

HISTORICAL WALK
FINDERN

A history trail and guided walks
around the village and footpaths
of Ffindern

DERBYSHIRE
County Council
Improving life for local people

South Derbyshire
The Heart of the National Forest

This leaflet has been compiled as a joint venture between
Derbyshire County Council, South Derbyshire District Council,
Ffindern Footpaths Group and Ffindern Historical Society



Somerville House

1 Parish Rooms. These rooms were previously two adjoining cottages and were bought by Ffindern parish council as a venue in which to hold their meetings. They have recently been renovated and are now not only used for meetings, but for other functions including adult education and social occasions.

2 All Saints. The original Norman church with many carvings was demolished in 1862. It's replacement, the one we see today, was built at a cost of £2000, and re-consecrated in November 1863. The church contains various items from the previous place of worship including an octagonal font dated 1662, 2 bells, the tympanum of the Norman doorway and an alabaster tombstone of Isabella de Fynderne, who died in 1444. All Saints church also proudly has the oldest chalice (dated 1546) in constant use in Derbyshire

3 Ffindern Castle. The Fynderne family occupied a fortified Manor House, or castle on Castle Hill (close to where the village hall now stands). Local legend has it that the crusader Geoffrey de Fynderne on his travels to the Holy Land c1114 gathered bulbs and brought them back to be planted in the Manor House garden. This was the origins of the "Ffindern (Fynderne) Flower" (or Narcissus poeticus - The Poets Daffodil) which is very late flowering and although plentiful in the village in the mid 19th century, very scarce today. The Fynderne line was all but extinguished c1540 with the marriage of Jane to Richard Harpur of Swarkestone. She was a very wealthy heiress and brought to the marriage the family lands of Ffindern, Swarkestone, Repton, Ticknall, Twyford and Stanton-by-Bridge. The last male member of the Fynderne family died in 1556.



4 The Nadee Restaurant. Formerly the "Greyhound" and the "Canal Turn". The area in front of these premises was the location of the village wharf, and in the 19th century would have seen all manner of goods arriving and leaving by boat, including Limestone, Coal and Bricks. Heath Lane, heading south from Ffindern village, originally crossed the canal here via this old brick bridge, but with the arrival of the Birmingham and Derby Junction railway in 1840, there came the need to span both canal and railway in a more elevated style, and consequently the newer Buckford Bridge was built.

Ffindern Historical Detail

5 Fishing Ponds. A priory stood to the east of the church at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086. The Abbot of Burton owned land hereabouts and the monks ensured a fresh fish supply and a ready meal, by creating these ponds in the surrounding fields.

6 Ivy Cottage. This was once a weaver's cottage with parts dating back to the 17th century. It is one of the oldest dwellings in the village with the garden at one time being used as the village pound (lockup) for stray animals. The road alongside was originally called Town Street and this area of old Ffindern is known locally as 'Bumpton'.

7 Village Buildings. Many cottages, like those that stood where the car park is now, have disappeared over the years. At the entrance to Brook Close at one time stood a fine, brick gabled building originally built as a Unitarian Chapel in the early 18th century. It was later to become the village school, and used until deterioration forced closure in 1922. It was finally demolished in the 1930s. An academy built in the late 1600s for the training of Nonconformist Unitarian ministers was also situated in the village, on Doles Lane (not part of this walk).

8 Old Hall. Jedediah Strutt was born on a farm at South Normanton into a family of strong Unitarian beliefs. It was perhaps because of the establishment of a Unitarian College in Ffindern, that as a boy of 14, in 1740, he came to the village and was apprenticed to Ralph Massey the wheelwright. He found lodgings with the Wollatt family who were occupied as stocking makers and soon turned his mind to stocking manufacture, inventing a frame which would knit ribbed stockings - the famous Derby Ribbed Frame. He went on to improve the stocking frame and became a partner of Sir Richard Arkwright, who was engaged in cotton spinning. Together they established mills at Cromford, Belper and Milford. The partnership was dissolved in 1780, with Strutt keeping the Belper and Milford mills.



The Wheel public house

The time required to walk the circular route non-stop is approximately one hour, and the distance you will cover is just over 4 kilometres (approx 2.5 miles). Suitable for all ages, the route is a combination of flat surfaces in the village and some steps, stiles and more rugged walking on the footpaths (stout shoes are recommended for this section; in times of rain it can be muddy).

Our recommended start point is from the village car park in Lower Green. The map inside is at a scale of 1:110,000. The O.S. maps covering the area are Explorer 245 and 259.

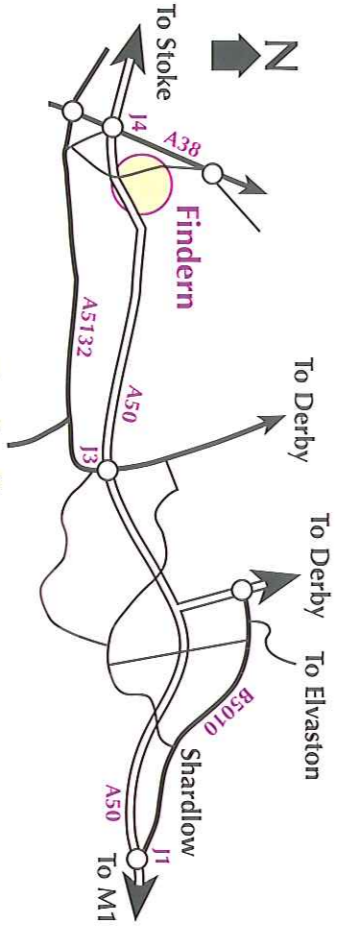
Tourist Information Centre

Information about walking, accommodation, attractions and events within South Derbyshire and The National Forest is available from Swadlincote Tourist Information Centre, Sharp's Pottery Museum, West Street, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 9DG. Tel: 01283 222848. Email: ticc@sharppottery.museum.org.uk

Parking and Public Transport

Car parking is available at the village car park on Lower Green adjacent to the church.

Bus routes and times can be accessed through Traveline on 0870 608 2608. Telephone on 0870 241 2216. For more details on public transport in Derbyshire log on to www.derbyshire.gov.uk and click on public transport.



Consulting Us

For further information please telephone 01332 571342 or email countryside.service@derbyshire.gov.uk. Alternatively you can write to us at Elvaston Castle Country Park, Borrowash Road, Elvaston, Derby DE72 3EP.

If you have difficulty in reading this leaflet it is available in other formats. For details telephone the above number or Call Derbyshire on 08456 580 580.

Acknowledgements

This leaflet has been compiled as a joint venture between Derbyshire County Council, South Derbyshire District Council, Ffindern Footpaths Group and Ffindern Historical Society.

Findern History Trail

Key: Directions in black. Additional information in purple. Numbers refer to historical information overlay.



The walk begins at the car park in **Lower Green**, adjacent to the church, where there is free parking. Those travelling by bus please alight at the Village Green and follow the car park sign to the starting point.

Keeping the church wall on your right, head back towards the village green. The white painted building on your left is the **Parish Rooms 1**.

Over on your right the present church of **All Saints 2** rebuilt in 1862-3, occupies the site of an earlier Norman place of worship.

Turn to your left and continue past the village Post Office, and down **Main Street**. Over on your right are stone garden walls that may once have been part of the 'Castle' or Manor House 3 of the Fynderne family, demolished in 1712.

Carrying on down **Main Street** we pass on our left a row of old cottages which were probably at one time the homes of silk and velvet weavers. **Silk weaving** was a popular local industry and in 1846 Samuel Bagshaw recorded 22 looms in the village. Work was 'taken in' from the factories in Derby and Belper.



Across the road you can see the remains of the **village pump**, in use until the arrival of mains water in the village in 1931.

The next large house we come to on our left is **Somerville House** a gentleman's residence built in the mid 18th century. The porch, wall and gated iron railings were added in the 19th century. Note the high porch roof which intrudes on the window above and also the front corners of the house, rounded to allow the easy passage of carriages and carts.

Again on our left we pass **Longlands Farm**. The single storey part of the building (nearest to The Wheel) was at one time the slaughterhouse, and still has the hoist in the roof.

On the corner of Main Street and Heath Lane is the **Wheel Inn**. This is an old establishment that has altered little externally over the years, the only significant change being the purchase from Longlands Farm in the 1930s of an area of land, now comprising the car park and garden.

Follow the road around to the left and continue down **Heath Lane**. This lane has in recent years been bisected by the newly built A50, and to continue our walk we need to cross over this busy route using the road bridge.

Once across the bridge immediately on your left is a fingerpost directing you down a footpath. Follow this path and it will bring you out again into the other half of Heath Lane, adjacent to the **King George V** playing field.

When it is safe to do so cross over Heath Lane to the opposite side, and make your way down towards the **Nadee Restaurant 4** and the old canal bridge. Our walk crosses the canal using the original hump-backed bridge and by using the towpath we pass under the newer **Buckford Bridge** and head eastward towards Stenson.



The 93 mile long Trent and Mersey Canal was opened here in 1770 and although a tranquil scene now, it was the 'motorway' of its day. Boats would have passed through here carrying all forms of goods to the Potteries and the sea ports of Liverpool and Hull.

Along this stretch of towpath look out for the **Ballast Hole Pond** picnic area and the newly created short woodland walk which offers welcome shade on a hot day. The pond was reputed to have been dug out when gravel was required to build the railway.

Approaching the next railway bridge you can see to your left, on the opposite bank, the continuation of our walk striking off up towards the A50. To get to that section we need to keep on the towpath as far as the next brick canal bridge, and then cross over, making our way back along the path on the opposite bank.

The section on the opposite side involves passing through a short tunnel in the railway bridge, originally designed to allow easy and safe movement of people and cattle from one side of the railway to the other.

Our walk (The Crow Park Way) is straight ahead towards the A50 but off to your right you will see a track that leads to **Stanhope Wood**. Stanhope Wood once belonged to the wealthy Stanhope family of Bretby Park and is now community woodland open to the public-by-kind permission of the current owners, the Cox family.



As you approach the A50 embankment, turn left, and follow the path to locate the underpass tunnel. On your left is the **Stanhope Hole** conservation area. Once through the underpass you emerge in an open area where several tracks lead off.

To your right is the path to **Ash Plantation** which is in private hands and not open to the public. Ash Plantation is known locally as **Crow Park** and gives the route its name.

To your left is the route of our walk which continues up the slope and through the gateway. Follow this path until it eventually emerges into **Common Piece Lane**. Here you will find a fingerpost and information plaque about the **Crow Park Way**.

Turn left downhill and as you begin approaching the little bridge over the **Doles Brook** you will see to your right the raised banks of the large ancient fishing ponds 5 that once belonged to the old priory.



Continuing up **Common Piece Lane** you have to either side allotments of various sizes, each one given individuality by their owners. These allotments or "common pieces" give the lane its name.

Emerging from Common Piece Lane you have on your left the well kept **Findern Cemetery**, and further on, again on your left, is **Ivy Cottage 6**.

Towards the church, on your right hand side is the **Methodist Chapel** erected in 1835 at a cost of £134 8s 0d. It has a well in the front garden which supplied one of the two pumps in the village. This area at one time was the centre of the old village known locally as 'Bumpton' 7.

Finally as we approach the church and car park, over on your right tucked back in the corner, is **Findern Old Hall**. Rebuilt in the Victorian period, and built on the site of the original priory, this was, in the 18th century, the residence of a Thomas Wollatt who in 1755 gave his daughter Elizabeth to be married to Jedediah Strutt 8. Apprenticed to a local wheelwright, he was destined to become famous for his mills in Derbyshire such as the North Mill in Belper.

