

# Duffield - Belper & Belper - Ambergate: Walks 1 to 4

## 1. Shining Cliff Woods

Shining Cliff is important both historically and naturally. The area has been wooded for over a thousand years (probably much longer) and is a remnant of the Duffield Frith hunting forest.

Changes have taken place in the wood over the centuries with new species being introduced, e.g. sweet chestnut and larch. Shining Cliff, however, still provides an excellent example of an ancient semi-natural woodland, with birch, holly and hazel prevalent. Part of the wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its plant life.



## 2. Belper

Excellent views over Belper can be seen from North Lane. The northern part of the town is dominated by the Strutts' cotton mill. Jedediah Strutt was a business partner of Richard Arkwright and built his first mill here in 1776. The North Mill, which stands overlooking the Derwent, was built in 1804 by Jedediah's son, William Strutt, and is a forerunner of the modern skyscraper - inside, a museum explains the story.

One of Strutt's workers, Samuel Slater, learnt the cotton production process at Belper, before quietly emigrating to America, disguised as a farm labourer, to revolutionise industry there.

There are other town trails around Belper available from the Visitor Centre at Strutt's North Mill. For further information phone (01773) 880474.

## 3. North Lane

Derbyshire is crossed by many ancient trackways, some dating back several thousand years. North Lane is part of the Anglo-Saxon Portway, an important track running roughly NW and SE across Derbyshire. This stretch was also used by the Romans to carry lead from the Wirksworth area to Duffield and - even earlier - is believed to have been a Celtic ridge route.

Along the route, an unusual stone wall can be seen on the right. This is part of the firing range, a shooting butt, built in the nineteenth century for the local militia to use for target practice.

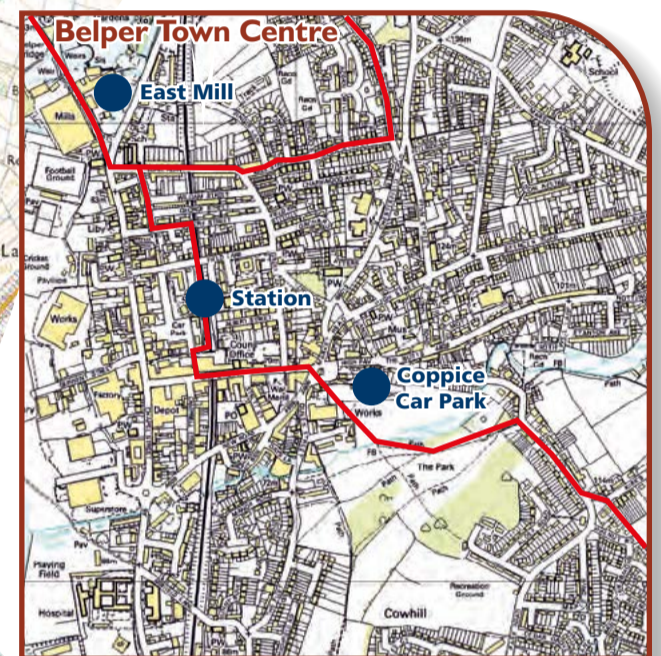
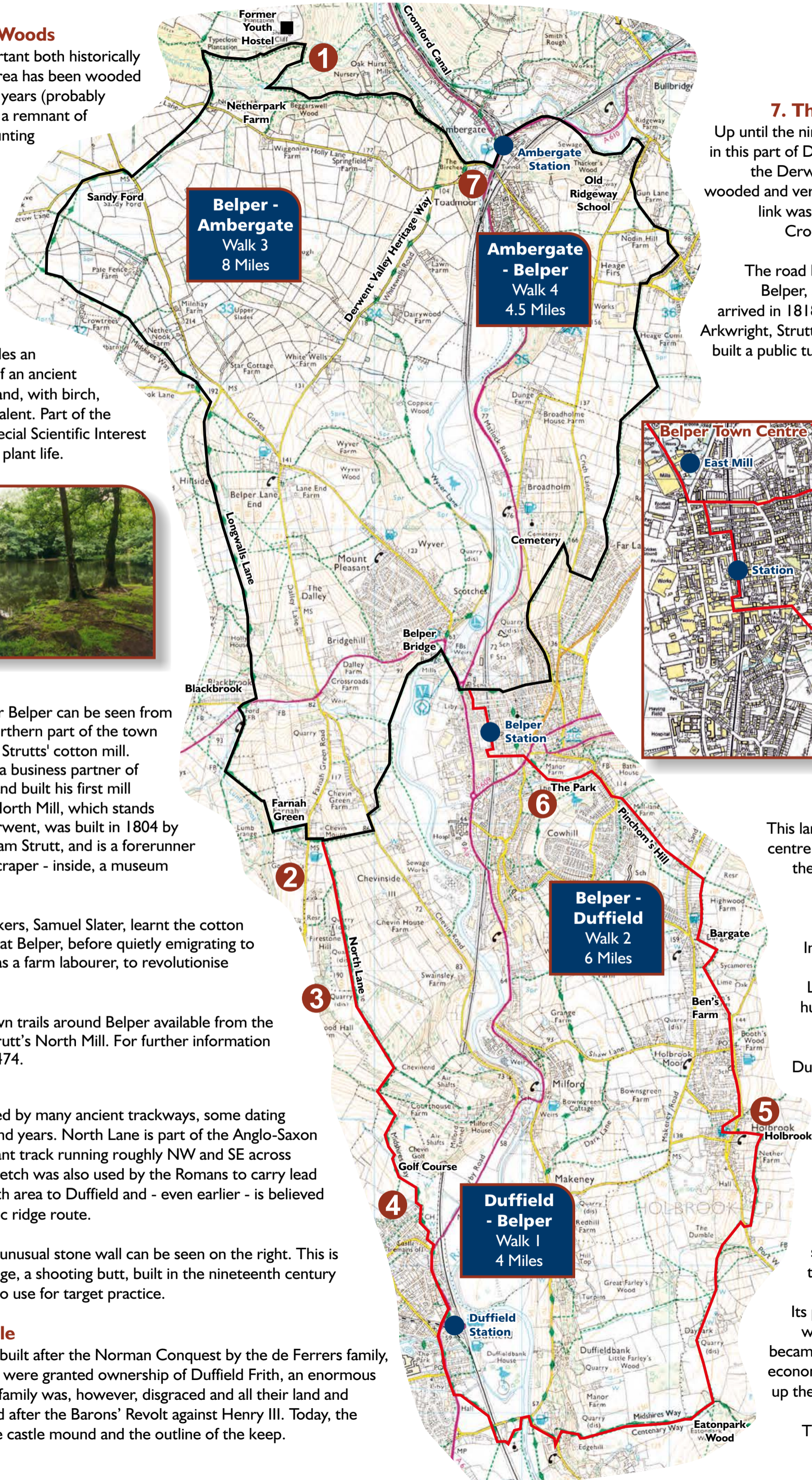
## 4. Duffield Castle

Duffield Castle was built after the Norman Conquest by the de Ferrers family, Earls of Derby, who were granted ownership of Duffield Frith, an enormous hunting forest. The family was, however, disgraced and all their land and property confiscated after the Barons' Revolt against Henry III. Today, the only remains are the castle mound and the outline of the keep.

## 7. The A6 to Cromford

Up until the nineteenth century, travel in this part of Derbyshire was not easy, the Derwent Valley being heavily wooded and very marshy. A direct road link was made in 1759 between Cromford and Nottingham.

The road between Cromford and Belper, alongside the river, only arrived in 1818 when a partnership of Arkwright, Strutt and Hurt (of Lea Mills) built a public turnpike, the present A6.



## 6. The Park

This large open space near the centre of town is a remnant of the Belper Deer Park, part of the old Royal Forest Duffield Frith.

In the Middle Ages it was owned by the Duchy of Lancaster and featured a hunting lodge, and later, a manor house. Several English Kings visited the Duffield Frith to hunt deer.

## 5. Holbrook

Holbrook is a pretty village situated on the southern edge of one of the most southerly parts of the Pennine Ridge. Its population grew quickly when framework knitting became important to the local economy, many people setting up their own frames at home.

The main street is part of an ancient Portway.



## DUFFIELD - BELPER WALK 1 DISTANCE 4 MILES

**A walk with a steady climb over the Chevin hillside following the ancient Portway along the ridge of the Derwent Valley, eventually dropping down into the historic town of Belper.**

Leave the station car park into Station Approach and then turn right along the main A6. Pass the site of Duffield Castle and continue on to turn left into Avenue Road then immediately right towards the golf club. The walk now follows the route of the Midshires Way around the rear of the golf club along a track and over a stile, then round right and up between the greens. At a way marker, turn right then immediate left. Climb, crossing tracks, until a main walled track is reached.

**Turn left onto this prehistoric highway, called North Lane, and enjoy the extensive views of the valley and Belper below. Just before the lane turns 90 degrees to the left, turn right (by a seat) into fields (thereby leaving the Midshires Way) and go downhill, turn left at the road and then soon right. Head past the house on the left, then cross a series of fields downhill to the River Derwent and follow the path upstream to Belper Bridge.**

After passing the town's historic mills, and going under the 1795 'gangway' bridge, turn right and find the way to the station using the town centre map in the inset.



## AMBERGATE - BELPER WALK 4 DISTANCE 4.5 MILES

**A walk through village, farmland and, after one short climb, excellent views from the valley ridge.**

Leave the station through the car park and down the entrance road. At the main road turn right. After passing under a railway arch take the footpath on the right. Follow this to the left of Thackers Villas then turn right along the path to the rear of Old Ridgeway School. Turn right up the road to find a footpath on the left beyond the housing.

**Ascend the path and, at the crest of the hill, admire the panoramic views with Heage Windmill (one of only 2 mills in Derbyshire with sails) to the front left as the path descends to a track. Turn right then immediately left to follow the road to Nether (meaning lower) Heage.**

Turn right to Malthouse Lane and again to Spanker Lane to find a long straight farm track on the left. Walk to the left of the farm buildings and follow the path through several fields for nearly half a mile to pass a wood on the left and then on into the housing estate in the distance.

**Turn left at the first road and soon right onto a footpath which leads eventually to steps on the right. Ascend these and continue on to the main road. Turn right then soon left down a path to Belper Cemetery. Turn left at the entrance and cross fields to reach Swinney Lane. Turn left here and the route to the station is easily followed through some of Old Belper by using the town map in the inset.**

## BELPER - DUFFIELD WALK 2 DISTANCE 6 MILES

**A walk through open country with superb views linking together historic settlements. This route contains 2 steady climbs.**

Leave the station, follow the town map in the inset to the Coppice car park. Go downhill, over the Coppice Brook and follow the path to the left leading through the ancient deer park, (now a nature reserve).

**At the road turn right and keep uphill. At Kirks Lane take the footpath ahead (Pinchom's Hill Road) to Bargate. Go straight over the road and soon turn right to follow the path behind the houses.**

This eventually cuts straight through the front yards of a row of cottages - this is the right of way! Turn left at the end of the path between fields, then pass through two stiles and turn right to cross two fields to emerge onto a lane. Turn left and follow the track to Ben's Farm and the road.

**Turn right and walk through Holbrook village to Town Street and soon turn left down a tarmaced path (Stoney Lane). Turn right at the bottom of the allotments and follow the quiet lane as far as the main road. Here, turn right and cross the road to find a path leading left uphill into a wood, over a bridge and on uphill to a lane and finally to Daypark Cottage.**

Take the path bearing at 45 degrees away from the gate to an oak tree. Cross the corner of the next field and head diagonally to the edge of a small wood. From here cross several fields to Eatonpark Wood. Go through the gate and after a few yards turn right to soon find a stile out of the wood (the walk now follows the route of the Midshires Way). Follow the path/bridleway across fields to the top of Duffield Bank. Note here that the footpath and bridlepath run side by side, separated by a hedge.

**Descend Duffield Bank to the Bridge Inn, turn left down the far river bank and follow the route of the Midshires Way into Duffield and to the station.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

These walks in the beautiful Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site have been designed to link together the stations along the scenic Derwent Valley Line. Choose one or more walks to create a circular route or use the train to get back to the start.

The train service through the Derwent Valley provides a great opportunity to leave the car at home, relax and enjoy the great views along the way. Trains on the Derwent Valley Line operate a frequent service between Nottingham, Beeston, Attenborough, Long Eaton, Derby and the local Derwent Valley Line Stations.

However, if you do travel to the Derwent Valley by car, there are car parks at each of the stations, from where you can start your circular or linear walk and travel back by train or on various bus services.

For train times call National Rail Enquiries 03457 48 49 50 or visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)  
Alternatively, for local bus times, call Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or visit [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses)



All walks have been carefully waymarked by green discs bearing a coloured arrow. Yellow indicates footpath status to be used by walkers. Blue arrows indicate bridleway status and can be enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horseriders. All the discs bear the legend Derwent Valley Walks.



The four walks in this leaflet are part of a collection of 12 walks exploring the Derwent Valley. The other eight walks are detailed in two more leaflets.

## HAPPY WALKING!

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
Middleton Top Visitor Centre,  
Tel: (01629) 533298

This leaflet was produced by Derbyshire County Council for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

## BELPER - AMBERGATE WALK 3 DISTANCE 8 MILES

**A longish walk from Belper, along the valley ridge with 2 steady climbs through farmland and ancient woods.**

Using the town map in the inset find East Mill and the river. Take the footpath left immediately after crossing the bridge and head on for some way to a signposted gate in the fence. Pass through the gate and begin to climb the valley side to eventually emerge by the side of a large house on to Chevin Road. Turn left and soon right up a footpath leading to North Lane.

**Turn right onto North Lane, follow it a short way to a road, turn right and go downhill for 100 yards at Farnah Green to a fingerpost on the left. Keep to the left side of the wall and follow the path as it leads into a wooded valley, the "Depth o'Lumb". Keep to the edge of the wood before entering fields and descending to Lumb Lane then downhill to the road.**

Turn right, then left on Longwalls Lane. Go straight ahead for over a mile to a T-junction (powerlines overhead) and turn left downhill, then right into fields. Still following the Midshires Way follow the ridge uphill quite a way through a series of "knee trapper stiles". After the summit and on entering a large field veer off to the right at a waymarker, to two more stiles next to gates and up to another stile, then aim for a small footbridge. At the lane turn right past Sandyford Lane to the T-junction. Turn right then left into fields then into Netherpark Farm. Go through the yard and cross the road onto a track into Shining Cliff Wood.

**At the first main fork, turn right (leaving the Midshires Way) and then right again just beyond the former Youth Hostel, continue to the Mermaid's Pool and veer left up to a main track. Turn left and follow this until the road is reached. Turn left, over the river to the A6.**

Cross the A6 and go left to the A610. Go under the railway arch and turn right to reach the station.

## Explore THE DERWENT VALLEY

