

The hermit, a baker from Derby (c1130), was led to Depedale (the old name for Dale) by a vision of the Virgin Mary. He carved the cave out of the sandstone and built a lean-to at the front for himself and his animals.

Return to bridleway, turn left and through yard of Church Farm, passing All Saints' Church.

The building is a rare example of church and house (and, until the 19th century a pub) under one roof. Part of the church dates back to c 1150 and contains many unusual features.

- 6 Cross second stile on right to view Dale Abbey Arch.

The great east window stands witness to bygone days of greater glory. Upon its dissolution in 1538, the abbey owned some 24,000 acres of land. Legends tell of knights in armour and of unfound hidden treasures.

Return to main street and proceed to Carpenters Arms. At pub, turn right past old school.

- 7 Enter first field after Play Area on left. Cross field bearing right towards barns in next field.

- 8 Cross footbridge, go straight ahead alongside hedge. (Do not take path on left into field leading up to wood). Bear left under power lines, go over next stile and turn right along hedge.

The path here follows the line of the narrow gauge section of the former Stanton/Dale tramway which fell into disuse early in the 20th century.

After two more fields cross bridge onto path passing Ladywood Farm. Follow path along brow of hill to rejoin Kirk Hallam below small recreation ground off Wirksworth Road.

- 9 Turn right downhill and after 600 metres turn right to return to Pioneer Meadows.

WALK TYPE:

Undulating countryside with gentle climbs and several stiles.

DISTANCE:

3¼ miles

TIME:

Allow 2½ hours

BUSES:

Traveline 0870 608 2 608

RECOMMENDED OS MAP:

Explorer 260 Nottingham (1:25 000)

PLEASE FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE



- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

For further information and comments please contact

Groundwork Derby & Derbyshire

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Hermits Walk

1



Country Walks In and around Erewash



Start: Pioneer Meadows Local Nature Reserve, off Wirksworth Road, Kirk Hallam. Ilkeston.

1 From gateway at Pioneer Meadows Local Nature Reserve go straight ahead to left of trees to metal footbridge across Sow Brook.

Pioneer Meadows is an area of public open space comprising wildflower meadows, woodland and pond. The meadows are of special wildlife interest good for toad flax, ragged robin and lady's smock.

2 Cross bridge, turn right and follow field edge. Two-thirds across, second field, path bears left. Cross stile and head for right of pylon. Do not cross stream. Path bears right to cross track bed of former mineral railway.

The old railway line once linked the Stanton Ironworks with the two collieries at Dale, local clay pits and a sand quarry on Arbour Hill, Dale Abbey.

3 Follow adjoining hedge to next stile. Bear left across next field to its far corner. Go left through gateway and follow the hedge on right to next stile ahead. Continue ahead uphill to corner of wood, then bear right to pass Furnace Pond on right.

The pond probably takes its name from 18th century blast furnaces on this site and would have been dug to power water driven bellows.



4 From Furnace Pond, turn left to follow surfaced farm track up to junction with Hixon's Lane. Turn Right and follow Dale Road for 700 metres. (Beware of traffic - there is no pavement.)

From its high point, about half-way, Cat & Fiddle Windmill, the spire of Ilkeston's United Reformed church and the tower of St. Mary's church are all visible on the horizon.

Continue to end of Dale Road to junction with Potato Pit Lane and Woodpecker Hill.

5 Cross road, with care, and pass through field gate, and continue bearing slightly right of wood along bridleway to Dale. Proceed below Hermit's Wood, entering it at far corner of field.

Hermit's Wood is an ancient woodland with magnificent trees of beech, ash, oak and lime. In Spring, a scented carpet of bluebells ramsons, wood anemones and yellow archangel covers the woodland floor.

A short flight of steps leads up to Hermit's Cave. (concessionary public access, - take care on the steep steps.)