

Kelstedge (8.3 miles)

At A Glance

- Distance: 8.3 miles
- Time: 3.5-4 hours
- Grade: Easy
- Terrain: Woodland/moorland trails, field paths, country lanes
- Accessibility: Uneven ground, squeeze stiles, gates
- Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL24

This beautiful walk takes you on peaceful woodland and moorland trails before heading across open fields with stunning views of the surrounding countryside. The pretty village of Kelstedge is at the halfway point, with a pub and cafe for refreshments if needed. The route then follows quiet country lanes past farms and cottages back to the park.

1. Starting your walk from the Reception building, turn left and leave Darwin Forest by the main entrance/exit road. Turn left on reaching the main road (B5057). Be aware that there is no footpath here but the grass verges are wide. Cross over the road and walk carefully on the verge, keeping to the left of a stone wall.



2. Turn right at an obvious gap in the stone wall after approx 400 metres to follow a clear path that leads through a stunning avenue of arching beech trees to the right and pines to the left, still keeping to the left of a stone wall.

3. Where the stone wall and beech trees end at a crossroads of paths, go straight on and follow a narrow path, with a dense woodland of pine trees to your left and birch trees to your right (Upper Moor). Be aware that the path may be muddy in places.

4. Where the trees end at a rough field, turn left to briefly follow a path alongside the edge of the pine trees. At a crossroads of paths after approx 150 metres turn right to follow a clear path through the rough field towards a wide metal gate.

5. Go through the gate to meet a quiet road (Jaggers Lane). Turn left on the road, passing Matlock Farm Park on your right hand side.

6. Just before the crossroads, look out for a public footpath on the right hand side. Go through the metal hand gate in the stone wall and head diagonally right across the grass fields of Middle Moor. There are wonderful open views all around you.

7. Go through a further metal hand gate in a stone wall and turn immediately right, walking with the wall on your right hand side.

8. Go through a third metal hand gate and this time turn immediately left to go through a wide gateway straight ahead of you. Head diagonally right across the grass fields.

9. Make your way through a succession of three narrow wooden hand gates - the last one entirely redundant since the stone wall has long since crumbled away. Head towards the far end of the woodland that you can see on your left.



10. As you draw level with the end of the woodland, turn left to follow a marked footpath with a stone wall on your left. Look out for wonderful views over the town of Matlock on your right, and see if you can pick out Riber Castle on the hill.

11. Go straight on through a wooden hand gate beside a wide metal gate. You're now entering the area of the abandoned Cuckoostone Quarry. If you take a short and obvious diversion off the path to the left here you can see the ruins of some of the old quarry buildings.

12. The path widens, still with wonderful views to the right. Continue straight on after passing a small cottage on the right, ignoring the footpath off to the right at this point. The path widens further to become a metalled track (Cuckoostone Lane).

13. After a further 450 metres, when you first start to see the road ahead of you (A632), look out for a signed footpath between stone walls on your left hand side. Do keep watching for this because the sign is low to the ground and not particularly obvious.

14. Follow this path with a stone wall to your right and mixed woodland to your left. After approx 150 metres the path bears left into an open section of heath land, dotted with young pine trees and heather.

15. Continue on this path as it enters an area of dense pine woodland. Go straight on across two crossroads of paths, following a clear track for approx 800 metres between tall pine tree woodlands on both sides (known as Bottom Moor).



16. The track eventually emerges from the trees to reach a road (Wirestone Lane). Cross the road carefully and take the quiet lane immediately opposite (Robridging Road), signed towards Uppertown. There are no pavements along this lane but the verges are wide and it's usually very quiet. There are wonderful views over the surrounding open countryside and you will pass Eddlestowe Lot Nature Reserve on your right, which has picnic areas if you need a spot for a break.



17. The lane bears left after approx 450 metres, at which point you should take the track on the right signed to Vernon Lane Farm. Just before the wide metal gates and cattle grid to the farm, turn left and take the well signed Footpath and Bridleway.

18. You now follow this bridleway for approx 2.5km into the village of Kelstedge. It narrows and widens at various points, twisting and turning through pretty countryside, often with stone walls on both sides. Ignore all paths off and keep straight on. Please note that this bridleway is used regularly by mountain bikers and horse riders so please be aware on the narrow path and give way accordingly.

19. A third of the way along, the path runs to the side of a stream (Hodgelane Brook), crossing the water via two wooden footbridges. The path eventually widens into a metalled track (Vernon Lane) and enters the small village of Kelstedge.



20. On reaching the main road through Kelstedge (A632), turn left and walk straight on. There is a pub here on the right (The Kelstedge) for halfway refreshments if needed. Alternatively, for a small diversion, keep going straight on along the main road for approx 200 metres to reach Marsh Green Farm Shop, which sells a wide range of cafe and deli food and drink.

21. To continue the walk, turn left just after The Kelstedge pub onto Kelstedge Lane, a narrow country lane that wends its way through beautiful open countryside. Be aware that there is no pavement but it is usually a very quiet lane with minimal traffic.

22. At a junction with Oaks Lane, Kelstedge Lane changes its name to Eaton Lane. Continue straight on to Uppertown. Keep following Eaton Lane and the signs to Uppertown when reaching a second junction with Mill Lane. At a third junction with Lid Lane, bear to the left.



23. At a small cluster of houses, Eaton Lane becomes a rough track that goes straight on, whereas the metalled lane bears left and becomes Whitefield Lane. Follow Whitefield Lane past cottages, through woodland and open countryside.

24. At a junction opposite Jagers Cottage, turn right on to Jagers Lane, following the signs to Beeley and Darley Dale. This lane heads gently uphill until it reaches a crossroads. At the crossroads go straight on to rejoin the lane you took at Point 5.

25. Retrace your steps along Jagers Lane past Matlock Farm Park, and turn right at the metal gate to re-enter the rough field you walked through earlier. At the crossroads of paths, turn left to briefly follow the edge of the pine trees as before, then turn right on the path through the woodland.

26. At the crossroads of paths go straight on to walk back through the avenue of arching beech trees. At the end of the path turn left onto the B5057 and look out for Darwin Forest Country Park on your right.

Along the way...

Upper, Middle and Bottom Moor

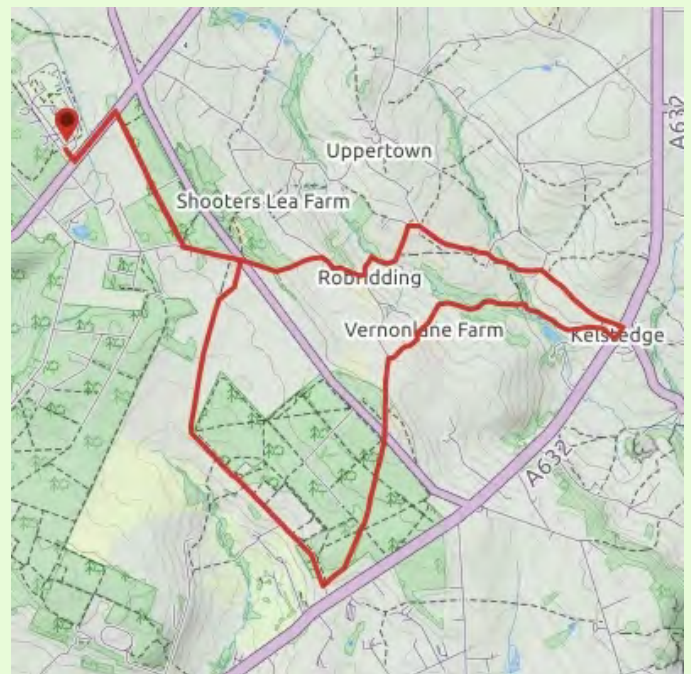
Upper, Middle and Bottom Moor are part of a large area of moorland and mixed woodland known as Matlock Forest, which covers almost 500 hectares. Situated on Matlock Moor, a plateau above the valley of the River Derwent on the southern edge of the Peak District, the area is dominated by mature stands of conifers, interspersed with areas of wet woodland, heather moorland and acidic grassland. It provides a vital habitat for plant life and wildlife, including Nightjars, nocturnal ground-nesting birds.

Riber Castle

The grandiose structure of Riber Castle stands high above the town of Matlock and can be seen for many miles around. It's a 19th Century Grade II Listed country house built by the industrialist John Smedley in 1862. After Smedley's death it had many incarnations: it was a boys' school in the 1930s, a food storage site for the Ministry of Defence during World War II and then a wildlife park from the 1960s until 2000. It is currently being converted into flats.

Cuckoostone Quarry

Cuckoostone Quarry was once a busy gritstone quarry, active in the late 19th and early 20th Century. The stone was used for building projects throughout the country, as well as for making millstones and grindstones, which were used for sharpening metal tools. The huge blocks of gritstone were transported from here to sawing sheds at Matlock Bridge Station to be cut.



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Download the instructions or GPX file at
www.darwinforest.co.uk/peak-district/walking