

Walk. 45
Hartington. 45.
21.7 Miles.
Map- White Peak.



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Start at Hartington (129604). Walk S on the road that goes W to Hulme End and Warslow, but in 100 metres, go L at the L of toilets at one of those splendid signs erected by the P.D and N.C.F.P.S.. This one is numbered 31 dated 1907 with directions to Dovedale. Proceed S on a good path behind houses through several walls to enter Beresford Dale through some trees; away to the R is the one roomed fishing house of Charles Cotton which he built in 1664. This is where he and Isaac Walton discussed their interest in fishing: They are named as the fathers of fishing nothing remains of Beresford Hall where Cotton was born in 1630, but the panelled and canopied pew he sat in (painted grey green) may still be seen in Alstonefield church. Soon go over a strong footbridge to pike pool whose name comes not from the fish but from a tall rock spire rising up from the pool.

Proceed down Beresford Dale to a footbridge to cross over the river. Cross the meadow on a path near a sign to Wolfscote Dale with the river on ones R; notice the cave up to the L, come to a slot in a wall, then continue on a pleasant riverside walk, the grass soft and short. Much work has been done in this dale to a restored path to prepare it for the hundreds of visitors who come on this popular route.

Pass Biggin Dale on the L; a dry dale coming from Biggin. Enjoy the ever changing scenery, and continue on the wide good path on its adventurers; it passes under another cave, near that is a slot in a limestone wall. Eventually walk through trees which soften the scene. Pass Coldeaton Bridge on the R; there is a small stone building on the L. above on the L is Iron Tors, an area given to the National Trust

by ICI, the first gift ever received by the Trust from a commercial undertaking. In front, a slot on the side of a gate.

Continue along the riverside to a double slot, one either side of a gate, an unusual feature elsewhere, but one of many on this route. In fact, a relaxing and pleasant walk soon comes to another double slot, having passed a footbridge on then way. Near the next footbridge is a double slot stile where the path goes off to the L away from the river to reach a N.T. sign: Fishpond Bank. Go through another double slot and walk with river once again on the R; on the L is a large house with a profusion of gables; over on the other side of the river is Lode Mill, a well preserved building which still contains some of its old machinery including the water wheel. Lead ore mined at Ecton was once smelted here. The river flows under an interesting, single-arched bridge. Go up steps to a slot and so out onto the road at 146551.

Turn R and walk along the road, keeping to the L at a fork (just over the bridge) and going SW to Milldale where stands Ochre Mill which once produced ochre from iron mined locally: a leat may still be seen. The pack horse Bridge gained its name Viator's Bridge from Isaac Walton's book "The Complete Angler" in which Charles Cotton engages a traveller (Viator) in conversation about a narrow bridge. Cross over this old and interesting bridge where countless travellers have walked during the past centuries on packhorse routes, and where many spend their leisure time in beautiful scenery. Go through a slot on to a renewed path which was once a muddy track, then on to another double wooden slot. A dry dale comes down from Hanson Grange (once the property of Evelyn the diarist and more recently the home of the novelist, Nat Bould); the interesting limestone cliffs are known as the Nabs, past Dove Holes on the L; two huge caves in a limestone outcrop formed before the dale was worn down to its present level. Other natural features catch the eye: Ilam Rock, Pickering Tor, Lions Head Rock, the Watch Towers, the impressive arch to Reynand's Cave where artefacts dating from the first and second centuries A.D. have been found, the Tissington Spires, and Lovers Leap where we like to think that a romantic young lady was saved from death by a broken fall. The twelve Apostles and other features remind one of our Victorian Ancestors who loved to name these distinctive geological structures, and one may say a good thing.

Eventually reach some stepping stones at 151513 near to Thorpe Cloud (National Trust): this scene is on many a calendar. It was the constant vision of F.A. Holmes of the (NT) to see this area of great beauty pass into the protection of the trust. As a war memorial to the men of Derbyshire and Staffordshire who fell in the war of 1939-45, also his family gave 33 acres on High Weeldon to the NT in 1947. Cross the river by the stones and walk SW with river on the L on a wide track to a car park (marked on map). Go R here at another metal sign erected by the PDandNCFPS re-erected in 1976, directing the walker to Ilam. Go over a step stile and go R into a grassy lane where young trees grow on either side and leads to a stile with four steps either side. Go SW through a field to a wall with a stile; then 40 metres to a wall and another sign by the society dated 1960. go W to the far L corner where there is an old swing gate; enter a field and go to a farm gate, on the R of this is a gritstone slot; then go on a path across the hillside, road and river down to the L and yet another sign by the PDandNCFPS No.123 dated 1950 erected "in grateful memory of J.T. Robinson of the R.A. Manchester area.

Cut down L to a little wooden gate and a N.T sign: Bunster Hill. Turn R and walk into Ilam (135508) (a village with Swiss style chalet cottages) to be faced with the spectacular monument to Mrs Watts Russell whose husband built Ilam Hall in 1821-6. The cross was influenced by the (Eleanor Crosses); at a time when the architect Scott was designing his Oxford Martyrs Memorial from the same source. The houses one sees are obviously influenced, like so many estate villages, by the great house: prominent barge boarding, half timbering and tile hanging. The mediaeval church was rebuilt by Scott in 1855-6 but is overpowered by Mr Watts Russell's Memorial Chapel in memory of his father in law. There are two late Anglo-Saxon crosses in the churchyard. Go forward and enter the estate by the R gateway. Walk past the hall (NT) now used as a Youth Hostel and caravan club park, and walk, with house on R, down steps to the River Manifold. With the river on the L, go along a narrow but interesting path, passing the remains of a cross found in 1840 when the village was being built. It dates probably from the middle of C.11 and has similarities with the crosses in the church yard. Leave the path at a bar stile, then go L over a footbridge. Walk NW to a slot in a field, cut the R corner to a slot between uprights in a wall with a few trees near. Climb up through the next field to a huge gap in the

hedge; an excellent slot is no longer needed. The path levels out in the next field, wall away to the R; to come to a metal gate on the L is a stile. Musden grange is to the L and abbots bank not far away: are they connected by a mediaeval link? Go forward through a field to a stile ahead in a wall enclosing trees, then take a simple slot stile and enter a farm drive at 123514. It is possible the stile has been moved to its present position.

Turn L: go 40 metres, then turn R up a lane, Rushley Farm to the L, then walk NW along a farm drive, going uphill to Throwley Hall Farm. Go into the farmyard and note that the building on the L has seven bays of two-light mullioned windows; it is known as Throwley Barracks. Nearby is the imposing ruin of the hall, a broad three-storey tower, built in the early C.16: its surviving windows have uncusped, four-centred heads to the light typical of the time of Henry V111. It was then the home of the Meverells who have a tomb in Ilam church. Charles Cotton once owned the hall.

Proceed through the farmyard, go L then R for a few metres then L at a F.P sign to a stile in a wall and enter a small, overgrown area to leave by a few bars across a gap and enter a field. Walk N uphill to the far wall at the top on the R of a gate is a stile. Enter the next field, wall on L, and walk N downhill so as to reach a small group of trees against a wall. Look for a metal gate on its R a stile. Go forward now on worn track passing on the R an unusual line of trees, then come to a gate, no stile. Cross over the River Hamps and walk with the River Manifold on the R; eventually to reach a road junction (L to Grindon, R to Alstonefield) at 099541.

Walk on a good hard surface which was the track of the Leek and Manifold Valley Light Railway, a 30ins narrow gauge line which operated from 1904-1934. It ran from Cheddleton through the Hamps valley and into the Manifold Valley terminating at Hulme End where the station and engine shed still remain. In 1936 the Staffordshire County Council spent £6,000 in converting it into a footpath, an act of great vision in those hard days. Enjoy the scenery as proceeding along the valley and contemplate the pleasures of travelling his way by railway long ago. Proceed past Wettonmill, now a centre for refreshments, then walk along the track to reach a tunnel, an odd experience. Walk through the tunnel then; bear R and walk E past Swainsley, crossing over the river by a bridge at Ecton. Carry on at the side of the river to Ecton. Up on the R is where Ecton Copper Mines were worked: a very rich ore was found 5metres wide; they were owned by the Duke of Devonshire who used some of the profits to build the crescent at Buxton. Carry on at the side of the river on the former railway to a point at 101592 where there is a swing gate on the R but go off the track to the L into a field. Walk N towards farm buildings, going through a gate into a farm drive and so out onto a road at 101583.

Bear L and walk along the road for 100 metres then go R through a fence and walk NW through a field, then go through a gap in a hedge and through a field to a fence where there are two good uprights; two trees nearby. In the next field, bushes mark the course of a stream on the R; Hollow Farm is away to the R; cross over its farm drive and pass a single tree, making for the hedge in front and another good slot. Pleasant walking through another field, going W, a wall and some trees away to the R and a gap in a broken hedge in front to enter a field, bear L and make for a metal gate with the suspicion of a slot on its R. Go uphill somewhat to the R through the next field to a wall in front in which there is a short drive to a gate, no stile, and so out on a road at 091597.

Turn R and walk N along the road for several hundred metres passing trees on the R; where the trees end, go over a very low wall with a drop down to the field below; there seems to be no stile in the untidy arrangement of stones in the wall. Walk NE, level going, to a fence where there are two gritstones making a slot. Cut the R corner and go through a gap in a hedge and continue to walk through a level field where reeds and thistles grow to come to another gap in a hedge no stile, then climb a short bank through shrubs to a hedge where, to the L, an old gritstone has been pushed over at a stile; a poor new stile for good old one. Go NE through the next field to the road via a slot in a hedge that has been neatly cut (094603)

Go straight across the road to two grits making a slot, then go NE close to a hedge on the L to a metal gate with pretensions of a stile on its L, obviously broken. Walking NE brings one to the far corner of this damp field; go over a wooden stile into another level field where reeds and thistles grow. Cut the L corner and go through a gap in the hedge on the L into more thistles then go through another gap in a hedge. Pass with nostalgia two isolated gritstones, useless! but may show the walker he is on the correct route, go towards a gate in a corner, and come out on to a road at 097608.

Turn L and walk N for 300 metres passing Hulme House, plain but well-built, then, 40 metres beyond the farm, go R at two old grits making a slot; continue NE again across this field to a white gate ahead a stile is to the L of it. Out on to a road again; turn R and walk over a bridge over the River Manifold at Brund Mill, a tall building on the L. some of the old machinery and an undershot wheel are still retain in the building which was erected in 1760 and originally used as a corn mill. It was converted into a cotton mill in 1790 by Thomas Cantrell who also had a cotton mill in Hartington which was built in 1777 on the site of what is now the Copper Grill. He was forced to sell out only four years later. The mill was last used in the 1940's during the war. The road that has just been walked on over the river has been used for centuries by travellers including the packhorsemen (whose route is soon to be taken) and the salt merchants. Some of the farms had stables with doorways wide enough to admit mules laden with their packs; that where on their way from Nantwich to Chesterfield where some of the salt was used for glazing pottery; there is still a Saltergate in Chesterfield. In those days, the crossing of the Manifold at Brund was by an old packhorse bridge which was replaced by the present structure in 1891.

Just opposite the mill, before the road junction, go R through a good slot in the wall, walking SSW uphill to a fence where there is a slot and wooden step. Turn R and walk towards the house on the R to turn L up a lane at 101612, climbing fairly steeply to the E between high banks on the old packhorse and saltway to Sheen. Was this lane as badly churned up then as it is now? Continue through the mud to a gate with a slot on its side to enter a field, wall on R, pleasant walking to a wall ahead where there is an enormous gap containing gateposts; level going through the next field. Note on the R is a sunken lane, probably an old track way. In front is a wall with a slot in it, so into a field with soft short grass, come to a good slot and on to a poor slot ahead into a field. Go through gap in a wall, and approach houses, passing on the R an old farm building with an end wall beautifully patterned by random stonework. In the L hand corner of this field are some solid steps in the wall, and so out on to the road in Sheen at 111613.

The church in Sheen is of special interest in that a rich man, A. J. B. Beresford Hope was a patron of the living. He was able to engage Butterfield, an outstanding architect, to rebuild the church in 1850 and put in a splendid parsonage in 1852.

Turn L for 100 metres, then R through a grit slot on the R of a gate, walking SE past an old farm building, the church away to the L. Walk with wall on the R down to the corner and a tiny wooden bar stile, then straight up a bank to a stile with handrails then into a field and walk E uphill then down to a fence with two good gritstones. From this slot, climb again to level ground and a wall with a slot stile. Go forward into a field with soft grass uphill to a wall with a slot. Enter a lane, high bank on the R, losing height at once and gaining views to descend to a metal gate with a slot on its R. Into a field and still going downhill to now cross the infant river Dove by a footbridge; then on to a gate, slot on L, and into a field going uphill to a wall which has a slot stile. The next field is easy walking; in front is a poor wall with two good limestone uprights for a stile. Cut the R corner in the next field and get to a stile with gritstones in it: laid as steps, and make for the factory ahead through a slot in its boundary wall. Pass through the yard of the cheese factory which makes world-famous Stilton cheese, and then proceed down a lane to the start.

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