



Peak Village WALKS

Written by Sally Mosley



PEAK VILLAGE WALKS – ‘ON THE RIGHT TRACK’

DISTANCE: Approximately 2.5 miles (4 kilometres)

TERRAIN & HAZARDS: This walk begins with a relatively flat stroll through woodland with a riverside path. After visiting Peak Rail, the route crosses the main A6 and heads for a short stretch of pavement through a residential area followed by a couple of narrow country lanes which ascend quite steeply to the quiet and isolated hamlet of Tinkersley. From here there is another woodland path to Woodside followed by a footpath through fields and stiles to return to Rowsley.

When crossing over the main road to Northwood Lane, please use the pedestrian crossing with traffic lights where advised in the directions. This walk is not suitable for pushchairs or persons with limited mobility.

Be very careful when walking along the riverside path which can be muddy at times and slippery.

On the quiet lanes up to Tinkersley there are no pavements so keep well under the side if you hear a vehicle approaching. On emerging from Copy Wood you will walk through a field occasionally used for golf so watch out for players. Beyond this there is a short stretch of about 50 yards beside a narrow stretch of Chesterfield Road where extra care should be observed with regard to passing traffic.

DESCRIPTION:

This short circular walk incorporates a ‘track and trail’ trip to Peak Rail to discover a little about Rowsley’s fascinating railway history and possibly to take advantage of a ride back in time on a wonderful steam train (subject to seasonal operating times).

The return to Peak Village is a mini hike with a walk up the hill to the tiny hamlet of Tinkersley from where there are fabulous views of the valley below. Look out for historical features along the way, follow the route used centuries ago by strings of pack ponies and wander through the woods which in spring are carpeted with bluebells.

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DIRECTIONS:

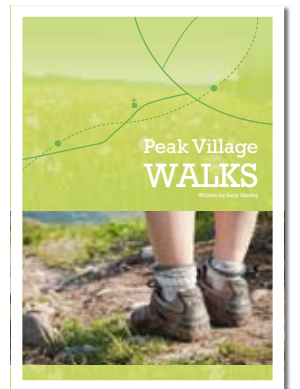
1. The walk starts at Peak Village where a **Walkers Zone** has been created providing free parking and a picnic area. From here head back towards the main car park but go through a gateway on the left and follow a path across the camping field to the Grouse & Claret which was originally constructed as The Midland Hotel for the railway line which for a hundred years passed through the heart of the village. Here travellers would have been able to obtain a bed for the night and railway workers or locals could quench their thirst with local ale. (Pics 1 and 2)



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The Midland Railway reached Rowsley in 1849, but its progress north was held up for 14 years until 1863 whilst the route forward was decided, as both the Duke of Rutland from Haddon Hall and the Duke of Devonshire from Chatsworth objected to plans for the railway to run through their estates. The 6th Duke of Devonshire finally relented and a station designed by the famous architect Joseph Paxton was built, but the Duke died before the line could be laid and his successor once again objected. Finally the Duke of Rutland gave permission for the line to pass Haddon Hall as long as it was hidden from view by a tunnel. The railway was accordingly re-routed but this left Paxton’s station in the wrong place and another passenger station was therefore built on the opposite side of the A6. The line operated between Manchester Central and London St Pancras before its closure in 1968.

2. Walk past the front of the pub to the main road and turn left, following the pavement for about 25 yards. **WITH EXTREME CARE** cross the main road and turn into Old Station Close where there is an amusing sign for T W Autos. On your right is a recycling point and car park on the site of the former railway line. You can still see in the top corner where the line headed towards a low bridge over the main road which was taken down after the railways closure to allow high sided vehicles to travel freely on the main road. The latter Rowsley Station, previously mentioned, was located to your left but was also demolished a few years ago and the site redeveloped with commercial premises. (Pic 3)



3. Continue down Ashbrook Close and as the road bends around to the left you should see a fingerpost on the right at the end of the fence, leading you towards a path into the woods. You will see several little lilac coloured markers with a yellow arrow and writing, informing you that this path is part of the Derwent Valley Heritage Way. The 55-mile, long distance path from Ladybower Reservoir follows the River Derwent south to its journey's end at Derwent Mouth when it combines forces with the River Trent. The route passes through the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site as well as the historic inland port of Shardlow. (Pic 4)

4. There are two paths through the woods, one follows the route of the former railway line and is relatively flat, whilst the other is part of the DVHW and is an undulating path close to the river, at one point passing the swirling confluence of the rivers Derwent and Wye. Either route eventually leads to Peak Rail.

5. As you wander along notice that many of the trees are young scrub which have filled the redundant track in the last twenty five years or so, whilst every so often you will come across a mature beech, sycamore or pine which in their youth would have been coated with smoke and wafted with the thundering force of passing steam and diesel trains. Look out for wild flowers in spring and summer including celandine, wood anemone, delicate herb robert and campion. Wild garlic grows here in abundance with its pungent aroma and large white flower heads like miniature snowballs, whilst along the river bank are huge clusters of Himalayan balsam, a problem weed which has become widespread throughout the country after being introduced to the UK in 1839. (Pic 5)

6. At the end of either route you will emerge onto the approach road to Peak Rail where there are signs 'To The Trains' to guide you. At one point the bumpy drive narrows and you cross over a bridge beneath which is a water channel paved with gritstone where a little brook which started life high on the moors is trickling down to join the river. Shortly after this you will come to the entrance to Peak Rail where you may wish to make a detour before continuing with your walk. For operating times and further information please visit www.peakrail.co.uk. On non operating days it is still possible to wander down to see Rowsley South Station but no facilities will be open or available and the exhibition buildings will be locked. (Pic 6)

7. Peak Rail is a popular Peak District attraction providing hours of nostalgic enjoyment, manned by a small army of enthusiastic and friendly volunteers. The 28-acre site contains an extensive collection of steam and diesel locomotives, historic carriages, wagons and rolling stock along with other railway memorabilia. It is also home to the Derbyshire Dales Narrow Gauge Railway. Rowsley South Station opened at Easter 1997 and is the northern terminus of Peak Rail which for over 14 years ran south to just short of Matlock. However, the track was recently extended to Platform 2 in the main Matlock Station and officially opened amid much publicity and celebrations on 2nd July 2011. (Pic 7)

8. Return to the entrance gate to Peak Rail at the end of their private car park and go past a semi-detached pair of former railway workers cottages to the main road. See the sign for Derwent Lane – this must surely be the shortest lane in the County! Cross the main road using the pedestrian crossing turn left to the junction where the house on the corner still displays its shop sign to indicate its former use. Turn up Northwood Lane and notice the wonderful monkey puzzle tree on your right. Continue along the pavement past the houses until you come to another junction at the bottom of a very steep hill. (Pic 8)

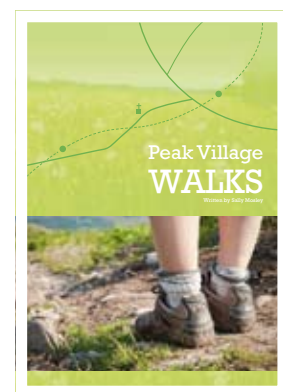
9. Turn left at Cote Hillock and just after the bridge on your left see if you can find a historic relic hidden away in the undergrowth. Look for a rather battered old stone known as a guide stoop which is an early waymarker dating from the beginning of the 18th century. For many decades Matlock Transport lorries from the haulage yard opposite have carefully manoeuvred around this old stone, to then be guided to far away destinations by maps and modern day satellite navigation.

Three hundred years ago primitive haulage contractors of that time operated trains of packhorses and ponies, their panniers heavily laden with salt, minerals, provisions and household goods. Their only way of being guided over the Derbyshire hills and moors was by distinctive landmarks and guide stoops such as this.

This particular gritstone stoop has been moved a few yards from its original position at the nearby junction where it indicated the route north-east on Chesterfield Road, south-east on Matlock Road and north-west on Bakewell Road. See if you can make out the rather large carved hand which is pointing to the left. (Pic 9)

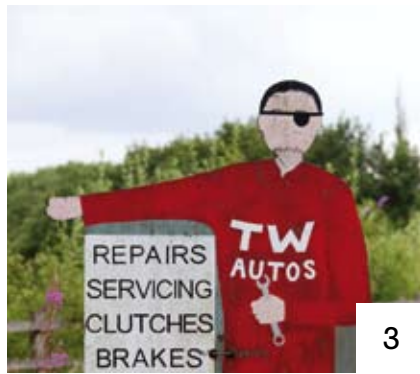
10. From here your route is onwards and upwards, heading beyond the guide stoop on a quiet lane. Wonderful views will begin to emerge extending across the valley towards the high hill opposite which is topped by Stanton Moor, a magical place of stone circles and prehistoric burial sites. Notice also a little tree-topped sugarloaf mound. This is Peak Tor, known locally as Pillow Hill, the ancient site of an early moated British camp. (Pic 10)

11. At the next junction where there is an appropriately placed metal bench to rest and admire the





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views, turn right and head up to the little cluster of houses and cottages at Tinkersley. Go past the drive to Tinkersley Farm on your right and continue uphill around a left-hand bend to Tinkersley House on your left. Notice the blocked up mullioned window at the rear of an earlier section of the property as well as a wonderful old stone trough placed at the side of the lane. Now planted with flowers, originally it would have been fed by a spring and provided a cool refreshing drink for ponies, horses and travellers passing by. (Pics 11 and 12)

12. Continue up the narrow winding lane to a beautifully restored farmhouse which has a wonderful long vertical row of leaded windows and a heavy studded door. From here you follow the footpath sign for Rowsley Bar & Dale Road North, by either crossing over the stone stile or heading through the gate.

Walk straight across the field beneath Tinkersley Farm and then aim slightly uphill to cross a wall stile into Copy Wood. (Ignore an alternative path leading down the woods). As you follow the level path through the trees, listen out for birds singing from the treetops and the occasional repetitive knock of a woodpecker. You might see tall purple foxglove in late spring or brambles laden with juicy blackberries in autumn.

There may be muddy patches along this path as this whole hillside is sponge-like with natural springs. However, hidden well beneath the surface is a giant water main laid in the 1930's, which runs right down the Derwent Valley from the huge reservoirs of Ladybower, Derwent and Howden to the north, delivering millions of gallons of water to the Midlands. (Pic 13)

13. At the end of the wood you will cross a high stile before heading across the top of a small private golf course (watch out for golfers). There is another wall stile onto Chesterfield Road where you emerge a few yards up the hill from a pretty little cottage dating back to the 18th century when this turnpike road was laid from Rowsley to Chesterfield. At that time there would have been a gate across from the cottage where anyone passing by with a horse or cart would have had to pay a small charge known as a toll. For convenience the toll-keeper lived in the cottage. (Pic 14)

14. Almost opposite Tollbar Cottage is a drive leading down to Woodside which was extended and landscaped in 1980. Follow the narrow footpath and head down between the hedge and wall, at one point passing through a small metal gate beneath a topiary arch. The path continues straight down the hill to return to Rowsley. Notice through the trees the wonderful landscaped grounds of East Lodge which is a premier country house hotel. On reaching the main road at a busy junction, cross over WITH EXTREME CARE to return to Peak Village by either heading back towards the Grouse and Claret or turn right for the main entrance. Notice The Old Station House on the corner which is now a small guest house. Built in 1850 it was the home of the station master at the new Railway Station. (Pics 15 and 16)

15. The walk ends with a final treat and a very important remnant and nostalgic reminder of the days of steam trains. Tucked away in the heart of Peak Village, which was constructed on the site of the former railway sidings, is a wonderful old stone building with three tall chimney stacks and an impressive overhanging roof supported by large wooden brackets. This is the original Rowsley Station designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, the famous architect and gardener associated with Chatsworth. It is an architectural masterpiece and an iconic surviving feature of the Victorian railway era as well as being an impressive centrepiece to Peak Village. (Pic 17)



Please remember the Countryside Code and keep dogs under control at all times as there may well be sheep or livestock grazing in some of the fields.

Please be aware that this is a moderately strenuous walk in the countryside which may involve the risk of injury and include hazards such as uneven terrain, exposure to livestock, rivers etc. Always watch out for passing traffic when walking on roads and lanes where there are no footways or pavements.

This walk has been compiled with care and due diligence. Please follow the instructions carefully and use the pedestrian crossing when advised. No responsibility or liability can be accepted by persons attempting this walk who are injured whilst following these instructions. Anyone following this walk does so at their own risk.

Photographs by Jackie Ellis

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