

Hathern Parish Walks

Hathern is a village approximately 2 miles north-west of Loughborough. It stands on a gentle rise overlooking the plain of the Soar Valley where the Grand Union canal meets the River Soar on its way to the River Trent at Trent Lock. Hathern can be reached by frequent bus services from Loughborough, Derby and Nottingham, and by car via the A6, the B5324 Ashby-de-la-Zouch to Rempstone Road or the Shepshed to Hathern Road. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Avederne and by 1258 had changed to Hawthirne, probably due to the protective hawthorne hedge surrounding it.

The Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul is a 14th century building of Charnwood stone with evidence of 12th century building, shown by the Saxon-Norman font and Norman capital preserved inside the Church.

Hathern Cross stands in the centre of the village, probably 14th century, it would have been a Christian monolith, a site from which sermons would have been preached. It became a convenient place for meetings and business and it is thought that markets were held beneath it.

Both illustrated walks may be lengthened or shortened by using the well-signed footpaths, which are indicated on the map.

Walk 1:

10 km (6 miles) allow 2.5 hours, relatively easy walking, undulating countryside.

Parking: nr. Anchor Inn, at the junction of Wide Street and the A6.

A. Start at the Anchor Inn, cross the road at the pelican crossing, turn right along the A6 Loughborough Road and turn left into Golden Square just past the Dewdrop Inn. The road peters out into a track heading up the hill towards Shepshed. Follow the footpath until you reach the road.

B. Turn left and after about 1½ mile there is a bridleway on your left. Follow this track to Pear Tree Lane and on to the main A6.

C. Cross the road and go left. Just past the allotments, turn right, along a track. Follow this track as it turns right into an open field.

Follow the footpath, heading toward the river. The footpath turns left at the end of the hedge and where it meets another path turn right back towards the river.

D. Follow this path, ignoring all other paths, unless you want to cut your walk short, until you reach the River Soar. Turn left and follow the river to the flood relief channel, cross Mill Race and over the footbridge leading to Zouch. After crossing the road turn right then left onto the towpath. The river forms the county boundary and you are now crossing into Nottinghamshire.

The Rose and Crown may provide a welcome rest at this point, especially if you are getting thirsty.

E. Follow the towpath to the pack-horse bridge and cross the bridge back to the road. Turn right and follow the pavement until you are back into Leicestershire. After about 400 yards, cross the road to a kissing gate on your left which takes you onto a path back to Green Hill Rise at Hathern. Turn right at the end of the road then left past the church to return to your starting point.

Walk 2:

7 km (4.5 miles) allow 2 hours, relatively easy walking, undulating countryside.

Parking: nr the Three Crowns on Wide Lane

Starts at the Three Crowns pub on Wide Lane and takes a route through open fields to the wildlife lake at Dishley where a footpath to the north-west of the lake allows you to observe the abundant wildlife, the path then meanders back along the river bank to Zouch.

1. Walk down the hill turning right along Church Street and on to Hathern Cross. Turn left along Cross Street to Pasture Lane and continue along this lane until you reach a track off to the right, called Tunnel Lane. Turn onto this lane and follow to its end, continue straight across the next field and follow the waymarkers until you reach Dishley Pool.

2. *Take some time out to enjoy the views and observe the wildlife. Dishley Pool is an important wildlife reserve and sustains several species of dragonflies and damselflies as well as waterfowl. Please do not disturb nesting birds and keep dogs on a lead.*

Take the short path down to the River Soar and turn left along its banks. This is a fine stretch of river scenery, twisting and turning across the landscape.

Follow the riverside path until you reach the flood relief Zouch Radial Gate.

3. Turn left away from the river and follow the waymarkers to the top end of Pasture Lane. Follow Pasture Lane back to the village centre to your starting point.

Useful Information:

Buses: Regular bus services operate from Leicester to Derby (no. 121) and from Nottingham (Rainbow 5), both stop at the Anchor Inn on the main A6 road. Please confirm with Traveline (0870 608 2 608) before you travel.

By car use the A6 Leicester - Derby. Car parking is available at the Anchor Inn and Three Crowns pub, (please check with the pub staff before starting your walk)

Refreshments & toilets: There is a shop/post office near the centre of the village and the walks will take you past four pubs: the Dewdrop Inn, the Three Crowns and the Anchor Inn in Hathern and the Rose and Crown in Zouch.

It is advisable to wear suitable footwear when walking. Stout shoes or walking boots are recommended.

Some stretches of the route follow minor country roads. Beware of traffic approaching from both directions. If possible stay on the verge, if not walk in single file on the right hand side of the road.

Enjoy the walks, whilst observing the Countryside Code.

Walking - Be fit and well

The benefits of walking regularly include; reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, bowel cancer, breast cancer, osteoporosis and obesity. In addition, many people feel better in themselves. Regular exercise is thought to help ease stress, anxiety and mild depression.