

## The 1717 Guide Stoop on Longstone Edge. Is it missing?

Ann Hall

with valuable assistance from Alan Jones



### Introduction

When Alison Stuart was preparing to move out of her family home at Christmas Cottage in Little Longstone shortly after Michael's death in 2012, she asked Hillary Clarke and I to help with finding the most appropriate home for papers that he had collected during his historical research. As we worked through a lifetime's work on many topics of local interest we came upon a photocopy of a guide stoop. Hilary recognised it as the one from Longstone Edge and I became interested to find out more. This article is the result of my investigations.

Some of my chief sources of information were from books which describe rambles through Derbyshire in a rather romantic manner in the first half of the nineteenth century. They were not intended to be full scientific records of features along the way but rather a description of interesting walks and fascinating items along the route. The record in the books is not always reliable but I have tried to extract as much sound information as I can.

There are records of a guide stoop, dated 1717, on Longstone Edge since 1905. Some of the earlier information is quite detailed and this suggests that it really was in existence at

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the time of the recording. In more recent reports it is listed as missing. My recent research intended to find out if it really is lost for ever.

### **Note - There are two guides stoops on Longstone Edge**

It is important to know that there are two guide stoops in the vicinity on Longstone edge; one dated 1737 and one dated 1717. Details of the Haydale 1737 stoop, which is definitely not missing, are given at the end of the article to prevent confusion.

### **Descriptions of the 1717 guide stoop between from 1905 to 2012**

In 1905 in “Highways and Byways of Derbyshire” (p.315) J B Firth describes a walk in the Longstone area and gives information about the site of the stoop, its state of preservation and details of the carving but erroneously records the date at 1737. He says that it was being used as a gate post and he records the “legend” as Tidswall Road with the date of 1737 beneath, with Sheffield Road, Chesterfield Road and Ashbourne Road on other faces. Since these roads are different from those recorded from the Haydale stoop I assume that he misread the numbers and that this is a genuine record of the 1717 stoop. Also the carving of “Sheffield road” and the “Chesterfield road” are not given in any other reports. These could be further mistakes or a true record of the two sides of the stoop which are not described elsewhere. Interestingly he states that additional capital letters have been carved on the stone so that the stone can serve as a boundary marker. This is discussed below.

Then similarly in 1925 in “The High Peak to Sherwood” (p.329) T L Tudor describes a walk around our area and mentions the presence of an “old road stone” “somewhere about here” and provides an illustration (p.339). This is the source of the photocopy that I came across in Michael Stuart's papers. It is not clear if Tudor actually saw the stoop or where the illustration came from but the details of the carving confirm that this is the 1717 stoop. Two sides are shown, with TIDSW-LL -OAD 1717 next to ASHB(or F?)OR ROAD. He does not record if it was in use as a gate post at this time.

Later in 1934 in “Minor monuments and lesser antiquities of Derbyshire” (DAJ No. LV Vol.VIII p.64-76 Record number 59 Longstone Edge.) the same author provides a greater amount of information compared with his 1925 report. He confirms that it is being used as a gate post with TIDSWELL ROAD and ASHBOR ROAD with the date of 1717. He gives further details of its present position and speculates where its original site could be. Additionally he says that “there are other stones in the locality marking the track along the Edge”. In fact there are several “meerstones” or boundary stones which have been well documented and are situated in the area in a line to the north of the track from Longstone Edge to Rowland. Tudor does not give the nature of the carved lettering so it is only speculation that the old guide stoop was carved with A for Ashford and H for Hassop because of its convenient position when the other meerstones were erected in the period after 1852 when this type of boundary marking became legal.

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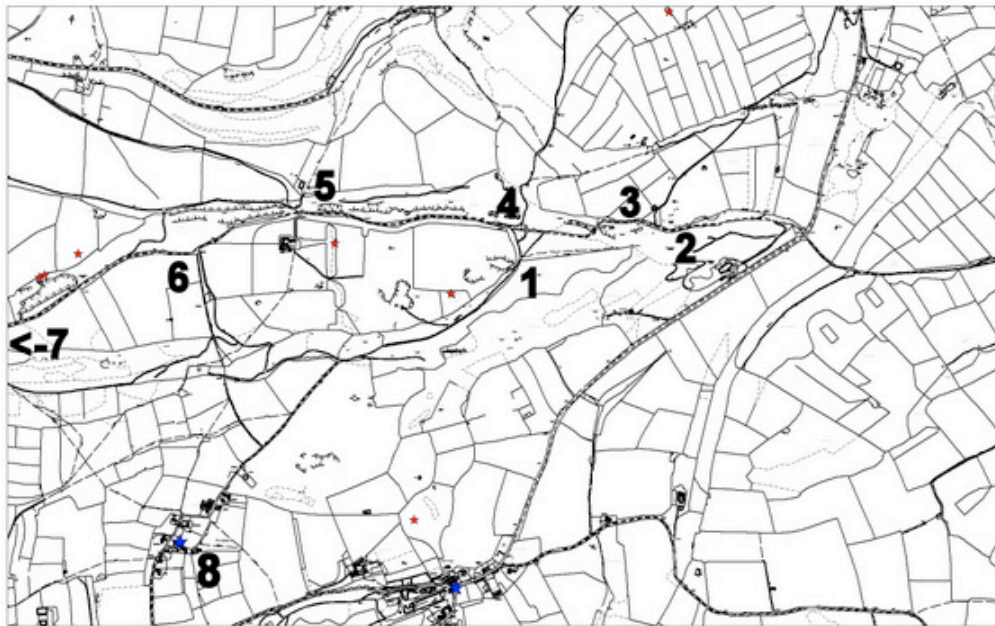
Closer to the present day in 1980 in “Packmen Carriers and Packhorse Roads” (p.37) David Hey gives a very brief mention of the 1717 guide stoop and gives no indication whether it still exists or not.

In 1996 in “The Guide Stoops of Derbyshire” (1<sup>st</sup> Edition p.96) Howard Smith and Chris Bilton conclude in Appendix 1 that the 1717 guidestoop is missing. They give some details of the 1717 stone with a four figure map reference of (SK) 2073. They give the carving as “TIDSWALL ROAD 1717” and “ASHBORN ROAD” with references. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2000 Smith and Bilton reprint most of the information given in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition (p.20) and include a reproduction of the illustration (p.16) from Tudor, 1925.

Hilary Clarke, Longstone Local History Group, understood that the stoop was at the junction of the track running east/west over Longstone Edge with the track running south towards Rowland, very close to the Calver Double Dyke. However she has not seen the stoop during many explorations of the area.

The above references suggest that the 1717 guide stoop was present on Longstone Edge in 1934 but was not to be found in 1996, when Smith made a comprehensive list of existing guide stoops, and could have been missing from before 1980.

### Where was the 1717 guide stoop sited – and is it still there?



## Guide Stoop on Longstone Edge

Map to show possible sites of the 1717 Guide Stoop on Longstone Edge.  
For numbered positions see below

Next I endeavoured to reconcile the information from the above literature with evidence on the ground.

Several meerstones with carved capital letters A and H are still in existence. These form a line of stones along the most easterly lane from Rowland onto Longstone Edge in the vicinity of (1) on the map. The LLHG visited them in July 2012 and there was no evidence of any additional carving associated with a guidestoop.

There is record of a carved stone on old maps near the junction of the lane from Rowland with the south end of the Double Dykes at SK 226735. This position (1) would be supported by the description of Firth (1905) who placed the stone on the eastern side of Longstone Edge. Examination of a possible junction and gatepost in this area has been undertaken by Alan Jones and by Chris Hall and myself but much of the land has been opencast mined in the more recent past (from the 1950s) and subsequently subject to remediation. No evidence of the stone was found during a survey in this area carried out by John Barnatt of PDNPA for the Hassop Estate in 1993.

The position of the stoop is recorded as about one and a half miles east of Castlegate Lane (Tudor, 1934). This concurs with Tudor 1925 which describes walking from the east past Deep Rake and High Rake and the stone is where “a track descends to Longstone via Rowland”. Smith and Bilton 1997, 2000 place the stone at SK2073. I assume that Smith and Bilton extrapolated the SK2073 reference from Tudor as they report it as missing. This would place the stone on the westerly downslope of Longstone Edge and to the west of Bleaklow Farm. There are three lanes that descend from the Edge to Rowland which could be the sites (5, 6 and 7) of the gatepost. Two (5 and 6) of them would be on a more direct route from the Edge via Rowland to Great Longstone which was the route of the author.

From Firth 1909, the stoop is to be found on the easterly downslope of Longstone Edge. He describes approaching the Edge from the east and it is to be found before “reaching the clump of trees on the summit”. This would place the stoop to the east of Bleaklow Farm and contrary to the reports of Tudor. There is one direct route between Longstone Edge, Rowland and Great Longstone. This route is fed from the east by a route from Chesterfield via Baslow (2) and from the north by two routes from Sheffield via Calver (3 and 4). These facts support the hypothesis that the stoop was in the region of SK226735 as described in section 2 above.

The family of Colin Wood of Great Longstone and his sister Linda Wood of Moor Farm have worked land on Longstone Edge since the early 1900s. When Hilary spoke to her in 2012 about the stoop Miss Wood had no knowledge of it.

Alan Jones, volunteer with the PDNPA 's Learning and Discovery Team, reports that a colleague of his, Rod Hyde, ex Deputy Head of Thornbridge Outdoor Education Centre

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recorded a guide stoop dated 1717 at SK 21507250 (8) in approximately 1980. This is on land under the Edge and away from the sites previously discussed but the stoop could have been moved to this position in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. They have made extensive searches in the area but failed to discover any trace of it. But they continue to explore the possibility that it may have been rescued during the open caste mining period and is to be found away from its original site.

In October 2012 I wrote an article in “Under the Edge” (no165 p 4) requesting information about the missing stoop from its readers, many of whom know the countryside around Longstone Edge very well, but it did not result in any responses.

I talked to Mr. Richard Ellis, past geologist for Glebe Mines, who spent much of his working life on Longstone Edge and he reported that he could not recall seeing a stone of this description.

### **So is the 1717 Guide stoop on Longstone Edge missing?**

At the present time no trace of the 1717 guide stoop can be found. So in July 2013 the stone is definitely missing and sadly it seems that it may be lost for ever. My feeling is that it was destroyed when the extensive open cast works were undertaken on the Edge in the 1950s and after. Access for larger machinery being used at that time required the destruction of many gateposts or upright stones making the 1717 guide stoop very vulnerable. Alan Jones and Rod Hyde also believe it may be a lost cause but they have not given up and continue to follow other leads.

Please contact me if you know anything extra to add to this article.  
annhall4@hotmail.com Riverside House Calver Road Baslow Bakewell DE45 1RR

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### The 1737 Haydale guide stoop

See W2 - Haydale in “The Guide Stoops of Derbyshire” Howard Smith and Chris Bilton for further details and illustration.

1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1996 p. 22, 23

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2000 p. 24, 25

It is a grade 2 Listed Building – list entry number 1109900. It is made of gritstone, broken and reused as a gate post. Map Reference SK180733

The carving on the stone is:

South side	TideswellRoad
North side	Bakewell Road
West side	Longstone Road
East side	1737