

Severn Trent Upper Derwent Valley

WONDERFUL ON TAP



Discover wonderful days out at The Upper Derwent Valley

stwater.co.uk/daysout



See overleaf for trail descriptions and accessibility information.

Discover Upper Derwent Valley

The mix of moorland, wooded valleys and open water provides great bird and wildlife watching. Both easy and challenging walks offer fantastic views and insight into the area's rich heritage.


Note, with the exception of the circuit of Derwent and Howden, which is a great cycle route, these are walking trails. Mobility scooters are available to hire at the Bike Hire Centre.

From Fairholmes Visitor Centre

Derwent Dam Trail ●●●●

Distance: 1.5km (1 mile)


This short loop has stunning views of the reservoir and the iconic dam made famous by the 'Dambusters'. When the reservoir is at 100% capacity, you will be lucky enough to see the incredible sight of the dam overflowing.

 This can be accessible for robust pushchairs, but it may be challenging or inaccessible for some due to steep and uneven paths. If using a wheelchair or mobility scooter we recommend accessing the viewpoint by following the road past Derwent Dam and turning left up the forest track signposted to Lockerbrook and returning by the same route.

Ladybower and the Lost Villages Trail ●●●●

Distance: 9km (5.5 miles)

Discover the lost villages of Ladybower and see the awe-inspiring Derwent Dam on this scenic trail. When water levels drop you may be able to spot the remains of the village of Derwent on the bed of the reservoir. 'Dam builders to Dambusters' is available to buy from the Visitor Centre which will help to guide you around our two new trails, and tell the stories of the valley and its people.


 This trail covers a variety of surfaces including a closed tarmac road and stone tracks. The path on the west side of the reservoir is of good quality but includes two flights of steps, these can be avoided by staying on the footway along the side of the road.

Derwent, Howden and Slippery Stones Trail ●●●●

Distance: 16km (10 miles)

This trail is full of adventure and challenges, taking you past the Derwent and Howden reservoirs and through increasingly wild scenery and forests. It includes the beautiful Slippery Stones Bridge and has amazing viewpoints throughout.


NB You cross the valley below Derwent Dam, you cannot cross at Howden Dam.

 The track is accessible for cyclists and mobility scooters but includes some up-hill sections and some uneven road surfaces, which can be navigated around. The first five miles are on tarmac and the east side of the reservoir has stone tracks. The quality of the surface varies and signs warn of two steep descents for cyclists.

Tin Town Trail and Valley of the Dams Trail ●●●●

Distance: Valley of Dams 5km (3 miles) from Fairholmes taking longer route. Tin Town 6km (4 miles) from Fairholmes.

Discover the fascinating history behind the 'Dam builders to Dambusters' with our two trails, marked by sculptures and taking you through Tin Town and around Derwent Dam area. Learn about the legendary Dambusters, who perfected their daring flying skills by using the reservoir as a practice site. The Valley of the Dams trail takes you around Derwent Dam with the option of going down to Derwent Village where there are outlying panels showing the location of the old church. Our 'Dam builders to Dambusters' trail guide is available to buy from the Visitor Centre.

 **Valley of Dams:** This trail follows a quiet tarmac road which is accessible. To get close to the dam you will need to take the level stone track to the base of Derwent Dam.

Tin Town: The trail is accessible by car for blue badge holders all year, but the road is restricted at certain times to non-blue badge holders. The road heading to Tin Town is tarmacked with some ascents and descents.

Other waymarked routes from Fairholmes;

Black and green arrows mark these more challenging walking routes, which take you up out of the valley for great views. Allow 1 hour for the black route or 2 hours for the green route.

From Heatherdene


Ladybower Dam and the 'Plugholes' Trail ●●●●

Distance: 1km (¾ mile)

Great views are packed into this short walk featuring the famous 'plugholes', the overflows for the reservoir. If the reservoir is full from wet weather you may even see them in flow.

Follow the path from the car park across the dam and return via the same route.

Warning: There is no circular route round the reservoir due to the A57 with no footway or verge.

 This easy access route from Heatherdene takes you across a road and onto the dam, look for purple dots on the signposts. There is an option to take the steps down or a very steep slope down to the road. To avoid the steps or steep slope take the route nearer the car park entrance which will zig zag down.

Other Heatherdene waymarked walking trails.

These more challenging walking routes are marked with coloured arrows.

The red route is a quick circuit of the woods behind the car park and the green arrows take you across the dam and up through the woods to the edge of the forest below Win Hill. The black route is a shorter version of this, mostly on better paths.