

## Mockingbird

Griffe Grange, Grangemill, Aldwark, Minninglow, Long Dale, Middleton, Green Lane, Tissington Trail, Biggin, Upper Moor, Minninglow, Rainster Rocks

Distance = 41.3 km (25.7 miles); off road = 27 km

Total Vertical Ascent = 801m

Ride Time = 3 to 4 hours

Maps = OS White Peak Area (OL 24) 1:25,000

Are you pulling my plonker? This route is a bit derivative and only exists because it takes in a couple of off-road sections that don't feature elsewhere. It is a good ride in its own right though and one of the off-road sections is a real gem of a collectors piece.

Leave Brassington via the uphill road heading north to Longcliffe. After 700 metres, turn right in front of the telephone exchange onto the road to Wirksworth. This soon levels out and passes in front of a large factory (Hoben's Industrial Minerals) behind which are the looming crags of Harborough Rocks. Immediately after the entrance to the factory is a stile and sandy path leading to the High Peak Trail. Reach the trail and turn right.

After 1.1 km, just before Hopton Station, is a large wooden gate on the left. Go through the gate and across the grass field keeping close to the left hand wall. Continue on the same line over the summit of the hill and down more grass to a T-junction with a wide, gravel track – the Chariot Way. Turn left and follow this for 1.8 km of fast up and down riding (more down than up) to a sharp left hand bend with a gate. Don't go through this gate, instead go through the gate below and to the right. The trail now follows an interesting, diagonal path across a grassy field, not really contouring and not really descending either, but kind of doing both. On the far side of the field is a muddy patch and beyond this is another grass field. At the bottom of the hill is Grangemill.

Take the first road on the left (the B5056) and after 300m turn right up the small lane to Aldwark. At the top of the long climb up the hill turn left and ride another 1.2 km. Turn right at the T-junction with the parked lorries. The start of Gallowlow Lane is on the left after 500m. Follow it to the High Peak Trail.

Gallowlow Lane is a lot easier in this direction as the muddy ruts are downhill (or should that be rutty muds?). Upon reaching the High Peak Trail, turn right and head towards Minninglow car park. Immediately before the car park, the trail crosses a minor road. Turn right onto this road. Go 1.2 km to the A5012 and turn right. About 500m along the main road, on the left, is a large metal gate and public bridleway signposted to "Gratton Dale & Long Dale".

Go through the gate and along the left side of the field. Where the wall bends to the left, turn left as well. Drop down the steep, rocky path into the valley and join a section of narrow sheep-path leading to two wooden gates. Turn left and go through the larger of the two gates. Ride for 1.2 very pleasant kilometres up Long Dale. Eventually a wooden gate is reached. Pass through this, stick to the right hand wall and take the obvious track that climbs steeply onto the north side of the dale. At the top, go through the large metal gate and follow the right hand wall across the field. The path now becomes a track and this leads all the way to the road to Middleton. However, part way along the track is a metal gate below and to the left (opposite a wall with a large tree). This gate is the start of 400m of rocky bridle path that is much more fun and far less mucky than the track. Both track and path emerge at a sharp bend in a narrow country lane.

Turn left and ride down the road to Middleton village, 1.5 km away. At the village 'square' in Middleton, turn left and go up the long hill for 1.8 km to a cross roads. Straight ahead is the driveway to Mere Farm and this is the start of the superb Green Lane.

Green Lane is 2.8 km of up and down riding along a rough track with a variety of surfaces.

Quite often there is a muddy lake in the middle to tiptoe round. At 1.5 km from Mere Farm, the lane crosses an old Roman road (look out for the Latin inscription) and at 2.2 km it crosses the High Peak Trail. At the far end, the A515 is reached. Cross this very busy road with great care and continue up the track on the opposite side. Go over the summit and down the other side. Where the track joins the road, turn right and carry on down the hill. Immediately before the bridge though, turn left to join the Tissington Trail at Hartington Station car park.

Follow the trail south for 3.8 km passing Biggin on the way and turn off at a bridge over a minor road. Head right up the road to the A515. Upon reaching the main road, turn right and then take the first left. Ride down the hill to a bend in the road where the driveway to Upper Moor Farm (signpost) heads off left.

Leave the driveway where it turns left into the farmyard and go straight on through the large metal gate. Head across the field to the summit of the hill. The 'ride' down the other side is a true classic – deeply rutted, filthy muddy and largely unrideable with little hope of escape into the neighbouring fields. Numerous gates bar the way. Seemingly devised by an evil genius, these require ingenuity and a fair amount of luck to open. Although only a few hundred metres long, this track must rank as one of the finest of its kind. Imagine the Krypton Factor meets SAS training on wheels. It has got to be done though and if you do it in Winter you can give yourself two seat post notches.

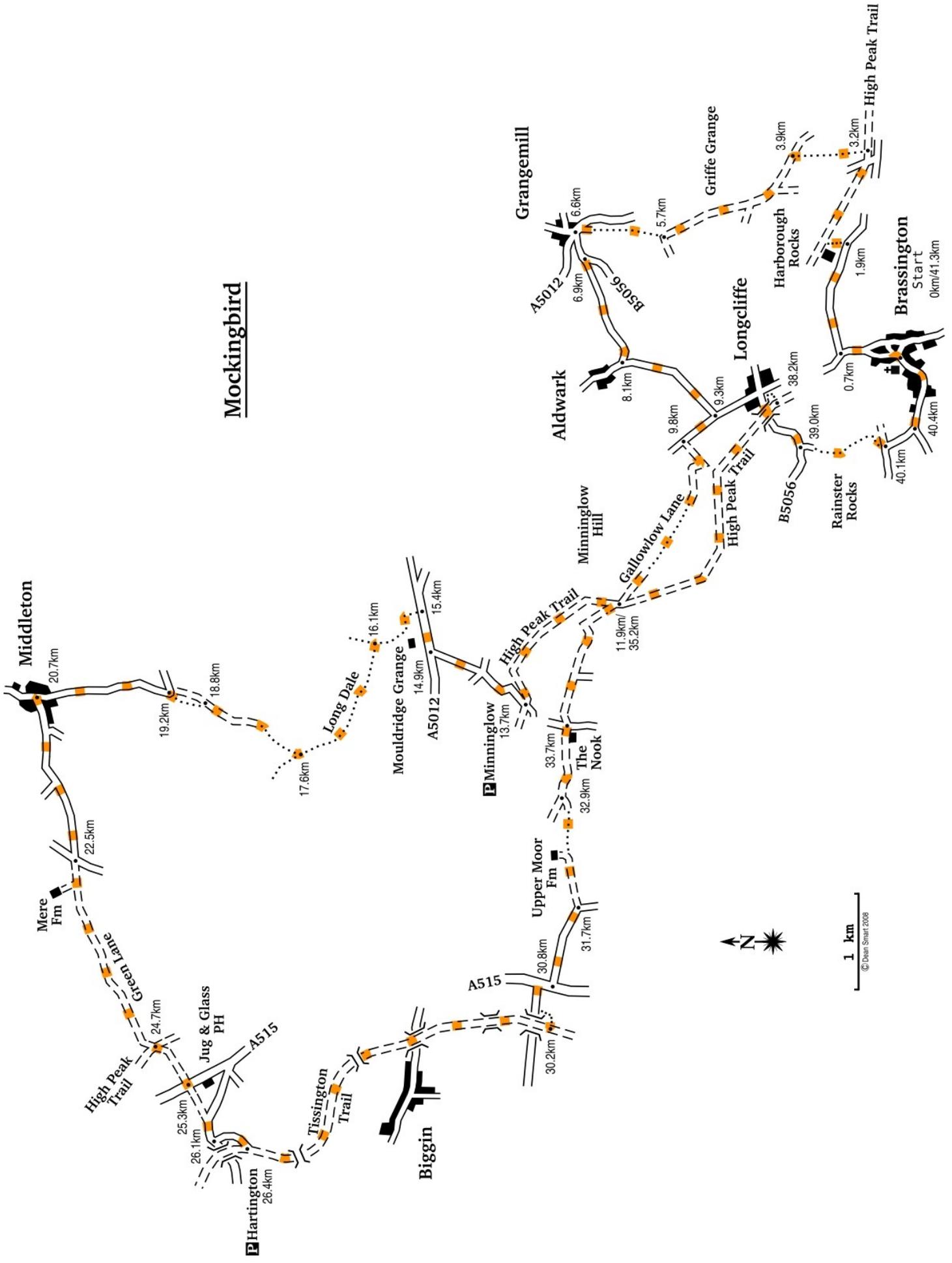
After what seems an eternity (“I may be gone some time...”), stone surfacing appears and the lower end of Cardlemere Lane is met. Follow this down the hill to The Nook. Cross straight over Parwich Lane (watch out for cars) and onto Minninglow Lane. Ignore the turning to Roystone Cottages after 600m and go straight on along the unsurfaced track. A short downhill run leads through the old brick works (now a Great-crested Newt sanctuary) to a longer climb up to the High Peak Trail.

Turn right along the trail and ride 3 km to Longcliffe Station. At the station, just over the bridge, leave the trail by turning left and following the looping driveway around to the road. Go over the stile and turn left down the road (the B5056).

About 600m down the hill, take the bridleway on the left, opposite the 50 mph sign. This begins as a good track leading to some farm buildings. Here the path bears right through an open gateway and runs down the left hand side of a large field. Bumpy grass leads to a second open gateway and more bumpy grass. Do not go through the third gateway though, instead go through the small wooden gate on the left with the sign “please keep to the bridal & footpath”. While watching out for ladies in white dresses, follow the bridle path rightwards and go through a narrow gap between the wall and the hillside. Emerge into a large field with ridge and furrow and cross the middle on a vague track curving gently towards the far right hand corner. In the corner is a gate opening onto a bend in a country lane.

Go straight on, up the hill, down the other side and turn left at the T-junction for Brassington.

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1 km  
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