



“Following the lovely River Dove downstream from Viator’s Bridge the walk arrives at Dove Holes; these are curious, rounded, water-worn holes in the limestone about 20ft (6m) deep”

It is over 300 years since Izaak Walton fished in the River Dove with his impecunious friend, Charles Cotton of Beresford Hall. Apart from some modern traffic on the short stretch of road through Milldale, Dovedale and its famous trout stream have changed little since Walton and Cotton spent time on its banks, angling and philosophising. Walton referred to the Dove as being ‘The finest river that I ever saw and the fullest of fish’. A sentiment true even today. The route of the walk follows the river downstream from Viator’s Bridge as far as the curious rock formation known as Dove Holes. A secluded dry dale on the left leads to Hanson Grange Farm before joining an ancient packhorse way back to Milldale.

# Viator's Bridge, Milldale

walk  
19



Viator's Bridge

## Route instructions

**A** Park about 300yds (275m) west of Milldale and walk downstream from Viator's Bridge using the riverside path for just under 1 mile (1.6km).

**1** The thin alkaline soil on the craggy valley sides, supports many semi-alpine plants such as thyme and dwarf cranesbill. Rock outcrops on the opposite bank are used by local rock climbers.

**B** Turn left before Dove Holes and follow the direction of the finger post indicating Alsop le Dale. Climb the tree-lined dry dale. ½ mile (800m)

**2** Dove Holes. These massive water-worn holes

appear, at first glance, to be the start of an extensive cave system but are, in fact, only 20 ft (6m) deep. This is a good vantage point from which to view the dale.

**3** The Nabs. These are the rocky crags guarding the exit from this dry dale.

**C** Turn left through a stile at the dale head and follow a series of stiles to the right of Hanson Grange Farm. Join its exit lane about 100yds (91m) beyond the farm.

**4** Hanson Grange. There were several extensive monastic sheep walks in the area until the Dissolution. Hanson Grange was part of one. The farm house looks

## Plan your walk



**DISTANCE:** 2¼ miles (3.6km)

**TIME:** 1¼ hours

**START/END:** SK137548  
Milldale

**TERRAIN:** Easy /  
Moderate

**MAPS:**  
OS Explorer OL 24;  
OS Landranger 119



Dove Holes

# Viator's Bridge, Milldale



Jacobean but is probably built on older foundations.

**D** At the end of the partly walled section of the farm lane, turn left as indicated by the signpost. Follow its direction across a series of fields, downhill towards Milldale.  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile (1.2km)

**E** Zigzag downhill on an ancient packhorse way into Milldale.

**5** Milldale. The Dove is crossed by the narrow packhorse bridge known as Viator's Bridge. The bridge earned its name from a reference in Izaak Walton's

famous treatise, 'The Compleat Angler'. He referred to himself as Viator (The Traveller) and Cotton as Piscator (The Angler). To the left of the bridge stands part of Ochre Mill. It was powered by water which ran along the leat on the west side of the river below Shining Tor. Upstream was Lode Mill and the two mills gave Milldale its name.