

## TO ASHOVER ROCK AND BACK – it'll take an hour or so

From Ashover Parish Hall Carpark, head downhill towards The Black Swan. Before you succumb to the delights of this pub, look for the kissing gate in the corner by a farm track. Follow the path as it keeps to the left side of the field. It is well walked.

At the top of the field, the path goes under a road bridge, built so that the Victorian/Edwardian owners of Eastwood Grange didn't have to see ordinary folk walking by. Just after the second of such 'tunnels', climb up some stone steps and then turn up the lane to the left. After a few paces, turn to your right and you will see where the path follows the right side of another field. The brown coloured disc indicates that this is an area of open access; one of several in the Parish of Ashover (which is huge and has nearly 50 miles of paths!). All the open area here is now owned by Derbyshire County Council to whom it was bequeathed by the Miss Bassetts of Liquorice All Sorts fame, who lived in Ashover.

Keep walking straight up the path, with an occasional rest to look at the view .... Ahead you will see some stone steps, which will take you up to the top of the hill.

After much heavy breathing, turn right at the top of the steps, looking out for an area of ground to your right, with little growing on it – the site of a mediaeval lead smelting pit. Now enjoy the views!!

Just past 'Ashover Rock' ahead of you, there is a circular viewing spot which indicates where various places are on the horizon. Those who set the stone may have visited The Black Swan first, as it is one or two degrees out! The concrete construction under your feet is the remains of a Royal Observer Corps bunker, used in The Cold War.

The whole of this area is known as The Fabrick. There are only 200 acres of such heathland outside the Peak District and it supports a huge variety of wild life. There were beech trees here too but they were used in the First World War to make rifle stocks.

Now, retrace your steps to the top of the steps you came up but don't go down them! Continue along the ridge, until you reach the road (just after you've walked over some areas of concrete, which were the foundations for search lights in World War Two). On reaching the road, turn left and then go straight on at the cross roads, to continue along the ridge on Hilltop Road. After a few hundred metres you will find a house (Apple Tree Knoll) on your right. Just on the sharp bend by the house look for the footpath finger post, which points you to the left and down some old stone steps.

The path swings to the right and through an old stone squeeze stile. Head from this stile straight on, keeping the woodland to your left. You will pass through two wooden gates, before dropping down onto Hill Road. Turn left to follow the road down into the centre of the village. Look out for the recently restored building on the right in a field, which is all that remains of the local rope works (hence why the road becomes straight, as ropes were stretched out down it). The ropes were used in local mines and were said to be the longest in the country. Opposite the house are the more imposing buildings of what was Ashover Hydro(1869), from the days when Ashover was an important spa.

At the bottom of the hill, you will see the local Post Office. Turn left here and.....well, I think you must be thirsty by now. It's time for the Black Swan, perhaps.

Courtesy of Richard Felton  
Ashover Footpaths Group