

DISCOVER
ASHBOURNE

Country Walk 2:
Bradley Woods and the golf course

This is an easy walk through woods and open fields including Bradley Wood and the golf course, with extensive views and the chance of seeing buzzards and possibly red kites. 7.5m / 12 kms. Allow 3½ hours. There is an optional shorter route back to Ashbourne at para 13.

This walk was written in 2012 and last edited in April 2021. There have been several official path diversions on this route and many new buildings and it is likely that your own map is out-of-date – when in doubt follow the instructions, not the map.

Please leave all gates as you find them, keep dogs on leads and take all litter home with you. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear and remember that paths become muddy after rain and that roads may have fast-moving traffic.

DIRECTIONS

1. This walk starts from the Shaw Croft car park. Near the entrance note the brick plinth where the annual Shrovetide Football is “turned up” (starts). Cross the road by the pedestrian crossing and walk left up the flood defence bank and then right along the top of the bank and immediately left to go over a wooden footbridge alongside the pond.
2. Follow the path ahead towards another footbridge but do not cross it. Turn right and keep the river bank on your left as you walk through the fields, crossing a stile and passing through several gaps in hedges.
3. When the fields end and the river turns right, head towards the houses and go through an obvious gate into the housing estate. Walk straight ahead along the road and go through another gate into a field. Turn left, pass through a gap in hedge and immediately go through a squeeze stile on the right. Keep the hedge on your left and walk towards the cottages, cross another stile and join Mill Lane.
4. After about 800 metres on Mill lane and just before Sturston Hall, go right through a gate along a rough track which very quickly meets a better track. Follow this track until the main road (A517).
5. Cross the road and take the narrow path opposite into Bradley Wood. After about 30 metres into the wood, turn right onto a main path. Follow this path to the end of the wood keeping the road on your right. There are two parallel paths but the lower one is slightly easier. This path exits very briefly onto the road but immediately there is a track on the left, where there are 2 commemorative benches and a plaque honouring Captain Fitzherbert Wright, who gave Bradley Woods to the people of Ashbourne in 1935.
6. Follow this obvious track firstly up the edge of the woods and then as it bends left through the woods and steeply uphill. At the top, follow the path round to the right, keeping next to the fence and cross the stile into the old airfield. The airfield was built in WW2 and was used as an Operational Training Unit for aircrew supporting airborne forces and, after the war, as an ammunition store.
7. Now with the fence on your left, walk through the field and as you near the old runway, walk diagonally rightwards over to an obvious stile over the runway boundary fence. Cross over the runway and walk through a gap in the bank opposite the stile and follow the path across the field towards a large blue building.
8. Go the left of the blue building and take the path that runs between metal fences separating two factories. Follow this path until it reaches a road. Cross the road, turning right and almost immediately left into another (signposted) path between more metal fences to reach Snipesmoor Lane.
9. At the end of the lane turn right and walk a short way along the A52, then cross over into Moor Lane. Follow the road around the corner and then walk down the entrance driveway to Peak Gateway caravan park.
10. Where the left hand fence leaves the driveway, turn half-left across the grass and head for a gap in the hedge by a static caravan. Go through the gap to enter the caravan park.
11. Follow the track straight ahead through the caravan park. When it meets a crossroads, turn left and then immediately right to pass by a large WW2 concrete building (the standby power set house). Follow the obvious path through a green

lane towards a copse.

12. Walk through the copse – all the paths go to the same place but if you follow the left hand route you will pass some interesting old air-raid shelters. Go through a gate and then over a stile, and then walk down the hedge to a gate in the corner of the field.

13. Turn right through the gate and walk towards the farm. Just before the farm the path goes left across two stiles to reach the Wyaston Road. (If you want a shorter walk then turn right down the road which will take you directly back into Ashbourne).

14. Turn left along Wyaston Road and walk 400m to the junction with Dobbin Horse Lane at Tinkers Inn cottages. Cross the stile in the corner of the hedge opposite the cottages and walk diagonally leftwards across the field towards the telegraph pole to the left of the tumulus (mound).

15. Go through a gap in the hedge, cross a farm track and then through another gap directly opposite. Walk down the field with the hedge on your left to reach a hidden squeeze stile in the corner of the field under an ash tree. After the stile, bear half-right across the field to the corner of a copse. Enter through a gate and follow the path through the copse for a short distance to a stile into a field.

16. Walk across the field towards the shed and then beside the stream to go through a field gate and shortly afterwards to meet a tarmac track. Turn right following the track through a field boundary with a farm gate and a squeeze stile.

17. Immediately after the stile leave the track and head diagonally right across the field towards some trees on the far side. You will shortly see an enormous new barn and you are looking for a footbridge in a dip by the trees, to the right of this barn.

18. Cross the footbridge, walk past the new barn and head towards the garden centre keeping the fence on your left. There is an excellent cafe in the garden centre and if you need refreshment, pass through the gate into their car park. Otherwise, turn right by the gate and walk uphill through the field – there is no visible path on the ground but you should be keeping the hedge about 40m away on your left. As you near the top head for the right hand corner of the field and look for a gate into the golf course, hidden behind a large holly tree.

19. Go through the gate and trend right to reach a golfers' path. Follow the golfers path for a short way along the tree line and then leave it for a grassy path going slightly downhill on the left away from the golf tees. The curving hedge line here is believed to be part of the boundary fence of the

medieval deer park of Ashbourne Hall.

20. At the bottom of the dip head left across a stile into a copse, then bear right slightly uphill through the copse until you emerge into a large field. On a fine day you will see magnificent views of Ashbourne ahead and the two guardians of Dovedale – Thorpe Cloud and Bunster Hill – away to your left. Follow the right hand fence along the field to a stile straight ahead.

21. Cross the stile into another copse and continue with the fence on your left to reach another stile. Walk a short way along a rubble filled track to find another stile leading into more woodland. Crossing this stile brings you to steps which lead down to a roundabout on the A52 Ashbourne bypass.

21. Cross the bypass and also cross the next road, and carry on along the A52 with Aldi ahead and the retail park on your right. Opposite the entrance to Aldi take the tarmac footpath which zigzags right then left down through some trees into a field. Follow this tarmac path, crossing and recrossing the stream, until it reaches the edge of the hospital grounds, where it forks. Take the left fork which soon turns into an unmade footpath alongside the brook behind the hospital.

22. This path brings you out to a car park near the leisure centre. Turn left and cross the river by the road bridge and immediately after the bridge, turn left and walk through a narrow alleyway between hedges, past the almshouses to St Oswalds church. In late winter the churchyard is filled with snowdrops, followed soon afterwards by thousands of daffodils and then a few weeks later wildflowers – it is a truly glorious sight for anyone who loves flowers. Turn right past the church and leave the churchyard by the main gates.

23. Walk along Church Street towards the town centre, admiring the Georgian architecture which is amongst the finest in Derbyshire. Keep going straight on, crossing over at Station Road and Dig Street until you meet a wide alleyway on the right (Horse & Jockey Yard) between a greengrocer and a shoe shop. Go down this alleyway which will bring you out at Shaw Croft car park, your starting place.

24. Ashbourne has many fine pubs and cafes where you can find refreshment after your walk.