

DISCOVER  
**ASHBOURNE**

Country Walk 3:  
Mapleton and Martin Hill

A delightful walk through the Dove Valley, via Mapleton and Martin Hill, in glorious parkland with lovely views. 6.5 miles /10.5 km. Allow 3 hours.

DIRECTIONS

1. Starting in the main Leisure Centre car park, walk past the Leisure Centre entrance and turn sharp right beside the small coach & car park (if you get to the roundabout by the hospital you have gone too far). Walk up School Lane past St Oswald's Church until you reach Church Street.

2. Cross over Church Street and climb Church Bank steps (to the right of the school) and cross the road at the top.

3. Walk up the drive straight ahead and go through a gate to a footpath between fences. At the end of the path, go through a gate and pause to admire the view towards Thorpe Cloud. Walk straight across the field and down through five gates to join the Mapleton Road by the stone bridge.

4. Turn left over the bridge and then right up the drive to Callow Hall hotel. Cross the stile on your right partly up the drive. (2021 note – there are works in progress to divert the footpath to run up the field parallel to the hotel drive). Then head up the field to pass through a gate into another field. Climb that field to another gate in the hedge line.

5. Cross the next field, diagonally to the right to reach a gate in the corner. Go through the gate, by a small pond and turn left to follow a farm track down the hill. Before reaching the gate on the track bear half left to a gate in the fence and walk to the road.

6. Turn right towards Mapleton village. Opposite the Okeover Arms (refreshments) take the footpath to the left heading towards the bridge over the

River Dove.

7. Cross the bridge into Staffordshire. This Bridge is the site of a renowned bridge jump on New Years Day. The Dove is believed to be one of the coldest rivers in England; its name is derived from the Celtic word for dark and the river is the boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire for much of its length.

8. After a mill stream, cross a metal ladder stile on the left and walk half-right to reach a road across Okeover Park with several stone bollards.

Alternatively, from the stream walk further along the road and turn left to cross a cattle-grid and walk along the road to reach the same bollards. Ignore the private drive to Okeover Hall (built in the 1740s and pillaged by Bonnie Prince Charlie's Army in 1745).

9. At the last bollard, leave the road and head uphill across the parkland, climbing up a small valley. From the lower levels there are good views back to Okeover Hall.

10. Follow the valley uphill and when it becomes visible, aim for the semi-derelict house; cross a long stile and pass in front of the derelict building to a gap in the tree line ahead. Vault the metal ladder stile, or (if less agile) go through the field gate, then walk alongside the wall bounding a wood, keeping the wall on your left side. At the corner of the wood, continue straight ahead to a stile in the opposite corner of the field, where the hedge meets a fence, and aim for Martin Hill Farm (not the modern farm buildings on the left but the small stone farm nestling in the trees straight ahead). Continue on past a spring

filled pond (can be muddy here) to go over a stile and keeping the wall on your left, reach the farm.

11. Turn right in front of the farm and follow the line of the farm wall to another field gate. Go through the gate and continue ahead over three fields to a gate marked by a large stone boulder and into a charming old lane that runs to the left of a disused stone barn and a rusting metal frame of another barn.

12. Follow the lane behind the barn and immediately turn sharp right to cross a field diagonally right to a field gate. Go through the gate and descend diagonally, aiming to the left of a wood in the valley. Go through a gate and walk along a well-made track until it turns left. At this point, leave the track and aim half left for a metal gate in the fence ahead.

13. Continue ahead through a gap in the trees, and then across the next field to reach a stile by a field gate. Descend the next field to join a farm track.

14. Walk along the track to reach Yerley Hill Road. Exit onto the road and walk downhill for about 750m to return to Mapleton village. From the bridge continue along the road to the crossroads. Turn right and pass St Mary's Church, on your left (described as a "whimsical little building", which was built in the early 1700s by James Gibbs, who also designed the nave of Derby Cathedral and was a pupil of Sir Christopher Wren).

15. 100m beyond the Okeover Arms, take the footpath (signed Ashbourne) to the left. Join a grassy path bearing right and uphill passing through a gap in the hedge line by the big oak tree. Follow the obvious path across the next field and through another gap in the hedge (after rain there is a spring here). Then bear sharp left and walk steeply uphill, through a squeeze stile and across the top field to a gate and small footbridge.

16. Enter Callow Top camp site and follow the fenced off path ahead. Continue straight ahead and, on leaving the camp

site, descend down the fields ahead, crossing 2 stiles to reach some steps leading up to the Tissington Trail.

17. After climbing up the steps, turn right and follow the trail (watch out for bicycles) over the Bentley Brook, past the cycle hire centre (refreshments in summer) and walk through the old railway tunnel. If you are lucky in summer you may hear the sounds of the railway.

18. You are now back at your start point in the main Leisure Centre car park. If you want to visit Ashbourne town centre, then turn left by the information board as you exit the tunnel path, just before the car park and left again along Station Road to reach Church Street. There is a tiny cafe immediately opposite or if you turn right its just a moment's walk to the town centre with a wide choice of pubs and cafes.

This walk was last edited in March 2021 – note that paths and buildings can change from year to year.

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.