

Aspley Guise Circular Walk

Introduction

Set on the delightfully wooded Greensand Ridge, Aspley Guise is one of the oldest villages in Bedfordshire. The Saxon name Aepslea, a clearing in the Aspen trees, was first recorded in 969. Following the Norman Conquest, the Manor eventually came into the hands of the de Guise family who gave the village its name in the thirteenth century. Today there are some notable buildings from the Elizabethan and Queen Anne period. Holly hedges are to be found throughout the village. Wildlife includes Muntjac and Fallow Deer. Rabbits proliferate in the sandy soil and birdlife flourishes in the varied habitats ranging from woodland to pasture, parkland and garden.

Start/Finish Point

The walks starts from the Moore Place Hotel.

General Information

Length: 3 miles (5.8 km)

Time: Just over 1 hour

Route Description

Start in the village square. Walk up Church Street, past The Anchor, as far as Aspley House, which is glimpsed through a gate set in the high wall. At the corner of the wall turn right, the path now passes over parkland giving a fine view of the house and gardens.

At the main road turn left, cross over, then right into Mount Pleasant. When the Wheatsheaf is reached turn right up Spinney Lane. Continue as far as the school, then take the path along the edge of the field opposite. A distinctive clump of Scots pine stands in the centre of the field, and the tower of Woburn Church can be seen in the distance.

At the end of the path turn right, follow the road until you can take a signed footpath across a field to the left. The path goes directly ahead over the field.

The path enters the grounds of Birchmoor Pumping Station. Simply follow the direction shown on the waymark post, keeping the hawthorn hedge on your left. Keep a lookout for the diminutive muntjac deer, and hares. At the end of the hedge, cross the plank bridge over the ditch and turn right. Follow the ditch to the corner of the field, through a metal gate and into Aspley Lane.

Go left along the lane to Birchmoor Lodge, then right and up the track to Aspley Wood. On entering the wood follow the same broad track between conifers on the left and sweet chestnut to the right, also carpets of bluebells in the Spring. When the track is crossed by another broad ride continue straight ahead following the waymarked path past Mermaids Pond, which can be seen through the trees to the left. The path now climbs a short slope before levelling out to follow a line of old fence posts. Go left at the next waymark, ignoring the more obvious path ahead, then right to take a parallel path on a slightly higher level. Turn right at a waymark following the bridleway down under mature Beech to exit the wood.

Cross the road and turn left along Woodside. Continue to the notice on the wall, "Footpath only. Horse riding and cycling prohibited". Follow this 'secret path', overhung with trees and bounded on the left by a high brick wall, to emerge at the main road opposite the Golf Club.

Cross the road and go up the lane to the right of the Club entrance. Continue to the end, between lime and holly, past the recreation ground and Common Farm. Go through the kissing gate and immediately bear right, taking a straight line diagonally across the field. Aim for a point just to the right of the tall lime tree and immediately left of the bungalow on the far side.

Go through the kissing gate and go down the grassy path between a garden hedge and a post and rail fence guarding horse paddocks.

The path now drops steeply, under a tunnel of Holly, down to Church Street. Turn right, the village square is just a few steps away.