

Dovedale, Lin Dale, Thorp & Illam

Walk Information

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Walk Area: | Dovedale | OS Map: | Explorer OL24/259 |
| Distance: | 4 Miles | | White Peak Area or Ashbourne |
| Start Point: | Dovedale Car Park | | & Cheadle |
| Map Ref: | SK 146 509 | | 1:25000 |
| Post Code | N/A | | |

General Information

| | |
|------------|--------------------|
| Parking: | Pay and Display |
| Tea Shops: | One |
| Duration: | 2 Hours 15 Minutes |

Altitude Data

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| Start: | 449 ft (137m) |
| Minimum | 423 ft (129m) |
| Maximum | 692 ft (211m) |

Altitude Profile



A scenic circular walk, with one moderate ascent up Lin Dale to Thorp Pastures. The trickiest part of the walk is near the start; negotiating the crossing of the River Dove either by the famous stepping stones, or the bridge near the car park then traversing the rough scree path between the river and the base of Thorp Cloud. This walk also crosses into neighbouring county of Staffordshire to visit the village of Illam.

Getting There:

Take the A515 out of Ashbourne towards Buxton and after a couple of miles take a left turn sign posted Illam, Thorpe, Dovedale. The road passes in front of the heights of Thorpe Cloud and Bunster Hill and just over the bridge crossing the River Dove, an access road leads past the entrance to the Izaak Walton Hotel and onto a public car park for visitors to Dovedale. Parking for this walk is at the main Dovedale car park (accessed via a narrow road along the side of the Issac Walton Hotel), at a flat rate of £2.50 per day. This car park can become full quite



Stepping Stones

Dovedale, Lin Dale, Thorp & Illam

quickly on sunny Sundays and Bank Holidays, so an early arrival might be advised. No tea or coffee shops on this walk, although there is a refreshment hut near the exit/entrance of the car park in peak season. This sells water, hot drinks, maps, and a large selection of ice creams. There is also supposed to be a tearoom at the youth hostel (formerly Ilam Hall) again only in peak season.



Rough Riverside Path

The Walk:

Leave the car park by the path between the River Dove and the toilet block near the main entrance. Follow the river upstream for a short distance to a narrow footbridge. At this point there are two choices of route; firstly cross the footbridge then follow the rather rough path along the river bank and scree slopes of Thorp Cloud to the famous and ever popular Dovedale stepping stones. Alternatively you can continue along the tarmaced path alongside the other side of the river then cross via the stepping stones. My preference is to take the bridge and rough path option, a even with a moderate flow in the river it may be that one or two of the stepping stones (around four or five stones in from the tarmaced side) may be either under water, or very wet and slippery. Having crossed the river either by the bridge or stepping stones walk upstream a few yards to the entrance to Lin Dale, turn right way from the river through the gate with the fence line to your right to enter Lin Dale. Keeping the fence and wall to your right ascend the length of Lin Dale to the point where the fence turns sharp right toward the slopes of Thorp Cloud. At this point do not follow

the fence line, rather head at around forty-five degrees to the right between Thorp Cloud and the rocky outcrops ahead and to the left. This more gentle slope will lead you out of Lin Dale and onto Thorp Pastures. Thorp Pastures is a "common", this is gives the general public the right to freely graze their cattle or sheep there, as the grazing rights are held in "common" with the other rights to the land. Areas with these rights are sometimes called "gaits", a gait being the common right to graze.

The road that has been followed through Thorp and now continues as a track down towards the River Dove, were once part of the Cheadle to Ashbourne coach road. At the bottom of the track to the left adjacent to the wall of Coldwall bridge is a milestone from the days of the coach road stating "Cheadle 11". Pass through the gate and cross the River Dove using the bridge, having reached the other side look out for a squeeze stile in the bridge wall on the right. The stile is signposted but poorly so, the signs on the right next to the stile are overgrown, and if you reach the sign on the left or the end of the bridge wall you have passed it!

Having managed to locate and pass through the squeeze stile in the bridge wall, make your way for a short distance through an area of thicket into a field, bear right and follow the path across the field

Dovedale, Lin Dale, Thorp & Illam



Coldwall Bridge

to a gate on the opposite side. Continue on the same heading through the second field, crossing a dip in the land (sometimes stream) by a wooden farm track bridge. The track soon swings sharp left and enters private land, at the point that the track turns look ahead for a tall double arm; wooden footpath marker on the brow of the rise ahead. Walk towards this marker

then follow the series of way markers (painted with a yellow band) across the field and down the slope. The path then starts a gentle descent to the river with the path becoming more obvious as it passes through woodland that may have been some form of orchard in the past. As the path continues through the trees the sound of the River Manifold merging into the River Dove becomes audible, the River Manifold itself becomes visible just before exiting this area of scrub land. Continue to follow the path alongside the river Manifold through numerous fields, crossing several stiles, including an unusual combined bridge stile, to the bridge at Illam. In the spring these fields are full of young lambs, so walking with pets during lambing time may not be the best idea. This section of the walk is quite flat and never far from the course of the river, the bridge will come into view as you enter the final field. Access to the road is by a short set of steep stone steps and a final stile. Turn right to cross the bridge, taking care of traffic as you enter the village of Illam.



Illam Cross

Illam Cross

Just over the bridge is the monument to Jesse Watts Russell, of Illam Hall (now a youth hostel). The Illam Cross as it is known was erected in 1841 and is constructed of white limestone.

It has been said that the monument bears some resemblance to the Elenor Cross, near Waltham Abbey (Essex). The cross itself stands some forty feet high, and is topped by a graceful ornamental cross.

Looking at the cross today it would be easy to believe that it is far older than its 160 years. This is mainly due to its current placement at the centre of the village's road traffic island, and the resulting pollution from vehicle exhaust.

Dovedale, Lin Dale, Thorp & Illam

On entering Illam turn right at the cross and follow the road along the opposite bank of the river. Shortly after passing the last cottage on your left (around a hundred or so yards from Illam Cross) look carefully for a gate in the wall on the left and a path up the steep bank, go through the gate and follow the path up the bank for a short distance until it joins a broader track, turn right and follow this track. Continue to a stile by a gate then pass on into the next field, look across the field to a point around midway along it's length where three hedges meet, this is the exit from the field. Pass through the kissing gate and keeping the hedgerow to your right follow path towards Thorp Cloud directly ahead. A word of warning about this gate; it's spring is rather strong, and if you are not careful it may catapult you half way back to the car park! Keeping Thorp Cloud in view ahead as a guide point continue along the path is clearly visible across the fields, pass over two further stiles and descend to a final double stile. Walk down through the trees and the car park, and end point of the walk should now be in plain view.