

Ashford In The Water To Monsal Head

Walk Information

Walk Area:	Ashford-In-The-Water	OS Map:	Explorer OL1
Distance:	4 Miles (6.4 Km)		White Peak Area
Start Point:	Sheepwash Bridge		1:25000
Map Ref:	SK 194 616		

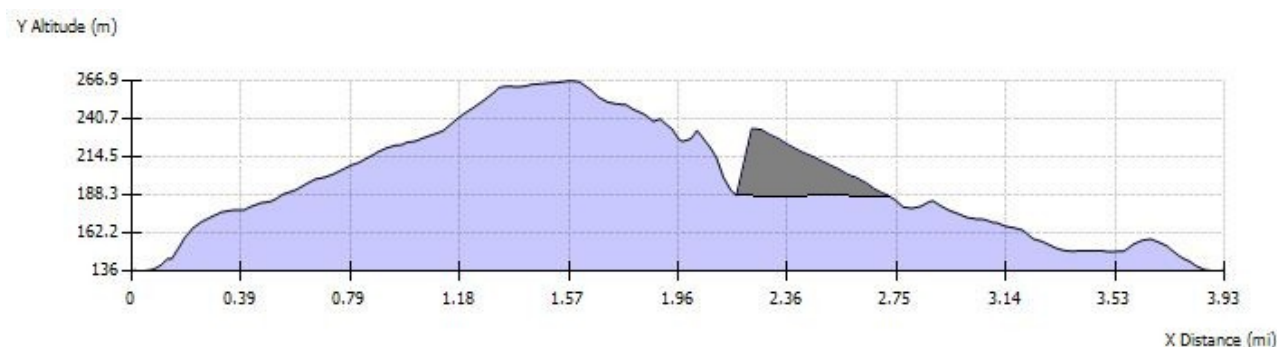
General Information

Parking:	Road Side – Limited Off Road
Tea Shops:	One
Duration:	2 Hours

Altitude Data

Start:	446 ft (136m)
Minimum	446 ft (136m)
Maximum	876 ft (267m)

Altitude Profile



The Odd Looking Walk Profile!

You may have noticed that the altitude profile for this walk looks a bit different. This is because the route passes under Monsal Head through the Headstone Tunnel (grey area above the line).

A fairly straightforward four mile walk from the the famous Sheepwash Bridge across the River Wye (this is the bridge that appears on almost every postcard of the village) up through the village then along farm tracks to Monsal Head. From the viewpoint at Monsal Head the route drops down to visit the famous Headstone Viaduct before passing through the Headstone Tunnel to start the return leg of the walk across farmland back to Ashford-In-The-Water.

Monsal Head it's self could be used as an alternate start for this walk if required. Toilets for this walk are at the car parks in Ashford and at Monsal Head, refreshments are to be found at the Aisseford Tea Rooms near the church in Ashford, and at Hob's Café beside the Monsal Head Hotel.

Getting There:

From Bakewell follow the A6 north and westward towards Buxton. In about 1½ miles turn right onto the A6020 Chesterfield road. In a few metres turn left to drive through Ashford ignoring the turn to Monsal Head and passing the pub and the church. Turn right up Fennel Street and in about 150 yards turn right into the car park. This car park is very small eight to ten vehicles at most (if parked carefully), you may be better off parking on the roadside wherever you find a space.

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Ashford-In-The Water is also accessible by public transport, served by bus services 173 (Bakewell & Castleton), 177 (Bakewell & Buxton), and the Trans-Peak service (Derby, Belper, Matlock, Bakewell, Buxton, Stockport and Manchester).



Covered Bench

The Walk:

From the picturesque Sheepwash Bridge across the River Wye, walk towards Holy Trinity Church then up the hill (Fennel Street) towards a small traffic grassed traffic island with a wooden covered bench, continue ahead and slightly right and look for a footpath a few yards up the hill on the left. Take the footpath the follow it as it turns right and climb the stone steps up to a gap in a stone wall at the end of the garden fence beside the path. Continue forward to a a low step stile in a second wall at the end of a track between the paddocks, here a footpath marker post indicates the route across the field ahead, there is also a route marker in the field to help indicate the way. From the mid-field way-marker head slightly left to the far corner of the field and exit over a stone step stile onto the rough surface of Pennyunk Lane. Turn left then bear right and

follow the rough surface of the lane as it winds it's way up hill between stone walls for a distance of around a half a mile. Along the way look for the renovated dew ponds that are part of a biodiversity program aimed at helping to provide a distributed habitat and migration paths for species such as the great crested newt.

At the point where the lane ends take the narrower walled footpath to the right and continue forward ignoring way-marked paths on either side. This section comes to an end at a metal five-bar gate to the left of which is a tall and awkward squeeze stile, so awkward that I ended up having to take off my rucksack in order to pass through. Once through the stile walk up the length of the field ahead keeping the boundary wall to the left, at the end of the field pass through a stock gate and turn right towards Monsal Dale as indicated by the wooden sign on the far side. Walk through the stock gate ahead then along a stretch of walled path to a farm gate, go through this gate then walk across the field with the wall to the right to rejoin the walled path at another stock gate. Continue along this path to another gate at the side of Monsal Dale, at this point there is a bench to allow the splendid views across the Dale to be enjoyed. Turn right and walk along the path with a wall to the right and a steep drop on the left until the path reaches the view point outside the Monsal Head Hotel.

If Hob's Café is open leave the path at this point to pay it a visit, otherwise continue along the path and go down the steep stepped path into the dale, after a short distance at a bench the path divides. At the junction of paths take the path to the left that doubles back and leads down to the site of the former Monsal station between the Headstone Viaduct and the Hedstone Tunnel. On reaching the Monsal Trail between the



View from Monsal Head

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viaduct and the tunnel, the route turns left and passes through the 533 yard (487m) Headstone tunnel, if you wish to explore the viaduct now is a perfect opportunity to do so. Walk through the tunnel with it's long sweeping curve to the left to emerge into the gorge like cutting where the exposed rock strata have earned it the status of a geological SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

Leave the cutting by passing under the bridge and walk along the trail to a point where a second bridge comes into view and the footpath from Little Longstone to Ashford-In-The-Water crosses the Monsal Trail. Take the path on the right to Ashford and step down the steep stone ladder stile into the adjacent field, cross the field to a stone step stile into a second field then keeping the field boundary to the left walk forward to a squeeze stile on the far side of the field. Cross the next field maintaining the same direction to a gates step stile with a muddy approach, wooden pallets have been provided by the landowner to allow passage across the area of mud. Cross the remaining fields on the same heading and exit through a stone squeeze stile in a wire fence to exit onto Longstone Lane.



The Sheep Wash At Sheepwash Bridge

Cross the lane and enter the field on the opposite side and follow the path beside the wall towards the farm ahead. Exit through a stock gate beside the wall, then keeping alongside the wall follow the farm track to another stock gate. Walk down the next field to a barn just beyond the power line and take the walled path to the right of the building up onto the B6465 Ashford Lane. Cross the lane being aware of traffic and climb the steps off to the left and take the footpath across the final field. Go through the stock gate out onto a lane and turn left. Walk down the lane back into Ashford and

past the covered wooden bench encountered near the start of the walk, from here continue down Fennel Street to Sheepwash Bridge and the end of the walk. From here the Aisseford Tearoom is a few yards to the right should you need a cup of tea or coffee.