

## Melton's 'Royal Mile'

This is a walk around the historic centre of Melton Mowbray of exactly a mile's duration. The walk takes around 20 minutes at a normal walking pace without any stops. The walk starts at the bottom of King Street (which should be explored first) next to the Market



From King Street cross the Market Place bearing right. A market has stood on this site for over 1,000 years and is the third oldest recorded market in the country. It is the only market in the whole of Leicestershire (including Leicester) mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.



On the South side of the Market Place is the Swan Porch.



It was at the Swan Porch that the drunk Marquis of Waterford from Ireland on 6th April 1837 found a bucket of red paint and used it to daub this and other buildings (including the Toll House). For 'Painting the Town Red' he was fined £100 at Derby Assizes.



Going along Church Street on the left side is the Old Court House and underneath the prison cells. The notorious murderer 'Peppermint Billy' was held here before his trial and public execution. More than 25,000 people watched him hang outside Leicester Prison – the last public execution in the County.



The walk continues past the West Door of the magnificent St Mary's Church; "The stateliest and most impressive of all churches in Leicestershire". The current building, on the site of a Saxon church was started 800 years ago and has some of the features of a cathedral.



After the Church walk down the former Great North Road. To the left is the old medieval wall and on the right Play Close one of Melton's Parks owned and managed by the Melton Mowbray Town Estate. The Melton Mowbray Town Estate was founded in 1549 and was created for the benefit of the Town's citizens, today the Estate still retains responsibility for the Town Parks, Market and other local recreational facilities.



At the bottom of the path turn left along Mucky Lane and in front of the Melton Borough Council building. This replaces the former Council HQ in the North of the town destroyed by fire in May 2008. Behind the offices is Melton Railway Station on a direct line from Birmingham to Cambridge and beyond.



The exit of Mucky Lane onto Burton Street used to be a major canal basin linking the Oakham Canal to the Melton Mowbray Navigation to Leicester, hence the Boat Inn. The building opposite with a porch and columns is the former Lodge of the Earl of Cardigan who led the Charge of the Light Brigade (October 1854) which he survived.



Walk along Burton Street on the left handside.  
From here observe the buildings opposite.

The Harboro Hotel was a famous lodging for the aristocracy and others when the nobility and aristocracy flocked to Melton Mowbray in the hunting season during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Famous guests at the Harboro include Elizabeth Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary who along with 21 horses and several noblemen, visited Melton to hunt. She gave the proprietor of the Harborough Hotel only a day's notice of their impending arrival. The Maharaja of Cooch Bejar was another hunting guest of the Hotel.



The Manor House on the corner of Mill Street was owned in turn by Prime Ministers Melbourne and Palmerston both of whom were Lords of the Manor of Melton and stayed in the House. The famous conductor, Sir Malcom Sargent, lodged there when he was the organist at St Mary's Church.



Further up are the Maison de Dieu Bede Houses. These were and still are almshouses for pensioners built by Robert Hudson in 1640



The white building with the upper bay windows was the Old Club, a hunting club founded in the early 19th Century by Beau Brummell, 'King of the Dandies' and others. It had only four bedrooms and so four members. Beau Brummell introduced the Prince Regent (George IV) to hunting in Melton where they would dine at the Club.



The famous painting "The Melton Breakfast" by Sir Francis Grant was painted at the Club. One one occasion a wager between members bet that a horse could not be persuaded upstairs at the Club. The bet succeeded but the horse would not go down the stairs so the bay window had to be removed and the horse winched down.



In front of the church made of yellow ironstone is the Anne of Cleves pub. Built in 1384 for the monks who serviced the Church, it was confiscated and owned after the reformation by Richard Cromwell, Chief Minister to Henry VIII. When Cromwell was executed for persuading the King to marry Anne of Cleves, she received the building in her divorce settlement. There is no record of the Queen ever having visited her pub!



Continue to the Junction and turn right to start down Sherrard Street. Sherrard Street goes all the way to Thorpe End, famous for the Midnight Steeplechase on 10 March 1890 where the aristocracy raced through fields and over hedges by moonlight dressed in their nightshirts.



Along the way, as in the rest of Melton, many of the buildings have large archway entrances for the coaches of lodgers who would rent the building for the hunting season. Among these were the Duke of Montrose and Duke of Beauforth as well as Prince Demidoff, who was related to Napoleon's family, all of whom stayed in apartments at the Old Post Office.



At the end of Sherrard Street is the old library now the Carnegie Museum gifted by Carnegie to the town. The museum has an extensive local collection from the bronze age onwards. Exhibitions include a Museum of Hunting and a Museum of Rural Life. Replica shops inside include a Pork Pie Bakery and a Stilton Cheese Dairy. It is hoped that the museum will mount a temporary exhibition on Royal Melton facilitating school visits.



Not part of the walk but some 200 yards on the same side is Tuxford & Tebbutt the last remaining producer of Stilton Cheese in the Town. Stilton Cheese originated in Melton Mowbray. The whey fed the pigs which were turned into Melton Mowbray Pork Pies.



Cross to the other side in front of St John's Catholic Church which was started in 1839 to a design influenced by Pugin the architect of the Houses of Parliament.



On the way back along Sherrard Street turn right into Windsor Street. The Melton Cheeseboard sells cheese from across Europe but most notably Stilton Cheese which originated in Melton Mowbray. You can taste different Stilton and Red Leicester cheeses made by local producers.



At the top of Windsor Street turn left into King Street past the Art Deco Regal Cinema built 1933.



Walk behind the Manor House and admire it from the Car Park. No nails were used in the original construction. Like most houses of the time these were not painted white but a dull earthen colour.



Go through the car park and pass through the Bell Centre to Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe. Built in the 17th Century this Grade II\* listed building is the home of Dickinson & Morris one of the original producers of Melton Mowbray Pork Pies. Pies were made for huntsmen from the pigs that were fed on the whey from Stilton Cheese.



To finish the walk turn left to enter the Market Place again. Before you do so, on the right is High Street. Half way along the street on the right is the former George Hotel, accommodation for the Aristocracy during the hunting season. In the distance is Egerton Lodge the Hunting Lodge of the Earls of Wilton.



The walk is exactly one mile and takes 20 minutes at a good walking speed without any stops.

On a Tuesday and certain other days turn right from the Pie Shop if you wish to visit the Livestock Market just 5 minutes walk to the top of Nottingham Street and over Norman Way. The livestock market established by Act of Parliament in 1869 is the largest town centre livestock market in the Country and specialises in Cattle and Sheep (up to 6,000). A farmers market and collectables market also operate on the site.

