

Two Dales & Ladygrove (5.4 miles)

At A Glance

- Distance: 5.4 miles
- Time: 2-3-hours
- Grade: Moderate ●●●○●
- Terrain: Woodland trails, country lanes, field paths
- Accessibility: Uneven ground, steps, squeeze stiles, gates
- Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL24

This beautiful route takes you on forest trails and country lanes offering wonderful views of the countryside, before descending into the pretty village of Two Dales, where you can detour to a pub. It then follows the course of a brook past a series of impressive millponds and waterfalls, returning over field paths and quiet forest trails back up the hills to the park.

1. Starting your walk from the Reception building, cross over the driveway and join the Forest Trail that is located behind Evolution Health & Fitness.



2. Head into the forest and follow the well-marked path. At a small fork in the path soon after you've entered the woodland, take the left hand fork. The path bears right after approx 300 metres.

3. As the woodland clears, you'll reach a crossroads of paths with a vehicle access gate on your left. Continue straight on, following the path through the trees, with the quiet road on your left.

4. After approx 400 metres look out for a wooden fence with a low stile in the wall on the left, soon after a little outcrop of trees that juts into the pathway. Cross over the stile and carefully cross the road (Flash Lane), veering slightly to the left towards a broad access track.

5. Turn right off Flash Lane to follow the broad access track into woods known as Forty Acre Piece. Continue straight on, ignoring a path off to the left after approx 200 metres. The path narrows and tracks to the right of a plantation of young conifers.

6. The path eventually meets a narrow lane with stone walls on both sides (Back Lane). Walk out of the woodland through a gap in the stone wall and turn left on this narrow lane, heading downhill.

7. Follow Back Lane for approx 2km as it winds down through beautiful countryside, with views to the villages of Darley Dale and Rowsley. Note that the terrain is uneven in places so take care, especially after wet weather.



8. The metalled lane bears left soon after you pass Upperwood Boarding Kennels on your right, but continue straight on down the rough track, now with views over to Two Dales on your left.

9. The track narrows and becomes very rough underfoot before it eventually reaches houses and bears sharp left to meet a road (the B5057). Cross the road and turn left, walking slightly uphill. Be aware that there are no pavements here so do take care. After only 50 metres turn right on to Denacre Lane.

10. Follow Denacre Lane as it twists downhill. Where the lane forks, take the left hand fork on to Knab Road. Follow this quiet lane uphill with views over the village of Two Dales to the right. After approx 150 metres the road forks again. This time take the right hand fork heading down. Follow the road until you reach the Old Mill House at the very bottom.

11. *If you are planning to visit the pub in Two Dales, turn right here and follow this road to the main crossroads. Go straight over on to Wheatley Road and you will see The Plough Inn.*

12. To continue the walk, turn left at the Old Mill House along a rough path with the stream (Warney Brook) on your left. Go through a small hand gate and turn right to follow the course of the brook, with the water running to the left of the path. (Note, do not take the first sharp right turning after the gate which leads up and doubles back on itself.)



13. Follow this well-marked path through trees. After approx 200 metres watch out on your left for spectacular waterfalls which flow down from a millpond. If you have small children take care as the water in the pond is deep.

14. Continue following the path straight on. Be aware that the ground is uneven in places and will be muddy and wet underfoot, particularly after periods of rain. Look out below for Warney Brook to your left, occasionally collecting in a series of dams. Continue straight along the path, ignoring other paths off to the left and right.

15. After just over 1km you will see another stunning waterfall on your left. Once you are level with the waterfall, look up to your right towards a mature tree. There is a steep, uneven minor path which you should follow towards the tree. Immediately beyond the tree you will see a footpath sign.



16. Turn left at the footpath sign to walk with a low stone wall to your left and beautiful rhododendron bushes to your right. Again, take care if you have small children as there is quite a steep drop here beyond the wall. Ignore a path off to the right uphill and continue straight on, still walking alongside the wall.



17. Go through a tunnel of rhododendron bushes and emerge beside a small metal footbridge over the brook, now referred to as Sydnope Brook. Turn left to cross the bridge and head up the wooden steps in front of you.

18. At the top of the steep and uneven steps follow the clear path through thin woodland. You will emerge from the woodland directly beside a telegraph pole. Walk straight on across the field towards a squeeze stile in the stone wall visible ahead.

19. Go through the squeeze stile and again continue straight on across the wide open grass field. Look out for the impressive Sydnope Hall on your right.

20. At the edge of the field go through a small hand gate, cross straight over the farm track and continue following the footpath immediately ahead of you. The path passes through a further gate and squeezes to the left of stone buildings. Be aware that it's quite narrow here.

21. Go through a further hand gate with care, as the path emerges straight on to a road ahead (the B5057). Cross the road and turn left, walking slightly downhill. There is no pavement here but the grass verge is wide enough to walk on if needed.

22. After approx 150 metres turn right on a lane (Butcher's Lane) signposted towards Upperwood Boarding Kennels. Follow the lane as it bears right around a corner with the kennels on your left, and joins Back Lane which you walked down earlier.



23. Retrace your steps heading up along Back Lane, passing farms, with fine countryside views all around you. After just over 1km at the top of the hill, keep an eye out on your right for the gap in the stone wall and retrace your route on the path beside the plantation of young conifers.

24. At the end of the access track cross Flash Lane and veer slightly left to cross the low stile and re-enter the woodland. Turn right on the path and retrace your steps through the trees.

25. At the crossroads of paths go straight on, and then follow the path as it winds through the pine forest as before. You will arrive back at the park behind Evolution Health & Fitness.

Along the way...

Two Dales (points 9-11)

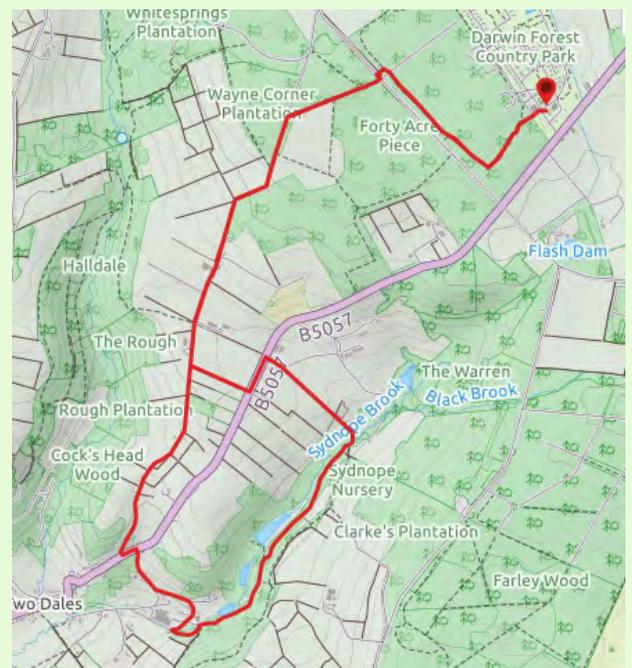
The little hamlet of Two Dales, so-called because it lies between the valleys of Hall Dale and Sydnope Dale, was known by the rather less romantic name of Toad Hole until 1850. It's a thriving community with local village shops and a pub if you want to add a diversion onto your walk at the halfway point and you're in need of refreshments.

Ladygrove (points 11-15)

The area around Ladygrove is particularly beautiful, with a pretty stream cascading in waterfalls from a series of millponds above. The mill here was established by the Dakeyne family in the 1780s, powered by water from the reservoirs and brook, initially producing flax but then lace and later animal feed. The former flax factory today houses a number of local businesses.

Sydnope Hall (point 19)

The grand mansion of Sydnope Hall stands on the site of a late Tudor farmhouse but the current building dates from the early 1800s. It was purchased by Sir Francis Sacheverel Darwin in 1820, a half uncle of the celebrated naturalist Charles Darwin. Much extended and re-fashioned, it is now apartments.



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