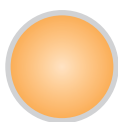


Trail Guide:



A ride through history

The 'Fancy That' Factor

Ride through a railway tunnel

Ride where Bonnie Prince Charlie once marched on Derby

Sit on a village bench made of horseshoes – lucky you!

See the typical village of your imagination for real at Osmaston

This cycle ride is about 26 Kms (16 miles) long and takes in some quiet country roads, green lanes, bridleways and parkland tracks. It will take 4 or more hours depending on how often you stop.

Cycling northwards from Longford to Shirley can be very muddy depending on the season but this can be bypassed using the slightly longer route via Hollington. In the parks there are some rough track sections with steep 'ups and downs' so it's more suitable for adult or teenage riders. For information about Cycle Hire please call Mapleton Lane Cycle Hire Centre, 01335 343156.

Start from the **Ashbourne Tourist Information Centre** or any of the town car parks. But the best place to start is at the Mapleton Lane Cycle Hire centre at the start of the old Ashbourne railway tunnel. Follow the signs for the cycle hire centre. The highlight of the tunnel is the realistic sound effects inside to conjure up the past so don't worry if you hear 'a train' coming – the line was closed in 1960. Leave the tunnel and go into **Station Road**, **left** into **Station Street** and then **right** up the steep hill of the **Old Derby Road**. Do **not** follow National Cycle route 68 signs. Later you will pick this route up again.

Trail Key:



Walking



Car



Bus



Cycling



Scenic



Historic



Time



Distance

Difficulty Rating for cycling:



Easy



Moderate



Strenuous

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

After this short but busy section on town roads you are onto quiet country lanes. After Spitalhill you will pick up cycle route 68 and the route leads you through the lovely little villages of **Wyaston** and **Rodsley** passing pre-historic burial mounds on both sides of the lane, through **Carr Wood** and then into **Longford**. This is about half way through the ride so follow **route 68** until you cross the river. Stop here to look for the lovely old **Longford Mill** with its water wheel and mill race. Then ride the loop around Longford and head through the village to rejoin the main road you just left. Turn **right** and look immediately for the **left turn signed "Parish Church"** which takes you onto the road through **Wormsley** to **Shirley** (the muddy route). Even if you decide to take the no-mud route to Shirley via Hollington described below, you must still go back to see **St Chad's Church** and **Longford Hall**. If you think graffiti is a modern habit then try to find the tomb with the graffiti artist's initials carved on it; the date is 1714! The Longfords settled here in the 12th century and built St Chad's then. The Cokes of Derbyshire took the estate over from them. Today it is privately owned.

From here there are two ways to continue. Retrace back 300 metres to the small gate and north through the fields following a section of the *Centenary Way link to the Bonnie Prince Charlie Walk* – commemorating his march from Ashbourne to Derby as well as the 1995 celebration of 60 years of the Ramblers Association. During the unsuccessful Stuart rebellion of 1745 he was proclaimed King of England in Ashbourne Market place and then they marched through Osmaston and Shirley enroute to Derby. The rest is history. This is the muddy route depending on

the weather. The alternative is to go back to the main road and follow the country lanes to **Hollington**, (mentioned in the Domesday book) and then **Shirley**. Both routes lead to Shirley, an ideal spot to stop for lunch is the Saracen's Head, famous for its real ales and excellent food. The "valiant Shirleys" are mentioned by Prince Hal in Shakespeare's Henry IV and today part of their original manor house is part of a farm.

From **Shirley** to **Osmaston** the route follows bridleways and parkland tracks. Make sure you stop at the foot of the steep hill down from Shirley Park to the lake. The 200 acre park was originally part of the Earls Ferrers estate and here there is a wonderful old water mill that seems to have been abandoned with its old machinery and tools left in place. The road crosses over the Shirley brook and goes through Osmaston Park just south of the village of the same name. Osmaston Park has an air of abandoned grandeur with its great oaks and cedars but the magnificent hall, built for the industrialist Francis Wright was demolished in 1964. The park is being rejuvenated with play areas, new footpaths and sports facilities.

Osmaston is the typical English village of our imagination . . . thatched cottages abound, a good pub called the Shoulder of Mutton, a church and a duck pond with a bench made out of horse shoes!

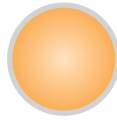
From Osmaston you rejoin the roads again and after a short stretch on the busy **A52**, you arrive back into town along the **Old Derby Road**. It's downhill from here luckily and back through the town and tunnel to the hire centre for a reviving cup of tea and a sandwich.

Ashbourne Trail No. 26

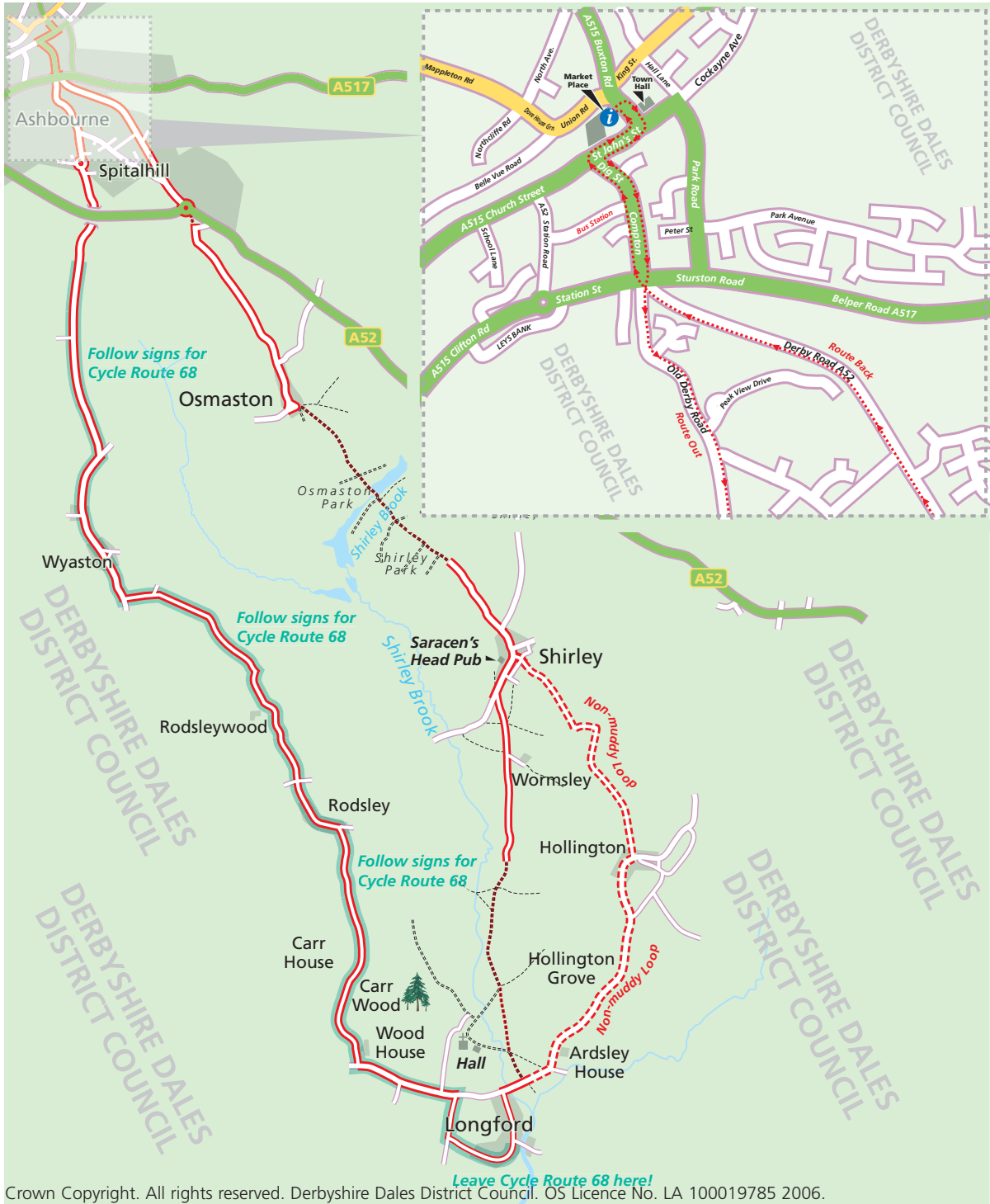
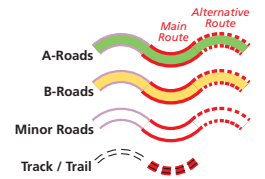
Cycle Through Centuries



26 km
16 miles



Key



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