

1.6 miles (2.5 km)

# VISIT PEAK DISTRICT & DERBYSHIRE



Ashbourne

## Heritage Highlights of Ashbourne Walk

This easy circular walk takes in the heritage highlights of Ashbourne in less than 2 miles, walking on well-made paths, streets and lanes, with no steps or stiles. Ashbourne is a town steeped in history; it was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and has had a thriving market since the 13th Century. During the Georgian period it was a popular stopover point for travellers, with no fewer than six coaching routes converging here, including the important London to Manchester route. It's no surprise, then, to find evidence of centuries of rich history literally around every corner.

### Start/Finish Point & Parking

The route starts and ends at Shawcroft Car Park (DE6 1GD; [///blotting.tries.funky](http://blotting.tries.funky)) accessible from the A515, Park Road.

### Directions

Walk out of the car park in an easterly direction, heading towards Park Road. Before leaving the car park take a few moments to look at the red brick **Shrovetide Football Plinth (1)** close to the entrance.

Cross over Park Road carefully at the pedestrian crossing and turn left to walk into **Ashbourne Park (2)**. The park is well laid out with level paths and it's pleasant to walk around if you have time. Turn right where the path forks and then left before the tennis court to find the statue of Catherine Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army, who was born in Ashbourne in 1829.

Exit the park by way of the large Memorial Gates to emerge onto Cockayne Avenue. Cross over the road and turn left to walk along St John Street into the town centre. The red brick Georgian building on the corner of St John Street is **Madge House (3)**.

After approx 100 metres, take the road on the right and walk up the slight hill towards the cobbled Market Place. You might wish to visit the **Ashbourne Museum and Visitor Information Centre (4)** which is located in the Town Hall on your right just beyond the red telephone box. (Please note that there are 7 steps into the building.) Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing just beyond the Museum to enter the historic **Market Place (5)**.

From the Market Place walk down either side of Ye Old Vaults pub to enter the smaller cobbled area of **Victoria Square (6)**. Walk through Victoria Square to emerge back onto St John Street and turn right.

Cross the road and then take the first road on the left, Dig Street, just beyond The Bank pub. Along Dig Street you will see the old **Ashbourne Workhouse (7)** and also **Compton House (8)**. Turn right into King Edward Street, just after Compton House (now Lloyd's Bank).

Continue straight on to the T-junction at the end of the road and turn left onto Station Road. After approx 150 metres you'll reach another T-junction. Straight ahead of you is the **Old Derbyshire Constabulary Building (9)**, dating from 1857.

Turn right onto Station Street. After approx 120 metres, turn right again into Leisure Way. Before turning, take the time to look ahead to the old **Railway Engine House and Goods Shed (10)**, built in 1852.

Walk straight on for approx 50 metres and then turn right at the T-junction, heading to Ashbourne Leisure Centre. Just before the Leisure Centre, turn left into School Lane. After approx 75 metres, turn left again towards the church car park but take the footpath on the right just before the entrance. At the end of the footpath are the **Spalden's Almshouses (11)**, built in 1710.

Continue following the footpath into the grounds of **St Oswald's Church (12)**. If you have time, it's well worth taking a diversion left to look inside the church, which has step-free access.

Walk out of the church yard through the main gates and turn right. Walk straight on along Church Street, ignoring the entrance to School Lane on the right just beyond the church. Church Street is lined with fascinating old buildings, so keep your eyes peeled on both sides of the road. Highlights include: **The Old Grammar School (13)**, **The Mansion (14)**, **Owlfield's Almshouses (15)** and the **Clergy Widows' Almshouses (16)**.

Continue walking along Church Street back into the centre of Ashbourne, and continue straight on when Church Street becomes St John Street. Look out for **The Green Man and Black's Head Royal Hotel (17)** and the **Ashbourne Gingerbread Shop (18)** on the right.

Continue straight on along St John Street and turn right after Madge House, returning to the car park and your starting point on the right after approx 100 metres.

## Ashbourne

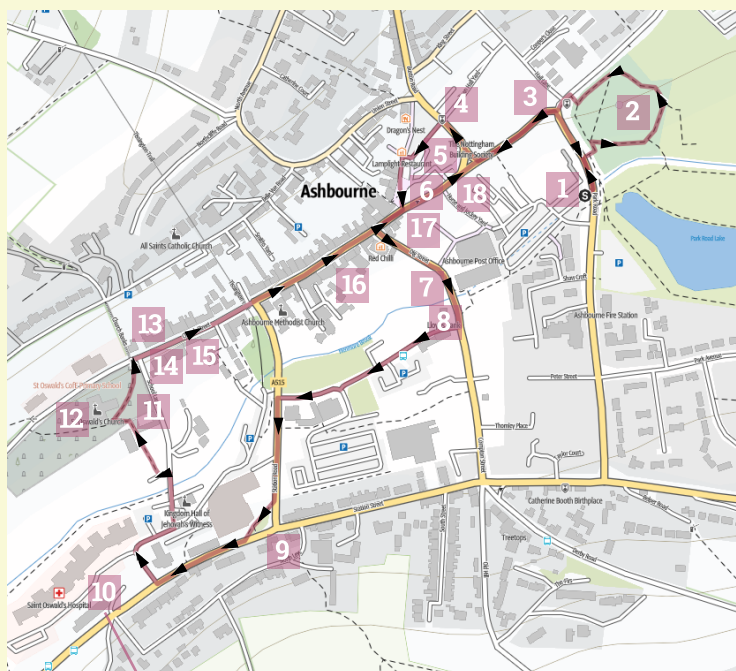
### Heritage Highlights of Ashbourne Walk



The red brick building on the corner of St John Street is **Madge House (3)**. It was once a Girls' School founded by Erasmus Darwin in 1794. Grandfather of Charles, Erasmus Darwin was a physician, poet, inventor and botanist, as well as one of the key thinkers of the Enlightenment period. He was critical of the limited education offered to girls at the time and created the school for his daughters to pass on his ideas to the young women of the area.

**Ashbourne Park (2)** was noted on the first map of the town in 1547. In 1645 Charles I's Royalist army of 3,000 men camped here, and 100 years later so did Bonnie Prince Charlie's army of 6,000 men when he stopped en route to London. More recently, it was where the West German football team practised in 1966 before losing to England in the World Cup.

**Ashbourne Museum and Visitor Information Centre (4)** is well worth a visit. Inside you'll find a wealth of interesting memorabilia from historical Ashbourne, including many of the decorated balls from past Royal Shrovetide Football matches.



Ashbourne was granted its Market Charter in 1257, although there are records of a market here since 1200, with merchants selling cows, pigs, sheep, horses and grain. The original buildings in the **Market Place (5)** and **Victoria Square (6)** would have been small, timber-framed buildings, and most of the taller, grander structures you see today were built in the Georgian period when Ashbourne became a large, prosperous town. Some older buildings still remain, however; what is now the Fish & Chip Shop has been dated to 1420, the building that now houses the Lamplight Restaurant dates from 1493, albeit with a brick front built onto its original structure, and the building that is now The Horns pub dates from 1535.

The red brick **Shrovetide Football Plinth (1)** is where the ball is 'turned up' (thrown into play) each year for the annual Royal Shrovetide Football match in Ashbourne. This ancient game has been played in the town every Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday since at least 1667. It involves hundreds of players, with one half of the town (the Up'ards) playing the other half (the Down'ards). The goals are 3 miles apart and the large ball, which is traditionally painted by local craftspeople, can be kicked, carried or thrown through the streets.



On St John Street look out for **The Green Man and Black's Head Royal Hotel (17)**, built in the 1750s as a coaching inn, and also the lovely **Ashbourne Gingerbread Shop (18)**, which dates from 1492 and has been a bakery since 1805.



The **Old Derbyshire Constabulary Building (9)** dates from 1857, when the Derbyshire Constabulary was first formed. At that time it employed 156 men with eight divisions in Ashbourne, Bakewell, Belper, Chesterfield, Derby, Glossop, Melbourne and Matlock.

Undoubtedly one of the grandest churches in Derbyshire, **St Oswald's Church (12)** has a graceful spire that is 212 feet high and can be seen for miles throughout the town and surrounding countryside. A church on this site was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 although the church as you see it today dates from the early 1200s. The brass consecration plate of 1241 is believed to be the oldest in Britain. It has a beautiful interior with bright stained glass windows and three chapels dedicated to important local families, all of which contain impressive monuments and statues.

The former **Railway Engine House and Goods Shed (10)** was built in 1852. The Ashbourne to Hartington section of the North Staffordshire Railway closed in 1963 and this is now the only surviving railway building.

The **Spalden's Almshouses (11)** were built in 1710 'for ten poor men'. They were constructed on the instruction of Nicholas Spalden (1650-1713), a wealthy Coach Harness Maker who lived in London but was born in Ashbourne. He also left provisions in his will for each of the alms-people to be paid a weekly sum of 2s 6d, and to be given a new serge gown, worth 20s, every year on St Thomas's Day.



Pause on Dig Street and look over the bridge across Henmore Brook. What is now the rear section of The Bridge pub was once the **Ashbourne Workhouse (7)**, closed in 1846. The low windows show just how close the rooms were to the water, and flooding was a common problem. Just beyond the bridge look out for **Compton House (8)**, now a bank. This elegant stone house was built in the 1760s for a local attorney, Francis Beresford, and was designed by a renowned Derbyshire architect, Joseph Pickford. Pickford also designed The Mansion on Church Street.



The **Old Grammar School (13)** was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1585. It was opened in 1603 for the education of boys aged 6-9 and remained in use for 300 years until a new school was built in 1903. **The Mansion (14)** opposite was built in the 1680s by an Ashbourne attorney, Benjamin Taylor, and was once used as accommodation for the grammar school's Headmaster. Whilst on Church Street look out for the low stone terrace of **Owfield's Almshouses (15)** founded in 1640, and the elegant red brick **Clergy Widows' Almshouses (16)**, built in 1755, again thanks to Nicholas Spalden.

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