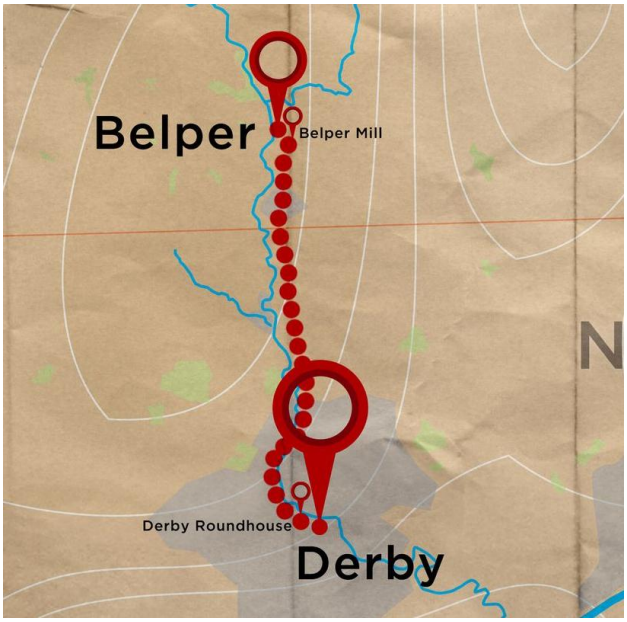
Wyvern Lane Bird Reserve lies just a short distance west of the Derwent Valley Heritage Way. The reserve is one of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's most important wetland reserves, consisting of two pools, water meadows and reed beds. It's a wildlife haven and an excellent place to see the many birds, which visit it throughout the year; sightings here include fire crests, pied flycatchers, spotted flycatchers, crossbills and hawfinch.

Continuing on the Derwent Valley Heritage Way we reach Belper, where Day 3 walk finishes.

If you fancy an extra walk on this day, it's worth continuing 5 miles on the Derwent Valley Way to The Holly Bush Inn at Makeney, which was reputedly frequented by highway man Dick Turpin.

Walking Through History

Day 4: Belper to Derby, via Belper North Mill, Derby Roundhouse, 9.5 miles.



Begin at Belper North Mill for final leg.

Belper North Mill

Belper Mill was like Cromford Mill's big brother, everything about it was a step up in scale. Belper owes its size and scale to the initiative of a father and son. By the mid-1800s Jedediah Strutt owned eight mills here, making Belper the second largest town in the county. Mill owners share one nemesis; fire, and in 1803 Belper's North Mill burned to the ground. But, the following year the mill was back, bigger and better than before.

At the time of the fire, Jedediah's son, William Strutt, had been experimenting with an entirely new fire-resistant building technique. When the mill was rebuilt William replaced timber with iron, to create an iron framed 'fire-proof' building. The metal framework also meant more floors could be added, the key to building high. Belper North Mill is one of the oldest surviving examples of an industrialised iron-framed 'fire proof' building. Strutt's ideas have shaped the way modern cities are built all over the world.

Join the Derwent Valley Heritage Way and head south, passing through Milford, Makeney and Little Eaton. At Darley Abbey village cross the river and continue on the path to the great railway city of Derby.

Derby

In the 1830s the great and the good of Derby had their eye on one thing - linking the ancient county town to the railway. If Derby could become a part of the growing national network, its future would be transformed. In fact, Derby's central location made it an ideal railway hub, and in 1844 it became the headquarters of the Midland Railway Company. Offices, platforms, engine sheds and workshops covered 80 acres of the city. The golden age of the railways was arguably the last great act of the Industrial Revolution.

Entering the city we walk on to the Derby Roundhouse where we complete our 44-mile route.

Derby Roundhouse

One of the jewels in the railway crown is Derby Roundhouse. It's a giant repair hangar, based around an ingenious central turntable with 16 radiating tracks to enable over 30 engines to be serviced here at once. When the locomotives of the Midland Railway broke down they were brought to the roundhouse to be fixed.

True to the innovating tradition of this valley, this particular workshop was the first of its kind. The railway roundhouse was a concept copied across the country, and all over the world. The Roundhouse was built in 1839, nearly 70 odd years after Arkwright started work in Cromford. It was well into the Industrial Revolution and mass production, factories and machines had become the new normality.

Useful Links:

www.derbyshireheritage.co.uk

www.nationalheritagecorridor.org.uk

www.caudwellsmill.co.uk

www.haddonhall.co.uk