

Walk 11: Risley to Dale Abbey, Notts.

Distance: about 6 miles.
Terrain: undulating, with one or two moderate uphill bits
Time: 3½ hours, including lunch stop
Map: OS 1:25,000 Explorer Map sheet 260 (Nottingham).

This walk is based on Country Walk No 15, published by Erewash Borough Council, downloadable (PDF file) from <http://www.erewash.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/22D56827-CD92-4E8D-A7FF-A3C783256090/0/Walk15TheFarmersWalk.pdf>.

The walk starts from Risley on the old Sandiacre-Derby road. A convenient place to park is the Risley Park pub, which can't be missed – it is on the left as you drive towards Derby (Photo 1). The path starts across the road from the pub (Photo 2). The Public Bridleway sign is well hidden.



Photo 1: Risley Park Hotel



Photo 2: The start of the track

Follow the track uphill past several houses on the left and a spinney on your left. You will come to a pair of Severn-Trent service reservoirs and, at the top of the hill, Risley Lodge Farm. This is a longish uphill stretch but it isn't taxing. At the end of the farm lane there is a "No Public Access" notice. Three paths are available – to the right, to the left, and straight on, We take the one that goes straight on, over a dilapidated stile and across the field (Photo 3) and towards Park Farm.



Photo 3: Over the stile and across the field.

The exit from the field is downhill to the right (Photos 4, 5):



Photo 4: You can just make out the line of the path across the grass.

There is quite an elaborate footbridge over the field drain – down steps and up steps (Photo 6). You emerge in the right-hand of the two fields that you can see in Photo 4. Keep to the right side of the hedge up the hill (which is moderately steep) and emerge at Park Farm.



Photo 5: Going down the field towards the footbridge



Photo 6: The footbridge.

Look for the metal gate and stile leading more or less straight on (Photo 7).



Photo 7: Gate and stile at Park Farm. Paul H in conversation with Denis

Go diagonally across the next two fields to pass the RHS of Trentham Farm, then along the hedge and through a well-hidden gap in the hedge to the Sandiacre-Dale Abbey road (Photo 8).



Photo 8: Exit from Trentham Farm fields onto the road

Turn left along the road (called No Man's Lane) and take the first road on the right (Hixon's Lane) past Dalemoor Farm to the junction with the Stanton-by-Dale to Dale Abbey road. Go straight on down the track directly opposite, past Furnace Pond. Cross the stile at the side of the farm and continue straight on. Where the track bears right (Photo 9) carry straight on along the green lane.



Photo 9: Straight on along green lane.

At the gate at the end of the green lane cross the stile and turn left along a narrow path. Cross another stile that brings you out into a large field (Photo 10).



Photo 10: The path in the large field is difficult to see.

Just keep going straight ahead, watching out for yellow arrows with the number 15, and you will reach the sharp corner on Dale Road. Walk along Dale Road (straight ahead, signed Dale Abbey) into the village. Turn into the street called The Village almost opposite the Carpenter's Arms, and proceed to the end of the road, where there are a couple of benches - just the place for lunch. More on Dale Abbey at <http://www.derbyshire-peakdistrict.co.uk/daleabbey.htm>.

Turn towards the left at these benches, then swing right and you will see a gravel track running to the right of the half-timbered house (containing a small chapel) (Photo 11). There is a fingerpost at the end of the gravel track. Take the left hand path.



Photo 11: Southern edge of Dale Abbey.



Photo 12: Isolated gate.

On the left, you will see a gate in the middle of a field (Photo 12). It doesn't seem to have any function. Eventually reach, enter and pass through Hermit's Wood (some nice photos of the wood at <http://www.ilkc.com/2005/050403/Dale%203.html>) and emerge on to the Dale Abbey to Sandiacre road. Turn right, uphill, (signed Sandiacre) and go round a slight right-hand bend. At the sharp 90 degree left hand bend (near Sandiacre Lodge Farm) keep straight on along the track signed as a dead end. After a short distance there is a way marked ("15" or "Midshires Way") stile and path. Go downhill, cross a stream, and up the other side towards Keys Farm. You can't get lost here – just keep going south along a clearly marked track. The views were good on the day we did this walk (rather hazy though) (Photos 13 and 14).



Photo 13: Looking back towards Dale Abbey from near Keys Farm



Photo 14: Another view, this time to the west

Next, down and up across a small valley to Hopwell Hall Farm. Just before you reach the farm take the footpath on the left going towards Risley Coppice. Pass to the right of the coppice and over a stile at the corner of the coppice. Turn obliquely left towards a gate and stile. The stile takes you into a field which you cross, going slightly downhill, and into a second field sloping down towards a brook. There is a small footbridge over the brook and once across this, turn right along a narrow path at the side of the trees which line the brook. (“Brook” may be a misnomer- it is really no more than a ditch). Cross a muddy stile into the next field. Keep the hedge on your right and eventually you will find a gap (Photo 15).



Photo 15: Gap in the hedge. Coppice in background.

Follow the field edge round – only about 30 yards – and keep on up a steep little rise up towards the coppice shown in Photo 15. Emerge onto the track on which the walk began. Turn right and go downhill back to The Risley Park.

Summary: The undulating landscape is very attractive and none of the hills is steep enough or long enough to cause any problems. Recommended.