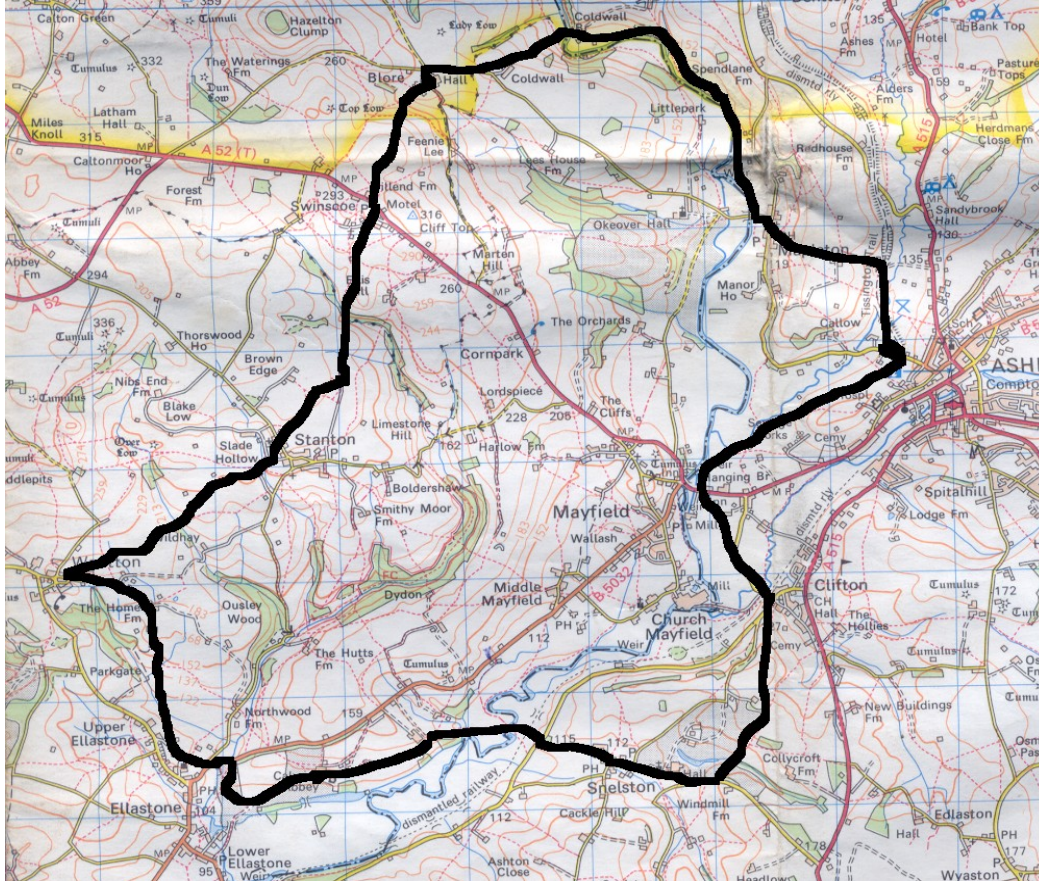


WALK 10.
ASHBOURNE 10.
17.7 miles. 5 hours 45 minutes.
Map SK. 04/14



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Start at the Mapleton Lane car park Ashbourne, (Peak National Park) on the Tissington Trail where the tunnel is blocked (176469). Turn left and go uphill for 200 yards then turn right up some stone steps and walk along a narrow path that is sometimes almost completely overgrown with nettles. In 150 yards, there is a stile of sorts, then, in a field, go SW with a hedge on one's left to a good wooden slot stile in a thorn hedge in front; then continue SW with the hedge on left to a gap in a hedge, no stile. In 150 yards, there is another gap in a hedge, then go downhill to a large gap in a hedge. Walk 200 yards close to the hedge on one's left until a good wooden slot stile is reached in a hedge. Once over this, walk downhill towards the brook, then walk with brook on right to a double wooden stile in a wire fence. Walk SW with the stream on right and ignore the footbridge. Continue along pleasant level ground to a good wooden slot stile in a fence. In 50 yards, there is a gap in a fence; go through this, turn sharp left and make for the raised embankment. Walk W on the embankment to the River Dove; go left over a wooden step stile, then proceed S close to the river on the right. Pass the weir; go through a scrap yard, then emerge on to the road near the bridge at Mayfield (159457).

Cross the road to a small car park at the side of a garage. Make for the far left corner where there is a wooden slot stile that leads into a field through which go SSE. Holme

Field Farm is to the left, and a mill stands on the river to the right. In 30 yards to the right of the farm is a tree and an open gateway, no stile or gate: go through this in the same direction across the next field to a good gritstone slot stile in a hedge, then over a minute stream, and across the field SSE to a gate where there is a sign post and a poor slot stile (162451). The road is Watery Lane; turn right and walk 200 yards SSE then enter a field on the left by a farm gate and make for a prominent and substantial footbridge which leads into a small field where stands a monolith bearing the inscription: "This stone marks the site of old Clifton Mill and is one of the goals in the Shrovetide ball game. Nestle and Co.1968".

Go out on to the road via a stile at (164448) then turn left to walk E past old station and signal box on one's right to a crossroads in about 50 yards where you turn right to go SE for 30 yards, then go left through a wooden stile in to a field. There is a signpost here. Go S to the far left corner of this field to a slot stile, a holly tree on the right; then go uphill through the field to Margery Bower, a group of trees, then take the farm gate nearby; this leads to a wide farm lane which is very frequently muddy. The route leads to the Mount Pleasant Farm (163439). Continue to walk S keeping close to the farmhouse on one's right, passing the orchard which is next to the farmhouse, then going through a farm gate. In bad weather the area is quite muddy.

Walk SSW through a clean field, keeping close to the iron fence, arriving, in a few hundred yards, at Gravel Pit Covert (163436) which you enter over wooden bars. Go straight through the trees then emerge at an interesting stile in which a number of bars swivel up and down. Continue in the same direction through Snelston Park, a scene of former glories. Snelston Hall has now gone: it has been described as a spectacular piece of romantic Gothicism built in 1827 and demolished in 1951; only the ruins of a gateway and part of the W window remain. It is pleasant here; walk downhill through the estate landscaped by Cottingham, to a wooden slot stile. In the next field, go diagonally right up to the far hedge and a wooden slot stile on the right of a farm gate, and so out on to a minor road at (159433). Turn right and go W for 10 yards, then climb the bank opposite on one's left to a wooden stile in a holly hedge, then walk SSW across the field to an open gateway in a hedge in front. Turn sharp left and walk with the hedge close on one's left to a hedge where a good wooden step stile is tucked away. Bear right and walk downhill SW to a farm gate, no stile, then down to a farm drive. Turn right: go along a rough drive over a stream and cattle grid, then leave the lane, going right through a farm gate in to a field (157428).

Walk NW at the side of a stream, to a wooden step stile in a hedge, then on through the next field to a footbridge, and out on to a road at (156431). Cross the road to a wooden slot stile, then make for a farm gate, at the side of which is a metal fixture with bars to get over it. Continue in the same direction to a small wooden gate in the far hedge and come out on to a road at (155433) near the church. Turn left to walk W, the church now on the right. Only the tower is old, with diagonal buttresses and battlements, pinnacles and gargoyles. Continue forward: do not turn right up Parkfield Lane. Proceed to the "Snelston

Arms", turn right and go through the village of Snelston, a model village controlled by the big house and designed by Cottingham; the Snelston Arms is in a Tudor style. Leave the village along Littlefield Lane, which leads to a road junction at (146436). Go straight across the road into a field through a gate way, then walk WNW on a farm track, crossing the disused railway to arrive at a farm gate with a slot stile on its left. In 40 yards, cross the river by means of the Toadhole Bridge, then walk W across a large, flat area to the opposite hedge where there is a small wooden stile, and a route across a small stream. Walk WSW to where the river has snaked around to approach the footpath. At this point, a cutting has been made to draw off water from the river through a sluice to form a canal. In 50 yards a fine stone bridge crosses this canal: ignore it and walk with the canal close on one's left, a high bank on the right, (The

Grove). Proceed over the gate in the hedge, then, in 250 yards, go through a small gate and continue with the water away to the left. Ignore a footbridge and come up to a striking building, again a place of memories and departed glory. This area is the site of Calwich Priory, an Augustinian house founded in 1130. Nothing of the Priory remains, nor of the house which was built in 1849-50, but the delightful temple by the river is still there. It must date from 1790. It has a portico of detached columns, Wyatt-type tripartite windows with a blank segmental arch, a copper dome, and a back door with steps down to the water. The dome is surrounded by four little square pinnacles with ball finials (131432). So often, on these walks one stumbles into history: only a little imagination is required to bring back to life the monastery on the banks of the Dove and the exclusion of the monks in 1530 and the conversion of their buildings into a home for John Fleetwood by 1603. The route of the walk passes Wootton Lodge, also built by Sir Richard Fleetwood before 1611 for “heraldic and stylistic reasons” it is said: he had purchased a baronetcy from the King in return for money for the troops in Ulster. For his help Fleetwood was allowed to put the red hand of Ulster on the escutcheon over the great doorway.

— The Fleetwoods died out in the C.18 and Bernard Granville arrived. He pulled down the remains of the monastery, then built himself a new house by the stream which he broadened into a lake. The house was visited by the great: Handel came here often and played the organ he himself designed for Granville, to whom he gave a manuscript copy of his works in 38 volumes.

But it is Rousseau whom we remember for his visit to Wootton Hall from which he came to talk in his native French with Mr Granville in his home here, and to encourage a friendship with Mary Dewes whom he addressed in his letters as the beautiful shepherdess of Calwich. Other accounts have been left to us by Anna Seward of the house that has now vanished, and all we have to remind us is an arched grotto under one of the terraces still called Rousseau’s cave.

From this point, go W uphill to a gap in a wall, then bear left and walk WSW on lane between some houses, then a farmyard on one’s left, and out the other side. There is an interesting derelict house on one’s left that might bear investigating.

Walk W; Portobello Bridge is away to the left. Walk with the trees close on the left, which brings one to an open gateway. Ignore this and go to a farm gate to the right, then proceed through it along a fenced lane, which curves around to the right and passes an old quarry going N to a wooden slot stile in a fence on the right. Go through this into a field, a house on the right, and make for a good gritstone slot stile to the left and out on to the road at (120434). Turn left to walk WSW in to Ellastone, climbing the hill to the Bromley Arms once the Ellastone Old Hall, a fine late C.17 house of five bays with upright two-light windows and a doorway with pilasters.

Ellastone lives in the work of George Eliot whose father Robert Evans spent the early part of his life here. He is the Adam she portrayed so vividly. Her grandfather’s house is still here, so is her father’s carpentry workshop, much altered. Her uncle Samuel’s house has also been rebuilt. In the churchyard is her grandfather’s tombstone. Though much of the Parish Church of St. Peter was rebuilt in the C.19, the tower (perpendicular) was built in 1586, while much of the chancel and chapel date from the Armada. Among its monuments is a medallion portrait of Walter Davenport Bromley whose ancestor invited Rousseau to stay at Wootton Hall for a year; there is a stone in the chancel to Bernard Granville of Calwich Abbey who was frequently visited by Rousseau; also a tomb with the broken figures of John Fleetwood and his wife, who first converted the Abbey into a home 400 years ago. John died in 1590.

We must not forget Gilbert Sheldon who gave Oxford its Sheldonian Theatre. He was born here in 1598, and from this tiny place, he went to London to become Bishop of London, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of Oxford.

Go a little N beyond the church to the school at (116435) then turn right at a signpost to Wootton. Walk W through the houses and take a slot stile on the left of a cattle grid; go past a stone cottage, then go NNW downhill to a slot stile in a wire fence in 100 yards. Continue down to a footbridge over a diminutive brook, then continue in the same direction across a fairly level field to a wooden slot stile in a wire fence, then up a steep bank. To the left appears a wooded glen and Cliff Bridge; bear away to the right from the trees, still going uphill where you cross a tiny stream by means of solid railway sleepers to reach a gritstone slot stile wide enough to have a wooden gate attached. Still climbing N through a field, make for a farm gate, then up to farm buildings- note the strange garage doors here. Continue on a good farm drive past Home Farm and out on to a minor road at (114448).

Go NW along the road for 800 yards, then, where the road turns off left, go right at a footpath sign through a gritstone stile. Just down the road you have just left is Wootton whose claim to fame was Wootton Hall, now dismantled. Wootton Lodge built by Sir John Fleetwood before 1611 is still there, now the property of the founder of the ubiquitous JCB excavating machines.

Go NE through the field to the top corner where there is a wooden slot stile just above the farm to your right, then, in 20 yards, there is a gate way into a field. Go diagonally across this field and make for a gap in the hedge, skirting a few trees and a small stone building. Continue in the same direction to the far hedge and cross it at a short section of wooden fencing, no gate or stile. Keep in the same direction, cables overhead, and proceed through the far hedge by a large gap near a concrete drinking trough. Go straight across the next field to a gateway; there is a slot stile to the left of this, then walk with a small stone wall and a thin hedge and barbed wire on one's right, to some trees ahead, then go down a steep bank to a stream which is crossed at (117456) by a footbridge with a slot stile at each end, one of them being opened and closed by a wooden clip: unusual. Climb a steep bank up from the brook avoiding the path that goes away to the right on a lower level following the stream. Instead, make for a good gritstone slot stile at the top of the bank to the left of a gate and enter a field. Walk NNE with the hedge close on one's right to a fence ahead with a slot stile in it. The next field is fairly flat: make for a distant tree near a farm metal gate in a wall: it has a slot stile to its left. The next field is a narrow area with a fence on the left and a hedge on the right, but this opens out where there is a shed covered with old metal. Go through gateway and follow a tractor track, hedge on right and a pleasing view of Stanton Church ahead.

Pass a stone cottage on one's right and come to a stone wall on the right: note the good stone steps at a gritstone slot stile: it leads to another good gritstone slot stile at the top of a bank, and thus out on to the road at (124461). Bear right along Chaff Lane for 150 yards where you turn left to walk NW for 250 yards or so to a point where a minor road goes off left. There is a good gritstone stile on the right which leads into a lane with a stonewall on either side. In about 40 yards, go through an untidy wooden construction into a field, which has familiar mounds and depressions caused by lead mining. In about 20 yards, there is a good gritstone slot stile on the right of a gateway. Go through this, walking NE with a good old familiar gritstone wall on the right. Note in the wall a number of large gritstones set upright, rather like gravestones. With these on the right, approach the next wall ahead and a good gritstone slot stile, though there is an open gateway to the right. Continue with the wall on the right, but, before the next wall ahead, turn off right through a good gritstone slot stile into the next field. Here walk close to the wall on the left to another gritstone stile ahead. In the next field, go straight across for about 150 yards to a gritstone slot stile. In the next field, bear left slightly to the right at (128467) to a low gritstone slot stile in a thorn hedge, adjacent to a minute stream and a wooden slot stile in a wire fence. Go across the field for about 40 yards, bearing right to a gritstone slot stile in a stone wall. In the next field, bear right to a slot stile only 40 yards away, then make for a metal farm gate, and out on to Flather Lane at (130467).

A signpost here indicates “Cuckoo Cliff” and “Swinscoe”: these are our destinations. Turn left walking N to enter a field through a gate. Very muddy. Bear right slightly in this field to go through the hedge ahead by one of its many gaps in order to walk downhill with a hedge on the left to a stream below which is reached through a slot stile. Walk N through a lovely little gorge, Cuckoo Cliff with the stream on the right, to a footbridge at (131473). This is a most pleasant part of the walk; ascend some steps steeply to a path and a wooden stile, then walk NNE uphill, Ellis Hill to the right and good views to one’s left. Make for the stonewall ahead where there is a fine wooden slot stile made of railway sleepers. In the next field, walk N close to the fence on the left up to a wooden slot stile in a fence leading directly in to the farmyard which is remarkably clean. This is Leasow: it has a fine tennis court. Go between the buildings to a wooden slot stile, then into a field, walking N to a poor slot stile in a fence with a gritstone stile next to it. In about 30 yards, there is a farm gate with a gritstone slot stile on its right, then out on to a lane at (133479).

Turn right, going N up this lane then NE, passing on the right some strange black buildings and reaching a road, the A.52, at (133482); this is the village of Swinscoe. Cross the road; turn left and walk NW for about 30 yards to an elegant wooden bus stop. Nearby is a slot stile and signpost saying: “footpath to Blore”. Go through this stile and make for the farm gate ahead, Hillend Farm on your left. Go through the gate on the farm track, (ignore the map which shows stile on the left; there is none). In the next field the map shows the path to be at the side of the wall on the left, and through a stile in the far top corner, but this is not there, so follow the farm track through a gateway into the next field, Clifftop Farm to the right and Feenie Lee with its trees on the left. Walking N and suddenly the most spectacular views all around, a splendid panoramic scene. Go slightly uphill to the wall ahead where there is a good slot stile. The next field drops sharply to reveal another facet of this splendid scene: Blore Parish Church tucked into the hillside below. Descend to the bottom of this hillside by gritstone slot stiles to the left, then up the bank on the other side to a farm gate with a slot stile in its right, and thus into a farm yard. Go forward to a stile, which leads into the Churchyard. On the left is Blore Church, an irregular building with a complex outline and all the more interesting for that. The windows are generally C.15. It has a fine tower with pinnacles and worn gargoyles. There is much Jacobean woodwork inside. Here again, we meet with some of England’s history in the many monuments to the Bassets, a Norman family who lived in Blore Hall nearby. In their chapel is an immense tomb erected in the C.17 by Elizabeth Basset to her father William Basset who lies in his armour; his wife in a long gown, a ruff and a flowing headdress. With them is the armoured figure of Elizabeth’s first husband, Henry Howard, son of the Earl of Suffolk. Her second husband was William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, whose home was Welbeck. There, she took part in two royal receptions for James the First for which Ben Jonson wrote two masques. This little church seemingly unimportant can yet remind us of the high politics of the C.17.

Go through the churchyard bearing to the left, and thus out through the fine wooden gate (signpost). Turn left in the lane passing Blore Hall, once the home of a powerful Norman family, now a farmhouse with a little more than some C.15 windows to remind us of its greatness. The crossroads are nearby (137494). Turn right: walk E along the road for about 400 yards. On the left is an old moss-covered stone step in the stone wall at a field boundary. This is where you go left into a field and then walk ENE, Coldwall away to the right. At the far hedge and fence, go through stile then ENE down to a farm gate and down to Coldwall Bridge, a fine old stone bridge over the Dove (149497). Once over the bridge, turn right down a lane to a farm gate with a good slot stile on its right and a signpost. This leads into a meadow, the river on the right, a small building nearby. Go forward between farm buildings into a field keeping the hedge close on one’s left. This is good level walking now up to a metal gate with a slot stile on its left, and another signpost. The river has now come close on the right: this is pleasant walking. Go through a wooden slot stile in to a level field and

another 200 yards or so, in fact, two wooden slot stiles and a step stile. Continue with the river fairly close on the right, level going to a wooden slot stile in a thorn hedge, and so in to the next field, going to a wooden step stile with wooden bars in a hedge. Ahead, is a new slot stile with a step on the right of a gate, very muddy here. The next stile is a wooden one with a narrow path that leads to a footbridge. The route becomes cleaner in a field which one leaves by a wooden slot stile in a wooden fence for a path through a wide field with a weir on the right. Onwards through a large gap with a gritstone slot stile on the left, now no longer needed, and a splendid view of a fine stone bridge with a hump back: this is Okeover Bridge, and away to the right is Okeover Hall where the Okeovers still live, one of the oldest families in England. Bonnie Prince Charles called here on his way to and from Derby in 1745. A letter still exists telling of the outrages committed by the Scots who stole from all around.

Go through a good slot stile in to the road. Cross the road to another slot stile then make across the fields for the road near the "Okeover Arms" (165480). This is Mapleton whose C.18 church has a strange octagonal dome with a lantern. W of the church are almshouses dated 1727. Walk S on the road for about 20 yards or so from Okeover Arms, then turn left at a signpost and stile in to a jitty. In 40 yards, turn right and walk through a field uphill to a wooden stile in the hedge, a big tree nearby, walking SSE thus far. In the next field, the path still rises with hedge on left; go SSE for about 40 yards to a wooden stile in a thorn hedge. In the next field, continue with hedge on one's left, going uphill for about 100 yards to a large gap in the corner. Turn sharply left, and walk W keeping the hedge on the left, making for a good gritstone slot stile in 100 yards.

Go straight across the next field bearing slightly right to a wooden slot stile in a holly hedge near a big tree. Note: ignore a wooden slot stile to the left. Go ESE through a beautifully flat field with hedge on the left to a wooden slot stile in a thorn hedge. The next field is also flat. The gate leading out was open. Go downhill now through a field, hedge on right, to the last wooden stile of the walk and another fine holly tree. The next field goes downhill just as steeply to a wooden wicket gate. Climb some steps to the Tissington Trail, then turn right and walk S along the Trail for 500 yards to road, turn right, and go to the car park and the start of the walk.

Checked 22 Oct.2002.