

Country Walks

for the best in nordic walking, guided walks and weekends away

Dovedale: Moderate 'B' Grade

Friday 17 - Monday 19 April
(3 nights) (B grade: 7.5 - 9 miles daily)

A special place of outstanding natural beauty, "one of the most unique and delicious places in England", according to Tennyson, writing in the hotel's visitor's book Some of the finest dale walking in the country with fabulous views from the hilltops

The Izaak Walton Hotel, Dovedale

Dinner, bed and breakfast at the privately-owned Izaak Walton Hotel, a converted 17th century farmhouse idyllically situated with glorious views over the Derbyshire countryside. The River Dove meanders through the valley below and the atmosphere is one of peace and tranquillity. The hotel is named after the famous author of 'The Compleat Angler'. All rooms are en-suite and 14 bedrooms enjoy panoramic views as does the restaurant, terrace and garden. (Rooms in this hotel are allocated in strict order of booking). The restaurant has received many accolades, including two AA Rosettes, 'A Taste of Staffordshire Good Food Award 2005' and it was awarded second place in the 'Wedgwood Award for Restaurant of the Year'. The hotel is also Johansens recommended.

Price per person: £340 for 3 nights in double or twin rooms; £10 per person per night single supplement for all singles occupying double or twin rooms - there are no single rooms.

Accommodation: 4 double, 3 twin and 10 single occupancies of double or twin rooms at a supplement - see above

Price includes:

- En-suite accommodation
- Three 3-course dinners
- Three full English breakfasts
- Two full-day guided walks
- Two guide-hosts providing commentaries on features of historical and general interest along the way
- All gratuities

Price excludes:

- One packed lunch; one tearoom lunch
- Optional teas
- Drinks and items of a personal nature

Itinerary

Friday After a welcome meeting, we dine together in the hotel's award-winning restaurant.

Saturday From the hotel we ascend sheep pastures to picturesque limestone villages: Thorpe with its fine manor house and church, then Tissington, a classic English village, arguably the prettiest in Derbyshire, filled with architectural gems, including an ancient church and a Jacobean manor house. After lunch (not included) at the Old Coach House, we visit one of the wells from which the famous well-dressing ceremony originated. We then explore the surrounding countryside. Traversing a gently rolling landscape, then descending to the tiny hidden hamlet of Alsop-en-le-Dale, we return via Shining Tor to Milldale, viewing on the way an awesome gorge below. After stopping for tea, we offer two options: a short climb up above the River Dove to exquisite Halldale, finally returning alongside the river, or alternatively, omitting the last mile or so, simply returning from Milldale along the river. *(7.5 or 9 miles, 'B' grade)*

Sunday We make an early start along beautiful Dovedale to ensure that we enjoy this spectacular walk of exceptional beauty before the crowds arrive. You will see fantastic limestone features punctuating the gorge, great pillars rising out of the water, alongside towering cliffs, pinnacle rocks and caves. Following the softly-flowing River Dove, we thread our way through the gorge, glimpsing sometimes a kingfisher or an otter on the riverbank. We reach the tiny riverside hamlet of Milldale with its famous packhorse bridge where at Polly's Cottage sandwiches and snacks can be purchased for lunch in the lovely setting of an upland meadow. Then the landscape changes to lonely limestone plateaus with sheep pastures enclosed by drystone walls and the occasional farmstead. Finally, we drop down to the Manifold Valley and enjoy the gentlest of landscapes, rounded hills rising up on the far side of the valley. On the banks of the River Manifold, the famous village of Ilam awaits us with tea in the garden at the superbly-situated National Trust tearooms. Here from the terrace the views are glorious. After tea we visit Ilam's little Saxon church before returning to the hotel. *(9 miles, 'B' grade)*

Monday Departure

Travel and Transport

By rail, fast direct trains twice an hour from London St Pancras to Derby (1.40 hours) with onward travel by taxi (18 miles). We can arrange taxi-sharing if required. By road: Total mileage from central London: 152 miles (3.20 hours). We may be able to arrange car-sharing. Ample car parking at the hotel.

No transport is required during the weekend as we walk straight from the hotel each day.