

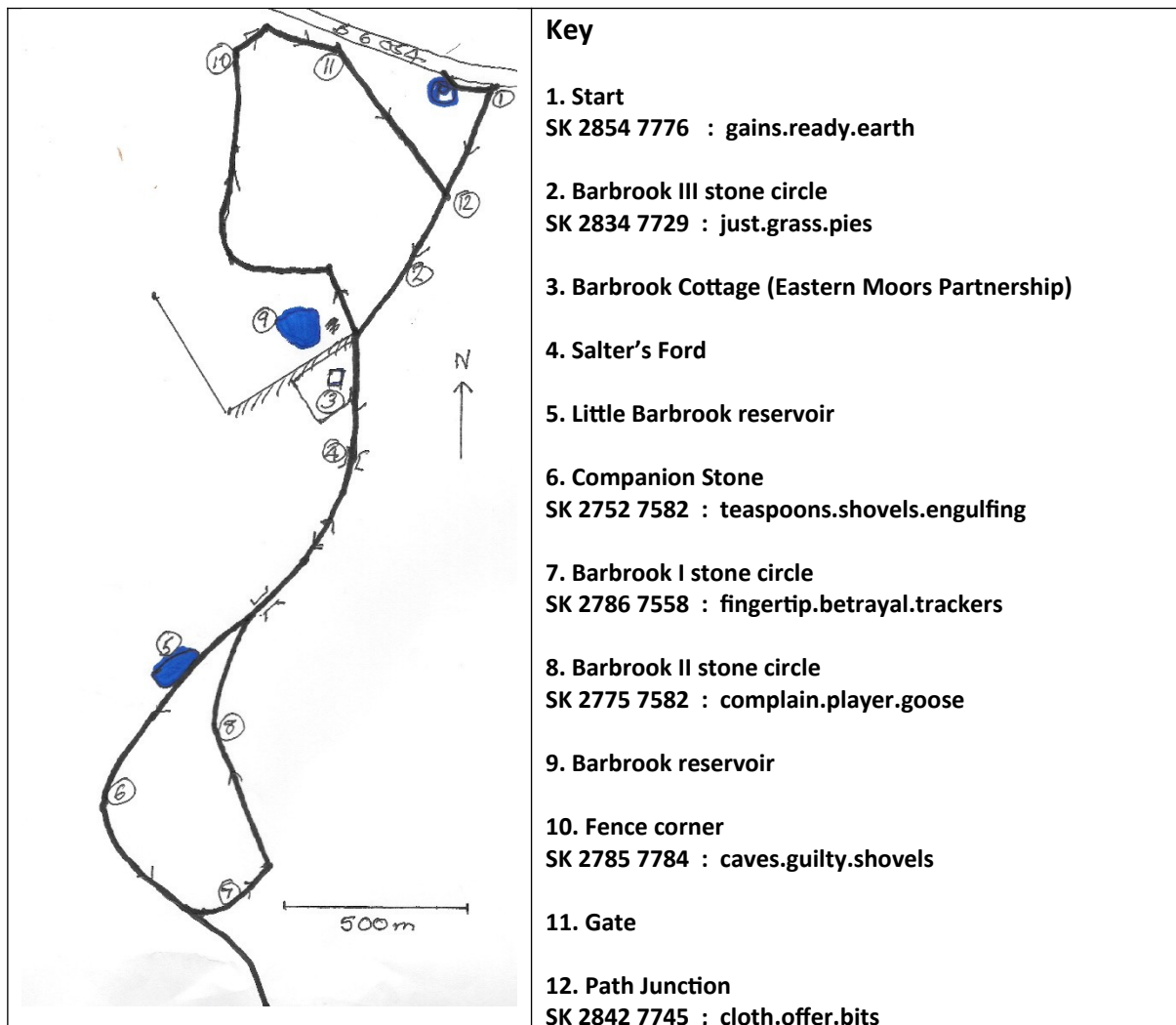
Big Moor – a walk in the past

With some 5700 archaeological sites recorded on the Eastern Moors on the edge of Sheffield there's no need to travel to Orkney or the Hebrides to see a rich collection of stone circles and prehistoric sites. The walk on Big Moor is about 4.5 miles and takes in three stone circles, (Barbrook I, II and III named after the nearby brook) two abandoned reservoirs and several prehistoric cairns.

In Britain most stone circles date from between 3000 BCE and 2000 BCE. Their origins and purpose have long been a matter of debate and include astronomical uses and ceremonial gatherings such as cremations. There is evidence of cremations at Barbrook II following excavations in the 1960's.

The walk starts from the B6054, the road between Owlbar and Longshaw, at the first layby on the left-hand side travelling from Owlbar, opposite a green metal gate. There is limited parking at the layby. (Although the 218 stops at Owlbar there is no pavement alongside the busy B6054 so doing this walk using public transport is difficult).

(The walk can be easily shortened to 3.5 miles by going directly from Barbrook Cottage [3] back to the start [1] on the return leg).



Go through the gate at the layby and head SW, passing a path junction [12] after 400m. **Barbrook III stone circle [2]** , which is marked erroneously on OS maps on the west side of the path, is actually on the east side (on the left hand side) 200m further on from the path junction. A faint path leaves the main path to the stone circle (at **input.salads.pipe**).

Barbrook III consists of 21 small stones, and can be hard to find when covered with grass. It is one of the largest stone circles (in radius) in Derbyshire.

Return to the main path and head SE for another 250m to reach a fence surrounding **Barbrook Cottage [3]**.

Barbrook Cottage, formerly the reservoir keeper's house, contains the offices of the **Eastern Moors Partnership**, a joint venture between the National Trust and the RSPB. Their website <https://www.visit-eastern-moors.org.uk/> has details of several walks covering this area.

Turn left and follow the fence heading south for 300m, crossing a tarmacked lane, then along a grassy track, to reach a gate and bridge across **Salter's Ford [4]**.

From Salter's Ford it is 800 m (0.5 miles) along the main track heading SW to reach Little Barbrook reservoir [5].



Little Barbrook Reservoir

*Barbrook, **Little Barbrook** and the nearby Ramsley reservoirs were built by Chesterfield Water Board in the 1880's and are no longer used as a water supply. Little Barbrook reservoir is a favourite swimming spot for both humans and canines.*

About 350m further down the path is a companion stone [6] for the guidestop at Deadshaw Sick Bog which is 200m across the valley and difficult to access.



Companion stone

The stone is a modern sculpture with an inscribed poem and is one of 12 in the Peak District. Each of the 12 sculptures is a companion to a Derbyshire guide stoop. (<http://www.companionstones.org.uk/>). The guide stoop is one of a series erected in the early 18th century to show the way to market centres.

From the companion stone it is 400m heading SE to **Barbrook I stone circle [7]**. Look out for the turnoff on the left, heading NE, just before the path veers to the right. The largest stone in Barbrook I, a metre high, is visible from the main path.



*The largest stone in **Barbrook I***

Keep in a NE direction for 100m to a reconstructed cairn and turn left, just past the cairn, to head NW for 300m. You will pass several cairns before reaching **Barbrook II stone circle [8]**.

***Barbrook II stone circle**, which is not shown on OS maps, was reconstructed in the late 1980's following vandalism, to look like it did 4000 years ago. It has 9 stones that are set into a drystone wall.*

Carry on in a NW direction on the path for about 500m until you return to the main path close to the bridge north of Little Barbrook Reservoir. Retrace your steps back to Barbrook Cottage (about 800m). Cross back over the tarmacked lane and follow the path with the fence on the left, enclosing Barbrook Cottage, to reach a gate. Turn right on the path, heading NE, to get back to the start (this shortens the walk by 1 mile).

Alternatively go through the gate and follow the path that passes the side of **Barbrook reservoir [9]** for 800m to reach another gate. Go through this gate, following a barbed wire fence for 200m (this section can get very

muddy) before turning right at a fence corner **[10]** , and with the fence still on your right, going uphill to reach the dry stone wall by the road.

***Barbrook reservoir** originated in 1882 when a dam was first built. It was enlarged in 1910 and provided water for North Chesterfield until the mid-1970s. In 2003 a project was carried out to decommission the reservoir for safety reasons. It was drained over a period of 4 weeks by breaching the main embankment wall. Pools were created in the reservoir basin as wildlife habitats.*

Turn right, to go through a gate, walking parallel to the road for 200m and at a gate to the road **[11]**, walk in a SE direction along a grassy footpath to the path junction **[12]** (which you have already crossed) where, just after passing 3 hawthorn trees, you turn left to get back to the start.