

Three Churches Circular Walk

This walk starts from St Michael's Church at Sutton-on-the-Hill and you should park in the lay-by, taking care to ensure you are not in front of the Lynch Gate as access is required at all times. There is a choice of two routes set amidst the rolling Nils north of Etwal.

The longer route takes you past All Saints Church at Dalbury and All Saints Church, Trusley; it is 5.5 miles (9 miles) and takes about 3 hours. The shorter route is 5.5 km (3.4 miles) and takes about 1 hour 50 minutes. For a more detailed map you are recommended to refer to Ordnance Survey Explorer 128 (Derby & Burton upon Trent).

You will be walking through countryside which involves a number of stiles and fields with horses or cattle. This walk is moderate to hard and includes some steeper climbs. Parts of the route are liable to flooding.

ROUTE A (Long walk)

In cat park in layby by St Michael's Church 1 Start your walk by turning right onto Church Lane. After approximately 20m turn left through a metal kissing gate into a large field. Cut diagonally across the field to a gate 2 in the bottom left hand corner of the field. Pass through the gate and head towards the cricket pitch 3 by Sutton Hill passing a large pond on the left. Follow the boundary fence around the cricket pitch to a stile 4 in the bottom right hand corner of the field.

Sutton Hill is a private residence not open to the public. One of the Hill's more unusual features, visible from Hill Lane, is this 'ornivore-candle' or 'suspense' wall. In red brick with moulded brick copings, this continuous wavy wall is about ten feet high (3m) and bears the western boundary of the gardens.



Turn right along the lane (beware of traffic) and after a few metres cross over to a stile 5. Walk up an incline across the field to a stile 6, and across smaller field to a further stile 7. Look for Field's farm, a red brick house on the horizon. Cut across a large field to a field gate 8 and across a further large field keeping large oak trees to your left to a further stile 9. Keep Field's farm straight ahead and walk towards stile 10. Cross the stile onto the Sutton-Etwal road (beware of traffic), turn left and proceed for about 20m. Turn right to cross the stile 11 and walk diagonally across the field to a metal gate 12 in the middle of the field hedge. Pass through the gate and along the field edge path for approximately 200m to a field gate 13.

Then head for the hedge to the left of the former Keeper's Cottage (now a ruin). Pass to the left of the Keeper's Cottage and through the field gate / stile 14. Proceed along the path on the right hand field edge, and through a metal gate 15 and to a further gate 16. Bear left and walk to a gap in the hedge where 2 paths cross 17. Then proceed diagonally across the field towards Balfields Farm and a further gate 18. Go through the gate and bear left past the edge of an open barn, continue straight ahead for approximately 50m, then bear right to stile 19. [There are five views of Dalbury Church and Ashe Hall ahead.]



Ashe Hall - the present hall was started by Rev. Rowland in the 1830s and completed by his heirs, the Buxton family in 1880. The first recorded owner of the manor of Ashe was Henry de Finers who came with William the Conqueror in 1066. During the 15th-16th and 1625-45 when the hall was used as an army hospital and between the wars it opened as Ashe Preparatory School, a boarding school for boys. In 1920 the hall was sold to Derbyshire Education Committee for use as a school for children with special needs. Finally in 1956 the Hall and grounds were purchased by Tara Buddhist Centre. The Centre is open throughout the year and everybody is welcome to relax in the beautiful grounds or enjoy the World Peace Gate, open 7 days each week.



Follow lefthand field edge path towards Dalbury Church to a stile 20 in the bottom left hand corner of the field. Cross the stile and bear left following the left hand field edge path to the bottom left of the field, keeping the church in view. Look carefully for the gated hunting bridge 21, crossing it and bearing right for a few metres. Next cross the bridge 22 over Trusley Brook. Follow the left hand field edge path to a stile 23, and track across a further field towards Dalbury Church.

If you want to visit the church, cross the stile 23A into the hamlet of Dalbury. To continue, re-cross stile 23A, turn right back onto the walk.



All Saints Church, Dalbury is a simple and architecturally plain chapel and probably dates from the 12th century. It was enlarged (north aisle) under the incumbency of the Rev Charles Cotton who was Rector from 1831 to 1867. He was a skilled wood carver and responsible for much of the woodwork in the church, probably including the old organ case-work. The c1700 stained glass figure of St. Michael, acquired during the late 20th century, is probably the oldest glass in Derbyshire. The church is open daily.



Walk along the track leading to Manor Farm and pass the hayricks 24. Cross stile on right, bear left towards a large gap in the hedge 25. Bear right diagonally towards top left hand corner of the field, looking carefully for Beam Bridge across Trusley Brook 26. Cross the bridge, and then cross the distinctive medieval 'ridge and turrel' field to the stile 27 behind Trusley Brook Farm. After

crossing the stile, bear right looking for a large oak tree with a stile 28 underneath. Cross metal gate road, beware of traffic.



Pass through the field gate opposite and bear left to gap in the post and rail fence 29. Continue in the same direction, towards a large oak tree in the middle of the field. Pass through a gap in the fence 30 to the next stile 31. Turn right along a metal gate road for approximately 50m (beware of traffic). Cross the road and over a steep stile 32 and progress diagonally across a small paddock (Trusley Old Hall is on your left). Cross the stile onto a grassy lane 33, which takes you to Trusley Church.

All Saints Church, Trusley is a small, white, adobe-like building of 1713 in the style of Wren and replaced an earlier church. Features include a late Baroque south porch (readily from elsewhere), and an interior retaining its original box pews, three-decker pulpit, the largest collection of hand-carved hatchments in Derbyshire, and a 'Maiden's Garland' (or virgin's funeral crown). The church is open Sunday weekdays only.



After visiting the Church, continue along the grassy lane to the gate 34 which leads onto the metal gate road (beware of traffic) in the hamlet of Trusley. Turn left and proceed for approximately 100m before turning left through the gate 35 near by Close Farm. Walk diagonally across two fields, keeping the wood to your left, to a field gate 36, then cross a further field between two large oak trees to a field gate 37.



Continue across another field in the same direction. Cross a stile to the right of the large trees 38 and continue in the same direction across the last field to a stile on Butterpot Lane 39. Cross the lane to a further stile, pass into the field and follow the field edge path for approximately 200m to another stile 40. Bear slightly left across the field heading towards an ivy clad tree and stile 41. Cross the stile and bear left across the field towards a willow tree and a foot bridge 42. After crossing the bridge, bear left and

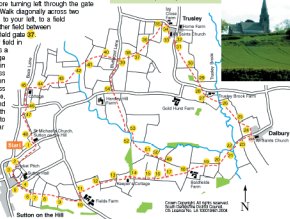
cross stile 43 between two large trees into a further field. Bear left towards the top lefthand corner and cross stile 44. Bear left again across a smaller field to a metal field gate 45 in the top lefthand corner, by a cottage. Emerge onto Balfields Lane, a metalled road. Turn left and walk for approximately 200m along the metalled road (beware of traffic) to a 'junction'. Turn left into Commemorative Lane and past a white cottage. Turn right off the road and cross a stile 46 next to the white cottage, heading for a footbridge located towards the top right hand corner of the field 47.

Follow the left hand field edge path for approximately 250m (five views include Thorne Cloud in the Peak District) to a stile. Cross and head to a further stile 48 behind the church cross. Follow the churchyard path to the start of your walk at the church gates.

ROUTE B (Short walk)

At point 17 turn left across the field to a metal field gate 49 (beware of mud in wet weather). Go through the gate and follow the lefthand field edge path to a further gate 50, and continue along the lefthand field edge path to the end of the hedge 51. Bear right towards the top right corner of the field looking for a footbridge 52 which you should cross. Follow the lefthand field edge path looking for a metal field gate 53. Keep to the field edge path. Turn right and follow the right hand field edge path to a footbridge 54 keeping Hardley Hill Farm to your left. Cross the footbridge onto a metalled road. Cross the road onto Butterpot Lane and walk for about 400 metres, looking for a way marked stile on the left 55, crossing it to rejoin Route A.

St Michael's Church, Sutton-on-the-Hill retains 14th century features including the tower, north aisle arcade and part of the chancel. However the general impression is of the 1853 rebuilding. The church on its prominent natural hill site is very impressive and a dominant feature in the landscape for miles around. The church is open daily.



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