

WALK 3

DURATION : ABOUT 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES

What will I see ? *The spoils left behind by one of England's richest lead workings; a beautiful 17th century country house, complete with a front garden of the same period; a badger set, (you'll be standing on it); ravens – quite a rare bird*

What should I sing ? *"I'm Looking Down on Creation"*

Will I make it ? *Well, you'll know you've been on a walk, but you should make it!*

Where does it start ? *The back door, and with any luck that's where it finishes too !*

Now the first bit is the hardest – you have to leave the pub AND walk past the Brewery ... and then turn sharp right down the bridle path (well, its local name is the "Coffin Road", but we must not let that put you off!) Keep following this path as it crosses the River Amber, where you can look carefully for signs of the narrow gauge Ashover Light Railway, and climb up the other side of the valley. As you climb the hill the path splits, so keep to the right hand side one you'll come back down the other one at the end of your walk (perhaps).

At the top of the hill (well the first hill), you meet an old wall made of stone flags. Turn left here and then first right up the country lane. Where the lane meets another lane go straight ahead and follow the paved path through mature woodland. You will soon break out onto what is called the "White Hillocks". This is not a scottish dance but where lead mining took place from the 17th century – you should pick out the old chimney down to your left, BUT look at those views!

Climb diagonally over The Hillocks, along the well-defined path and then the path narrows again. As you climb on up, (nearly done hard climbing now), you will see a fairly new wooden building to the right of the path, (lambling sheds). Immediately to the left of this, you should find a small slit stile, which leads down a well-defined path and then skirts the edge of a ridge above Ravens nest. (Look out for our feathered friends here). For most of the way you will now keep a wood and steep slopes to your lefthand side. After about half a mile you enter a wood, keep strictly to the path along the top of the wood. (The path goes near a badgers' set!) From here the path goes across the top of a grassy field with stunning views, and then follow the ridge downhill. Look out for two-way marker posts with directional arrows as you descend the hill to keep you to the right path. You will eventually walk through a builder's yard and then onto a busy lane on a blind corner.

Go left down the road and then left at the road junction. At the far corner of the second field on your left you will see a sign post which directs you down a well-walked path, through a wooden gate and over one rather challenging stone stile, and eventually onto a country lane. Turn left along the lane and through a small gate by the side of a big one along and past the very impressive and beautifully kept Raven House. At the end of the buildings, look out for a slit stile on your right onto a large field. After about 50 metres leave the hedge side and look for another stile diagonally left in front of you, from whence a path leads you down across a little stream onto another lane. Go straight across the lane into another field and follow the hedge line to your left. This leads to yet another rocky lane directly in front of you, (ignore the one that runs right to left), which leads you steadily uphill to Overton Hall, once the home of the naturalist Joseph Banks.

Having past the Hall on the right, take the next righthand lane, (yes you walked up this one earlier on). Where you reach the gateposts and cattle grid either head through the squeeze stile, (yes that is a bit of railway line "liberated" from the Ashover Light Railway), OR follow the lane down the hill and visit the "Great Eastern Plantation" on the lefthand side. This was laid out in 1858 and is the same length, shape and width as the great steam ship, which was by far the biggest ship in the world at the time.

If you follow the path down the field your homing instincts will certainly get you home. If you follow the lane down the hill turn left just after the lower cattle grid and take the lane down to Demonsdale Farm, where the path goes straight ahead of you through a small gate and then along and across the Amber and thence back to the Poets' (seeing, if you are really lucky, a kingfisher as you go).

After a few pints at the Poets', your memories of a great walk will improve by the second and you have seen things the rest of the world can only imagine !!!