

# WILDLIFE TRAVEL

24th-28th June 2024 (5 days)

## DERBYSHIRE DALES

wild flowers and walking in the Peak Fringe

"our leaders were excellent"

"beautiful surroundings, an incredible variety of flowers"

Derbyshire 2023

**A relaxing short break, in search of the wild flowers, industrial heritage and interesting limestone landscapes of the southern fringe of the Peak District National Park.**

Our base will be the village of Cromford, home to Arkwright's Mill and now part of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will stay in a recently renovated hotel, originally built by the Arkwright family in the mid 19th century.

The landscape of the area is strongly influenced by industrial history: from lead mining, dating back to the 12th century and beyond, to the construction of the mills and canals of the industrial revolution, and modern limestone quarrying. We will explore some of the rich wildlife habitats that have been left after these industries have moved on.

Ancient spoil heaps left over from the lead mining are now home to interesting calamarian grasslands, with mounds cloaked in colourful wild flowers including Mountain Pansy and Spring Sandwort at the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) Gang Mine nature reserve. Nearby, abandoned canals and railways, former bustling industrial thoroughfares, are home to Water Vole and Little Grebe, Pyrenean Scurvygrass and Fairy Foxglove, with modern quarries a nesting site for Raven and Peregrine.

We will also visit the species-rich unimproved grasslands of Rose End Meadows (another DWT nature reserve) and take a walk through the picturesque valleys of Dovedale National Nature Reserve, where Dippers bob in the river, Redstarts call from the dale-side scrub, butterflies feed on the thyme and Nottingham Catchfly and Red Hemp Nettle are amongst the rare plants to be found amongst the scree and rocks.



**Price**  
£940

**Single Room Supplement**  
£220

**Full board**

**Day 1** arrive  
**Day 2** Gang Mine  
**Day 3** Cromford Canal  
**Day 4** Limestone Dales  
**Day 5** depart

**Leaders**

Philip Precey  
with second leader tbc

**Group size**

min 4, max 12

limestone flora,  
industrial heritage,  
Peak District landscapes



## ITINERARY

**Please note that the itinerary may be changed to suit the weather or other practicalities or at the discretion of the leaders.**

**Day 1 Monday 24th June.** Our holiday starts in the village of **Cromford**, in the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site, where we will meet at our hotel in time for an introduction to the holiday and our first dinner together.

**Day 2 Tuesday 25th June.** This morning we will travel a little way 'up hill' onto the Carboniferous limestone, towards Wirksworth, to visit two Derbyshire Wildlife Trust reserves. We start our day at Gang Mine: part of an ancient lead mining area, the name comes from the old word 'gangué', meaning the worthless rock in which valuable metals occur, which was dumped as spoil heaps around the old mine shafts. The grassland which has since developed on this lead spoil is home to nationally rare species such as Spring Sandwort and Alpine Pennycross, both (rather confusingly) known locally as Leadwort, alongside Kidney Vetch, Dyer's Greenweed and the lovely Mountain Pansy

From here, we will walk down to the nearby Rose End Meadows, an area of unimproved grassland that gives a glimpse of what Derbyshire's farmland would once have been like, full of flowering knapweeds, Betony, Great Burnet and various orchids.

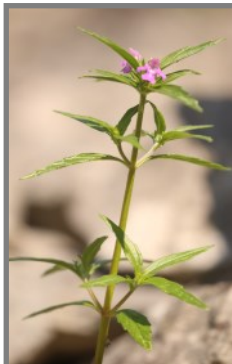
**Day 3 Wednesday 26th June.** Today we will take the local train service a short distance south, and then walk back to Cromford along the Cromford Canal. Last used as a working waterway in 1944, the canal has since developed a rich flora, and is now both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve. Along with various interesting wetland plants, our walk should give us the chance to see various dragonflies and butterflies, and we will look out for Little Grebe, Grass Snake and Water Vole.

Depending on how long it takes us, there should be some spare time this afternoon to explore Cromford village, including the lovely Scarthin Books, which frequently features in national 'best bookshop' lists.

**Day 4 Thursday 27th June.** No visit to Derbyshire would be complete without a trip to the Peak District's limestone dales: today we head to the village of Hartington, from where we will walk a six mile circuit through part of Dovedale National Nature Reserve.

Starting on the rolling farmland of the limestone plateau, we will drop down into Biggin Dale, where Common Redstart flick amongst the bushes and where we will look for two local rarities: Red Hemp-nettle and Nottingham Catchfly both grow here amongst the scree and rocky slopes, where they can escape the attentions of the grazing sheep.

We then join the River Dove, where we hope to spot Dipper and Grey Wagtail, before we head up Wolfscote Dale. We should arrive back in Hartington in time to sample the local farm-shop's cakes, before we return to Cromford and a well-earned dinner.



**Day 5 Friday 28th June.** After one final breakfast, there will be the opportunity to take an optional guided tour of Arkwright's Mill in Cromford (bookable in advance, price not included, and not accompanied by the Wildlife Travel tour leader). The tour explores the mill, built in 1771 by Sir Richard Arkwright and known as the birthplace of the modern factory system, and tells the story of life in the Derwent Valley and the global impact of the cotton industry.



All too soon it is time to bid farewell to Cromford and to head home.

## Accommodation, meals and travel

We will be based at Oakhill, a Georgian-style hotel in a beautiful Grade 2 Listed building, built by the Arkwright family in the mid 19th century as a private family dwelling, which has been restored and refurbished by its new owners during 2021. The hotel is set in landscaped gardens, within the historic village of Cromford. All rooms are en-suite.



Dinners will be taken at the hotel, and we will take picnic lunches out with us each day.

Cromford is located on the A6, just south of Matlock, on the edge of the Peak District National Park. The hotel is a 1km walk from Cromford train station, with trains every hour from Derby.



Our transport for this trip will be by small coach/minibus.

If you would like to **extend your stay** in Derbyshire, we can book extra nights accommodation at the hotel, and give advice on other interesting places to visit.



## Weather

The English weather is of course anything but predictable. While we should expect pleasantly warm conditions, hot, cold or wet weather are all always possible. We will try not to walk for long in hot or adverse weather conditions.



## Leaders

**Philip Precey** is a Director of Wildlife Travel who has led almost 90 previous trips for Wildlife Travel, including previous UK holidays to Norfolk, Dorset, Devon and Sussex, and our 2023 visit to Derbyshire.

Prior to joining Wildlife Travel, Philip worked for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for six years: after seven years away, the lure of the dales proved too strong, and he moved back to the county in 2014.

Depending on final group size, Philip will be joined by a second Wildlife Travel leader.

## Health and fitness

**You would need to have a reasonably good level of general fitness** to get the most out of your holiday.

We will be **walking for much of the day**, each day, albeit at a gentle pace. We will be covering between 3 and 6 miles each day, which includes areas of rougher ground and some slopes, both up and down. None of the walks are particularly strenuous, but (light) walking boots are essential.

The pace will be relaxed, with plenty of time to enjoy the surroundings and take photos as well as enjoy the wildlife along the way. In most locations 'facilities' are scarce/non-existent, and shade may be limited.



## TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT £300 PER PERSON, BALANCE DUE BY 25/03/2024**  
**SEE GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLET ON HOW TO BOOK**

**INCLUDED:** Four nights' accommodation, full board (dinner day 1 to breakfast day 5). Local transport as specified in the itinerary. Services of leaders.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Travel to Cromford. Refreshments and drinks with meals. Gratuities. Travel insurance. Optional guided tour of Arkwright's Mill (c£15). Covid tests and associated costs.

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*Wildlife Travel Ltd. Reg. No 2237697; (for Registered Charity numbers, please contact us)*

**Photos: front** (clockwise from top): Biggin Dale, Betony, Mountain Pansy, Common Redstart. **Page 2** (from left): Nottingham Catchfly, Red Hemp-Nettle, Pyramidal Orchid, Meadow Brown.

**Page 3** (from top): Little Grebe, Biggin Dale, Comma, Great Burnet, Cromford Canal, Rosebay Willowherb, Monkey-flower. **Back:** Grey Wagtail, Meadow Crane's-bill

A trip report from our 2023 visit to Derbyshire can be found on our website.