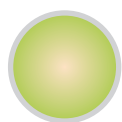


Trail Guide:



Swadlincote is the largest town in South Derbyshire and borders on Leicestershire and Staffordshire. Although it was granted a charter for mineral extraction back in the 13th century, it was not until the Industrial Revolution that it came into its own through coal and clay mining. At one time nearly 70 chimneys were visible in the town. However, the last colliery closed in 1988 and today most of these have been replaced by engineering and service industries. Much of the area around the town has now developed into woodland, parklands and activity centres. Although Swadlincote is referred to as a former coal mining town, it is also famous for the manufacture of salt-glazed sewerage pipes which were exported all over the world.

The 'Fancy That' Factor

Flush with pride on having learned about the town's contribution to matters lavatorial!

China buff? – learn the terms used in pottery

Discover why time is the avenger on the Market Hall clock

Find out why Swadlincote is 'at the bottom' of Rio de Janeiro, Cairo and Mexico

Despite its industrial background, Swadlincote is not a drab place; the town has a fantastic pedestrianised shopping centre and plenty of free parking, which is always a bonus! Once you have finished your walk around the town you can visit the attractive Eureka Park or Green Bank Leisure Centre or if you fancy having a go at skiing, why not spend some time at the Swadlincote Ski Centre, which is the only ski centre in the country to offer tobogganing.

This short walk highlights the significant buildings and facades which illuminate the history of the town.

Trail Key:



Walking



Car



Bus



Cycling



Scenic



Historic



2hr

Time



40^{km}
25^{miles}

Distance

WEST STREET

Begin at the place where the history of Swadlincote is its very business: **SHARPE'S POTTERY [1]** at the top of West Street. Here you will find the pottery kiln, a Tourist Information Centre, a small museum, a good cafeteria and an assortment of people beavering away researching the history of the towns. We say "towns" for Swadlincote, to local people this includes Newhall, Stanton, Church Gresley, Midway and Woodville.

Difficulty Rating for walks:



Easy



Moderate



Strenuous

This trail is one of 44 exciting trails to explore in the Peak District & Derbyshire.

Now a listed building with its capped kiln, **Sharpe's Pottery** was founded in 1821 by Thomas Sharpe. Household pots and utensils were manufactured in great quantity and many were exported to countries within the British Empire and to Russia, Germany and Holland. Perhaps most celebrated was the world's first **flushing rim toilet** developed by Edmund Sharpe in 1855, which was the town's major contribution to improved health and living conditions throughout the world. Its everyday trade was domestic products manufactured from Derbyshire Ironstone and buff drabware. A speciality was the "Toby Fillpot" jug, fashioned in coloured and Rockingham-ware and based on the traditional Toby jug. Opposite Sharpe's on Alexandra Road, there once stood the Waterloo Pottery works founded by Robinson and Rowley and taken over by Staley, Mason and Adcock before Sharpe acquired it in 1883. Sharpe's ended pottery production in 1967.

Opposite the entrance to Sharpe's once stood Swadlincote's Cooperative Wholesale Society store number 9, recalled now only by the inscribed terracotta panels high up on the wall **(2)**

NEW EMPIRE CINEMA (3)

Now housing an antiques centre and other entertainment facilities, the **New Empire** replaced a previous 1912 building which offered early films, stage shows and amateur operatics. These were disapproved of by some who believed them to be 'the devil's work'. There were once three cinemas in the town and a number of the earliest full length films made were shot in Swadlincote.

WESLEYAN CHAPEL (4)

This is the oldest nonconformist chapel in Swadlincote, built in 1816 to seat 400 people and still presenting a clean, well-maintained face to visitors. Alongside is a small graveyard. Most of the land on this side of the street is still owned by the chapel authorities whilst the building to the right, formerly the post office, was commissioned by them.

BEAR INN (5)

Extensions have been added to this pub since it was built in 1830 and used as theatrical "digs" by actors visiting the town.

THE DELPH (6)

This is the **town centre**. Translating as "quarry", "mine" or "hole dug in the ground", the name "Delph" recalls a coal mine once sited on the Midland Road, High Street and Belmont Street Corner. The **Market Hall** of 1861 (once serving as a magistrates' court for one day each week) is now the **Town Hall** but in its heyday it was supplemented by the **Shambles**, an open arcade along **Midland Road** from which butchers traded.

In the quest to find sufficient capital for a new market hall, the Reverend J.B. Stevens went about collecting subscriptions. Two of his targets were members of the local gentry, Sir Henry and Lady Sophia Des Voeux; but whereas her Ladyship volunteered £20, her husband was meaner. Suffering from gout and recent financial losses in court, he was eventually persuaded to match his wife's generosity on condition that the words "Time the avenger" were inscribed below the clock on the new hall. That inscription is still perfectly visible today.

A major halt on the Burton to Ashby route, the Delph was served by a tramway from 1906 to 1927.

HIGH STREET

THE PUBLIC HOUSES

Although the **Foresters Arms (9)** remains at the lower end of High Street, at least three other pubs have long gone, two of which, the Nag's Head and the Bull's Head without trace. However, if you look closely above the premises of William Hill the bookmaker, on the left of High Street, you can still see the proclamation of the **Stanhope Arms (7)** set against its modified Dutch gable. Looking at the Foresters Arms you can see on its upper level the stretchers [bricks laid lengthways] are red whereas the headers [those laid short side out] are now a dirty yellow.

DILKS' GARAGE (8)

Although no evidence of their business now remains, the buildings in which Messrs W.A.Hudson and S.Underwood operated as Paramount Cars remain to the left of the present Woolworths store. From c1949 when the prototype was constructed, they employed around 30 people in the design and building of a two-seater sports car. For £637, this car included a built-in cocktail cabinet, a radio and a heater. Seven examples were produced from this site, truly ahead of their time!

The subsequent history of the company saw moves to Bretby Art Pottery, Stanton by Bridge, Melbourne and finally, Linslade Farm in Bedfordshire. Only 88 cars were manufactured with a final price of £1000 per vehicle. Unfortunately, the ultimate owners of the marque, Paramount Cars of Leighton Buzzard, ran into cash flow problems and the company was liquidated in 1956.

CHURCH STREET TO CIVIC WAY

At the bottom of High Street, turn left along Church Street, noting the curved roofline on the houses opposite the junction. On the far corner at the top of Church Street stands:

EMMANUEL CHURCH (10)

Designed and built between 1846-8 this small stone building with nave, chancel, transepts, polygonal apse and lancet windows, but no tower, is actually Swadlincote's parish church. It formerly had a small spire. Stevens, the architect, also built St. Alkmunds, Derby, Repton School chapel and Woodville church. He also designed the famous coffered ceiling in the Calke Abbey saloon.

Turn left down **Civic Way** until you reach a furniture store on your left, behind which you will see the remaining buildings of the:

GAS WORKS (11)

The chimney is now obsolete but a recent restoration retained the decorative bands of blue and white bricks whilst, towards the top of the chimney, multiple 'M's are incorporated in white brick on all sides. Both the

chimney and the former engine house are Grade II listed buildings from the nineteenth century. The chimney is best viewed from **Belmont Street**.

Continue along the footpath until you reach **Midland Road**. Turning left will return you to the **Delph** but if you cross the busy **Civic Way** you will come to the continuation of **Midland Road**. Walk across the massive blue brick bridge which was built by Tomlinson's of Derby in 1906 to allow the Burton to Ashby Light Railway to cross over the Midland Railway line and to relieve horse-and-cart congestion at the frequently closed level-crossing gates below. The route of the former Midland line is clearly visible below the bridge.

Beyond the bridge, you will reach a bus depot at the back of which stands the remains of the old **tram shed (12)**, with a weathercock on its roof. Continue for a few yards further and you will reach the municipal **park** on your right. On the opposite side of **Midland Road**, the brick building currently occupied by a security company is the former :

AULT'S POTTERY (13)

Established in 1886, the firm's trademark was a vase and if you look carefully below the roofline, you will notice this symbol built into each of the three gable ends.

Retrace your steps along **Midland Road** and across **Civic Way** towards the **Delph**, and note the 1930's mock timber frame building now serving as shop premises.

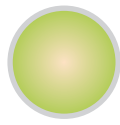
No need for an oracle to tell you it is now time for a cup of tea in one of the many cafés around the Delph.

Further town heritage trails and quizzes suitable for young and old are available from South Derbyshire District Council.

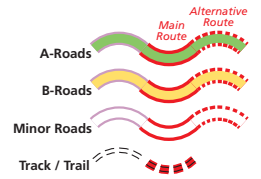
With grateful acknowledgement to EM Kitching and S Day the authors of a previous town trail on which this walk is largely based.

Swadlincote Trail No. 1

A Saunter Around Swadlincote



Key



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This trail is one of 44 exciting trails to explore in the Peak District & Derbyshire.

