



# Wild Edale Walk

Transport



Distance

8.8 km  
5.5 mi

Allow

4+hr

Difficulty



## Trail Summary

Challenging walk up steep slopes with a scramble up a stabilised rock-fall. Difficult for children under 8.

### Start and finish:

At the Moorland Centre, Grindsbrook, Edale. Call in to discover more about the moorlands and wildlife. There are also toilets, a shop and information service.

### Access:

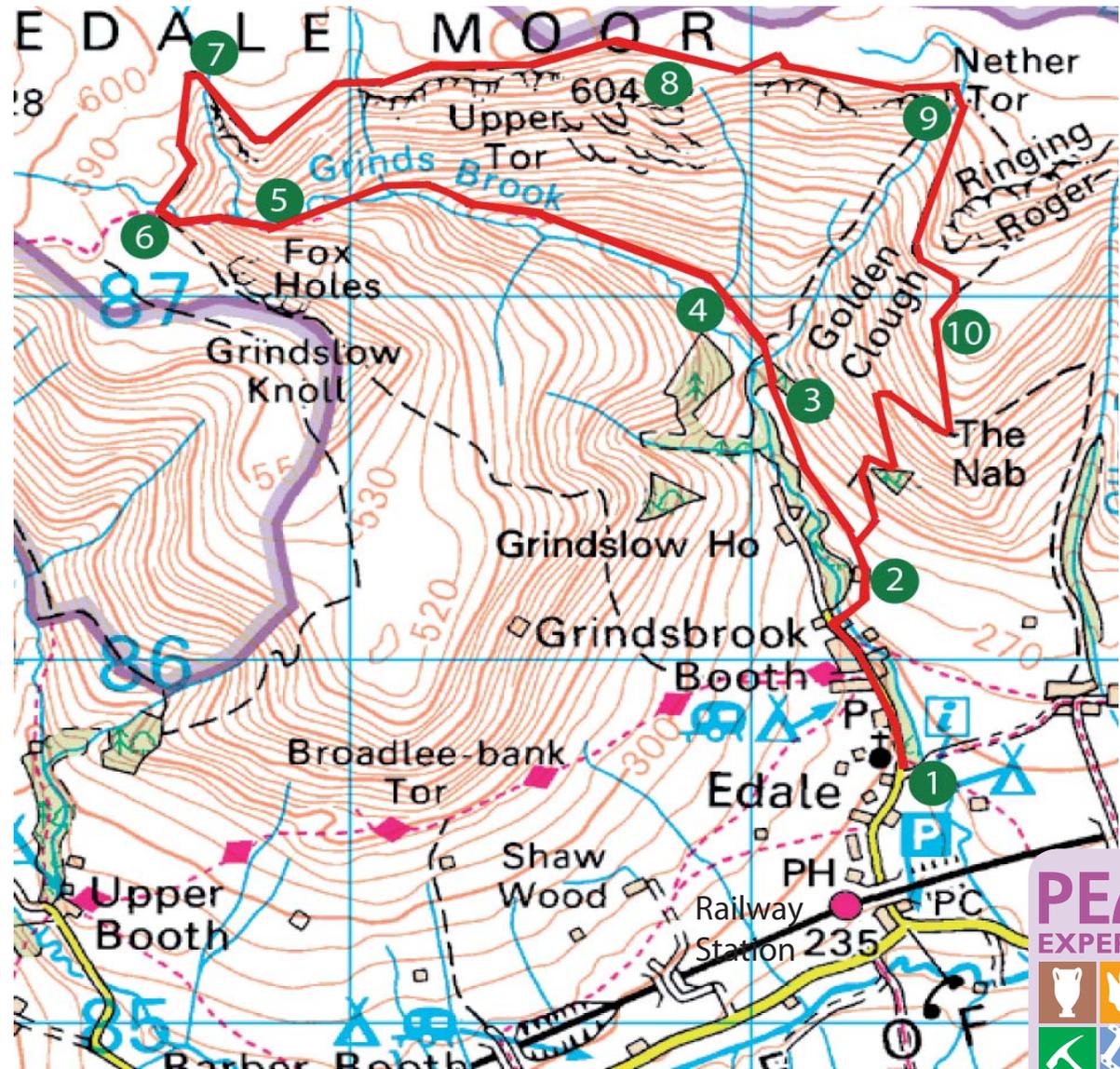
Edale railway station is on the main route from Sheffield to Manchester, making it great place for a car-free visit. Parking is available at the pay & display car park at the turn in to the village. Toilets in car park.

The wildlife habitats you see on your route include heather moorland, peat bogs, acid grassland, gritstone edges and upland streams. Each habitat has its own distinct look and wildlife. Perhaps you'll see a rare mountain hare, and you can be sure of astounding views over the valley.



Project is part-funded by the European Union European Regional Development Fund

## Explore many faces of Edale's wild side



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Controller HMSO. Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. Peak District National Park Authority. License No. LA 100005734. 2005

PEAK EXPERIENCE





# Wild Edale Walk



## Discovering Edale's Moorlands

Edale's moorlands and peat bogs are almost endangered species in their own right!

Conditions are harsh in the high moorlands, with poor soil, low temperatures, high rainfall and winds. Life here has to adapt to survive. Despite the hardships, our moorlands are home to a plethora of wildlife – small mammals scurrying among heather and bilberries and many birds such as curlew, golden plover, short-eared owl and merlin.



If you're lucky you may spot a mountain hare (pictured below). They have white coats in winter and are brown-grey the rest of the year, to keep themselves camouflaged.



**PEAK EXPERIENCE**



A good time to see them is in early spring, while they still have their white fur but there's no longer snow on the ground to hide them.

The moors are at their brightest in August with a purple carpet of flowering heather. Yet year-round they show a rich patchwork of colours and textures among heathers, bilberry plants, grasses and bracken. There are three types of heather. Ling heather is most common, but you can spot bell heather too, and cross-leaved heath in damp ground.

As you walk, take a close look at the path edges to see smaller mosses and lichen.

## 1. Moorland Centre

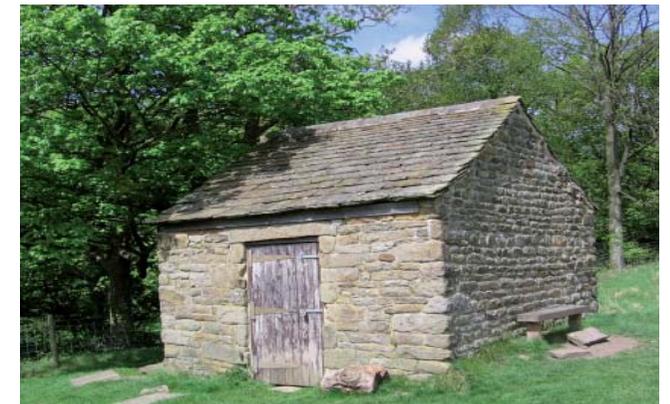
The Moorland Centre's planted roof saves energy by providing year-round thermal insulation. It is also a wildlife habitat. Local schoolchildren planted the different species all around the building to help visitors learn about Edale's wildlife. Have a look at the board outside the centre for more info.



One of a suite of downloadable trails available from [www.peak-experience.org.uk](http://www.peak-experience.org.uk)

From the Moorland Centre, head up through the village and follow signposts for Grindsbrook. Cross the small bridge over the brook and continue into a field with a stone-paved walkway. Continue along this route.

## 2. Information barn



The small stone field barn houses more information about the moors. It's open at summer weekends. The flagstone pathway is an important protection for the valley. Thousands of visitors enjoy Edale's rugged beauty each year and stone walkways protect the land and its wildlife from erosion by walkers.

Continue walking up Grindsbrook.

## 3. Through the valley

Notice how the fringe of trees becomes sparser and eventually peters out, as lush valley fields give way to rough uplands. These trees are all that remain of the woodland that once covered much



# Wild Edale Walk



of the area. Grazing sheep nibble away young tree shoots and keep the land grassy rather than wooded. This allows grassland wildflowers to grow.

As you cross the pretty wooden bridge after a small patch of woodland, look up to your right to see Golden Clough topped by the triangular silhouette of Ringing Roger on the horizon. Take the lefthand, more clearly visible route after the bridge.

## 4. Wildflowers at Grindsbrook clough

In late spring the hillsides are bright green with bilberry bush leaves. On your left is an area of acidic grassland. From May through to September, you can see typical acidic grassland wildflowers, four-petalled yellow tormentil and the tiny blue flower of heath milkwort (pictured below). Heather, bilberries and bracken cling to the clough sides down to the stream.



**PEAK**  
EXPERIENCE



As you near the top of Grindsbrook Clough, there's a small outcrop of rocks and the path disappears. Keep to the left of the outcrop and pick your way up over the boulders of this ancient rockfall.

## 5. A glorious scramble

Keep an eye on the stream as you climb, you might see a few small fungi growing in under damp rock shelves.

You'll cross the stream a few times to find your easiest route. Near the top it becomes steep and is a scramble, but great fun if you are confident and well worth the effort for the astounding views from the top.

## 6. Top of the clough!

Take some time to catch your breath and enjoy the views over the valley and across Edale Moor.

Turn right and follow the path along the edge of the plateau. You'll cross numerous small streams along the way.

## 7. High moorland and rare peat bog

This extraordinary high moorland and peat bog landscape is home to small wildlife and birds, including dunlin, snipe and golden plover. Notice how the rich dark peat sits atop infertile pale dry stone. Peat took millions of years to form and is an important 'carbon sink'. It holds huge quantities of carbon within it, and helps protect the planet

from further carbon-related climate change. This is a wonderful place to get a sense of the vastness and tininess of nature, as you look out over huge landscapes and come across the intricate insects that live here.

If you're lucky you might spot a mountain hare or bird of prey, such as a merlin, peregrine or short-eared owl. Red grouse, meadow pipit and golden plover nest on the ground, so listen and watch for them too. Ungainly red grouse sound like laughing witches or rusty springs bouncing, while meadow pipits are smaller with brown and buff bars. Ecologists understand how healthy the land is and how much wildlife is living here in part through studying the numbers of birds that can live and feed here.



## 8. Nesting birds and sheltering plants

Look out for the lichen *cladonia floerkeana* along the pathsides, with its distinctive red flowers. The magnificent gritstone edges are full of nooks and crannies that provide shelter for ferns, mosses and lichens to grow. The cliffs also offer safe nesting



# Wild Edale Walk



sites for birds.

A little over halfway along the clifftop edge, you come to a slight promontory and can look directly over the valley-bottom village to a cleft in the line of the opposite horizon. This is Hollins Cross, on the line of an old packhorse route across Mam Tor, the historic 'Mother Mountain' opposite you, down into Edale valley.

## 9. Erosion control

On parts of the moor the vegetation and top layer of peat have been eroded by walkers, so the stone footpaths are here to protect the land from further damage. Please do use the paths that you see.

Take a right down a rather rubbly path to the small plateau below. Be careful! You can see a clear pathway continuing along the line of the contour about a third to a half way down the hill-side and you are heading down to join that.



## 10. Moorland food for birds

Look around and you may see pools of open water. The insects that live here are essential food for moorland birds such as golden plover and curlew (pictured below) to feed their chicks. In the surrounding damp ground grow rushes and cross-leaved heather. Look and listen for red grouse (below left) as you walk.



Join the most obvious, pale path and follow it to the Nab, a little promontory sticking out like a nose from a face overlooking the valley. From the Nab, follow the path back round and down into the valley bottom to the paved way you first came along. Retrace your steps into the village. Perhaps back to the Moorlands Centre now that you've seen the land and wildlife it reveals; perhaps to a village teashop or pub.

Credits.

Walk: devised by Emma Mortimer; edited by Georgia Litherland

Photos: Georgia Litherland, Emma Mortimer, Ray Manley

We hope you enjoyed your walk! Please tell your friends.

There are more Peak Experience self-guided trails for you to download at [www.peak-experience.org.uk](http://www.peak-experience.org.uk)

Inspired by the landscape? Send us photos or stories from your walk to share with others on [www.MyPeakExperience.org.uk](http://www.MyPeakExperience.org.uk)

And if you or your children were inspired to create poetry, songs, paintings or drawings we'd love to see them.

## IMPORTANT

**Please keep dogs on a short lead during bird nesting times, 1 March to 31 July.**

