

DARLEY ABBEY AND NUTWOOD WALK

(Devised by Denis Eardly and published by Derby Telegraph 9 May 2014)

THE WALK

This splendid walk combines beautiful mature parkland scenery, with a great sense of history and the starting point for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and the National Heritage Corridor. The walk through the Darley and Nutwood Nature Reserve provides an added bonus



The wooden footbridge by the weir at Darley Abbey

WALK DETAILS

Length: 4 miles.

Start: Tourist Information Centre, Market Place, Derby City Centre. (SK355364)

Terrain: Easy, flat walking mainly on surfaced paths and pavements. It can be muddy walking through Darley and Nutwood Nature Reserve

THE ROUTE

1. Walk across the Market Place towards the War Memorial and turn right up Iron Gate, carry straight on passing Derby Cathedral and the Dolphin Inn.
2. Maintain the same direction up Queen Street, cross King Street at the pedestrian crossing and walk along a recently created path leading to the footbridge over St Alkmund's Way.
3. On reaching St Mary's Roman Catholic Church turn right in front of the church, and then in a few yards go to the left up Darley Lane.
4. Continue straight on up North Street before going right at a sign for Chester Green; do not cross the bridge but walk along the path close to the River Derwent by Derby Rowing Club Head Quarters.
5. Walk across Darley Park heading slightly to the left towards a gap in the trees in front of you, which eventually leads to a surfaced footpath where you turn right. Follow the path round, keeping to the left of the park cafe.
6. On reaching New Road go to the right and follow it to the bottom of the hill, where you turn left past the Abbey Inn.
7. Continue along the road through the village until with the bridge on your right you carry straight on, signed for Allestree and Nutwood. After about 200yards, turn left at an opening in the fence and head up South Avenue.

8. Opposite Leafenden Close, cross a wide grass verge and go through a stile into Darley and Nutwood Nature Reserve. Follow the path as it bends to the right and descends to cross a stream by a footbridge. Continue along the main path through the reserve, before turning left to leave by a high metal gate.
9. Here you turn right by the Midland Canoe Club, and walk along a rough track, leading back to the bridge to Darley Abbey Mills. Go to the left and cross the bridge and follow the narrow, winding road carefully through the mill complex. In about 75 yards after leaving the mills, turn right down Folly Road.
10. After passing Derby Rugby Club on the left and Folly House on the right, you go over the new bridge (officially opened in 2003). Keep straight on before turning right after about 200 yards at the Millennium Milepost
11. Remain on the path close to the river, before crossing Handysides Bridge. Once, on the other side of the Derwent, turn left down a flight of steps and continue along the river bank towards Derby City Centre.
12. Go under St Mary's Bridge, with the Bridge Chapel on the right and continue by the side of the river, passing the Old Silk Mill, down to Exeter Bridge. Turn right along Derwent Street, with the Council House on your left, and return to the Market Place and the start of the walk



Route Point 1 – Derby Cathedral visible from a distance dominates the skyline with its impressive perpendicular tower, the second highest in England to the Boston Stump. It was built early in the 16th century, but worship has taken place on this site since the tenth century.

Light and spacious inside, the iron screen by Robert Bakewell is an inspirational masterpiece in this proud and beautiful building.

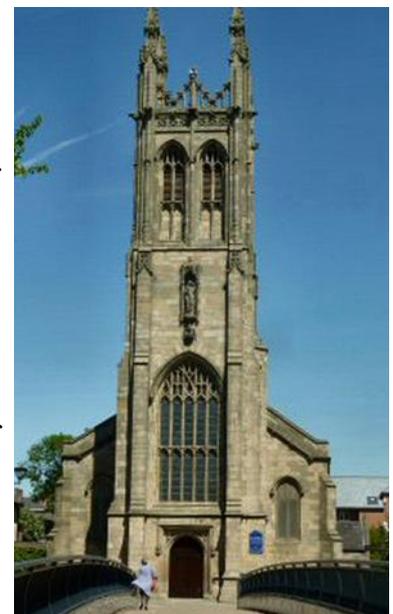
A combination of events led to it becoming Derby Cathedral, in 1927. In 1884, a new diocese of Southwell was created and the majority of the County of Derbyshire was transferred from

Lichfield to the new see. Five years later, the first assistant bishop to the diocesan Bishop of Southwell was appointed with the title Bishop of Derby. He and his successor worked with the first Bishops of Southwell for the creation of a new diocese of Derby, and this was brought to fruition with the hallowing of All Saints' as its Cathedral Church.

Point 3 – St Mary's Roman Catholic Church has been described as 'Pugin's Masterpiece.' The foundation stone for church was laid on the 4 July 1838, Queen Victoria's Coronation Day.

The church was built in less than 18 months without the benefit of modern construction techniques and project management expertise. It was completed by 9th October 1839. The church was officially opened by Doctor Wiseman, (later Cardinal). He began his sermon with the words: "St Mary's, without exception the most magnificent thing that Catholics have yet done in modern times in this country."

Pugin's main rise to prominence had come about by his publication of five books on ecclesiastical architecture. He became famous for his exterior and interior designs and was knighted for his efforts, which included work on the House of Commons..





Point 5 – Darley Park with its wide range of different tree species is at its most impressive when approached through the park on the western side of the River Derwent.

It is one of Derby's most beautiful parks and is a popular leisure site for the city. Situated as it is within easy walking distance of the city centre, it offers peace and quiet and relaxing walks though unspoilt parkland.

The park was once home to the county's most important

monastic institution: a house of Augustinian Canons established in 1137 and dedicated to St Helena, who built an abbey on the site. Few traces remain of Darley Abbey, founded in about 1140 and which later became the richest and most powerful abbey in Derbyshire.

Point 6 – Abbey Inn is the only remaining building from the original abbey that is still intact.

The pub is on two floors, and is well worth a visit to look around and enjoy the hospitality. Although its original use is uncertain, it may well once have been used by the monks to entertain guests.

During a renovation, 12th century pottery was unearthed. Some of the stonework in Abbey Lane is also thought to date back to the former abbey.



Point 8 - Darley and Nutwood Nature Reserve:

Nutwood is very old, originally comprising of oak and coppiced hazel. Until 1985, a tip was in use on the site, before a covering of soil was applied.

A survey in 2003 recorded over 260 species of plant including the rare bee orchid.



Point 9 – Darley Abbey Mills today forms part of The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site because of the pioneering work of the Evans family.

The old village of Darley Abbey is regarded as a desirable place to live. The mills built by Thomas Evans, on the east bank of the Derwent, remain largely intact although no longer used for cotton spinning, but are still in use for a diverse range of purposes.

Point 11 – Handyside's Bridge is a fine bowstring bridge built by Andrew Handyside in 1877, which carried the Great Northern Railway across the Derwent. It remained in use until the line was closed by Dr Beeching. There was a public footway along the near side but this was removed when the bridge was renovated. Since then, pedestrians have used the main span, walking where the tracks were once laid.

Handyside established his Britannia heavy engineering works and iron foundry in 1848 and although he originally produced ornamental ironwork, he later became involved with railway architecture.



[BACK](#) to Derby Heritage Forum