

Wetton to Ilam along the Lower Manifold Valley...10 miles

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

# Manifold Valley, Peak District

**This circular walk from the stone built village of Wetton, in the Peak District National Park, explores Thor's Cave and then continues down to Ilam Park, before returning along the opposite side of the River Manifold.**

**Start:** Wetton village – grid ref: SK 109555 – map: OS Landranger 110 or 119

## How to get here & local facilities

**By foot:** Manifold Way runs along the former railway line which is part of this walk

**By bike:** National Cycle Network Route 54 runs through the Manifold Way

**By bus:** Service 405 Leek-Wetton, Mon-Fri, 443 Ashbourne-Wetton, Thurs & Sat only

**By train:** Stations at Derby, Matlock, Buxton and Stoke, all 10-15 miles away

**By car:** Off the A515 Ashbourne-Buxton or A52 Ashbourne-Leek roads

Wetton car park (not NT) Wetton village. A National Trust tea-room, shop, visitor centre and WCs are located at Ilam Park. Tea room and WCs also at Wetton Mill. Pub in Wetton Village.

Contact us on 01335 350503 or [southpeakestate@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:southpeakestate@nationaltrust.org.uk)

## Things to look out for...

### Woodland animals

Keep your eyes peeled for deer, foxes and badgers in the woods of the Manifold Valley, whilst weasels and stoats can be seen foraging for food along the dry stone walls.

### Ancient woodland

Some of the woodlands have been around for hundreds of years. The ancient semi-natural ash woods thrive in the thin limestone soil and many species of shrub grow here, such as Guelder Rose, Mountain Currant and Hazel.

### River Manifold

Part of the river is subterranean, disappearing underground just past Wetton Mill and reappearing in the grounds of Ilam Hall. Look out for the bright blue flash of Kingfishers along the river.



Ilam Park runs along both banks of the River Manifold. Enjoy outstanding views towards Dovedale National Nature Reserve, part of the National Trust South Peak Estate, or use it as a base to explore the beautiful White Peak area.

© NTPL/Andrew Butler



About a mile from the village of Wetton is Wetton Mill. The mill house dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was used as a corn mill until 1857. Today it is a popular tourist attraction with a tea-room and two National Trust holiday cottages.

© NT/David Slade



You will find it hard to miss Thor's Cave (non-NT) located above the Manifold Valley. It is a steep walk up, but the magnificent views down into the valley make it well worth the effort.

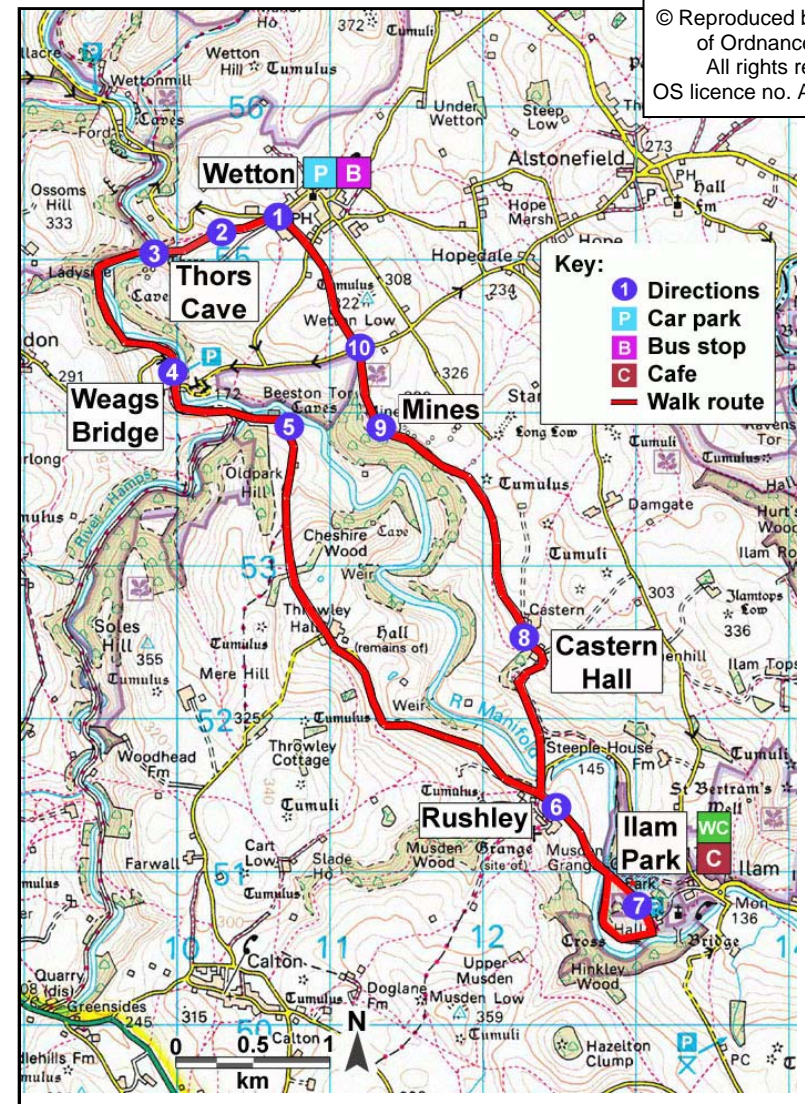
© NT/S Wright

## Directions

1. From the centre of Wetton village, take the small road leading towards Wetton Mill and the Manifold Valley. A few yards out of the village a farm track branches off left and is signed as a concessionary footpath to Thors cave.
2. Take the path and follow it down a small dale until it branches. Take the left branch which contours around the hillside towards Thor's Cave.
3. From the cave return the way you came to the fork in the path, but this time take the other branch down to the river and cross over the footbridge.
4. Follow the old railway track (formerly the Leek and Manifold Light Railway from Waterhouses to Hulme End – now the Manifold Way) down the valley to Weag's Bridge, then take the farm track which runs parallel to it on the river side and head for Beeston Tor Farm.
5. From the farm take the track up the hillside away from the river and continue until it turns into a grassy trail. Bear left up the trail to a small wood at the top of the hill. Go over the stile and continue on the path down to Throwley Hall farm.
6. Follow the small road past the farm towards Rushley. At Rushley the road bends to the left and just past this take the path across the fields to the footbridge. Cross the River Manifold into Ilam Park. From the bridge turn right onto the path which runs along Paradise Walk to Ilam Hall where there is a National Trust tea-room, shop, WCs and visitor centre.
7. Head back to the footbridge and Rushley by cutting straight across the park at the back of Ilam Hall (or back the way you came along Paradise Walk). At Rushley turn right along the road and cross the river by Rushley Bridge. Pass through a stile in the left wall and follow the path which leads to Castern Hall across the fields and up a hill that runs parallel to a farm road.
8. Go around Castern Hall and just behind the hall take a track on the left. Follow this track around the hillside until, at the third field it starts to climb away from the valley. Branch left towards the left-hand corner of the field and go through a gate to a path at the top edge of the cliff leading down to the Manifold.
9. Follow the cliff edge past the spoil-tips of lead-mines and then follow it to the right, away from the river, through a small dale.
10. Cross the head of the dale where you will emerge onto the tiny road which links Weag's Bridge with Alstonefield. Go over a stile on the far side of the road and follow the path which skirts Wetton Low to return to the village.

## Terrain and accessibility

10ml (16km) circular walk. Hilly with some sections on quiet roads. Some paths will be muddy in wet weather. Dogs welcome on leads.



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