

To the iconic landmark..... Ilam Park to Dovedale Stepping Stones

In 2006, Dovedale was declared a National Nature Reserve, a great achievement for an iconic landmark that is one of the most visited sites in the Peak District. On this walk you can enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the area by enjoying a relaxing walk which leads from Ilam Park to the popular Dovedale.

Getting there:

Train: Nearest train station is Derby or Buxton

Buses: Regular bus services from Ashbourne

Cycling: Sustrans National Route no 68 from Ashbourne

Road: NT Car Park at Ilam Hall

Map & grid ref: OS Landranger, Explorer, OS Map OL24, 131 507

Facilities available:

Visitor Centre, Shop, WC and Tea Room at Ilam Park

Walk distance, terrain and accessibility:

1 1/4 mile each way. The terrain is mostly gentle paths, with some tarmac drives, some stiles and one short steep slope.

Points of interest:

The walk starts at **Ilam Park**. Ilam Hall is now a Youth Hostel managed by the Youth Hostel Association. The Hall was built between 1821 and 1826 by Jesse Watts-Russell on the site of an older hall, built by John Port in 1546. The old stable-block now houses the National Trust Tearoom, Visitor Centre and Shop. The Hall was saved from complete demolition in 1934 when Sir Robert McDougall bought what remained for the National Trust

When you reach the **Stepping Stones** you maybe pleased to know that the footpath continues beyond the Stepping Stones for another 2 1/2 miles along Dovedale to Milldale.

Contact us: South Peak Estate Office, Home Farm, Ilam, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 2AZ. Tel 01335 350503. e-mail ilampark@nationaltrust.org.uk

NT Properties nearby:

Longshaw Estate, Sudbury Hall and Kedleston Hall

Things to look out for:



Dippers enjoy the fast flowing waters of the River Dove and visitors can often see them flitting from stone to stone in search of insect larvae and freshwater shrimps. Its white throat and breast contrasts with its dark body plumage. It is remarkable in its method of walking into and under water in search of food.

© NTPL / Eric Thomas

Thorpe Cloud looks like a volcano, with a flat top. In fact it is neither a volcano nor flat-topped. Rather it is a 'mud mound', formed under the tropical sea which covered the area 350 million years ago. The landscape is built of Carboniferous limestone and there are fossils of the sea creatures from that time visible in the rocks.



© NTPL / Joe Cornish

As a charity, independent of government, the National Trust relies on the generosity of its supporters to continue caring for our countryside and wildlife, so that everyone can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors for generations to come.

Find out more at www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Route and directions:

1. Start at Ilam Park and follow the footpath towards Ilam Church
2. The church was built by the Saxons before the Norman invasion. In the churchyard are the shafts of two Saxon crosses, each of which is more than 1000 years old.
3. Follow the path past the Church into Ilam Village. Marvel at the Alpine Style houses and the local school all provided by Jesse Watts-Russell.
4. Follow the path through the village and in front of you will be the Ilam Cross. The Mary Watts-Russell Memorial Cross was built in 1840, on the death of the wife of Jesse Watts-Russell.
5. Just after the gateway to Home Farm, cross the road at the lay-by to go through a wooden gate. There is a short steep slope up to the footpath. Turn right onto the track and pass through a squeeze stile into the fields. Enjoy the views of the Manifold Valley from here.
6. Follow the paths across the fields behind the Izaak Walton Hotel. The hotel is named after the author of 'The Compleat Angler', who fished the River Dove in the mid 17th century
7. As you cross the fields following the footpath take a moment to enjoy the landscape. Thorpe Cloud and Rocky Bunster can be seen from this point.
8. Cross the stile and follow the footpath down the hill to join the tarmac road. Turn left and you will follow the River Dove on your right hand side. The National Trust cares for and manages Dovedale. An information panel here tells you more about the wildlife, geology and conservation of
9. Continue along the tarmac path with the River Dove to your right. The River Dove's name is derived from the old Norse word 'dubo', meaning 'dark'. On the slopes of Thorpe Cloud are large areas of loose stones, called 'scree'. These stones have been prized from the top of the hill, through freezing and thawing, and have fallen to the foot of the slope.
10. Congratulations you have reached the Stepping Stones. Take a minute to take in the fantastic scenery. Put in place in the middle of the 19th century, the stones have long been a magnet for visitors to the area. Your next decision is do you cross the stones to continue your walk or return to Ilam Park for a refreshing cream tea in the Tea- Room?

If you have been inspired by what you have seen you can find out more by visiting www.nationaltrust.org.uk/peakdistrict. On these pages you can find out more about the history and wildlife and also how you can get involved either through volunteering or donating to the Dovedale Peak Appeal which helps to protect this precious landscape.

