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Dovedale and Tissington

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Thorpe village – free car park at Narlows Lane (SK 164505)
Ordnance Survey map	OL24 – The White Peak area
Distance	7.8 miles
Date of Walk	20 April 2015
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: A Dovedale walk is virtually an obligatory outing for anyone who has ever walked in the Peak District. Hardly surprising as it is a dramatic limestone gorge, a beauty spot with few equals. Many start it from the village of Milldale and treat it as a linear “there and back” stroll. However this route creates a circular walk also taking in the beautiful village of Tissington and a section of the Tissington Trail.

Dovedale is very popular and there is no chance that you will have it to yourself but the attractive scenery makes it worthwhile. However, I would avoid peak periods (no pun intended!) if possible

It is an easy walk with a slight climb out of Dovedale at Hall Dale.

The melting water from the Ice Ages created Dovedale and caves which have been used by ancient man for a variety of purposes.

The River Dove is well known to trout fishermen and made famous by Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*. It forms the boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

There are a number of interesting rock features, not least Ilam Rock (technically in Staffordshire), Dove Holes (caves) and Tissington Spires.

There are masses of blackthorn bushes so if you like sloe gin, autumn would be a good time to do the walk!

Tissington village is a beautiful unspoiled spot and has been controlled by the FitzHerbert family since the reign of Elizabeth I. The family live in a Jacobean Manor in the village centre, built in 1609. The village is perhaps best known as the home of well dressing which attracts huge crowds when the 5 wells are dressed with boards, decorated with flower petals, on Ascension Day. Unfortunately, it lacks a pub! However there is a tea room.

The Tissington Trail runs for 13 miles from Ashbourne to Parsley Hay, following the course of the Buxton to Ashbourne railway line, which closed in the 1960s. This route just follows one and a half miles of it. It is very popular with cyclists, some of whom do not seem to have the “nous” to warn you of their approach so take care.

Refreshments are available at Tissington which is quite near to the end of the walk. Otherwise it is a picnic. There are toilets also at Tissington.

The walk starts from free parking at Narlows Lane car park at the village of Thorpe (where there is a pub!). To get there, turn west off the A515 (opposite the main turn to Tissington), signed for Thorpe and Ilam. The car park is on the right, just on entering the village.

Start: Turn right out of the car park (SK 164505). At the road junction, go straight ahead following the road sign for “Thorpe Dovedale and Ilam”.

Walk along the road for a quarter of a mile and at the entrance to the hotel, The Peveril of the Peak, turn right through a squeeze stile, following the public footpath fingerpost and yellow arrow for the Limestone Way (SK 159505).

The route is obvious and at the second stile, a National Trust sign indicates you are entering Thorpe Pastures. Turn left here to follow the public footpath fingerpost for “Dovedale $\frac{3}{4}$ mile”. Note the signs for the firing range on the right which will soon provide a useful guide for the route.

Follow the footpath behind the hotel and when the wall on the left turns sharp left, turn right at about 45° to the wall. Heading to the right of Thorpe Cloud (the hill with its distinctive conical shape) and starting to descend down Lin Dale. The path is well walked and obvious. If in any doubt, follow the line of the firing range signs.

The path drops down to meet a broad path in the valley bottom (SK 152514). Turn right to follow the course of the river Dove, along the right hand river bank, the direction of the public footpath fingerpost to Milldale $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The path climbs some steps at SK 146518 before descending again.

You pass the rocky bluffs of Tissington Spires (right), Ilam Rock (left) and the double caves of Dove Holes.

At SK 142531 come to a footbridge between two pinnacles of rock but do not cross it. Continue along the riverbank following the fingerpost for Milldale $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

At SK 142536, pass the two caves of Dove Holes and shortly after this, turn right to follow the public footpath sign for Alsop-en-le-Dale $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The path climbs quite steeply through the woods (hence the amber traffic light), before leaving them via a walkers' gate. Keep straight ahead to a three way fingerpost which you can see.

At the fingerpost, join a broad access track to the farm. Turn right following the fingerpost for Tissington. You need to concentrate now. As the farm track swings right, leave it and continue straight ahead, to the corner of the walls just to the right of the copse of trees (SK 150534). Here is a fingerpost for Tissington (rather dilapidated when I did this walk). Follow it over a stone stile, alongside the left and

field boundary, until you reach a stone step stile. Cross this to follow the public footpath fingerpost. There are good views here back over Dovedale.

Follow the right hand boundary of the field and after passing a copse of trees, arrive at Bostern Grange Farm. Turn right through the farmyard (SK 153534), following a clear track. At a gateway, there is a stone step stile to the left. From here head slightly left to stay parallel with the wall.

When the wall turns left, keep straight ahead towards the nearest copse of trees. Arrive at a post follow the direction arrow through a gateway, bearing slightly left.

After crossing the next field, go through a squeeze stile and turn left (SK 156526), following a public footpath fingerpost (one of three).

Drop down the field to the narrowest point, to a walkers' gate with a yellow arrow. There are far reaching views to the east as you descend this field to a tarmac lane. Turn right along it.

Follow the road for about 300 yards, then cross a stone stile on the left (SK 161524), following the direction of the fingerpost. Descend into the valley, following the wall on the left, in effect going back on yourself. In the valley bottom (SK 161525), turn right, curving anti-clockwise round a copse of trees.

As you round the copse of trees, the route heads to the far right hand corner of the field where there is a gate and stile. Over the stile, bear right slightly and at the corner of the wall, turn right to follow the right hand boundary wall, to the track to Sharplow Farm. Turn right then left before the farmhouse and continue to the road (the A515) (SK 169527).

Turn right for about 100 yards, watching for traffic. This moves quickly along here but there is a verge. Turn left along a side road, which takes you to Tissington.

Follow the road into Tissington, passing the church and at the junction, turn left, passing the village pond. The road curves right. Turn right for the Tissington Trail.

When you reach the Trail, turn right to follow the sign for Ashborne (SK 179521). There is a small kiosk here where refreshments can be obtained and there are public toilets.

Continue on the trail until you reach point 68 on the National Cycle Network (SK 166503). Turn right through the car parking area back to Thorpe.

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