

# Monyash and Sheldon

**This cross-country walk visits the upper reaches of Lathkill Dale before crossing fields to the little village of Sheldon and returning to Monyash using a mixture of quiet field paths and green lanes.**

## Walk Facts:

Start	Monyash (SK 157 664), between Bakewell and the A515 Ashbourne-Buxton road
Terrain	Paths along limestone dales and green lanes and through fields, which can be very muddy in places in wet weather
Length	Eight miles
Time	About three and a half hours
Food/Drink	Cafes and pub in Monyash, pub in Sheldon
Toilets	Monyash (beside the parking area at the top of Lathkill Dale, about a quarter mile on the Bakewell side of the village)

## Route

Park on the roadside at the top of Lathkill Dale, about a quarter of a mile on the Bakewell side of Monyash. If this area is full, there's a small car park in the village.

From the road, enter the top of Lathkill Dale through a kissing-gate alongside the toilet block and a water company building. The path starts off on grass through fields but soon becomes a steep-sided dale. Stay in the dale bottom, ignoring a couple of paths which leave to the right.

After a while you have to skirt around a mass of tumbled boulders which are actually waste from the disused Ricklow quarry. As you do so, pause to reflect that this may have been the fate of many of Derbyshire's most beautiful places had enlightened people not fought to preserve them over the course of the last century, a struggle which continues today.

The dale becomes deeper and you pass the source of the river Lathkill, a cave on the right of the path. In winter there will probably be water issuing from this but in summer it dries up, the water coming to ground further downstream. The limestone cliffs around here are used by many birds as nesting sites and the dale itself has a good flora.

After just over a mile you come to the point where Cales Dale joins on the right, a footbridge taking the path over the river. Opposite the footbridge, by a Nature Reserve sign, a path climbs the hillside in a wide zig-zag - this is the path you need to take.

As the path levels off at the top of the dale-side (wonderful view from here!), enter a field through a stile. Walk straight on until you cross a ruined wall, then veer left to reach a stile under trees, alongside a number of gates which block holes in the walls. Passing through the stile, you find yourself in a caravan park. Walk through this, leaving along the access road past farm buildings to join a lane on a sharp bend. Turn right along the lane.

After a couple of hundred yards/metres, enter a field on the left by a step stile. Walk straight ahead through

this long field, passing a small copse on the left, to eventually reach another minor road opposite some buildings (SK 179 668). Turn right onto this road and after a short distance, opposite a road junction, take a rough track on the left.

At the top of the track you reach yet another road. Turn left onto this one and follow it until, about 100 yards/metres past a junction, there's a step stile on the right alongside a tree and a gate. Cross this into a field. The buildings away to the left are at the site of Magpie Mine, which was Derbyshire's last working lead mine. Its resemblance to a Cornish tin mine is no accident, as it was designed by a Cornishman.

The navigation from here to Sheldon village needs a little care as the route is not always very clear. This isn't helped by the fact that the walls which exist on the ground bear little resemblance to those shown on the OS map! Walk straight across the first field to reach the wall on the opposite side. Turn left and follow this wall until you come to a step stile. Cross this into the next field.

Walk straight on, with a wall on your right, until a finger post comes into view on the wall which crosses the top of this field (diagonally left). Walk over to the finger post. From here you can see another finger post diagonally left. Walk to this one, where you'll find a stile in the wall - go through it.

The finger post you're standing by indicates paths to the right and left. Ignore these and instead walk straight across this field to yet another finger post which you can see ahead and leads you into yet another small field. The excavations in this one are the remains of an ancient mineral working, probably for lead, of which there are many in this area.

Cross the field to a gate in the top-left corner. Go through the gate and walk downhill through two fields to yet another finger post (SK 173 684). Turn right at this one and follow the path straight on through three fields to reach the road in the village of Sheldon. Breathe a sigh of relief, as that's the end of the difficult navigation!

Turn left onto the road and walk through Sheldon. There's a village pub called the Cock and Pullet - you've earned a drink! Sheldon itself seems to be undergoing a revival - some years ago there were a lot of derelict buildings but these have now largely been renovated and the village seems more alive than it once did. Once you leave the village you come to a step stile in the wall to the right, with a finger post. Ignore this and stay on the road until, just before the buildings of Johnson Lane Farm, there's another step stile. Cross this one into the field.

Walk diagonally left to a stile in the opposite wall a little way to the right of the field corner. Cross this and walk across the next field to a dew-pond with a fence around it. The gate to the right of the dewpond leads to the next field but was locked shut and had to be climbed when I did the walk - if you find a better way through, please enlighten me!

Cross the next large field diagonally left until a stile comes into view on the opposite wall. Cross this and walk through several small fields, which are VERY muddy in wet weather, to reach the road (SK 159 685). Turn right onto the road then leave it after 100 yards/metres to join a track on the left. Walk along the track, continuing straight ahead through fields when the track ends. After passing a small area of trees on the right, you come to a step-stile in a wall, with a finger-post. Follow the path to the left, passing through fields. The farm on the left has a noisy and vicious-sounding dog but this is out of harm's way! Continue along the obvious footpath through the fields until you join the road in Monyash village.

Monyash was once an important lead-mining centre, with its own barmote court to settle disputes. The market cross in the village green is 14th century, at which time Monyash had a market charter. Refreshments can be had from the Bull's Head pub or various cafes and tea shops.

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