

DISCOVER
ASHBOURNE

Town Walk 1:
Georgian Buildings (1710 to 1830)

Editors note – we will be producing a version of this walk with a map and photos but don't have funding for this at the moment – if you enjoy this walk and would like to donate, please follow the link on DiscoverAshbourne.com.

Ashbourne has one of the best collections of Georgian buildings in Derbyshire and, thanks to some excellent work by Adrian Henstock and the Ashbourne Local History Group, they are well documented. On this walk, we will see how local building styles developed, looking at buildings in a roughly chronological order. The walk starts in the Market Place and will take about one hour. There are some uneven surfaces and road crossings, so please take care.

DIRECTIONS

We start by looking at two buildings from before the Georgian period. Standing by the prominent memorial at the top of the Market Place, you are in a medieval marketplace, which would have originally been surrounded by two storey timber-frame buildings – some of these still survive. Look down the Market Place to the Fish and Chip shop, which was recently dated to 1420. Originally it would have had a thatched roof. Wooden thatched buildings were very vulnerable to fire, and Ashbourne suffered some serious fires in the late 1600s. This, combined with increased wealth in the town, led to a redevelopment using bricks made from local brick pits.

The oldest brick building in the Market Place is probably No 12 (now used by the Nottingham Building Society), built around 1690. It has splendid 'long and short stone' quoins on the corner of the building, red and blue bricks, heavy stone copings on the gable ends of the roof with projecting stone kneelers, and an oddly off-centre chimney. Turn around to walk down the Market Place to the left of Ye Olde Vaults pub to enter Victoria Square. Look at The Horns on your left. Ignore the date of 1535 on the front of the building, the Horns is a good example of the town's Queen Anne period buildings (circa 1710) with a third storey lit by dormer windows. Some twenty new buildings were built in Ashbourne around this time leading to a comment in 1715 that Ashbourne was 'now an extraordinary good market town and much improved in buildings.

Continue to the bottom of Victoria Square, and look across at the Green Man Inn. Slightly out of our chronological sequence, this was Ashbourne's premier coaching inn built around 1750 to service the growing coaching trade from London to Manchester and Glasgow, which passed through

Ashbourne. Walk away from the town centre, crossing Dig Street into Church Street, and stop by Vine House, (Bagshaw Estate Agents). Look across the road at No 24-26 (Hulme's Fish Shop). Built around 1710, it has 'long and short' stone quoins, and wonderful pilasters (ornamental columns projecting from the wall) topped by ionic capitals and oval medallions. This extravagant Baroque style would soon start to be replaced by a much plainer style with fewer decorative features and an emphasis on symmetry.

The change can be seen by looking at the next house, No 28 – Antique Centre & House of Beer – built only 10 years later in 1720 but with a very different frontage. It is plain in comparison, with seven bays of uniform windows with key blocks, a brick parapet with blank panels on the roof line, and a fine shell canopy over the central door. Now look at Vine House. Built around 1735, this house has many of the features associated with the new Palladian style. It has a symmetrical front with a raised first floor reached by stone steps leading to a classical portico serving as a porch to the front door. It has a roof parapet and the windowheads are made of bricks laid at an angle either side of a key stone, although the original 12-pane Georgian sash windows have been replaced by Victorian 4-pane ones. The house sits on a half-sunken basement, which features a Tudor mullion window from an earlier building on the site.

Head towards the Church with its prominent spire and cross over the old railway bridge to reach No 51, Chantry House. This is a good example of how some houses were 'improved' in the middle of the 1700s. Originally built about 1710 as part of a typical Queen Anne Terrace (see Nos 53-57) it was made into a small townhouse for a 'respectable' family around 1750 – possibly the Fletcher family who

had made their money as iron mongers. It adopts the Palladian style to a smaller house with sash windows, an ornamental plaster cornice, and a pedimented doorcase approached by steps with railings.

Further along Church Street is the Grey House, an imposing stone-faced house with possibly the best Georgian frontage in Ashbourne. The house was originally built in brick in about 1750 but, only some ten years later, a new owner had the front remodelled in stone. The central bay has steps leading to a doorcase with a fanlight protected by a classical Doric portico. Above the door is a Venetian window on the first floor and a Diocletian window on the second. At roof level there is a triangulated pediment and a balustraded parapet. There are two projecting full-height bays either side of the doorway. It is generally believed that the new front was one of the earliest works by Derby architect, Joseph Pickford. If so, it is one of his most successful street facades, blending Elizabethan features – the bays on either side of the front porch – with Palladian principles. It blends in well with the Elizabethan Grammar School building next door.

Almost opposite is the Mansion, the largest house in town and probably the oldest surviving brick building. Originally built in the 1680s – possibly around an earlier timber-frame building – it was a H-shaped mansion with projecting wings facing the garden and the road. In the late 1760s, it was remodelled and the H-shaped front filled in with a grand entrance. The work was probably intended to rival the Grey House but does not compare in quality. The brick front is almost always in the shade and lacks the impact of the stone of the Grey House. Interestingly, when an octagon was later added to the rear of the Mansion, it was built in stone. The octagon with its copper dome can be glimpsed over the garden wall from School Lane, which starts by the Church Gates. The Mansion's new front is also believed to have been undertaken by Joseph Pickford featuring his characteristic porticoed doorway with Venetian and Diocletian windows above, topped by triangular pediment and balustraded parapet. The red brick wall with seven blind arches to the left of the house was the back wall of an orangery.

Return back along Church Street to the Ivies, built around 1785 for Robert Dale, a member of a minor gentry family who invested in local cotton spinning mills. Generally, by the 1780s, the strict Palladian style had mellowed under the influence of such architects as Robert Adam, who introduced more decorative features. However, there is little exterior evidence of Adam's influence in Ashbourne,

despite his local work at Kedleston Hall. The Ivies continued with Palladian principles: a raised entrance over a sunken basement with steps leading to a large pedimented doorcase, and an attic with square windows. Note the speaking tube on the left of the door to enable a visitor to announce their arrival.

In the late 1700s, Ashbourne was well established as a fashionable resort, but fashions change. By the 1820s, wealthy families were building their houses elsewhere and one of the few larger properties in town from this period is No 27, Hamilton House, with its Regency style arched doorway with fanlight above, and cast-iron balcony. Continue to walk back along Church Street and stop by Vine House, to look across the road at a block of four houses grouped around 3 sides of a courtyard behind railings.

These are the Clergy Widows' Almshouses, built between 1768–70 to the designs of William Harrison of Derby. Although not in our chronological sequence, they are interesting in that their very urban design would be more appropriate in London's Lincoln Inn than in a small county town. Nicholas Spalden had left money in his will of 1710 to build: 'four neat and pretty houses for entertaining the widows of four clergymen of the Church of England'. A legal dispute over his will at the Court of Chancery delayed their construction.

If you have time before returning to the Market Place, there are two other buildings of interest from the Georgian period. From the traffic lights, walk down Dig Street to cross the bridge over the Henmore to come to Compton House, now Lloyds Bank. Built in the late 1760s for Francis Beresford, a rising young lawyer and industrialist. This is another house believed to be by Joseph Pickford with a stone front featuring some of his design characteristics: rusticated pilasters supporting an open pediment over the door, flanked by Venetian windows. It is unusual in that it is an extravagant house built in in the poorer part of Town.

Return back to the top of Dig Street and walk along St John's Street (the continuation of Church Street) to the street junction. Cross the road and look back at No 42, – Vision Express. Above the shop front you can see the Venetian and Diocletian windows favoured by Joseph Pickford. However, the facade lacks his style and is probably the work of a less skilled architect.

That concludes our short tour of Georgian Ashbourne, but there is much more to see and enjoy – so go and explore.

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Town Walk 2:
A Tour of Ashbourne Yards and Alleyways

Editors note – we will be producing a version of this walk with a map and photos but don't have funding for this at the moment – if you enjoy this walk and would like to donate, please follow the link on DiscoverAshbourne.com.

The walk will take about one hour and includes some uneven surfaces, steep slopes and steps. Please take care.

Ashbourne is well known for its impressive Georgian buildings but, at heart, it is a medieval market town. Developed in the early 1200s as a large triangular marketplace, this original layout can still be seen on the ground today along with several surviving timber-framed medieval buildings. Exploring the town's yards and alleyways is a great way to familiarise yourself with Ashbourne and get better acquainted with some of its most historic buildings.

DIRECTIONS

We start in the Market Place by the Wright Memorial (1) near the pedestrian crossing. Crosses were common in marketplaces to remind traders that God was watching. However, this monument to Francis Wright is a Victorian addition. Wright came from a Nottingham banking family, which had married into local gentry. He was the principal shareholder and director of the Butterley Company at Ripley, which had provided the ironwork for London's St Pancras Station. Wright was an evangelical Christian who believed "busy hands keep the devil away". As Chairman of the Town's Magistrates, he tried to impose his strict moral principles on the Town. He put a stop to the Town's annual fairs and tried to stop the Shrovetide Football game. As a result, he was not as popular as the memorial inscription would suggest and he was known locally as the "President of the Poke-your-nose-into-everybody's-business Society".

Look down to the Marketplace Fish & Chip Shop (2). This is one of the original timber-framed buildings in the Town, possibly the oldest as it was recently dated to 1420. In the distant past it was the Brown Lion public House. Walk down the marketplace alongside the main road and immediately after the Flower Café, turn right into a narrow alley – the Middle Cale (3). This is a medieval alley created as houses were built in the centre of the marketplace. Look for the bricked-up doors on the side of the Flower Café building. On emerging from the alley turn right to pass behind the Millennium Clock and right again to head into The Gallery (4) – another medieval alley, probably named after a medieval galleried house that stood here.

At the end of The Gallery turn right to look at the side of the Leek Building Society (5) with its painted faces on the lintels above the windows. Then head uphill back into the marketplace, past Coral bookmakers, above which you can see one of the few sundials left in Ashbourne. If the sun is shining you can check its accuracy! Cross over the marketplace and walk through a "tunnel" entry between Elliots of Ashbourne and the Bear Patch into Frith's Yard (6). This is one of many Ashbourne yards built as the population increased in the late 18 and 19th Centuries. Originally,

the space behind the houses would have been crofts (gardens), but as the population increased, cottages and workshops were built on these gardens. Many of the yards are entered through a "tunnel" and were an important part of the close-knit working-class community in the town centre. In 1851, there were about 25 yards in Ashbourne, housing around 750 people, about a quarter of the Town's population.

After climbing to the top of Frith's Yard, look to your right over the wooden railings to see Spencer's Bakery (7), where Ashbourne gingerbread – a local delicacy since the early 1800s – is still produced. Walk uphill along the alleyway through the gap between the buildings and turn left onto Union Street. Immediately after Boswell Court, turn left this time going downhill, into another alley. This is Shakespeare's Yard (8), named after a butcher who had a shop by the yard's entrance on the marketplace. He was an accomplished musician and poet who claimed he had inherited his talents from the Bard. After passing through the tunnel in the building, you will see a surface drain running down the centre of the yard. This came from the slaughterhouses on the right side of the yard. Cattle would be herded up the yard from the marketplace to be slaughtered. Just before entering the tunnel at the bottom of the yard, look to your left to see an interesting window and some ornamental brickwork. The building on the right just before the tunnel was a butchers shop into the twenty-first century and has only recently been converted.

You are now in the lower part of the Market Place, originally known as The Butchery (9) as it was the site of the Town's butcher shops – served by the slaughterhouses behind, their meat would have been displayed on wooden boards or 'shambles' in front of the shops. Turn right and, after the Lamplight Restaurant (10), turn right again to enter Tiger Yard, named after the Inn which once stood at its entrance. The Lamplight building is another of the Town's surviving timber-framed buildings. It is a good example of how buildings were modernised to keep up with building fashions. From the Yard, you can see its Tudor timber and brick construction; recently some timbers were dated to 1493.

In the 18th Century, a brick front was added whilst, in the Victorian period, the front was rendered, and decorative bargeboards installed. Finally, in the 20th Century, a large glass window was added for an Italian Restaurant. Now walk uphill from the back of Tiger Yard to exit onto Union Street between some mid-twentieth century flats.

Behind the brick wall opposite, and just visible through the trees, is Dove House (11). Now a care home, it is an early 18th Century brick house – although the large central chimney may indicate that this house was built around an earlier one. Turn left and walk carefully around the steps to No 24 Union Street (12). Built around 1770, the outside is virtually unchanged and is a good example of a provincial builder's response to national trends in domestic architecture. It has been owned by some of the Town's prominent entrepreneurs: Barbara Ford who successfully ran her husband's malting business after his death in 1788; and later Richard Cooper, who set up Cooper's Corset Factory in 1864.

Continue along Union Street and enter Belle Vue Road and look across the road to see a water pump (13) on the pavement opposite. Not in its original position, this pump was placed here as a memorial to Captain Holland (RN), who lived in Ashbourne Hall between 1852 and 1858. At a time when there was no piped water and public water supplies were often contaminated, Captain Holland was instrumental in providing clean water by street water pumps for the townsfolk. The author Elizabeth Gaskell (*Cranford & North and South*) was his cousin and came to stay with him at Ashbourne Hall.

Walk past Vine Cottage at the entrance to Vine Yard – a modern yard with new houses that continues the tradition of building on gardens in the Town centre – and continue alongside a row of Victorian workers' cottages to reach a large red brick building at No 42 – the Old Gaol (14). Built in 1844 as the Town Lock-Up with cells to accommodate four prisoners under the control of a full-time keeper – the Town's first policeman. To the left of the Old Gaol is a driveway and path. Walk down the path (not the drive to 40A & 40B), to enter Smith's Yard (15). This yard housed higher-status families than most of the other yards in the Town. It gives a good view over the roofs of the houses on Church Street, and you pass a garden on the west side of the Yard, once the site of a brass foundry and clock manufacturer.

Continue downhill and exit the Yard onto Church Street. The timber-framed antique shop on your right was once the Old Bear Inn (16). On the other side of the road is the Methodist Chapel (17), built between 1879 and 1881 to replace an earlier Chapel in Compton. The new chapel has a distinctive renaissance-style front decorated with terracotta panels and friezes. It was the work of architect John Wills, whose Derby practice specialised in non-conformist chapels and produced lavish designs where money was available. Not everyone appreciated his design: the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner described the chapel as a "pretentious eyesore".

Cross the road carefully and turn left back towards the town centre, to pass Tyler & Coates Yard (18). Look down the yard to see a garage made from railway trucks – a reminder of the time when Ashbourne had a railway station. Continue along Church Street to the Clergy Widows Almshouses 1768-1770 (19), which are grouped around a courtyard behind a set of railings. These were built under the will of Nicholas Spalden for "the widows of 4 clergymen of the Church of England". A legal dispute over his will in the Courts of Chancery delayed their building for over 50 years. It is now six flats.

The White Hart (20), now offices, was one of Ashbourne's coaching inns with stabling for horses and a malthouse in its narrow yard. It was also the site of a cockpit, where cockfighting would take place. Local gentry would gamble, often large sums, on the outcome. On the corner with Dig Street is the Corner House now Avanti Jewellers. Note the Corner House Clock (21) which uses the name of the building rather than numbers. In 1822, Arkwright Toplis and Co – who already had a bank in Wirksworth – converted the building into a bank. The son of inventor and entrepreneur Richard Arkwright, Richard Arkwright Junior's interest lay mainly in banking, investments in government bonds and the accumulation of land. In 1804, he became a partner in the Bank and, in 1829 after the death of John Toplis, he took complete control. It was a small but highly profitable business. When he died in 1843, he was believed to be the richest commoner in Britain.

Cross Church Street at the Traffic lights and continue to the bottom of Victoria Square (22). Look across the road to the Green Man Royal Hotel (23) and its gallows sign. The Green Man was built in the 1750s to service the growing coaching trade in Ashbourne and was the Town's premier coaching inn. In the 1830s, Princess (later Queen) Victoria stopped here for a comfort break on her tour around Britain. The railways brought a final end to the coaching trade, but the Green Man continued to be a centre of social activities until its closure as a hotel in 2012. It has recently been redeveloped as a bar and a restaurant.

In Victoria Square, look for the mounting block (24) used to help people into carriages or onto horses. The nearby lamp post (25) was originally erected at the bottom of Buxton Hill when gas lighting was introduced in the 1840s. It was moved to its present position when the road was widened and now, powered by electricity, is a memorial to the local businessmen who founded the Ashbourne Gas Company.

Walk up the slope to return to your starting place. We hope you enjoyed your tour. If you have the time, there is plenty more to see and do in Ashbourne – interesting buildings, more hidden yards & alleyways, and independent shops, along with cafes and pubs – so go and explore.

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Town Walk 3:
Aldi / Waterside to Town Centre and back

This is a round trip walk from Aldi / Waterside to the town centre and back again, avoiding the worst of the main roads. There are steps and unsurfaced paths. 2.2m / 3.5 kms. Allow 50 minutes plus time for shopping / eating / drinking. This walk was written in June 2021.

DIRECTIONS

1. This walk starts from the Waterside car park (2a or 2b) or from Aldi (2c).

2a. If the weather is dry, then walk to the very end of the car park and go down the side of HomeBase – you will meet an obvious footpath which you follow for a few yards until it meets a tarmac path.

2b. The path at 2a can get very muddy so in wet weather leave the car park via the main road entrance, turn right and follow the pavement round onto Carnation Way. Just before you reach Aldi there is a pedestrian island crossing point over the main road – do not take it – but look for a tarmac path sloping down to your right.

2c. Starting from Aldi car park, head towards the main road and cross over via the pedestrian island crossing point. Turn left and immediately look for a tarmac path on your right.

3. Take the tarmac path which zigzags right then left down through some trees into a field. Follow this tarmac path, which crosses and re-crosses the stream, until it reaches the edge of the hospital grounds, where it forks.

4. Take the left fork which soon turns into an unmade footpath alongside the brook behind the hospital. This path brings you out to a car park near the leisure centre.

5. Turn left and cross the brook 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.

6. 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.

7. Shortly after Dig Street you will see a cobbled square on the opposite side of the road, with an old gas lamppost at the bottom. Cross over the road and walk up the left hand side of the cobbled square. In the narrow section (before you reach the main market place) go through the square archway on your left and follow the alleyway uphill to reach Union Street.

8. Turn left and walk straight ahead – in a few moments Union Street bends right but you carry straight on into Belle Vue Road.

9. Keep looking left for where the houses end a field starts – at this point you will see some steps going downhill towards the Church. Go down these steps.

10. At the bottom of the steps turn right and walk along Mayfield Road. When you reach the cemetery, cross over and go into a small stony car park. Turn right in this car park and follow the short path to the Shrovetide statue and information board.

11. Retrace your steps back to the car park and turn right crossing a low level plank bridge over the brook. You are now back on the tarmac path in step 3 above. Turn right and retrace your steps back to your starting point.

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Country Walk 1:
Atlow Moat

A quiet walk along the Henmore Valley to the hamlet of Atlow offering lovely views across the valley to the hills beyond, and plenty of picnic places and a scheduled ancient monument. If lucky you could see kingfishers and otters. Be warned, the Henmore Valley can be muddy in places, and the route is not well waymarked. 13 km (optional short route 8 km). Allow half a day for full route.

DIRECTIONS

1. Start from the Shawcroft car park. Note the brick plinth where the annual Shrovetide Football is "turned up" (starts). Cross the road by the pedestrian crossing and go into the park up the sloping pathway in front of you. Follow the perimeter path around the left hand side of the park. Immediately after the bust of Catherine Booth (the Mother of the Salvation Army, who was born in the town) turn left and exit the park.
2. Turn right along Cockayne Avenue. Just after Cockayne Mews take the road to the right towards the school playing fields.
3. At the next road turn left, then right at a footpath sign, passing behind the pavilion to reach a hedge. Turn right and follow the hedge to a gap in the hedge. Cross the footbridge and go ahead between the sports pitches to reach a gate in the hedge opposite.
4. Continue in the same direction through two more gates to enter a wood and reach a tarmac track. Cross the track and continue in the same general direction through a plantation of poplars.
5. Leave the plantation at a gate and go ahead through a gap in the hedge line. Continue in the same direction through a gate to reach a gate in the corner of a field.
6. Continue across the field to a gate in the hedge about one third of its length along from the left hand corner. Cross the next field bearing slightly left to a gate and continue ahead, with the Henmore Brook on your right, over 2 small footbridges, a gate, another footbridge and a stile. Bear slightly uphill to a hedge gap before descending to a footbridge in the bottom right hand corner of the field.
7. Turn right and shortly left on a tarmac road with a No Through Road sign. (To shorten the walk, keep right on the road, over Agnes Meadow Bridge on the Henmore Brook and past Corley Farm, where the longer walk rejoins).
8. In 50m, go right through a gate and cross the field ahead bearing left to another gate. Bear slightly left to a stile in a slight depression.
9. Continue in the same direction to find a stile next to a field gate, partially hidden by a tree. Walk past a ruined building, ignore the track going left and cross a stile next to a field gate ahead.
10. Walk alongside the Henmore Brook through 2 fields to reach a footbridge. Cross the footbridge and continue to walk along the brook, picking a line with the least mud through a number of hedgerows and passing a ruined building to reach a footbridge taking you back over the brook.
11. Cross the brook and turn right to follow a permissive footpath around Atlow Moat to a footbridge over a small stream. Atlow Moat is a scheduled ancient monument and a good example of a medieval moated homestead.
12. Go straight ahead to reach another footbridge over the Henmore Brook. Cross the bridge and head straight uphill towards the church, picking your way carefully over the wet ground to reach a squeeze stile on your left into Atlow Churchyard. Exit by the Church gates and turn right onto the road.

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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.

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.

DISCOVER
ASHBOURNE

Country Walk 4:
Sturston Hall and Bradley Wood

An easy walk in the Henmore Valley, visiting Sturston Hall and Bradley Wood with optional diversion to the Shrovetide goal. 6 kms. Allow 1.5 hours.

DIRECTIONS

1. Start from Shawcroft car park. Note the brick plinth where the annual Shrovetide Football is "turned up" (starts). Cross the road by the pedestrian crossing and follow the path left then right over the flood defence bank into the park. Cross over a wooden footbridge alongside the pond (originally one of the fishponds for Ashbourne Hall).
2. Follow the path ahead to another footbridge but do not cross it. Turn right to follow the river bank along the edge of the sports field.
3. At the end of the sports field cross a step stile on a wooden fence (ignore the stile on the right). Continue to follow the river bank. At a weir and sluice gate go across a small stream and pass through a hedge. After one more hedge go diagonally across the field to the edge of the new housing estate. Go through the gate into the estate and proceed straight ahead, slightly uphill. Where the road turns right go ahead through the gate into the field. Turn left and follow the track alongside the hedge for about 100 metres.
4. Go through the narrow squeeze stile and walk alongside the hedge to reach another stile by a cottage. Walk straight ahead along Mill Lane for about 800 metres to reach Sturston Hall. There was a moated hall near here in the 14th Century and the present Hall was built in about 1650. (If you want to see the Sturston goal for the Shrovetide Football match, turn left and walk through Sturston Mill Farm to reach a footbridge over the Henmore Brook. The goal is on the left bank just upstream of the bridge. Then retrace your steps to Sturston Hall).
5. Facing Sturston Hall, turn right through a field gate to follow a rough track, initially uphill. Go right across a cattle grid and a second one just before the A517. Cross the road carefully (beware of fast moving traffic) to enter Bradley Wood (given to the people of Ashbourne in 1935 by Captain Fitzherbert Wright). Walk 50m into the wood on a narrow path to reach a crossing track. Turn right to follow this track to the corner of the Wood where there are two commemorative benches. Alternatively you can pick your own route through the wood using one of the many other paths to reach the same corner.
6. Cross the road (again with care) and turn left to walk along the grass verge to reach a lane on the right (Mill Lane). Turn right and follow the lane past an electricity substation. Where the lane turns right you go left alongside the cottage. You are now retracing your steps from the way out.
7. At the end of the cottage cross a stile alongside a field gate and follow the hedge line straight ahead. At the end of the field squeeze through a narrow stile and turn left to proceed for 100 metres. Go through the gate into the estate and go straight ahead slightly downhill. Go through the gate out of the estate and proceed diagonally across the field towards Henmore Brook.
8. Turn left and follow the brook back to the park sports fields. Cross the wooden footbridge by the pond, the flood protection bank and the pedestrian crossing to return to Shawcroft car park.

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

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