

Roam Around Ashover

ABOUT THIS WALK A circular walk from the centre of the main village of Ashover. For a snapshot of village history try the fascinating **Ashover Village Audio Trail** which can be downloaded as an MP3 file.

WHERE DO I START? Right outside the front door of YE OLD TUCK SHOP in Ashover (but please don't park there!)

ARE THERE ANY MOUNTAINS TO CLIMB? If you can walk upstairs to bed, you should manage this and you could always turn around or take an alternative route!

WILL I MEET ANY DODGY ANIMALS? Well, you will probably meet other human beings.....You may see buzzards or kingfishers (if you're very lucky) and lots of different birds. There may be rabbits, a cow or two or a couple of horses and the odd sheep. The dragonflies will be about in late summer but the badgers will usually be asleep.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE? Allow an hour but to really enjoy, take longer.

WHERE SHOULD I LEAVE MY CAR? Please use the large village car park – up the hill and turn right at the Black Swan and then 100 metres on your right.

The Walk

As you leave the shop, cross the road and turn left up the hill. Pass the first place where you could sit down for a rest (there are two benches on your right but it's a bit early for that yet!) and look out for the replica village pump that the village won some years ago in a television quiz show. As you walk up the hill, enjoy a good look at the village church (All Saints Parish Church built from 1350 onwards) – better still, go in!

Take a right turn opposite the Crispin Inn (read all about it on the outside) and follow the wide path that leads past the Bassett Rooms. This was a former girls' school built in 1877 and now the parish rooms and yes, there is a connection here to the Liquorish Allsorts sweets: the Miss Bassetts and their father were village benefactors. Continue onto the 'Show Fields'. The Ashover Show was revived in 1925 and has a growing reputation. It still sticks to the second Wednesday in August for its show day, attracting crowds of at least 12,000.

Keep following the path and look out for the cricket pavilion to your left, on the other side of the wall. The club was founded in 1874 and is still thriving.

The path keeps straight on through a series of slit stiles and fields, until you enter a wood. The path is well defined, so you shouldn't lose it. When you reach the wood, continue to follow the path but look out for the quarry to your right and be aware that any deviation to the left might get you well stuck in one of the former settling ponds. Immediately on leaving the wood, turn right to follow the edge of the quarry (one of many in the area and this one's well fenced) and then along the right hand edge of a small field.

You leave the field by some steps straight down onto a fairly busy road, where the speed differential between the walker and the motorist is very evident! You should turn immediately right along the road for about 40 metres before crossing to follow a little lane down to the Fall Mill, which was built in 1731. At various times grain was ground here and also fluorspar: the two together might have made for a very special baking of bread!

Having viewed the mill, turn so that the River Amber is on your right and follow the path to cross the river and then up some steps. Turn right and cross over the railway tracks, which are a few rails left from the Ashover Light Railway, which was built in 1922 and closed in 1950. The locos and track were army surplus from the First World War, and some were used on the Western Front.

Look for the lane to your right and follow it down to Demonsdale Farm. Follow the track between the farm buildings to your right and the wooden building to your left and go through a wooden gate. This opens onto a path along the banks of the Amber. You will cross over a lovely stone bridge and just before the path swings from the river bank, you will see the foundations for one of the railway bridges of the Ashover Light Railway. You now climb up a short sharp hill onto the road opposite Leonard Wheatcroft Cottage. Turn left here and follow the lane back to your starting point - and a cake or ice cream or drink or souvenirs

The thin line of trees you see on the hillside across the Amber is the Great Eastern Plantation. It was planted in 1858 and is the same length, breadth and shape as Brunel's great ship – not surprisingly by far the largest in the world when it was launched: it still looks huge today.

This walk was devised by Richard Felton. We hope you enjoyed it, perhaps the first of many around Ashover. If you want to try more, a book of 6 detailed walks around the parish is available from local shops for £3 or direct from Richard - we'll pass any **email** requests on to him. **All** sale proceeds go towards footpath improvement.

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