

Ashbourne (Three routes: 3.1 miles/4.9km, 4 miles/6.4km, or 4.1 miles/6.6km)

At A Glance

- Distance: 4.1 miles/6.6 km (max)
- Time: 1-2 hours
- Grade: Moderate ●●●○●
- Terrain: Trails, field paths and country lanes
- Accessibility: Uneven ground, steps, stiles and gates
- Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL24

This walk provides an alternative scenic route into the wonderful ancient market town of Ashbourne, taking you along quiet trails, field paths and country lanes. Ashbourne is a great place for a day out, offering a wide range of well known and independent shops, as well as plenty of cafes, restaurants and pubs, all in a setting of historic charm. There are three options for the return route depending on the time you have available.

1. Leave the park by the main exit and carefully cross the road to join the lane immediately opposite (Spend Lane), signposted for Thorpe, Dovedale and Ilam. Take care walking along this lane as there are a few short sections with no pavement, but it is usually quiet.



2. After approx 500 metres look out for a large railway bridge across the road. Immediately before the bridge go through the wooden hand gate on the right hand side and take the path that twists up a set of steps and emerges on to the Tissington Trail. Turn left on the Tissington Trail and walk along this peaceful former railway track.

3. After approx 1km you will go through a series of gates and cross a wide bridge over Bentley Brook. Continue on the trail, ignoring paths off. After a further 350 metres you will reach a large Bike Hire Centre. Immediately after passing the buildings on your left, turn right and walk through the car park to reach a quiet road (Mapleton Road). Turn left on the road and head up a slight hill.

4. After approx 100 metres, as you draw level with the 30mph speed sign, take a footpath that heads up a set of steps on your right. Follow this clear path between hedges until you reach a gate. Go through the gate and continue straight on, now walking to the left edge of a field, with a hedge on your left and beautiful open views to your right.



5. Go through a further gate and walk for approx 250 metres, before taking a footpath on your left through a wooden hand gate in the hedge. Follow this clear path under trees and between houses, before reaching a further wooden hand gate to emerge onto a metalled lane.

6. Follow the metalled lane downhill until you reach a road. Cross straight over the road and take the path immediately opposite that heads downhill. Be aware that the surface of this path can be slippery, particularly after wet weather, so it's advisable to use the handrail provided.



7. The path emerges onto Mayfield Road in Ashbourne, immediately opposite the beautiful St Oswald's Church. Turn left and follow this road as it leads you directly into the town centre.

8. As you walk into the town centre on Mayfield Road (which becomes Church Street) look out for the numerous historic buildings and landmarks that you will pass along the way, including the Grammar School on your left (founded in 1585) and the Alms Houses on your right (built in 1640).

For more information about what to see and do in Ashbourne, go to the Visitor Information Centre in Town Hall Yard (opposite the market place), postcode DE6 1ES.



9. When you have finished exploring, shopping and dining in Ashbourne, there are three options for you to return back to the park, depending on your time and energy levels.

9a. **Option 1** (3.1 miles) is to return to the park directly along the main road (A515). This is the quickest, shortest route back and there is a pavement for the whole way, although the road is very busy and be aware that the path is narrow in places.

9b. **Option 2** (4 miles) is simply to retrace your steps and walk back on the Tissington Trail.

9c. **Option 3** (4.1 miles) is to return to the park along quiet lanes and field paths. This option is peaceful and scenic, but please be aware that there are a few step stiles to cross as well as uneven ground which may be muddy.

10. If you wish to follow **Option 1** and walk back to the park along the A515, walk out of Ashbourne on the clearly-signed A515 (Buxton Road), with the market place on your left and the Visitor Information Centre on your right. Bear right to walk uphill and out of the town. There is a pavement alongside this road all the way back. You will find the entrance to the park on your right after approx 0.8 miles (1.3 km).

11. For **Option 2**, return along Mayfield Road and take the path opposite St Oswald's Church that leads uphill. Cross over the road and take the metalled lane that you reached at point 8. Simply reverse the directions overleaf to return to the park.



12. For **Option 3**, walk out of Ashbourne on the clearly signed A515 (Buxton Road) and follow the road as it bears right. On reaching the top of the hill, turn right on Windmill Lane, opposite the Bowling Green Inn. Follow this quiet residential lane past houses and into the countryside.

13. After just over 1km, take the public footpath clearly marked on the left that leads down the driveway to Green House Farm (Coldeaton Jersey Dairy). Go through the gate beside the cattle grid and walk down towards the farm cafe and car park. Immediately after passing the car park, turn right and then almost immediately left over a stile, following the footpath signs. Do not continue straight on into the farmyard.

14. Walk through the field to the right of the farmhouse and straight on into the next field via another stile. Follow the path straight on, keeping the hedge on your right. At the bottom of the field cross a small stream by way of a little plank footbridge, and then bear left to emerge through trees into another field.

15. Bear slightly diagonally right as you cross this field to find a stile within the hedge to the right of a tall ash tree (it's quite well hidden so keep your eyes peeled!). Cross the stile and then turn left to follow the clear path down to the corner of the field.

16. Go through a wooden squeeze stile and then follow a clear path straight on across the next two fields, crossing a further stile on the way. Go through a wide metal gate to enter a final field, with views across to the 19th Century Sandybrook Hall on your right. There are some wonderfully carved wooden seats here if you're in need of a rest!



17. Go straight on across the final field, to cross a stream via a narrow footbridge and then onwards over a ladder stile to meet the road (A515).

18. Turn right on the road and walk with care along the pavement, to find the park on your right after approx 250 metres.

Along the way...

The Tissington Trail

The Tissington Trail is a traffic-free trail that runs for 13 miles from Parsley Hay in the north to Ashbourne in the south. It follows the route of the former railway line between Buxton and Ashbourne, opened in 1899, operated by the London and North Western Railway.

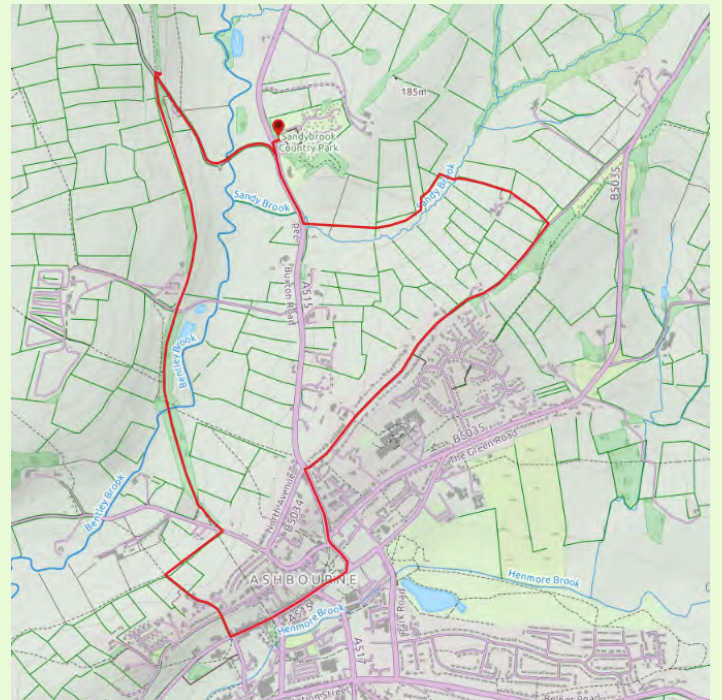
Ashbourne

Ashbourne is a wonderful town steeped in history. It was granted a market charter in 1257 and a market still takes place here twice a week in the cobbled market square.

The magnificent church of St Oswald's (which you pass at point 7) dates from around 1220, and its 215ft tall spire dominates the town skyline.

During the Georgian period Ashbourne was a popular stopover point for travellers, with 6 major coaching routes all converging here. As a result you'll find many fine Georgian houses and coaching inns in the town, the most famous of which is probably the Green Man and Black's Head Royal Hotel, built in the 1750s. As well as providing hungry travellers with food and ale (which is still does very well), it also served as the local Magistrates and County Court.

Ashbourne is famed for the ancient tradition of Royal Shrovetide Football, played every Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday since the 1150s. It involves hundreds of players, with one half of the town playing against the other half. The goals are 3 miles apart and the large ball can be kicked, carried or thrown through the streets.



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