

CIRCULAR WALKS IN CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH PARISH

WALK 2

THE FIVE HALLS

A mixture of paths, roads and bridleways passing the seats of the old 'Squires' of the area, a distance of some 5 miles.

The walk commences in the Market Place by the Post Office. Go towards the Church and take the path going alongside the Church railings noting the old sexton's hut on the right. It has a lintel detailing the past sextons.

At the end of Church Walk turn right down a path, before the modern houses and go down into the new estate. Turn left for twenty five metres then right continuing down the path between the supermarket and the estate. Cross the brook and on reaching the Hayfield Road go straight across into The Crescent. Go ahead on the path to reach Bowden Lane, cross the lane and continue on the path. *The path crosses a footbridge that once spanned the Mill Pond for the old Bowden Hey Wadding Mill.* Pass through the stile and cross the route of the Peak Forest Tramway. *This was an early gravity tramway which ran from Bugsworth to Dove Holes. Built between 1796 and 1800, by Benjamin Outram, it continued in use for 120 years.*

Continue along the path and reach the bypass, cross this by the access points and take the path ahead. At the end of this path you emerge onto Bowden Lane, turn right. *BOWDEN HALL is now on your right. This was built in Tudor style in the first half of the 19th century. The clock face on the hall was originally on the parish church.* Pass the main entrance and at the end of the buildings turn onto a lane and on the end of the stable block can be seen the arms of Bowden. Rejoin the road and continue uphill to Bowden Head. At the 'T' junction bear slightly right and take the footpath gate on your left. Go ahead with the wall on your left and reach a gate into Bowden Wood. Follow the path through the wood and emerge at a stile. Cross the stile and with the fence on your right go down hill to the stream and cross by the bridge. *On your right are the remains of fish farming ponds which, when in use, were much the same as they were in the 14th and 15th centuries.*



Slack Hall

Follow the track uphill and you will arrive at a gate in the corner. Turn left through the gate onto the road. Turn right into the hamlet of MALCOFF. *At the entrance to a lane on your left stands a cottage with the date 1711 over the door. This was the meeting place for the Non-Conformists until they were run out by the owner at the beginning of the 18th century.* Continue

along the road to the next hamlet of FORD. This is believed to be the oldest part of Chapel. *It was on the route of a Salt Way from Cheshire to Yorkshire. FORD HALL dates back to at least the reign of Henry III [1216-1272]. Early records mention Wymind de Ford before 1222, before the building of the first Church in Chapel. The south west side of the Hall is the oldest portion. It was rebuilt between 1575 and 1585 in the shape of a letter E. This was said to be a compliment to Queen Elizabeth. Traces of earlier work are to be seen at the rear in what were formerly the kitchens. During the 19th century rebuilding in the Gothic style changed the shape of the Hall. In recent years the Hall itself has been split into three houses. The outhouses have been made into additional residences so that the hamlet of Ford still thrives after eight centuries.*

Now follow the road over the stream and up the hill to SLACK. Turn left at the top of the hill. This is another old hamlet which, for several centuries, was a Quaker stronghold. There is a small Quaker graveyard here, in the grounds of the Owl and Otter Sanctuary, dating from the 17th century when the burial of Quakers was not permitted in consecrated ground.



Ford Hall

SLACK HALL was once the seat of the Lingards who suffered for their beliefs. It was purchased by Thomas Slack in the 1720's. When one of his descendants in 1800 found that the new turnpike road from Chapel to Sheffield would cut through his garden, he built a new residence nearer to Chapel. Cross the main road and go ahead uphill on the lane. At the top on the right, is MAG LOW, a prehistoric tumulus. Continue on the lane to the next group of buildings which form the hamlet of STONEYFORD. Turn right at the junction and go down hill to BAGSHAW. On reaching Bagshaw, where the road bears left, go right down hill passing the old Methodist Chapel on your right, and continue to BAGSHAW HALL. Today this is a farm house but its origins date back to the 14th century. Continue past the front of the hall and go ahead on the track. After crossing a stile, by the side of a gate, the path swings right and then left with a wall on your right to reach the Castleton road. The house set in the gardens on your right is NEW SLACK HALL. It is known locally as Prettyfields. Turn left on the Castleton road and go downhill into Chapel. At the 'T' junction turn right and continue up hill to the town centre and your starting point.

