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Hartington to Beresford Dale, Wolfscote Dale and Biggin Dale

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Hartington – on street or (expensive) pay and display car park (SK 127602)
Ordnance Survey map	OL 24 The Peak District – White Peak area.
Distance	9.3 miles
Date of Walk	21 April 2015
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk from Hartington takes you along three lovely Derbyshire Dales. In some ways, I think this is a more attractive walk than the more famous Dovedale, not least because it is not quite as well known and so is not as busy with visitors! There is a distinct contrast between the pretty Beresford and Wolfscote Dales, which follow the River Dove and the rugged Biggin Dale with its impressive screes.

The route is in a figure of eight so if desired, the last loop could be omitted, reducing the overall length by 3.5 miles or so, although this would omit a short section along the Tissington Trail from where there are good views.

The walk starts in Beresford Dale which runs between limestone cliffs. High above on the right is a tower, the last remnant of the old Beresford Hall.

As it transitions to Wolfscote Dale, the route opens up a little, before progressing between dramatic limestone outcrops. According to legend, the last wolf in the area was killed in this Dale but this might be “pinch of salt” stuff!

The river here has many weirs along its length providing areas popular with fishermen. Indeed, Izaak Walton, who wrote the famous book about 17th century rural England called ‘The Compleat Angler’ and was a friend of Charles Cotton who lived at Beresford Hall.

Unlike the other two dales, Biggin Dale is a dry stony valley. Dramatic screes tumble down the sides.

The circular walk ends back in the attractive village of Hartington with a choice of pubs/cafes and public toilets.

To get to Hartington, take the B 5054 west off the A 515, between Buxton and Ashbourne.

Start: Exit the car park and turn left (SK 127602). At the public toilets on the right, turn up the left hand side of the toilets. There is a large footpath sign but it is still easy to miss this turn.

Behind the toilets, go through a walkers' gate on to a clearly defined footpath. Follow it to another walkers' gate to a broad track. Go straight over it and through another gate.

The path descends gently passing through Morson Wood. As you reach the river, cross a footbridge, noting the rock pillar in the middle of the river (SK 129589).

At the second footbridge by a ford, cross to the opposite side.

At the third footbridge, do not cross but stay on the left hand bank. The bridge is marked as part of the cycle network.

At a three way fingerpost, keep straight on for "Milldale 2¼ miles".

Pass and ignore Gipsy Bank Bridge. Just beyond it, at Iron Tors, is an old pump house containing the remains of a ram pump used to supply farms with water from the river.

Pass and ignore Coldeaton Bridge.

At a four way fingerpost by an old restored pump house, keep straight ahead for "Milldale 1½ miles" (SK 142570). Note the route signed "Tissington Trail 1 mile" to the left will be your return route from the loop you now start.

At SK146552 you reach two houses below a wood. Turn left here to follow the wall at the left hand side of the wood. The path climbs steeply.

At the top of the trees, go over a gated stile and continue straight ahead following the direction of the yellow arrow. The next stile soon appears.

As you reach the brow of the hill, you can see the old railway embankment along which runs the Tissington Trail. You may be able to make out a fingerpost. Ascend to the Trail, via a walkers' gate just to the right of the arch and turn left (SK 152553).

There are good views from this elevated section of the Trail, especially to the west.

Walk along the Tissington Trail for half a mile and just before a bridge over a track, fork left to follow the public footpath fingerpost (SK 152561). At the bottom of the embankment, go through a walkers' gate, then left entering National Trust land Bradburys Bank.

Keep straight ahead following the direction in which you descended the embankment and arrive at a kissing gate. Follow the direction of the yellow arrow, descending into the little valley. Turn left in the valley bottom, following a public footpath fingerpost. Ignore the gate by the fingerpost SK152564).

The grassy path takes you back to the restored pump house encountered on the outward journey. Turn right here and retrace your steps along the river to the turn for Biggin Dale. Go right following the fingerpost for "Biggin".

There are some spectacular scree slopes alongside the path along this valley.

