

## Wings of a Dove

Bradbourne, Tissington, Thorpe, Blore, Calton Moor, Rushley, Throwley Hall, Weags Bridge, Stanshope, Alstonefield, Narrowdale, Beresford Dale, Biggin Dale, Biggin, Pikehall, Longcliffe

Distance = 50.5 km (31.4 miles); off road = 22.6 km

Total Vertical Ascent = 1,279m

Ride Time = 4 to 5 hours

Maps = OS White Peak Area (OL 24); Derby (259) 1:25,000

An epic route providing excellent off-roading amid stunning scenery. There is quite a lot of tarmac, but virtually all of it is quiet country lanes. The climb up Larkstone Lane defined the word 'steep'.

Head out of Brassington on the road to Bradbourne. Upon entering Bradbourne, stay on the same road and leave the village down a steep hill. About 500m down the hill, turn left onto a purpose-built track signposted cycle route 54A. This goes around the back of Bradbourne Mill and avoids a short section of busy main road. It emerges onto the B5056 opposite Tissington Ford. Cross the main road and either tackle the ford direct or use the footbridge. Climb the hill beyond and ride 2.5km to Tissington village.

As the road enters Tissington, it crosses a bridge over the Tissington Trail and just beyond this is a turn left leading to the trail itself. Take this turn and bear right down the trail for 2.3km to the car park at Thorpe. Leave the trail here. Go up the track, join a small road coming from the right and continue to a junction in front of the Dog and Partridge pub. Do a right-left shimmy and follow the road around the side of the pub. Drop down the steep hill into Thorpe village.

In Thorpe, ignore the first turning left and take the second – Hall Lane signposted to Thorpe Church. Turn left at the T-junction and follow the lane around the corner past the church. Keep going straight on to the end of the tarmac and a large gate. Go through the gate and down the steep, rough track to Coldwall Bridge. This is a very nice place to stop and have a break while staring into the clear waters of the River Dove. You are now leaving Derbyshire and entering Staffordshire.

Continue on the now grassy track up the other side of the valley. The grass is soon replaced by stone and the track passes through Coldwall Farm before meeting a narrow lane. Turn right. At the crossroads in Blore, keep straight on. Follow the road up and down for 2.5km to a junction with the main A52 at Calton Moor Crossroads. This road is very busy and the traffic moves quickly so be careful here. Turn right onto the main road and right again after just 100m.

Climb gently uphill. Just over the brow of the hill, 1.1km from Calton Moor, is a new metal gate surrounded by bushes. There is a signpost, but no sign. Go through the gate and across the field to another gate. Head diagonally left across the next field and over the ridge (Musden Low) to a gate in the far corner. An excellent, long descent to Rushley starts here. Aim for the large barn at the bottom of the grass field and join the stone track. Carry on down the track which gets steeper and rougher the further you go. Go through one farm, down a short hill, across a cattle grid and through a second farm to a small lane. Turn left up the hill signposted Throwley. Do not continue down to the bridge across the river.

At the top of a long, gentle climb is the picturesque Throwley Hall, after which the road turns more steeply uphill. At the top of here, go past Throwley Cottage in the wood to the left and on to where the road bends sharply left at the far end of the trees. Turn right off the road and head blindly across the field on a non-existent track. Try not to lose any height. After it comes into view, aim for the left hand of the two gates in the far wall. Go through this and follow a more obvious track to a dew pond. Here, bear right and contour over the ridge to a gate in the corner of the field near some trees. Go through the gate and down the track to another gate. If you are lucky, you may

see some climbers on Beeston Tor from here. Follow the track around to the left and down the shallow valley towards a barn in the distance. Go through another gate and pass the barn on a better stone track to descend to the River Hamps/River Manifold confluence. Take either of 2 parallel roads (one is a disused railway) up the valley to Weags Bridge.

Turn right and cross Weags Bridge to begin the strength-sapping 125m climb up Larkstone Lane. Go straight on where the road to Wetton goes off left and do the same at the next crossroads. Join the next road, but in just 100m distance, take the turn right to Stanshope (signposted).

At the small grass triangle in front of Stanshope Hall, turn left and follow a wonderful little track down to the valley bottom. Cross the road and push up the steep path on the opposite side of the valley. Alternatively, starting 70m down the road, is a less steep, zig-zag route that is just about rideable. At the top, go through a gate and up to a large tree in the middle of the path. Bear left and, keeping close to the wall, head across the grassy field to the exit gate which is in the far left hand corner. Follow the short track to a road and turn right into Alstonefield.

Take the first left and the next left to head out of Alstonefield on the road to Hulme End. Just before the brow of the hill, 1km out of Alstonefield, turn right on a good stone track leading to a YHA camping barn. Keep straight ahead to the very end of the track. Go through a large metal gate and bear left to follow a very bumpy path alongside a wall down the valley. Where the wall turns sharply away, head diagonally across the valley to a wall on the opposite side. Follow this, passing through various gateways, to a pond and closed gate. Beyond here the valley narrows and can be boggy in winter. Continue down to meet a wide, stone track at Narrowdale.

Go straight ahead and follow the track by the wall through a series of gates for 800m. In front of the 5<sup>th</sup> gate, a limestone path heads off right to a small wooden gate. It is signposted as cycle way 54 to Hartington. Take this to an idyllic spot in Beresford Dale where Frank i'th Rocks Bridge crosses over the River Dove. Cross the river and climb steeply up the other side to a fork in the track. Straight ahead is steep and has a loose surface which makes it difficult to ride, while right is the relatively easy. Both routes lead to a lane where you need to turn left. Follow the lane around the hill, ignoring any left turns, to reach a crossroads. Take the good track on the right to Biggin Dale (signposted).

As it approaches the dale, the track narrows to a path and becomes steeper and more technical. The final descent to the valley floor is very steep and very rocky. At the bottom, turn right down the valley and continue for 200m to where a side valley joins from the left. Follow the blue public bridleway arrow on the wooden post and go through the small wooden gate above and left. A grassy path leads up the pleasant side valley to Dalehead (signposted). It is all rideable and emerges onto a road. Turn left and take the next right (Drury Lane) to Biggin.

At the T-junction with the main street in Biggin, turn right up the hill. Pass under the Tissington Trail and continue on to meet the main A515. Do a right-left shimmy across the main road and follow a wide, stone track (Cardlemere Lane) for 1.5km to the top of the hill. Here, an obvious track, signposted Green Lane, turns off left. Take this and rocket down the hill. Cross the High Peak Trail on a slight rise and rocket down the next hill to Pikehall.

Turn left onto the lane at the bottom of the track and round the corner to meet the A5012. Turn right onto the main road, but leave it almost immediately by turning right onto a wide, stone track after just 100m. The track is uphill, but not steep. Upon meeting the crossroads at the end of the track, go straight across and follow the superb, undulating track to Rockhurst Farm. At the farm, join the road by continuing on in a straight line. After a further 2.6km, Longcliffe crossroads is reached. Go straight across and pass under the High Peak Trail. Savour the view from the top of the hill and then have a blast down the long, steep descent into Brassington. Go on, spoil yourself, you deserve it.



**Wings of a Dove**



1 km  
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Pikehall  
43.5km  
A5012  
42.6km  
44.3km  
High Peak Trail

Rockhurst Farm  
46.3km  
41.5km  
Cardemere Lane  
40.0km  
A515  
Tissington Trail

Biggin  
38.9km  
38.1km  
37.8km  
Biggin Dale  
37.0km  
36.0km  
35.3km  
34.7km  
R. Dove

Narrowdale  
33.9km  
33.1km  
31.7km  
30.7km  
Alstonefield

Stanshope  
29.8km  
28.8km  
27.7km  
27.6km  
27.0km  
Larkstone Lane  
26.1km  
25.1km  
Weags Bridge  
R. Manifold

Throwley Hall  
21.9km  
21.9km  
Rushley Bridge  
R. Manifold  
Rushley  
19.0km  
16.5km  
Mudden Low  
15.4km  
A52  
Calton Moor Crossroads

Blore  
12.4km  
12.4km  
Coldwall Bridge  
R. Dove  
R. Manifold  
Thorpe  
10.4km  
Dog & Partridge PH  
9.7km  
Tissington  
7.0km  
Tissington  
6.9km  
Tissington Ford  
3.7km  
3.0km  
Bradbourne  
0.9km  
50.3km  
Brassington Start  
0km/50.5km