

12. Foolow - Hucklow - Abney Moor - Offerton Moor - Eyam Moor



We have called this walk the Bretton & Abney skyline; as on a good day, it offers wonderful views of the 'cloughs' of Bretton and Abney as well as the surrounding countryside.

From the door of the Bulls Head, turn right and follow the main road out of the village. The last house on the right is called 'Spread Eagle house', a former inn; Beyond this is a small drive to a barn on your right, then in 50m there is a stile again on the right leading into the 1st field take this and follow it across the field (roughly in the direction of the house) a stile leads onto the drive of the house; take the small gate opposite, and cross the first field to a small opening in the wall, known as a squeeze stile. The path through the next field is not always obvious, but is followed roughly in the direction of a modern barn, to another squeeze stile and finally into an old lane. Follow the lane to its end, where it meets a tarmac road. This is the hamlet of Grindlow; follow the tarmac road past the houses then continue to a T-junction on the edge of Great Hucklow.

Turn left at the junction and continue past houses and a road on your left for 150m to a lane on your right (with sign 'unsuitable for motor vehicles'). Follow the lane to Great Hucklow school; the track bends right behind the school and then climbs steeply uphill. Follow the track until you meet a tarmac road.

Turn left at the road and follow it out of the trees until you see a wooden finger post to the start of a footpath on the right. You now have a vista of Camphill gliding club on your left and Bretton Clough on your right.

Camphill has been the home of The Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club since 1935 most days you can see the gliders being lifted by tractor on a winch or soaring in the sky above your head.

You now have 2 options; the 'skyline' route follows the quiet road past the gliding club as far as a junction leading to Grange Farm on the right.

(An alternative if the road appears busy is to look for a stile in the wall on the right just after a small indent (water reservoir) and take the field path which drops down to the head of Bretton Clough, then up again to join the road at the same point.)

Just beyond the Grange Farm road you will see a gate and stile on the left leading onto Abney Moor; take this and follow the well defined path across the moor until you get to another stile and dirt track.

Cross the stile then turn right and follow the track until you come to a gate; go through the gate, then 500m beyond this the track bends left; we turn right hand here and follow a path for a short distance beyond this to another stile and gate. Cross the stile and follow the path, which goes alongside a wall. This is Offerton moor and again you have great views of the village of Abney and Abney Clough.

Abney is a small hamlet with its outlying 'Manor Farms' at Abney Grange and Highlow. Abney Grange was listed in the Domesday book and Highlow Hall has its origin in the 1300's.

The moorland path follows the stone wall for about 500m to an old wooden marker post where the wall bends right wards and drops downhill. Here you have a choice; the main path takes a right wards direction slightly downhill, initially following the wall; then where the wall turns off downhill and to the right, the path continues straight on; (look out for a green footpath sign to Oaks Farm).

An alternative at the wooden post is to continue straight ahead on a small path which takes you along the top of the moor, with views all round. Follow this path for around 500m until you see a metal gate on your right, just before meeting another path; turn right here and cross the stile beside the gate. At the far side of the gate is a bench, which makes a good place to pause a while and enjoy the view over Abney and Bretton.

Beneath you is the path for the green footpath sign, where you need to turn left and continue on to Oaks Farm which you can see in the distance.

The path bears right just in front of the farm, alongside the boundary wall for 25m where you will see a stile cross this and follow the path which goes beneath the farm buildings and on to join a track and the road.

Cross the road and stile opposite then follow the path diagonally through the field to an obvious stile on the edge of some trees. This takes you to a lovely woodland path which descends to Bretton Brook (take care in wet weather, as this can become slippery).

Just before the brook, the path crosses a stile and then over a wooden bridge. Beyond this on the left is a small gate to another bridge which crosses the brook; this is know as Stoke Ford. A green footpath sign gives you 3 options; you are aiming for the middle one - which goes right initially, then after 50m turns left, steeply uphill towards Eyam moor. As the path levels off the route continues over 2 more stiles, with a great view of Bretton Clough.

There were apparently 5 farms in Bretton Clough, and the remains of 3 can be seen today. In 1893 a rabbit warren was created at Clough Farm by the lord of the manor of Abney; Rabbits were bred here for the next forty years or so, and are said to have burrowed so much that they badly damaged the land, making the slopes of shale unstable. There is certainly evidence of the land having slipped at the far end of the Valley, giving it great character.

Our route continues over 2 more stiles and onto Eyam moor; at the 2nd stile go straight ahead following the path which ascends the moor towards Eyam. At the top of the climb, pause a while to admire the view before continuing over the moor towards Sir William Hill mast. Follow the path to the edge of the moor and a stile.

Leave the moor by crossing the wall and then turn right along the dirt track, which undulates alongside the moor until it reaches a tarmac road. Turn right here and follow the road taking time to admire the view, which on a good day means you can see the whole of your route. Continue past the Barrel Inn, then bear leftwards to descend steeply back to Foolow.

