

## *Ashover to Overton Hall Walk*

**ABOUT THIS WALK** This walk takes you from Ashover to Overton Hall and back again along Coffin Road and across the White Hillocks. Please feel free to link to this page or to download it as a PDF.

**WHERE DO I START?** From the village hall car park in Ashover.

**WHAT WILL I SEE?** The spoils left behind by one of England's richest lead workings. The home of Joseph Banks who sailed with Captain Cook in 1768. A beautiful 17th century country house, complete with a front garden of the same period. Ravens - quite a rare bird. A plantation of trees the same length and width as I.K.Brunel's S.S.Great Eastern

**WILL I MAKE IT?** Well, you'll know you've been on a walk but you should make it.

**HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?** 1 hour 30 minutes.

**WHAT SHOULD I SING** I'm Looking Down on Creation

**WHERE SHOULD I LEAVE MY CAR?** Please use the village hall car park – up the hill and turn right at the Black Swan and then 100 metres on your right.

### *The Walk*

Go down the village, past the church, and towards the Old Poets' Corner pub at the bottom of the village. To the left of the pub car park turn down the path/bridle path - its local name is the 'Coffin Road' but we mustn't 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 onto a well defined path that skirts the edge of a ridge above Ravensnest (look out for our feathered friends here). For most of the way you will now keep a wood and steep slopes to your left hand side. Where you do enter the wood, following the path, you will need to stick to the top right hand side.

From here the path goes across the top of a grassy field with stunning views and eventually past some holly trees onto a newly made muddy farm track which goes off down the hill. Look out for the way marking arrows which will keep you on the right path until you stumble across a builder's yard (so, look out!). Shortly after this you meet a fairly busy road.

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 stile and over one rather challenging 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 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 up hill to Overton Hall, once the home of the naturalist, Joseph Banks.

Having passed the hall on the right take the next right hand lane (yes, you walked up this earlier on). Where you reach the gate posts and cattle grid either head diagonally left 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 left hand 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 Ashover (seeing, if you are very lucky, a kingfisher as you go).

This walk was devised by Richard Felton. We hope you enjoyed it, perhaps the first of many around Ashover. If you want to try more, a book of 6 detailed walks around the parish is available from local shops for £3 or direct from Richard - we'll pass any **email** requests on to him. **All** sale proceeds go towards footpath improvement.

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