

Jane Eyre Hathersage Trail

Transport



Distance

8 km
5.5 mi

Allow

3+ hr

Difficulty



Trail Summary

This circular film and literature walk takes you to the places visited by **Charlotte Bronte** that appear in **Jane Eyre**. You can also recreate the famous scene from **Pride & Prejudice** 'on location' above Stanage Edge and visit the grave of **Robin Hood's** sidekick **Little John**. Explore a Romano-British village, Norman fort, historic church and breathtaking moors on the way.

Moderate difficulty. Easy underfoot with some steep ascents and descents. Valley fields, high moorland paths, woodland path.

Start and finish:

The George Inn at the junction of the village Main Road (A6187) and the B6001 to Grindleford. OS Dark Peak Explorer Map, OL 1. SK230 815.

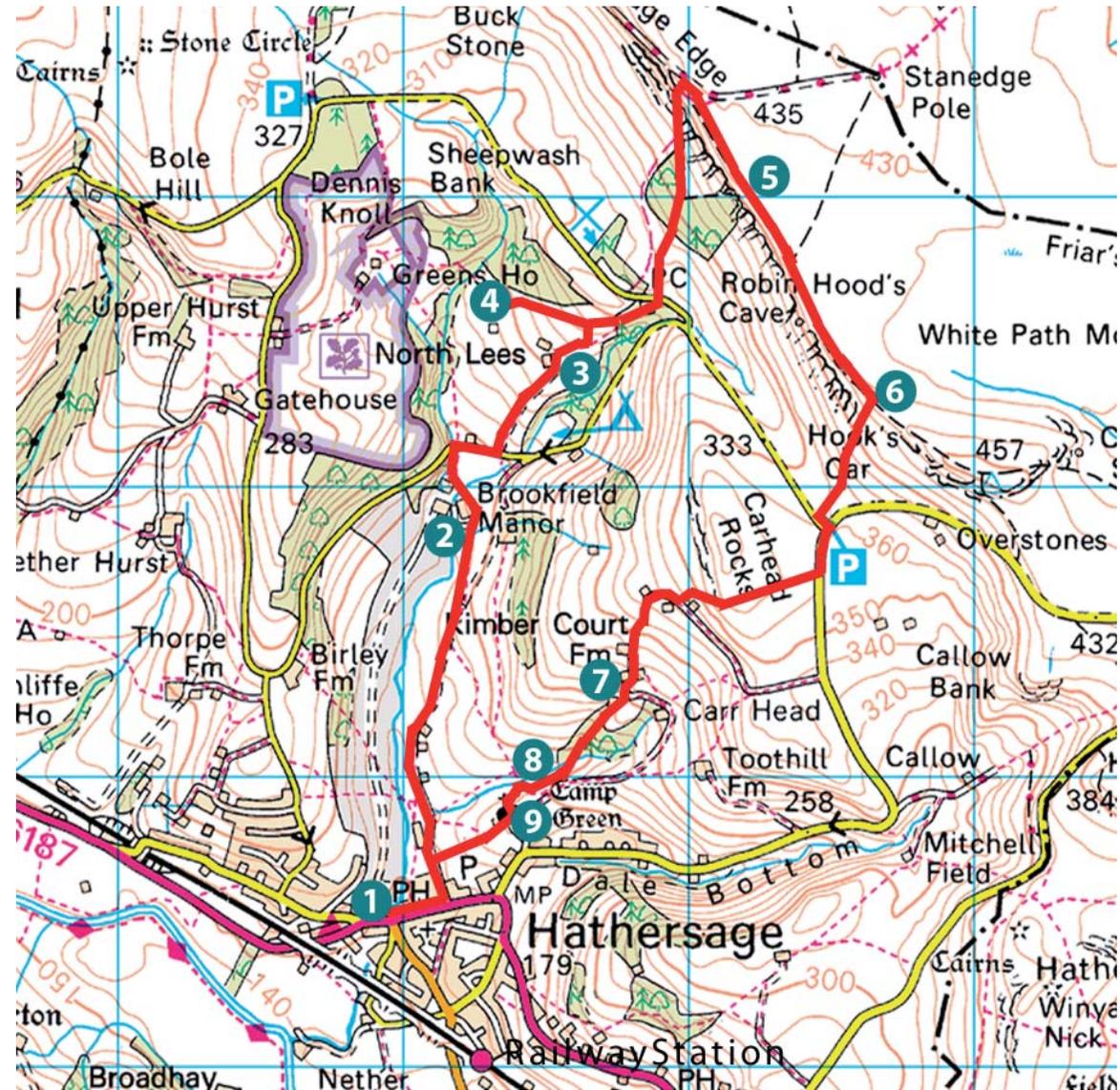
Access:

Buses from Sheffield and Bakewell stop on the Main Road. Sheffield to Manchester trains stop at Hathersage. Turn right out of the station. At the road (B6001) go right down to the village to arrive at the George Inn. Pay & display car park in village.



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Step into the pages of Jane Eyre, Pride & Prejudice and Robin Hood



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Explore historical Hathersage village, with its ancient church and surrounding halls that are central to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (above). Climb the cliff where Keira Knightley (below)



surveyed the Peak as Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* before stepping back down into polite society and marrying proud Darcy. Listen for rooks at North Lees Hall, and watch the attic windows for the ghostly face of a distressed captive, a sad vengeful wife no longer desired and destined to burn.

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1. The George Inn

In 1845, Charlotte Brontë arrived at Hathersage by stage coach to stay with her friend Ellen Nussey at the Rectory, while Nussey's rector brother was on honeymoon. The George (above right) was the village coaching inn, offering rest and

refreshment to travellers and their horses. Brontë used pub landlord Morton's name for her new novel. Morton is the village where *Jane Eyre* works as a schoolteacher, after fleeing from Rochester and Thornfield.



Head up the main street through the village, past the National Westminster bank and courtyard cafés. Immediately after the next building, turn left onto Baulk Lane, a signposted public footpath. In May and June the pastures along the path are radiant with yellow buttercups. Follow this footpath for nearly a mile (1.5km) until you see a large house with towering chimneys (below).



2. Brookfield Manor/Vale Hall

This is Brookfield Manor, which features as Vale Hall in *Jane Eyre*. In the novel, Mr Oliver of Vale Hall made his money from a needle factory and, in fact, Hathersage was famous for producing needles at the time. Daughter Rosamond Oliver funds the village school where Jane teaches under the false name Jane Elliott and pays Jane's £30 a year salary.

Continue along the footpath and at the road, turn right onto Birley Lane. After about 200 metres turn left onto the public footpath. Follow this tarmac road up to North Lees Hall.

3. North Lees Hall/Thornfield



'three stories high... a gentleman's manor house... battlements around the top gave it a picturesque look.' This is Thornfield, home of Edward Rochester, Jane's destined love. In the book, Thornfield is

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far to the south of Morton, but North Lees Hall is undoubtedly the template for the building Bronte describes. It is one of the many Eyre family homes in the area and we all know how Charlotte Bronte used their name!

Robert Eyre built North Lees Hall in the early 1590s, with a further wing added in 1750 after a fire. A persistent local legend has it that Agnes Ashurst, an early mistress of the hall, was imprisoned as a mad woman in the attic and died in a fire.

Continue along the footpath running behind the hall, and take a sharp right by an information board into a field, which is likely to have cows or sheep in it. About half way along the top field wall, to your left, is a stile. Cross it and follow the path about 50 metres till it kinks to the left.

4. Romano-British Village

Look right and you'll see what looks like a standing stone (below). This was once the end of a wall marking out a terrace. The terrace is one of five that were filled with Romano-British houses almost 2,000 years ago. Archaeologists have found

pottery made in the Derbyshire potteries set up after the Romans arrived. They also found a corn-grinding stone, so can be certain that back then villagers grew grain in the fields around you. Most probably the people who lived here were native local farmers. The invaders had a fort a few miles away. The ruined wall with the arched window across the field was once a Catholic chapel.

Cross back over the stile and head left and uphill along the woodland path. At the road, just before the public toilets, turn left and then right onto the bridleway. Cross the road and follow the bridleway up through woodland. Bear left, staying on the most obvious path and ascend up on to Stanage Edge.

5. Pride and Prejudice

Could you be Keira?! On Stanage Edge, Keira Knightley as Pride and Prejudice's Elizabeth Bennet felt freedom and air to breathe. So can you find Keira's rock?



Listen out for curlews and cackly red grouse on the high moorlands to your left. Rare ring ouzels are among the birds that nest in the cliffs at Stanage – a conservation success story!

Some 4,000 to 2,000 years ago people lived in the valley below and the moorland hills opposite you. They left us traces of their lives – burial mounds, stone circles and standing stones.

As you walk, you will pass Robin Hood's cave tucked in to the Edge below.

Follow along the top of the Edge for about 1 kilometre, heading south.

6. Jane Eyre on the Moor

Peaty moorlands quickly get wet and boggy. Here, Ruth Wilson as Jane Eyre in the BBC series, finally collapsed after fleeing Thornfield, only to be rescued by the Reverend St John Rivers, nursed back to health by his sisters and begin a new life teaching at Morton.



Take the concessionary path to your right, which heads diagonally down off the edge. Turn left out of the car park and immediately right onto the Hathersage road. After about 200 metres take the righthand footpath across heather moorland. When you leave the moorland, turn right onto the

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track and continue down through a wooden gate then a metal gate and into the grounds of Moor-seats (house). It feels like private property, but it is OK to pass through on this public footpath.

7. Moorseats/Moor House

Charlotte Bronte created Moor House out of Moorseats. The Revd St John lived here with his sisters and it becomes Jane Eyre's protection and retreat, dark, hidden away, sturdy.

'They loved their sequestered home. I too, in the grey small antique structure, with its low roof, its latticed casements, its mouldering walls, its avenue of aged firs all grown aslant under the stress of mountain winds; its garden, dark with yew and holly and where no flowers but of the hardiest species would bloom found a charm both potent and permanent.'

Walk through the grounds and turn immediately right after you exit. The footpath is through a small wooden gate between 2 sets of stone gate pillars. After 50 metres or so, go through the blue-grey gate to your left and then follow the path down through Moorseats Wood. Continue straight on where the path forks, ignoring the left turn to the metal kissing gate. Immediately after the fork you will see the grass and tree covered ground rise up 2 or 3 times head height, in front and to your left (pictured above right). It blocks the view of the church.



8. Norman Fort

This is the earth wall of a 1,000- year-old Norman Fort built shortly after the Battle of Hastings and the Norman invasion. William the Conqueror granted all Hathersage to one of his lords.

Continue along the path with the remains of the fort wall on your left until you reach a gate and stile. The church is in front of you. Turn left on to the road and enter the churchyard through the second gate on your right. It's the gate with the wooden roof.

9. Robin Hood and his Merry Men!



Hathersage churchyard is most famous for the grave of Little John, Robin Hood's giant righthand man (above). Local legend claims Little John's bow, hat and mail shirt once hung inside the church. There's been a church here for at least 1,000 years.

You will also find many Eyre family graves in the

churchyard, confirming the importance of this name and family to Hathersage.

Look out for gargoyles and 'Celtic'-style carved heads adorning the church. The church you see today dates from 1460. Robert Eyre, then Lord of the Manor, restored the church and added the gargoyles. It was restored again in the mid 1800s.



Leave the churchyard by a gate more or less opposite where you came in. Take the path down to rejoin Baulk Lane to head back into the village. To return to the George, turn right out of Baulk Lane.

Credits.

Walk: devised by Bill Bevan & James Tolhurst as a Moors for the Future audio trail; adapted for print by Georgia Litherland. Photos: Bill Bevan, Jane Eyre still courtesy of www.VisitPeakDistrict.com, Pride & Prejudice still courtesy of EM Media.

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