

WALKS IN AND AROUND TANSLEY

The following circular walks from the Village Green in Tansley are favourites with local people and can be attractive to walk in all seasons. Tansley is surrounded by hills and these walks give an opportunity to look down on the village from all points of the compass. Often when people live in an area of beauty all their lives they become unaware of its attractions, but I'm happy to say that on the occasions I have spoken to those born and bred in Tansley they have expressed delight in their surroundings and thanks that they have had the privilege to live here all their lives

WALK 1 - LUMSDALE

From the Village Green set off down the Old Coach Road opposite the steps at the bottom of the Green. Follow the lane with houses and flats on the right and detached houses with large gardens on the left. The houses and flats were erected in the 1960s after demolition of a row of three storey workers' houses which had been on the same site since the middle of the 19th century. Today the houses would have been restored, but, as in the rest of the country at that time, anything old had to go to make way for something new. As the lane bends to the right look out for a bricked up stone archway on the right where, in the stones forming the top arch, you may just be able to see the words 'Welcome home Lewis' scratched into the stones. At the end of the second World War people were still living in houses behind this arch and the Ryder family were welcoming home Lewis Ryder who had been a Japanese prisoner of war for many years. What a party that must have been.

The large mill on the right is now called Speedwell Mill and has been turned into a home and design office, but this was originally part of Lowe's Mill which in the 19th century made the first paisley designed cotton material which was prized not only in this country but also all over the world for use as shawls, scarves, etc. The whole area was a wood yard in the 1960-1980 era and owned by the Gregorys, a branch of which family still has a thriving wood yard at the other end of the village on the Nottingham Road. The area you now come to has several working units and is a very active industrial area as it was so many years ago. Instead of continuing on the lane, branch off to the right just beyond the pond and walk along with the high stone wall to the left. This is the barrier wall of Scholes Mill, which, again had been a busy cotton manufacturing mill in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Originally, the footpath went through the yard of Scholes Mill, but was diverted when the perimeter wall was built in the early 1980s. The mill has been beautifully restored by the owner of the agricultural equipment and supplies business, Gordon Wardman. It is now used as offices and apartments.

Opposite the wall ending and to the right is the Scout's centre. These huts were used as billets for soldiers during the Second World War. Follow the path and go through the squeeze stile on the left and walk along the path, which now has a wall to the right and a steeply sloping wooded area to the left. This area is rented by the Matlock Scouts and is used by them and visiting groups as an area for activities and campfire sing-songs. The campfire circle can be seen with a commemorative plaque to honour Mr Thomas Palfreyman who was a prominent Scouter and well known Tansley Man, but who sadly died in 1984. Through the squeeze stile at the end of the path you will come into the Parkland, which originally was part of Tansley Woodhouse owned by the Drabble family who were also the owners of Drabbles Mill, a complex of mill buildings to the left of the Parkland, where cotton goods were processed. Today, some of the buildings are being restored/converted while others have been cleared awaiting redevelopment. When walking through the Parkland notice the river below to the left and also the canal which brought water from Bentley Brook into the Drabbles Mill complex. Through another squeeze stile/gateway at the end of the Parkland continue to the road and then turn right beginning a gradual climb which will end at the top of a series of waterfalls.

Workshops are to the right and left and were originally owned by Paton and Baldwin (once producers of 12 tons of wool per week) but now, once again, house various forms of light industry, the most recent of which can be seen on the signboard. Just past these buildings is a turning to the right where you will see a row of tall buildings. These were originally called Lumsdale Cottages and were restored for domestic use in the late 1980s. When these were built they housed cotton weavers and the topmost rooms had large hooks from which the yarn was hung. Continue along the lane which bends to the right past old buildings on the left and a stream on the right until you reach a gap in the wall/fence on the right with a plaque saying the area was restored in the 1980s by The Arkwright Society.

Go through this opening and climb the hundred steps to the top of the series of waterfalls. The scenery here is dramatic and is a good place to stop and view your surroundings. At the top of the steps bear to the right and pass through the area which holds the remains of the Mill. Don't forget to look at the huge housing for the water wheel which powered water from the stream to serve the mills below. Once through the old mill area bear to the left and find a stone stepped stile over the wall which brings you to a rough track leading right to a former mill pond and on as far as Pond Cottages. These were restored in the 1980's for use as holiday cottages, but which are now all in private ownership. Bear right before the cottages at the top of the pond which was restored by The Arkwright Society in the 1980s. When stopping, as you do in this spot to view the surroundings, look out for the old dovecotes which are part of the side wall of the restored building overlooking the pond, and which, as part of planning permission given in the 1980s, had to be retained because of their historical value. Now carry on along this track, which in places is very rough and stony and in wet weather can prove difficult walking. Views of the valley now appear to the right and reappear, after a wooded section at the top. On your left as you climb the path is the start of the pinewoods which will feature in a later walk. After the small holding sheds and barn on the right, the village of Tansley lies in front. Stop here again and take in views of the village and surrounding scenery. Carry on along the track which will soon lead to a metalled road leading down to the outskirts of the village. After sharp right hand and left hand bends at the bottom go straight up the steep hill of The Knoll. As you climb stop and look back to see where you have walked. At the top of the hill continue in a straight line with The Gate Inn on the left (why not stop again and have a pint) and cross the road into Green Lane which leads back to the Village Green.

WALK 2 - RIBER

Go down from the Village Green into The Knoll, which is the road running to the left of the rebuilt (but closed) village shop. Follow the road round, passing The Rocks and Holmesfield Close, both on the right. As the road bends look out for a signpost for a footpath to Matlock on the left and take this path. It immediately drops down through woods, with a steeply sloping bank to the right falling down to the top dam (pond) of Tansley (there are three in all) and with a wooded slope on the left full of bluebells in spring. This dam is fed by a stream flowing from Tansley Moor. Carry straight along the path which descends to a small bridge, but before the bridge bear left and take the path alongside the third dam of Tansley (the second dam is above this, but can't be seen at this point). This dam is now rented by the Matlock Angling Club and during the season is well used by enthusiastic fishermen. It can be muddy along here, but persevere until The Old Coach Road is reached. Turn left past Salisbury and Wood (Builder's Merchants) and Speedwell Mill on the left. Just past the mill and to the right is a wooden signpost, but before taking the footpath look to the left and above can be seen the second former dam of Tansley, now filled-in. Once on the footpath notice the old kerbstones which were part of the original stone path used by villagers when walking to work in the mills. Near the far end of the path, just before the high stone wall on the right is reached turn right and cross a wooden stile with a yellow and green way mark and follow the descending path to Tinker's Bridge. To the left of the path can be seen some large homes built in the former garden of Tansley House, formerly the Tansley hydro which accommodated users of the spa waters in Matlock. The house is now an old people's residential home, but in the past the garden was of great beauty and when planning permission was given to build the new houses it was on condition that some of the trees must remain on the site.

Cross Tinker's Bridge and ascend the path to the left leading to The Cliff (the main road from Matlock to Tansley). Pass through the stile and cross the road, taking the metalled path/lane nearly opposite, slightly to the right. Be careful when crossing the road because of traffic speeds at this point. This path/lane was originally called Gypsy Lane and the cottages to the right were known as Gypsy Row. The names have now been changed - what a pity. Keep on this metalled path/lane (heading half-right). The climb is steep but take the opportunity to look right at views of Tansley village, which get better as the lane goes higher. Near the top, and looking down, Brookfield Estate can be seen on the outskirts of Tansley, with its industrial units built in the 1980/1990s. It can be seen that Tansley is retaining its industrial uses, albeit so different from those in the 19th and 20th centuries. Continue along this path and at the top, just before the drop down into a farmyard, take the signposted path to the left, but not before looking again to the right to view the outskirts of Matlock and the hills beyond. The arched top building in the farmyard is an old pumping station built by the Water board in the 1920/1930s and many such structures can be seen in fields in this area.

Follow the clearly defined path across the fields ahead until a wooden signpost is reached which is clearly way marked. Go through the stile and in 10 yards (*), take the path to the right through a gate/stile and head for the wall at the end of the field with a squeeze stile.

Once through the stile bear to the left across the field, coming to a lane with another stile opposite. The path now leads to a left hand squeeze stile towards the top of the field - go through and another stepping stile can be seen to the right which leads to a lane - turn left. Riber village has now been reached. It can be proud of Riber Hall and Riber Manor, both of which are superb listed buildings, although there are other smaller buildings in the village that have this distinction. There was a prominent wildlife reserve for animals facing distinction in the grounds of Riber Castle many years ago. Now, the area and Castle have been sold for development. The castle will be restored to form apartments. This was not a popular decision locally, as it is feared that the area will lose its unique ambience and beauty. Follow the lane until two grass islands are reached and ahead you will see a seat beside a pond. This is a peaceful place to rest and reflect on a nice summer's day (a little cold and blowy at other times). The pond was restored in the early 1990s, previously being a smelly mire.

There are alternative routes to take here. Either follow Carr Lane to the left, which will eventually lead back to Tansley or retrace your steps to the point marked (*) on these instructions above, and turn right. At the end of the field take the path through the squeeze stile on the left and follow the path across four fields until a gate leads on to Carr Lane. Either use the gate or the stile to the right and turn left for approximately 60 yards. Turn right at the bend in the lane onto Cunnery Lane (unmarked) for about 100 yards and go through the stile with a signposted path adjacent to a white/rusty gate. Whilst on this path another view of Tansley can be seen with the main road to Alfreton and on the hill opposite, Jackhill Farm. After passing through three fields (this area was once known as The Willows where village children played) go through the final squeeze stile which leads across a corner of a private garden onto another stile on the left which goes down a steeply sloping field and then through an alley way to Thatchers Lane. Turn left and immediately right down to the main road. Opposite is The Tansley Tavern and I'm sure you'll need a drink by this time. Take the lane to the right of the pub, Holly Lane - which leads to the main street of Tansley - Church Street. When walking down Holly Lane notice the flagstoned footpath which is very old and covered by a protection order. At the end of Holly Lane, turn right along Church Street. On the left is the Methodist chapel and further up, the well-used Community Hall. This building in the first half of the 20th Century was the Reading Room for the men of Tansley where they could read, play chess, dominoes or, so I believe, just chat (no women allowed). Further up on the right is Holy Trinity Church which is open during the day and well worth a visit. Next to it is the well-used Village Hall, which was once the village school, beside the village green where the walk began.

WALK 3 - PINEWOODS AND QUARRIES

From the top left corner of the Village Green, as seen from Church Street, pass through the squeeze stile onto Green Lane and follow to the end. Cross the road into The Knoll, to the left of The Gate Inn. Continue along this road, dropping steeply down to Woodbine Cottage near the edge of the village, where the lane bends to the right and then left around the cottage. This is Oaksedge Lane, which climbs steeply, but take time to stop occasionally and turn to take in ever-developing views of Tansley. As you climb look to the right and see Bobbin Mill next to a scrap metal yard. This area is a spur of the Lumsdale Conservation Area and the Mill originally made bobbins for the weaving industry in the 19th century. At one time there were allotments on the hillside behind the Mill and also a sheep wash where local farmers annually brought sheep for dipping.

Towards the top of the lane where it bends to the right, continue straight on, with Oaksedge Lodge on the left. Just past the house, notice a track to the right backing into the woods - this leads to an old Council tip where previously rubbish from the village was put. Carry on and as sheds are passed on the left, look immediately for an unmarked, but clearly defined, track on the right leading diagonally up into the pinewoods. Stay on this path, bearing left and leading to a ridge of approximately 200 yards. Slopes upward to the right and downwards to the left will now reveal large quarry boulders. At the point where the path begins to climb to the right, take the left fork which drops down. Care should be taken here because of the rocks, but continue bearing to the left, although upwards now. There is a wonderful view from here down into the valley below. Carry on to the right, again along a ridge, and turn left, after going over a broken down dry-stone wall, onto a descending footpath. It is now obvious that that the path has led deep into the quarry. In centuries past many of the local houses were made with stone taken from this area.

Carry along this path to the end. There are many routes through this pine-wooded quarry which are worth investigating at other times, but this walk is circular and takes in as much as possible of the quarries. Views of the Matlock to Chesterfield road and the outskirts of Matlock can now be seen. At the end of the path turn right and start to climb on a route backing above the route just walked. The tall and straight pine trees are prolific here and notice the beautiful clumps of heather and bilberry bushes, the fruit of which some people pick and make jam. As the path ascends look for and take, a clearly defined track on the left. This area has been a favourite haunting place of village children over the years and often remains of camp fires can be seen.

Bear to the left on the path, avoiding a mound straight ahead, and ascend the slope in front, bearing right at the top of a steep and difficult stretch of path. Continue on this rocky path, taking in different views of the quarry area, up a little mound and left onto Tansley Moor. This is clearly marked path bears right and then left across an open area. Good views of the surrounding area are beginning to appear. At the fork in the path bear right to go on to a wooden stile. To the left can be seen a massive disused quarry. Not many years ago permission was sought to bury contaminated waste in this quarry, but through public protestation and representations to the authorities, fortunately, this did not take place.

Cross the wooden stile and bear right across the field towards a metal, five barred gate then cross the abutting stile, and turn right onto Oaksedge Lane which will lead eventually back to Tansley. Notice ahead and to the right in the distance Crich Stand - a memorial to the former Sherwood Foresters army regiment. The stand is a viewing tower from which it is said visitors can see into several counties. Its light can be seen for miles around at night. Further down and to the left can be seen Matlock Garden Centre. The lane drops steeply here and it is satisfying to see that recently much needed restoration work has been carried out on the dry-stone walls in this area. Even further down the lane and on the hillside to the left can be seen Foxholes Cottage, originally a small listed building, but for which during the 1980s, the new owners gained planning permission to extend and to erect stables. It is now a prominent and prestigious looking building.

At the end of the big 'S' bend in the lane look to the left and see a fairly large lake (this may not be so visible when the trees are in leaf) where once youngsters from the village fished and swam. It is still used for fishing, but only for those with a licence. It is interesting to note that previously the Drabble family, owners of the Mill in Lumsdale, had total water rights on the water course from the Mill up to Tansley Moor.

At the 'T' junction, with a farm cottage on the right, turn left down into Tansley. Carry on past Woodbine Cottage (the bridge over the stream at this point was sometimes known as Treacle Bridge - lovely) and upwards but instead of going straight on up the steep hill ahead turn right and follow this part of The Knoll back to the Village green.

WALK 4 - DETHICK VIA LITTLEMOOR LANE AND CARR LANE

From the bottom of the Village Green turn left onto Church Street and walk towards the 'T' junction with the A615 Nottingham Road at the end. Along Church Street buildings of note and interest, including the Church, have already been commented upon in Walk 2. Turn right along the Nottingham Road following a pavement leading to The Royal Oak pub. As you walk look to the left and see a house called 'Chapelstones'. This was the original site of the Free Methodist Chapel which was demolished in the 1960s. At The Royal Oak carefully cross the main road into Alders Lane and follow the ascending lane, bearing left at the point where it bends sharply to the right. This is now Cunnery lane and where it turns left after 400 yards, turn right along the signposted footpath for approximately 100 yards where a squeeze stile on the left leads to an upwardly sloping field. The path bearing right across the field is clearly indicated. Half-way across, stop and look back. Tansley will be hidden now and it can be appreciated how much the village is sheltered by surrounding hills. Straight in front can be seen the outskirts of Matlock and on the horizon to the left Riber Castle, Hearthstone Farm and even further left the TV reception aerial at Bole Hill, near Wirksworth. Go over the step stile at the end of the field and ahead can be seen Crich Tower, a memorial to the Sherwood Foresters Regiment. During the 2nd World War many local men in this regiment fought battles in the Far East campaign and became prisoners of war of the Japanese.

Follow the footpath going alongside the wall, crossing over two stone step stiles and a wooden stile, before reaching the last field with a lane ahead. During spring, summer and autumn this last field is used by caravanners and campers and has been made to look most attractive in the spring with daffodils. It is an ideal location for busy and tired city dwellers to visit and recharge amidst this spectacular scenery.

As the last stile is crossed, notice a metal, five-barred gate to the left where dead moles are often hung. Traditionally, dead moles were displayed by estate workers who wished to signify to their masters that they were working hard and everything was under control. Cross the lane and follow the path, with Church farm to the right, Babbington Farm to the left and Manor Farm straight ahead. Follow the sign, 'Footpath to Lea' to the right just before Manor Farm and enter the churchyard of Dethick Church. Originally the village of Tansley was in the Parish of Crich and this was its Parish Church until Holy Trinity Church was built in Tansley in 1840. If the seat in the yard is vacant rest for a while and wallow in the atmosphere and outstanding beauty of the scenery. There is a special tranquillity about this area and many people visit to find peace and solace.

Go through the kissing gate and follow the obvious path which drops down to a wooden step stile and then down again to the woods, after a slight climb through the field. Bluebells carpet these woods in spring and this spot is well worth a visit at that time. Cross the bridge at the bottom and climb some very slippery steps to the kissing gate at the top. Be careful here because the stile leads onto a busy main road. It is not so much the number of vehicles that pass, but the excessive speed of those that do. Turn right and follow the pavement down past the Jug and Glass pub - if you fancy a drink have one.

After the Coach House turn right down Baker's Lane, bearing right at the bottom into Riber Road with Brookdale House and cottage on the left and Mill House on the right, both properties being unique and attractive. Bear left into Littlemoor Lane with Low Leas on the left. As the lane slowly climbs, Littlemoor Brook Farm appears on the right. In the woods to the left there are rhododendrons which, when in full bloom, can be an impressive picture because of the multitude of blooms of varying colours. As the lane veers to the left, watch out on the right for the metal signpost to Matlock Cliff, with a squeeze stile and go through. The footpath bears to the left and another squeeze stile is ahead. Pass through this and the path can be clearly seen bearing diagonally to the left. Continue along this path, through three fields until the stile onto Carr Lane is reached. Put your dog on a lead at this spot as the path drops directly onto the lane. Turn right and follow the lane back to Tansley. This lane is twisty and bears sharply to the left before dropping down to Alders Lane and finally to the 'T' junction with the main road.

On the left, at the junction, is Lorna Cross Garden Centre. Apart from being an excellent garden centre run by a well-known local family, there is also a craft shop called Lots Of Pots with interesting artefacts, many of which are more likely to be found in avant garde city shops. It is well worth lingering here, after which why not visit The Royal Oak for a drink and a satisfying meal, or just savour the atmosphere of a real country pub. Turn right at the junction down to Church Street, on the left, which leads back to the Village Green.

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