

6-8 miles

VISIT
PEAK DISTRICT
& DERBYSHIRE

Peek into the Past

South Derbyshire Walk

A easy 6 mile walk, with far reaching views, to the tranquil riverside village of Swarkestone - through a landscape carved through by river, canal and railway.

Parking

In car park in Melbourne town centre.

Refreshments on route

Crewe and Harpur pub at Swarkestone.

If starting from Melbourne, begin route at point A. If starting from Stanton by Bridge begin route at point C. If starting from Weston-on-Trent follow the canal towpath to join the walk at Sarson's Bridge'.

A

Leave the Market Place and head down Church Street towards the Parish Church past the Spirit & Vaults Pub. Turn left into Castle Street and right into Castle Lane (beyond Castle Farm) then immediately left into The Lilypool. Walk right along Station Road for a couple of hundred yards then left into Jawbone Lane. At the crossroads with the village cross in Kings Newton go straight over down Trent Lane.

Kings Newton may be an older settlement than the present day town of Melbourne. And an important Anglo Saxon cremation cemetery was discovered here in 1867.

Just before a railway bridge veer left down to the railway track, turn left and walk along the track (once a branch line between Derby and Ashby, but closed in 1973), watching out for bikes, as this is a cycle route too. A few hundred yards past the viaduct over the River Trent leave the track (to the left) and head down towards the canal bank. Turn left along the Trent and Mersey canal (completed here in 1777) and walk for just over a mile until you reach a canal bridge just after a canal mileage marker.

Climb the track by the bridge and turn left along a path which almost immediately takes a turn right across a field. Follow this well marked way for about half a mile to the Bullring at Swarkestone - an unexpected and amazing sight in this location.

Sometimes called the Balcony, the Stand, the Pavilion, the Bullring or Bowl Abbey House, this strange building rivals the bridge as Swarkestone's best known structure. It was built in 1632 in the style of John Smythson, who was partly responsible for the rebuilding of William Cavendish's fairy tale castle at Bolsover. It served mainly as a grandstand for the bowling green in the rectangular walled enclosure in front (known as 'The Cuttle'), a pavilion to retire to after feasts at nearby

Swarkestone Hall (demolished), home of the Harpur family before Calke Abbey. It has been restored by the Landmark Trust who let it as a holiday property.

B

From the Bullring head to the back of the parish church, passing on your left the 'Tith Barn', now a house it's gardens back onto the site of the Elizabethan hall and the walled enclosures once housed gardens.

Swarkestone church was virtually rebuilt in the 1870s, however the 15th century tower and Harpur Chapel are from an earlier building. The font and fragments in the east aisle wall are Norman. Cross the churchyard and turn left at its entrance gate, ignoring the footpath sign on the other side of the road. Head towards the River Trent and at the riverbank turn right and head for the Crewe and Harpur pub.

Turn left onto the Georgian bridge and turn right down road signed to Ingleby. You will shortly see a stile on the left by the entrance to the sailing club. Follow the tarmac road (until it veers into the Club) alongside Swarkestone Causeway. Swarkestone Causeway is a scheduled ancient monument $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long, dating mainly from the 13th and 14th century.

Do not turn right towards the club, but take the metal gate in front of you and pick up the path alongside a stream that heads west away from the last arches of the bridge. Mount a stile and continue on the path ignoring the first stile on your left. At the second stile, head uphill and into Stanton by Bridge.

C

Visit the Anglo Saxon church here if you have time, then head east uphill along the main street until you reach the main road. Cross with care and turn right towards Melbourne. After 200 yards, turn left through a metal gate and head towards the Victorian pumping station. Almost immediately join a footpath to the right uphill towards an electricity pylon. Follow this path until it meets a track coming up from the Causeway and keep on this 'ladders' track into Kings Newton. Turn right along the main road - within a few yards a finger post points to Melbourne. Follow this by the backs of the houses and market gardens until you reach Derby Road. Turn left and head back into Melbourne

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