

Lumsdale Valley and Bentley Brook

Let's Go Peak District II



Route Summary

This lovely walk packs a lot of interest into a short distance! It explores the Lumsdale Valley, an area with a fascinating industrial past but now a peaceful valley with mill ruins and waterfalls. The route then follows quiet lanes with views across Matlock, before returning to the start point.

Route Overview



Category: Walking

Length: 3.780 km / 2.36 mi

Last Modified: 9th February 2020

Difficulty: Medium

Rating: Unrated

Surface: Moderate

Date Published: 9th February 2020

Description

Introduction

This lovely walk is one of our absolute favourites and it packs an awful lot of interest into a short distance! It explores the stunning Lumsdale Valley, just outside Matlock. An area with a fascinating industrial past, it's now a peaceful, wooded valley with romantically overgrown mill ruins standing beside waterfalls. The route goes on to follow quiet paths and country lanes with fabulous views across Matlock to Riber Castle, before returning to the start point.

This is a walk of 2.5 miles. Most of the terrain is on country lanes, although there are some field paths that may be muddy after wet weather. There are gates but no stiles or squeeze stiles. Please be aware that there are a number of steps down through the Lumsdale Valley. There is (free) parking at the start/end of the walk, and nearby Matlock is very well served with cafes, pubs and restaurants. Allow 1-2 hours to complete this walk at a moderate pace, allowing for stops to take in the sights.

The Walk

1. Park on the roadside opposite Highfields School on the outskirts of Matlock (DE4 5NA). With the school on your right, continue walking along the road in a roughly southerly direction between cottages. The road eventually becomes a paved lane signposted Public Footpath to Lumsdale Valley.
2. As the lane takes you further into the Lumsdale Valley you'll find useful information boards produced by the Arkwright Society explaining more about the fascinating history of this area. Do take the time to stop and read! Continue along the lane as it takes you past mill ponds on the left hand side and then a rather lovely row of mill cottages.
3. Just beyond the mill cottages, turn left and then immediately right to follow the path that walks to the right of a larger millpond, Lower Pond. Follow this path down a few steps and into the heart of the once industrial Lumsdale Valley.

Designated a scheduled ancient monument because of its historic importance, the Lumsdale Valley was once a bustling centre of industry, with a collection of mills all powered by water from Bentley Brook. The brook rises on Matlock Moor and has never been known to dry up.

The Lumsdale Valley was used for industrial purposes from as far back as the 17th Century, although it reached the height of its production in the mid 19th Century. Some mills were used for cotton spinning and bleaching, and some for grinding corn, bone and minerals. The site was used until the 1930s. The Lumsdale Valley is now one of the best examples of a water-powered industrial archaeological site in Britain, unique in such an extensive use of water power over such a small area.

4. The first mill ruin you reach is the **Saw Mill**. Built in the 1850s, it was originally used for grinding the materials to make paint. Water from the Saw Mill directly powered the mills below.
5. Follow the path as it bears right and downhill, keeping the beautiful Bentley Brook on your left. Do take great care exploring the mills and the river; the stones can be very slippery and there are some very steep, unguarded drops.
6. The next obvious mill you find is the **Paint Mill**. The oldest in the Valley, it was built in the early 1600s as a very early lead smelting mill and bleaching mill. Behind the Paint Mill a large, circular stone trough can still be seen, once used for bleaching yarn.
7. Situated beside the impressive waterfall is the **Grinding Mill**. Built in around 1770, it was most probably a corn mill but there is evidence that it was also used in the grinding of red lead. You can still see the huge wheel pit for the Grinding Mill, and the cast iron pipe that would have fed water on to the immense wheel.

8. Continue to follow the steps down through the valley with the river on your left. Across to your right you will see more mill ruins, beautifully overgrown with ivy. These are part of the **Upper Bleach Works**, built in the early 1700s, used for bleaching cotton cloth.

9. The path eventually brings you out of the valley and onto a quiet lane. Turn left on the lane. The buildings you can see in front of you are the remains of the **Lower Bleach Works**. Built in the early 1700s as a cotton mill, it required a huge amount of water to power the wheel, which was enclosed within the building and powered from the waterfall. A number of the bleaching vats and the smithy still survive, as does a circular trough used to cool down the large iron rims of cart wheels. The bleaching vats are believed to be the last surviving examples in the country.

10. Continue walking along the quiet lane through further historic buildings, now used by a series of small businesses. If you're visiting at the weekend and are in need of refreshments, have a look at the Brewery Shop and Tea Room run by the Bentley Brook Brewing Company!

11. Very soon after you've passed the gates for Tansley Wood House, take the public footpath that goes off to your left through a small metal gate. Follow this obvious path as it tracks through fields, eventually passing through a squeeze stile and tracking to the left of an area of pretty woodland.

12. On reaching a fork in the path, take the left hand path that runs at the bottom edge of a field, with a stone wall to the left and a fence to the right.

13. Follow this path as it passes over a beautiful old stone bridge and into a lovely patch of woodland with yet more millponds. Follow the path up through the trees beside a handrail, until it emerges between houses into the little village of Tansley Knoll.

14. Turn left on the road and walk briefly through houses until you reach a T-junction. Turn left again, heading out of the village on Oaksedge Lane. Follow the lane as it heads gently uphill with a cluster of farm buildings visible ahead.

15. Carry on following the lane up, past Oaksedge Farm on your right, following the signposted Public Footpath towards woodland. This path continues with fabulous views across to Matlock on the left. The area of woodland on the right was once home to Lumsdale Quarry.

16. Stay on the main path with a stone wall on your left, ignoring footpaths signs off. This path leads you gently down between trees through peaceful fields, eventually curving around to meet up with Lower Millpond, now on your left.



17. Just beyond the pretty row of mill cottages, turn right to retrace the start of your route and return to the starting point.

Waypoints

