

Walk. 48.
Thorpe 48. 20-3 miles
Map. White Peak.



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Start at car park at Thorpe near the Isaac Hotel at the foot of Thorpe Cloud 146509. Walk straight across the road to a wooden step stile near a metal sign erected by the P.D. and N. C. Footpath Preservation Society. Go SW between young trees to a double step stile then continue SW to the back of the Isaac Walton Hotel to go through a slot in a wall then in 30 metres to the next wall and another slot and sign (dated 1960). From this stile, one footpath goes to Ilam; instead, turn R and walk NW across the field, level going, to a fence and a double wooden step stile. In the next field, begin to climb gently, still walking NW towards the wall at the top where there are stone steps cemented in place. Once over, turn L and begin to climb the steep bank on the R up to a point from which there are good views around. Walk N now on the contour of Bunster Hill. The worn path quite narrow it goes to a wall ahead and a stile, but do not take, turn R and walk steeply uphill close to the wall on the L. at the top corner, go over a stile and continue walking E of N through a field, still uphill with a copse on the L. make for a farm gate in the wall to the R, no stile, then turn L and walk 20 metres N to another gate

and enter a lane, wide and grassy. Ilamtop Farm ahead. When the entrance to Ilamtop is reached, bear R and walk down E to Air Cottage to be faced with the splendid view over Dovedale in the region of Reynard's Cave. Go through a gateway and cattle grid into Air Cottage (142523). Immediately go R and make for wooden gate in the far fence.

From the gate, go down a few metres to a worn path, turn L and follow the path N as it winds its way along the hillside and eventually down alongside Ilam Rock, having come through the woods and down a very steep slope. As close as this, the Pillar looks quite formidable. Walk N alongside the river, passing a footbridge, the path level and wide to come to a wall with a slot. Once through, bear L up into Hall Dale, the banks rising steeply on either side but the path level as yet to go NW, wall on L, some scree on the R, over a wooden step. Once through continue until the trees thin out, taking twisting its way round spurs. The dale broadens; go over a slot at the top half of a wall; pleasant walking towards houses ahead. Go over stone steps in a wall and catch a glimpse of a tall farmhouse noticeable for being built in red brick (Grange Farm in Stanshope). At this point notice a network of walls around: in one of them a slot is enclosed between uprights. Over two stiles and continue walking on level ground to a wall on the L where a stile is cemented into place. Go 40 metres to a slot and stile to enter a lane at 129542.

Bear R; walk uphill on a hard surface with views down Hall Dale, and in about 500 metres, the lane goes off to the R. A sign indicates the F.P. to Milldale and a slot on the L of a gate gives access into a field to walk with wall on L and charming views into Milldale. The wall on the L brings one down to a gate on your L; the field extends down on the R but leave at this point through a slot on the L of a gate and walk down with wall on the R to a slot on the L of a gate and walk down with the wall on the R to a gate in the wall in front, the slot stile is on the L of the gate. Good walking down through the next field with long views ahead over Dovedale, and arrive at a well-made wall with neat capping and a superior stile between good uprights. It is only about 40 metres to the next wall which is equally well made with a slot, then enter a more precipitous descent with rough grass, stony underfoot, some trees either side and views along the spurs of Dovedale. A good slot then to the R of a house and so down to a road in Milldale at 138547.

Turn R, walk down to the junction then turn L up the hill to the Methodist chapel on the R. Across the road from this is the entrance to a house, so; walk uphill, turn L up the drive into the garden and walk straight across to the far fence and a little wooden slot and then out onto the hillside, walking uphill NW with wall and trees on L to a wall in front to go through a slot and continue to climb steeply until the ground levels out and get a view back over Milldale. Make for the far corner to go through a slot into the next field to go diagonally through it. The far corner has a slot at a sign (obliterated) and enter a long field, turning to walk NW parallel with a dignified line of stately trees in the wall on the L to arrive at a slot on the R of a farm gate, near a sign to Milldale and enter a lane at 134553.

Turn L and walk with the church on the L: see a monument whose canopy shelters the figure of a woman kneeling by a broken column. The village has many attractive stone houses, Alstonfield Hall, dated 1587, being particularly noticeable with mullioned windows, ball finials on gables, angled chimneys and a Tudor doorway dated 1587;

notice a tree surrounded by a wall. Take the road to Hulme End to pass a amenities block on the L, look on the R for a slot stile; it is in a corner. Enter a field, wall on the L, and go N for 20 metres to a prominent stile in a wall. From this go N diagonally across the field to its far corner to stone steps in a wall. Some village buildings on the L. Enter a small area, some gardens on the L to cut the far corner to stone steps to go into a field to go 10 metres to another step stile. Turn R; there is a building near to the L to walk along a muddy farm track to a large gap in a wall. From this point, the track forms a path going NE but do not take it: go L close to a wall for 10 metres, two trees on the L, to a slot on the R of a small gate and enter a field, walking NW, wall on L, level going. In the next corner, go through a slot and continue in the same direction, wall on L. in the corner, a good stile, this time a huge upright, in the next corner a stile with no uprights. On the R pass a circular concrete water trough; bear R and walk NE uphill through this field to the far wall at the top to go through a broken section, a large gap, and continue climbing beyond it through the next field to the top where the map indicates Dea Low. To the R of the low is a good slot, (Low in Derbyshire means high), and descend now through a field, Low Plantation to the L and a building at the bottom. However, cut to the L far corner where a tree stands, views to the R over Dove Dale where Biggin Dale joins it.

In the L corner, go through a gap, and walk NW close to wall on R, Narrowdale Hill looking quite formidable in front and Low plantation now up on the L. In the wall in front there is a half slot starting halfway up over which to get into the third field to move away from the wall on the R to a stile which is about 30 metres up from the R corner, another half slot. From there, go diagonally to the far corner cutting the L corner, and proceeding through a large gap, no stile, walking W close to wall on L until it goes off S away from the path. Now get a good view down Narrowdale to the N to walk W until a gate appears in front, the entrance to a lane. Ignore this and walk with the wall on the R until approaching within 40 metres of the woods ahead and come to a slot in a wall on the R at 127567. Enter a lane and go straight across it to a slot in a wall and go into a very narrow field, walking N for 15 metres to a slot in a wall, then continue N through the next field, Narrowdale Hill rising high in front, Greenhill cottage away to the L. Pleasant walking brings one to the far corner ahead and a slot to emerge into rough ground, a field on the L and on the R the land falling down into the head of the dale.

Walk N through the nettles close to the wall on the L; there is a farm building to the L with a smaller building attached to it, and, in the field ahead, a tree surrounded by a wall, a striking feature. Go through a broken wall to a second wall where a slot on its R has a monstrous upright, and see again, near to the L, that tree within a circular wall. The path begins to drop, but the hill on the L continues steep and high, the path descends to Narrowdale Farm which is seen from above. Enter a lane and come down to old iron gates, which to get round is a tight squeeze, to come through into a farm area. Everywhere in this lonely farm there are limestone buildings with fine strong lintels and dressings of gritstone, quoins too. Apparently the farm was mentioned in the Doomsday Book. In 1800 there were seventeen houses in a hamlet here. The beams in the farmhouse kitchen were shaped by an adze, and in the farmhouse, named Priory Farm

was built in 1832 from materials used in a previous building. One of the outhouse is listed, but, unfortunately, requires urgent attention.

Leave the farm, going W through a metal gate, passing one old building and approaching a second; just before it go R into a small area, overgrown with nettles and go N for 15 metres to a wall where there is a slot hidden by nettles. (When was this path last used?). Ahead see a lane; go N down to a muddy track and instead of proceeding up the prominent lane, go L up a hidden lane, closed by a gate, no stile grassed over, a hedge either side, rarely used. Walk NW along this lane to an old ruin on the R; these old stones once made a respectable habitation. The lane now drops down to a ragged wall which surprisingly contains a simple slot of wood, and go forward without surprise to a muddy area and come to a wooden stile, two steps, now enter a wide field and cut the R corner having seen the perilous electric fence. In 100 metres come to a hedge with gaps and a stile is in one of them. Cut the L corner and go through a big gap in a fence and on to a farm drive. Proceed through Field Farm and out on to a hard-surface drive going NW. pass one field on the R at the end of which go R into a field, no stile, and walk N. Unfortunately several fields must be negotiated without stiles, before a narrow field which takes one out onto an road at 119584.

Turn R and walk NE for 100 metres, then go L, where the woods begin, over a stile that has been damaged. Then walk W of N through a field, level going, close to a hedge and trees on the R to the far corner where there is a a simple bar and slot in a fence. Continue in the same direction along what was once a hedge, proceed to trees ahead where there was once a stile. Walk N close to the line of trees on the L going through a gateway, down to a four bar stile at the end of the second field and thus on to a farm drive which goes to the L to a gate then through farm buildings. This is Lower Hurst Farm, well situated on an eminence, and built entirely in sandstone, and smart it looks. A farm building on the R has two arches with what, in a smart town house would be called voissiors with keystone, all correctly done. Go through the gate at the end of the farmyard, then turn sharp L so as to walk with the farmhouse close on the L to ,make for the corner and a good stile. Go SW diagonally through the next field to a bar stile in the distance to the R of the corner. In the next field cut somewhat to the R to avoid making for a gateway to Upper Hurst Farm. Keep to the R of a drinking trough to make for a gate with a stile on its L, then enter a field and keep close to a hedge on the L to go down to a farm gate, no stile and so out on to a road at 113592.

Go straight across the road to a step stile then walk through a level field, pleasant going, wall on L, but move away from it, passing a drinking trough on the way to a gateway, no gate or stile, into the gateway of Endon House. Being at the back of the house, go either side of it, in any case the house is now unoccupied, another house with a story. Then go NW on which is virtually the bank of a stream on the L, hedge on R, some trees growing along the path of the stream making an interesting picture. In front, in a hedge, come to a step stile, some trees nearby adding to their charm to the scene beyond which lie the building of a hotel. Follow the stream as it curves to the W and go L through a gate, no stile, and cross over the stream into a splendid field, through which walk to the W, level going, the trees around providing a beautiful natural border to the picture. Come to a gate, no stile, and the road at 196592.

Turn R and walk down to the Manifold Valley Hotel on the R, then bear L and cross the handsome stone bridge over the river and walk W to Hulme End, once the terminus of the Manifold Light Railway. The interesting Methodist Chapel (1854) is now closed. Go as far as the car parks on the L; go through these in order to get to the former line of the Manifold Light Railway and walk for only 300 metres to a stile on the R and a wooden gate on the L. go L through the gate and walk S down through a field towards the fence which crosses the field; about 30 metres in from the river is two slot stiles. From these, it is a short walk to a Foot bridge on the L which crosses the river. In 20 metres, there is a gate with a stile on its R and come out on to a road at 101589. This is Westgate Mill, the buildings have been well maintained; a somewhat indistinct carving looks like 166? Walk S. the Manifold lives up to its name as it meanders on the R. in about 400 metres, at a junction, the road turns sharp L, at a sign stating that it goes to back of Ecton, no through road. Go L along this road for a few metres then go R through a stile into an field and walk steeply uphill, hedge and trees on the R, to the top where there is a sign and a good slot stile: this is different to the map.

Turn R and walk W along a level path following the contour through the dale. Below on the R is the railway trail, and soon come to a simple slot as the path proceeds through trees, wall on R. The path curves to the S; and see Dale bridge below to the R, the site of a former mine and packhorse route; the path now approaches The Hillocks, a castle folly built as recently as 1931. Go through a slot on the L of a gate and come down in front of the Hillocks. Turn L and go through the outhouses under an arch to a gate, then along a jetty, up some steps to a wall containing a slot stile. Go NE straight up the hill from this point, a steep climb up to a mine shaft, though all that is seen from below is a huge pile of stones forming a beehive. Just above is a well kept building which was the engine house (098583). The high position gives a fine view down the Manifold to the former site of the copper mine at Ecton, and over the hill to the W, to Warslow and Butterton.

Continue uphill, wall on L to a piece of wood that encloses a gateway; there is a small, hinged wooden gate to the L of that through which a Footpath goes down to the back of Ecton. However do not take it; instead turn R and walk E of S uphill close to a wall on the L and walk on a ridge with views to the R and L. As high as this is there is evidence of former mines worked by those intrepid miners of long ago who we owe some of the footpaths we enjoy walking on. Come to a corner at the top and go through a good stile; the wall goes off to the R and the walking is now in open country on a good track now grassed over, now no wall to follow; good views all around.

Pass a shaft enclosed by a poor wall, then pick up a wall on the L and go through broken walls, then a good stile between uprights to then cut the R corner and make for rough ground ahead, former workings where there are two stiles: one of them is on a track from Broad Acton Farm; the other is the one to take, going S, this is a rough area that contains broken walls and disturbed ground, and is a considerable height on which people had to work. Walk S downhill, wall on R good views pleasant walking: the grass is soft, the path level. Go through a gate, no stile onto a hard track this goes off sharply to the L, but the walk goes straight on S to pass Leas Farm on the L. the track then curves L then to the R and passes close to Manor Farm on the R, then comes down to a gate on the L of which is a cemented stile with advise to walkers.

Proceed SW down the dale, Wetton Hill rising high on the L, level going in early stages. A little lower down, a worn path appears, a wall too, some trees on the spurs that provide pleasure to the eye: then suddenly the site of Thors Cave in that pointed peak, a miniature shot of a Canadian landscape for a few seconds.

Soon there is a gate and stile (098557) on the other side of which is a car park. Once over the stile, go sharp L on a road that climbs through pleasant woods. In about 500 metres, there is on the L, at a gate, a stile, over which leads into a steep bank of bushes. Climb SE to the top and onto a road. Turn L and walk up to Wetton (106552). At a junction, keep to the R and walk SE along this road which is free from houses, down to a road junction. Bear R; walk SW for 30 metres, then go L through a wide gateway, into a area of disused buildings, to stone steps in a wall (108550). The field is now quite large and rises to the skyline. Make SE for a building and a single tree to the R. near the building which seems to be well kept are two stones cemented in a wall providing a good stile into a field. Walk now on good soft grass; the path descending gently, wall on R; the deeply cut valley of the Manifold in front. Now come down to the bottom R corner which holds a slot and so out on to a road (111544).

Go straight across the road to a slot to enter a field and go 40 metres to a stile in a narrow area. Walk S, wall on L with striking views. Pass a water tank on the R and come to a wall where a stile admits to a steep bank falling to the R down to the Manifold. Walk along the contour, wall on the L: the view spread out in front where trees grow right down to the valley. Arrive at a stile in a wall on the L at 118536, a slot stile that leads into a small area roughly overgrown. Bear R; go through an open gateway, into a field to walk SE diagonally to the far corner and go through a gateway, to walk, now close to a wall on the L. at the other end of the field on the L stands some farm buildings. Good walking down to a gate, no stile, then emerge into an area where the wall on the L climbs up along the top of a bank, drop slightly making for the far corner, going S. the land falls away to the R: see the ruins of Throwley Hall and see what a fine strategic spot they chose for the old hall. In the far corner ahead, come to a gate and continue walking S on level ground, wall on R, to come to a another gate stile on its R. from this, it is a short step to a wooden gate and a few metres forward to the farm drive connecting Castern Farm with Castern Hall (123524).

Proceed around the hall to a gateway on the L, stile on R, then through the field to the far corner where 10 metres to the L is a stile. NE through the next field to a slot in a wall on the R, then to a gate in front; keep close to Beechenhill Farm on the R, then out on to a farm drive, go L up to a road at 131526. Turn R; count three fields on the L, and go L up a drive in the third, through a gateway, then go R off the drive and walk SE down to the corner at Moor Plantation where there is a slot in the wall. Continue SE, woods on the R to the wall in front and a stile with an immense stone on top.

Now cut up L to the top of Bunster Hill then down the other side to a bar stile, then walk E wall on R, fields on R, hillside on L to another stile. Pass two stiles on the R and take the third which goes down to the start on the walk.

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