The Castleton Carrousel

This mountain bike route of 25.8 miles takes you round and round and up and down on the trails around [Castleton](http://www.visitcastleton.co.uk/), in the [Peak District](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/). It includes some of the best descents the Dark Peak area has to offer and a few testing climbs. There are a few options though. The climb out of Bradwell is a push for half its length but worth it for the descent. However, there is a short cut. For more technical descending it’s also possible to include The Beast as an ‘Out & Back’. Which ever way you do it, it’s a technical and demanding route that will push your fitness and skills to the limit.

1. Start on the lane leading to the Treak Cavern, there is plenty of parking available in the pay and display laybys [(GR137830)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413730&y=383020&z=120&sv=413730,383020&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=863&ax=413730&ay=383020&lm=0). If you look closely you’ll find a small amount of free parking. Climb the lane away from Castleton, towards Mam Tor. It soon becomes steeper then turns sharp left to a gate [(GR132839)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413235&y=383900&z=120&sv=413235,383900&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=413235&ay=383900&lm=0). Go through the gate and follow the broken road below Mam Tor, on the right. Because of the subsidence that gives the road it’s name there are a few big drops to have a go at, if that's your kind of thing, if not you can go round them. Climb the road to a gate at the top. After the gate continue climbing, past the Blue John mine on the left, to a junction at the top [(GR128831)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=412850&y=383100&z=120&sv=412850,383100&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=412850&ay=383100&lm=0).

2. Turn right and climb the road past a car park on the right to a junction with a lane on the right just after. Turn sharp right and climb the steep lane to a gated track on the left [(GR124834)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=412460&y=383395&z=120&sv=412460,383395&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=412460&ay=383395&lm=0), just before the road bears left to the crest at Mam Nick. Go through the gate and follow the steep gravel track to where it splits at the ridge. Take the left hand track and follow the bridleway through a gate to follow the grassy singletrack along the ridge of Rushup Edge, on the right. It is quite easy going for a while until the next gate where the trail kicks up again for a short, sharp climb to the top of the hill. After the summit descend gently along the boggy trail that follows the drystone wall on the right. Go through the gate at the bottom of the field then turn right immediately and go through the next gate. Directly after the gate turn left on the gritstone trail for a fast flowing descent to a three way junction [(GR099829)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=409935&y=382925&z=120&sv=409935,382925&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=409935&ay=382925&lm=0).

3. Go straight on and descend the boulders and rock slabs to a gate. After the gate continue descending the loose boulders and slab steps between the grassy banks. The rocks finish at a gate by a road. Go through a gate to follow the thin gravel track on the opposite side of the stone wall to the road. This finishes a short distance later at a gated junction [(GR092825)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=409170&y=382505&z=120&sv=409170,382505&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=409170&ay=382505&lm=0). Go through the small gate then turn left through the gate leading to the road. Go straight across the road and descend the steep lane, on the opposite side, past Rushup Hall. At the bottom go through a dip and climb to a junction [(GR099812)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=409950&y=381275&z=120&sv=409950,381275&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=409950&ay=381275&lm=0). Turn left and climb the road to a junction with a gravel track on the right, at the far side of the Eldon Quarry [(GR113816)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=411360&y=381635&z=120&sv=411360,381635&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=411360&ay=381635&lm=0).

4. Turn right on this track and climb, keeping the quarry on the right. At the junction at the top of the climb go straight on through the gate and descend the double track along the right hand side of the field, to a gated junction at the bottom [(GR133813)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413375&y=381380&z=120&sv=413375,381380&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=413375&ay=381380&lm=0). Go straight on, then at the next junction continue straight on and follow the wide track, which eventually bears left and starts descending. At the next junction, with a track leading to a lane on the right, continue straight on to descend a fast, wide and rocky track. This track finishes at a junction with a lane. Turn left and descend to the next junction a short distance later [(GR155821)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=415535&y=382110&z=120&sv=415535,382110&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=415535&ay=382110&lm=0).

5. Turn right towards the quarry then, a short distance later, follow the arrows and turn left to descend the steep, bouldery track that drops into the deep gully of Pin Dale. Where the gully opens out weave through the old mine workings to continue straight on, following the arrows. The track eventually comes to an end at a junction with a lane at a small cluster of houses [(GR161824)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=416090&y=382435&z=120&sv=416090,382435&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=416090&ay=382435&lm=0).

6. Turn right on a dirt track then immediately jink to the left, following the bridleway sign. Follow this track though the trees to the cement works. At the factory follow the signs across the access road then go between the large stone blocks on the other side. Keep to the trail by the fence on the left. It eventually leaves the factory behind where it thins down and climbs to a junction with a lane. Bear left and descend the lane to the next junction in the outskirts of Bradwell [(GR171815)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417125&y=381535&z=120&sv=417125,381535&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=417125&ay=381535&lm=0).

If you don’t like pushing your bike uphill take the short cut here and turn left. At the next junction go straight on and follow the main road out of Bradwell to the junction at the start of para.9

7. Go straight ahead, along the right hand side of an open triangular junction, to a junction with the main road a short distance later. Turn right and follow the main road through the village. Go past a church and continue along the road as it bears right. Go past a junction with a lane on the left, by the pub on the right. At the next junction, a crossroad junction near the edge of the village, turn sharp left [(GR174809)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417460&y=380940&z=120&sv=417460,380940&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=417460&ay=380940&lm=0). Climb this lane, bearing right past a lane on the left. At the next junction go straight on. Descend past another lane on the right and go through a dip to the next junction at the edge of the village [(GR176808)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417620&y=380875&z=120&sv=417620,380875&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=417620&ay=380875&lm=0).

8. Follow the right hand lane for a very steep climb to a gate. After the gate push up the muddy and grassy trail. The trail goes through a couple of bends before bearing left across the face of the hill, where it becomes rideable for a while. At the top of the ridge turn right, almost back on yourself and follow the grassy trail to a gate [(GR182808)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=418230&y=380840&z=120&sv=418230,380840&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=418230&ay=380840&lm=0). After the gate turn left and follow the double track for a fast rocky descent. When the track ends go straight on and descend the lane, through a left hand hairpin, to a junction with the main road in Brough [(GR182825)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=418260&y=382545&z=120&sv=418260,382545&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=418260&ay=382545&lm=0).

9. Turn right and follow the road to a junction with the traffic lights at the A6187. Turn left, then immediately right up the lane signed for Aston. Climb the lane to where it finishes at a junction at the top [(GR185839)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=418535&y=383920&z=120&sv=418535,383920&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=418535&ay=383920&lm=0). Turn left and follow the lane along the flat then after some buildings, on the left, the lane descends through a dip. Climb out of the dip to a junction with a lane on the right a short distance later, just before the lane starts descending again [(GR182839)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=418190&y=383960&z=120&sv=418190,383960&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=418190&ay=383960&lm=0).

10. Turn right and climb the steep lane to where it ends at a junction by some cottages [(GR181843)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=418140&y=384335&z=120&sv=418140,384335&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=418140&ay=384335&lm=0). Turn left and climb the muddy and rocky track to a gate. After the gate the track bears right and steepens to the next gate. After this gate the track bears left and flattens off to go through a field. Go straight on through the field to another gate. After this gate go straight on along the singletrack to a junction with a double track. Bear left and follow the track for some distance as it climbs gradually across the face of the hill, while looking at the great views across Hope valley and Edale valley on the left. Near the end the trail kicks up and comes to a junction with a wide rutted track at the top of the hill [(GR173858)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=417250&y=385925&z=120&sv=417250,385925&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=417250&ay=385925&lm=0).

11. Turn left and descend the rutted track along the ridge, keeping the trees on the right. After some distance, at a forked junction, bear left and follow the wide rutted track down to a gate and junction with a gritstone trail [(GR169862)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=416460&y=386835&z=120&sv=416460,386835&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=416460&ay=386835&lm=0). Go straight on through the gate and climb the gritstone trail to the junction at Hope Cross [(GR159876)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=415995&y=387645&z=120&sv=415995,387645&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=415995&ay=387645&lm=0). You have the option here of turning right for a very technical ‘Out & Back’ on The Beast. Stop at the hairpin junction and retrace your steps. It’s a push most of the way back up but well worth it. Turn left and descend the fast, rocky track to the ford in Jaggers Clough. Afte the stream go through the gate and climb the track on the far side. The track goes though a left hand hairpin then up a series of small steps before reaching a gate at the top. Go through the gate and bear right to follow the track down another fast, rocky descent to the junction at Clough Farm. Go around the right hand side of the farm and turn left through the small gate then descend the singletrack between the bushes, to a junction with a road at the bottom [(GR145864)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=414575&y=386440&z=120&sv=414575,386440&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=414575&ay=386440&lm=0).

12. Turn right and follow the lane under a railway bridge. At the junction after the bridge take lane on the left [(GR136856)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413725&y=385580&z=120&sv=413725,385580&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=413725&ay=385580&lm=0). Descend the lane a short way then bear right over the bridge across the river. Climb the lane to a junction by a house on the right, and continue straight ahead up the dirt track, to start of the most difficult climb of the ride. At the end of the bushes go through a gate and climb the bridleway through a number of bends. After a right hand hairpin the track kicks up and becomes unrideable for a short section before flattening off and coming to a gate. After the gate follow the track up a steep, technical climb to Hollins Cross [(GR135845)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413595&y=384520&z=120&sv=413595,384520&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=413595&ay=384520&lm=0). Although just rideable it will be a push for most.

13. Turn right and climb the paved track along the ridge towards Mam Tor. After the second gate follow the increasingly difficult natural trail to the right of the paved track. Bear right to follow the fence on the right and traverse the hillside just below the summit of Mam Tor. The track soon descends to a gate by the road at Mam Nick [(GR125835)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=412565&y=383575&z=120&sv=412565,383575&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=412565&ay=383575&lm=0). Turn left on the road for a short climb over the crest then descend right to a junction with the main road [(GR122831)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=412210&y=383165&z=120&sv=412210,383165&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=412210&ay=383165&lm=0). Turn left and descend the road. Follow the road right past two lanes on the left, the first to the Blue John mine and the second to Winnet’s Pass. Climb a short distance to a junction with a tarmac track on the left, with a footpath marker post, at the crest of the road [(GR126826)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=412680&y=382615&z=120&sv=412680,382615&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=412680&ay=382615&lm=0).

14. Turn left and climb the lane, keeping to the wall on the left. Continue straight on over the crest of the hill, where the tarmac gives way to gravel and descend to the previously visited junction. Bear left and follow the track to the next junction a short distance later [(GR135813)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413545&y=381320&z=120&sv=413545,381320&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=413545&ay=381320&lm=0). Turn left and go through two gates set close together. After the second gate follow the wide grassy track that bears right across the field, away from the drystone wall. The track soon drops to a junction in a dip [(GR138816)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=413860&y=381605&z=120&sv=413860,381605&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=413860&ay=381605&lm=0). Turn right and go through the small gate a short distance later. Follow the rutted singletrack along the bottom of the gulley. After the next gate bear left and continue descending the trail along the deepening gulley. The next gate is at the top of the descent into Cavedale, the gorge below Pevril Castle. It’s steep, very rocky and extremely technical. At the bottom go though the gate to a junction with a lane in Castleton [(GR150827)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=415077&y=382745&z=115&sv=415077,382745&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=415077&ay=382745&lm=0).

15. Turn left and follow the line of buildings on the left past a triangular junction, on the right, to a junction by the YHA. Turn right and go past the pubs on the left and church on the right to where the lane finishes at the main road [(GR149829)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=414962&y=382935&z=120&sv=414962,382935&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=414962&ay=382935&lm=0). Turn left and follow the main road straight ahead out of Castleton. Climb to the Winnet’s Pass junction [(GR144828)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=414432&y=382855&z=120&sv=414432,382855&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=800&ax=414432&ay=382855&lm=0) then bear right to finish the ride at the laybys below the Treak Cavern.