

Melbourne Walk

This walk commences in MELBOURNE which is reached on the A514 from Swadlincote or Derby, and the B587 from the south. You should park in the public car park signposted from High Street. A footpath link takes you from the car park to Market Place where the walk starts.

The walk is approximately 5 miles/8km and takes 2 hours 45 minutes.

For a more detailed map you are recommended to refer to Ordnance Survey Explorer™ 245: The National Forest.

Starting from the Market Place in the centre of Melbourne, walk a short distance north and turn right **1** into Potter Street which you follow to the junction with Castle Street **2**. From here, turn right and walk the short distance to the crossroads at Blackwell Lane **3**.

From here the route crosses straight over the road and through Church Square with the **Church of St. Michael with St. Mary** on the right and **Melbourne Hall** to the left. Pass through a gateway and follow the tarmac drive with

Melbourne Pool to your right, past the 'Old Mill' and 'Pool House'. Eventually you pass over a bridge just before the end of the tarmac section where the driveway turns left. Follow the driveway and shortly after pass through the kissing gate on the right **4**, into arable fields. Take a line passing the corner of the adjacent cottages' garden and continue across the field in the same direction to a stile in the far hedgerow. Cross the stile and continue straight across the next field to a further stile. After crossing this stile the route now picks up a field edge path before descending a small flight of steps to a stile in a hedgerow **5**.

Keeping the fence to the left, walk gradually uphill to reach a double field gate after a short distance. Pass through the gap to the side of the right hand gate and continue along a pleasant tree lined avenue. Half way through the avenue turn left **6** following the fence down hill to find a stile at the edge of the woodland.

Pass through the narrow belt of woodland and over a stream to a stile at the far side. Cross the next open field to enter another block of woodland (Gorse

Covert) towards the top of the slope.

The path rises diagonally to the right through the trees to reach a stile onto arable land at the far side **7**. Walk straight across the field towards the crest of the ridge, and as soon as the church tower at Breedon-on-the-Hill appears above the ridgeline, turn and walk directly towards it, to reach a hedgerow at the bottom on the far side of the field **8**.

The origins of the **Church of St. Michael with St. Mary**, often described as 'miniature cathedral', are shrouded in mystery. Built on the site of an Anglo-Saxon church, it dates from the 12th century and is one of the finest Norman churches in Great Britain. It may have been built by the first Bishop of Carlisle, or as a royal church by Henry I as part of his manor at Melbourne. Whatever the reasons, the building is surprisingly complex and grand for a parish church of that period.



Melbourne Pool with its abundance of wildlife in a beautiful setting, was originally a medieval mill pond until enlarged in the 1840s. There was a mill recorded here in the Domesday Book. Now a private house, the old mill stands in a hollow alongside the Pool.



Turn right, keep the hedgerow to the left, and follow the field edge bridleway a short distance before passing through a wide gap in the hedge, then continue on the bridleway, with the hedgerow now on the right. Shortly before the next hedge **9**, turn left and follow the footpath through a narrow finger of woodland. Once on the far side our route turns right and follows the boundary hedge gently up hill along the edge of a golf course.

Continue following the line of the hedge downhill to enter a hedged lane **10** for the short distance towards the road. However shortly before the road, the path turns left **11** and runs parallel to the road before finally crossing a bridge to meet the pavement.

Turn left here and follow the road into **Breedon-on-the-Hill**, passing the village green and war memorial on the way (the Holly Bush Inn is a short distance off our route on the far side of the green). Continue along the main road and turn left onto 'The Delph' **12**, immediately before the old Lock-up and Three Horseshoes public house.

Follow the Delph gradually up hill and where it bends to the left, take the wide path that continues straight on **13**. Follow this path a short way before branching right to take the winding stepped path that climbs to the top of the hill, and the Priory Church of St Mary and St Hardulph. At the top of the hill, pass through the squeeze stile **14** and follow the tarmac road along the top of Breedon Quarry, past the Queen Elizabeth II jubilee beacon and pausing frequently to admire the commanding views over North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire.

As the road starts to descend and just after the left hand bend, take the footpath on the right **15** descending to meet the same road lower down the hill. When the path rejoins the minor road, bear right and follow the adjacent footpath a short distance to the stile on the far side of the road **16**. After the stile, follow the surfaced path to a Y-junction **17**, where our route bears right before taking a way-marked path across a golf course, initially with a line of trees to the right. (Please beware of golfers!)



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Breedon on the Hill - look out for 'Lockup' where miscreants were kept overnight. The C12 Parish Church of St. Mary and St. Hardulph atop a 55m hill is known for its magnificent collection of Saxon carvings and its part in the history of Christianity in the Midlands: Tatwin, a monk from Breedon, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 731.

Eventually the path arrives at a gap in the hedge adjacent to a minor road **18**, which we cross and take the cross-field path directly opposite, which ascends towards houses at Park Farm where the path passes between the properties **19**.

Melbourne Hall is built on the site of a house said to have been first owned by the Bishops of Carlisle in 1133. The property was extensively rebuilt by Sir John Coke from 1629 and later became the home of Lord Melbourne and his wife Lady Caroline Lamb, before passing into the ownership of Lady Palmerston. Now home to Lord and Lady Ralph Kerr, the Hall has many splendid works of art and is open to visitors during August.



The Hall Gardens were laid out in 1704 by Royal gardeners London and Wise in the French formal style. There are magnificent avenues and long vistas with statues, terraces stretching down to the lake and to the west is a splendid yew tunnel. The crowning feature is an intricate wrought iron arbour made by the celebrated ironsmith Robert Bakewell in 1706-8.



Do take time to wander around **Melbourne** either before or after your walk. The small town is predominantly Georgian in character and is notable for the wide range of historic buildings and



landscapes in a compact area. It gave its name to a tiny settlement far away, now the city of Melbourne, Australia. Look out for fine houses around the church, for the



thatched cottages and C18 buildings along Potter Street. On High Street you will find The Cruck Cottage, and The Memorial Cottages built in 1890-91 by another of



Melbourne's famous sons, Thomas Cook of travel agency fame who was born here in 1808 and is known as the 'father of modern tourism'.

Cross a stile and enter a large field where the path descends diagonally to the right to reach the far corner of the field, by a gate and cattle grid **20**.

Once over the cattle grid (a gate to the side) bear 1/2 right and cross the next arable field to a stile in the hedgerow, after which the path passes through parkland with good views of **Melbourne Hall**. At the far side of this field pass through a field gate to meet a road **21** - turn left and follow the pavement back to Melbourne to eventually arrive back at the Market Place.

There is a range of places to eat drink and shop in the town, including antique shops and galleries. In the church you can purchase leaflets and guides, while other local interest literature is available from Melbourne News in the Market Place.

