

Walk Two: Heath to Heath

A circular walk
between Overton and
Cuddington Heaths, from
Malpas Cross

You should allow about 1 1/2 hours for this walk which will lead you through some of the fields surrounding Malpas – all the access points are provided by kissing gates. Remember to wear strong shoes. The best time to take this walk is on a sunny afternoon when the light is good for taking photos.

Leaving the Cross, walk up Church Street to St Oswald's church.

Take a look around the church (1) and its gravestones - look out for the inscriptions to past church wardens within the churchyard walls. Or take a further detour behind the church to see the Castle Mound (2).

Once you've left the churchyard, turn right into the tarmac drive. Where the road forks, take the left hand path – it is marked with a fingerpost.

You are passing the Parish Hall (3), originally the stables of the Higher Rectory.

Malpas Parish is unusual in having had, until the 19th century, two rectors. In the 12th century, Baron Robert Fitzhugh had no male heirs, so the Barony of Malpas, and the right to appoint a rector, was divided between his two daughters.

4 The Ox Heyes, meaning a hedged enclosure for oxen, provided pasture for the ox of the town's plough teams. Enjoy the view from here of the Clwydian Hills, including Moel Famau.

Turn right and follow the top edge of the field.

5 The Old or Higher Rectory is over the hedge. This was the birthplace in 1783 of the Reverend Reginald Heber; see Walk Three for his story.

The larger Ox Heyes (6) was the town's recreation ground and at one point even had a bandstand. Malpas' celebrations for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee were held here.

The line of twelve sycamores in this field were planted to represent the 12 apostles. Look out for the large tree with the 'cave' in its trunk.

7 The deep cutting of Overton Lane, known locally as Love Lane, marks the township boundary between Malpas and Overton.

Turn left and follow the lane – take care as vehicles use it too. Look out for the sandstone pigsty of Top House Farm.

If you want a diversion, continue along the lane to the rear of Overton Hall (8) where you may see the earthworks of a deserted settlement. Overton Hall is private property, please respect this.

Turn left at the fingerpost to follow an ancient drove road (9) which links Overton and Cuddington Heaths. What you see is only the remains of what was once much larger heath land.



The birds and the bees ... and the plants, and the animals ... The hedgerow is an important refuge for many of our wildflowers. Spring brings carpets of stitchwort and celandines, to be followed in summer by the spires of foxgloves. The spots and stripes on the lip of each foxglove flower guide busy bees to the nectar, whilst each bee's back is dusted with pollen to carry on to the next landing.

Amongst the hazel and the hawthorn leaves, you'll see familiar friends, but better still, stop and listen for the song of the robins and wrens. In summer, swallows and swifts swoop above the wheat and barley, scooping insects as they go. If you're lucky, you'll hear the whistling call of a buzzard, gliding over open country in search of its prey.

Not every resident of the field edge is so obvious. Soft mud may reveal the presence of foxes or the five clawed print of a badger.

Where a footpath crosses the drove road, turn left and follow the footpath back to Malpas. You will cross the football pitches at the Sport Club.

Now that you've made it back to the Cross, why not try another of the walks?

St Oswald's Church and the Castle Mound

The origins of St Oswald's Church may be as the private chapel of Malpas' motte and bailey castle. The mound behind the present church - altered in the 1830s to provide a reservoir for the town's first piped water system - is all that remains of the timber and earth castle.

Today's St Oswald's is largely 14th century with 15th century alterations. Inside are the alabaster chest tombs for both the Brereton and Cholmondeley families. Some box pews remain with the coats of arms of their owners.

There is also a 13th century iron-bound chest made by a local blacksmith who may have been inspired by one in Chester Cathedral.



Look out for the Bear, a symbol from the Brereton coat of arms outside the church.



Evidence of the past The earthworks, which may indicate the existence of an early hamlet of Overton, were found in 1976 during an aerial survey of the area. Overton Hall belonged to the Alport family who provided Malpas with a Bluecoat charity school in 1745.



The sting of nettles is a familiar feeling, but take a closer look to find black, hairy caterpillars marching and munching across the leaves, preparing for the day when they will emerge as admirals, tortoiseshells and peacocks.



Walk Three: Cross o' th' Hill

A circular route, up hill and through field, from Malpas Cross

For a walk of approximately 13/4 - 2 hours, follow this route through Malpas and the land to its east. You will find both kissing gates and stiles at the access points on this route. Strong shoes are recommended.

From the Cross, walk down Old Hall Street, passing the Lion Inn (1) and the Smithy Garage (2).

Turn left into Springfield Road and then right into Springfield Avenue. The public footpath starts between the two sets of garages, half way along the road. Access to the field is through a kissing gate.

The names of the streets reflect this area's past, providing the water supply for the town.

On leaving the estate, you will cross the Kilnfield (3). When walking through all these fields, please follow the direction arrows on the posts and keep to the indicated 'path'. You will be walking along part of the Marches Way.

At the Good Moors (4), is an artificial pool and today's sewage works on the site of the town's old waterworks system. Pumps were installed in the 1830s to pump water up to a reservoir in the Castle Mound. All the work was paid for by the local landowners; the Cholmondeleys and the Drakes.

At the top of the hill you will have a good view of Malpas spread out below its church.

From the Good Moors to Bawbrook Lane (5) you are on the Cross o' the Hill, where a stone cross was recorded in 1465.

As you leave the field, take care going through the gate as there is a road on the other side.

Turn right and then cross the road once you are opposite the public footpath sign.

A stile takes you into the area known as Ebnal. You will be crossing the fields to meet the main Chester to Malpas road.

Turn left when you reach the road.

As you follow it back into the village, Bishop Heber High School (6) is on your right.

A short detour to the right up Hollowood Road and down Oathills takes you passed the Oathills cottages (7).

The road continues on past the Victorian civil cemetery (8), opened by the Burial Board in 1870.

The chapel's clock, from the 1880s, is by a local clockmaker, Arthur Callcott.

The new Alport School (9) is on your right.

To see the old Alport School (10), built in 1745 from money left in his will by Richard Alport of Overton, turn right when you reach the High Street. It is now a private house, but look out for the date of its founding and of its extensions recorded on the building.

Continuing Education

Richard Alport of Overton died in 1720, leaving £500 'towards the establishing and benefit of a charity school at Malpas for poor boys or girls of the same parish'.

His last wishes were finally granted in 1745 with the building of the Alport School. The original building housed only 14 boys. An extension was added in 1815 (on the right as you look at the building) allowing girls to attend too. Malpas Infant School was added as a wing in 1833.

By the 1880s the school roll had outgrown the buildings. Joseph Lewis' donation of land and money enabled the new Alport School to be built, which provides primary school education in Malpas today.

Head back towards the Cross, passing Drake House (11) and the old Fire Station (12) on your way. Look out for the building date and the initials on the rainwater heads of Drake House.

Just before you reach the Cross, you will see the Victoria Jubilee Hall on your left (13).

Now that you've returned to the Cross, why not try another of the circular routes round Malpas?



Bishop Heber, 1783 - 1826 "Reginald Heber was born in Malpas in 1783 at the Higher Rectory as his father was a rector in Malpas. He was famous for writing well-known hymns such as 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. He achieved his education at Oxford and won many prizes and awards that led him to his high fame."

Heber became Bishop of Calcutta in 1823 and spent the last few years of his life there. His only sermon preached in Malpas was his farewell one in St Oswald's Church.



Generosity knows no bounds Oathills Cottages were built in 1884 by Joseph Lewis to address the lack of working-class housing in the area.

Lewis was a farmer's son from Shropshire who had become a wealthy draper in London. He only lived in Malpas for the last 10 years of his life but contributed money for the new Alport School and for the restoration of St Oswald's.

For Queen and Country ... and Community In 1887, Malpas chose to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee with the building of the Jubilee Hall. It was to be a public room for the town and neighbourhood, and was opened on August 7th 1888 by the Marchioness of Cholmondeley.

During the 1890s, a shed was built to the rear of the hall to house the local fire engine and a turret with a fire bell added to the hall itself. During the Second World War, the hall provided a school for boys evacuated from Liverpool.



Your Guide to a short walk around the streets and nearby fields of Malpas near Chester

exploring | walking | birdwatching | cycling | sailing | horseriding | we've got the lot



Explore! The town & fields of Malpas

Welcome to Malpas

"My view of Malpas today is that it is still growing and has kept a lot of historic features alive."

Malpas stands on the line of the old Roman Road from Chester, called Deva by the Romans, to Wroxeter, via Whitchurch.

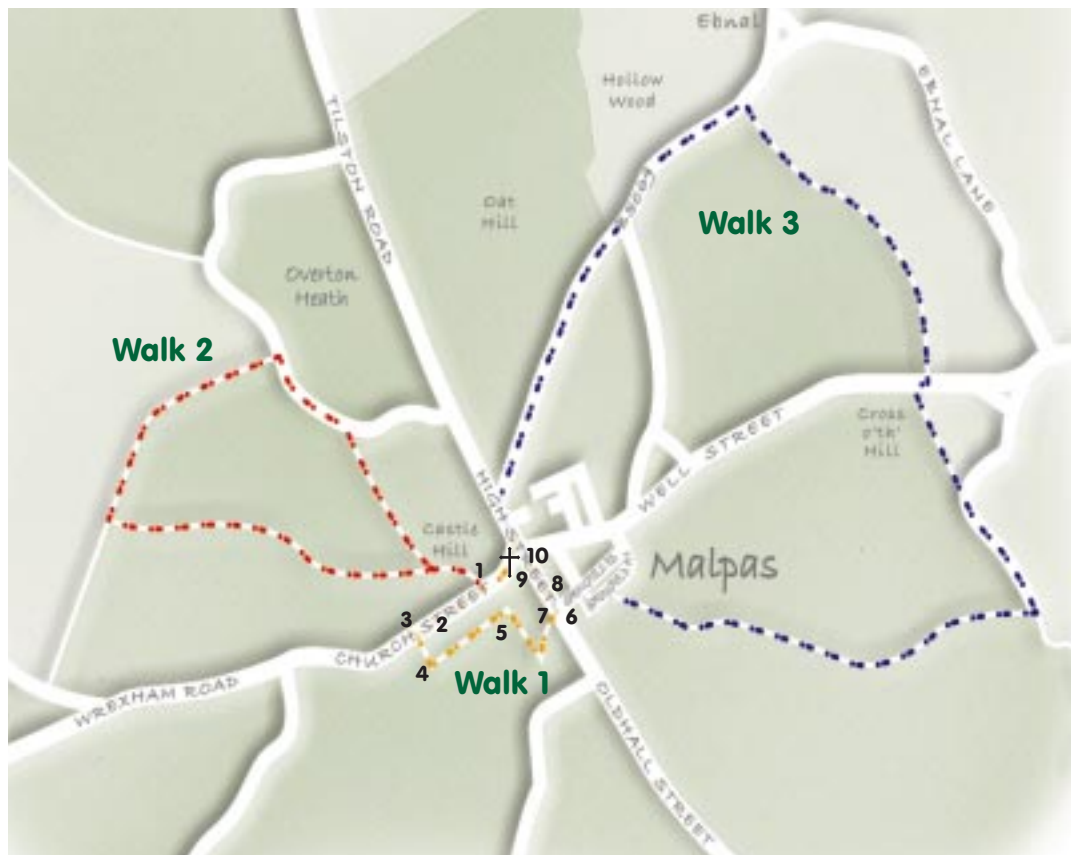
However, its origins are Norman, as its name, Mal-pas (difficult road in French) suggests. The first Baron of Malpas, Robert Fitzhugh was given the Barony by the Earl of Chester, who aimed to strengthen his control of the English-Welsh borderlands with a series of castles.

Today, the town has many interesting buildings, from the 17th through to the 20th centuries and tales to tell about those who lived and worked in them. The surrounding fields also reveal the past of the community and its present.

"Malpas is full of nice friendly people. In the countryside, out of the town, there is a lot of wildlife from pheasants to rabbits and the odd hare."

In 1281 Malpas was granted a charter to hold a fair for three days a year and a market every Monday.

New building in the 17th and 18th centuries filled in the large open market place which stretched from the Church Steps to the High Street and as far as the Old Hall.



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They can all book accommodation, give you information about places to wine and dine and provide tickets for theatres, attractions like Chester Zoo and the Blue Planet and coach tours.

- Chester: Town Hall or Chester Visitor Centre
Tel: 01244 402111
email: tis@chestercc.gov.uk
www.chestertourism.com
- Ellesmere Port and Neston:
Cheshire Oaks (J7, M53)
Tel: 0151 356 7879
email: cheshireoaksitic@btconnect.com
www.ellesmereport.gov.uk
- Wirral: Woodside Ferry Terminal, Birkenhead CH41 6DU
Tel: 0151 647 6780
email: dlst@wirral.gov.uk
www.wirral.gov.uk

CARE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- Remember that the countryside is a working environment where people make their living. Even empty grass fields are important to a farmer's income. Please respect the countryside and the people who live and work there. Help us keep the countryside alive and a place where people are pleased to welcome visitors.
- Make use of local shops and pubs.
- Don't let dogs chase livestock or wildlife.
- Please keep to paths/rights of way through farmland
- Please report any problems to Cheshire County Council. Tel 01606 301482
- Leave farm gates as you find them.
- Watch out for horses and people on country lanes.
- Don't park in gateways or on verges (remember that farm machinery is large and needs lots of room to manoeuvre even through village highstreets).

This leaflet contains a series of circular walks in and around Malpas devised on behalf of Malpas Parish Council.

All of the walks begin at Malpas Cross. You may like to link two or even all three of the walks together to create a longer one. As you follow the directions, you will find things to look out for on your walk, and some comments from Malpas Young Person's Parish Council.

"In 1911, the King's Coronation celebrations were held around the cross but it is hard to imagine doing that now!"
Malpas Young Persons Parish Council

Higher Rector of the parish from 1840 - 1873. was a memorial to the Reverend Charles Thurlow, having disappeared in the 19th century. The restoration However, its top section is Victorian, the original piece The steps of the cross are the original medieval ones.



Walk One: Round the Town

A circular walk through the streets and fields of Malpas

This short walk through the streets of Malpas will take about 30-45 minutes, giving you a real feel for its past. Access to all the fields is by kissing gates.

From the Cross, walk up the right hand side of Church Street. This street has two-way traffic, so take care.

- 1 The Market House was built in 1762 by local landowners, the Drakes, as two shops with living accommodation above. It faced out onto the town's market square. Go up the Church Steps and into the churchyard of St Oswald's. Walk Two tells you more about its history.
- 2 From the churchyard, you can look across the buildings of Church Street - look out for a mythical creature on one of them.
- 3 Follow the path through the churchyard and back down to street level again. Continue along Church Street.
- 4 The Cholmondeley Alms Houses were founded in 1636 by Sir Thomas Brereton for the support of six poor persons of the parish chosen by the Marquis of Cholmondeley.
- 5 The Tithe Barn is a 17th century timber framed building which was converted into a house in the 20th century.

The Gryphon
The symbol of local landowners, the Cholmondeleys, who were descended from the original Barons of Malpas. It can be found on the Old Printing House, built for the steward of the Cholmondeleys in 1733, which later housed a printing press.



- Cross the road and turn left down the green lane public footpath (marked by a fingerpost).
- This is locally known as Boughey's Lane after the owner of the shop, now demolished, which stood on the corner.
- Pass through the kissing gate and turn left. Keep to the side of the field as you walk around.
- 4 The Captain's Field, so called after Captain Ethelston who allowed the people of the village to use the field for sports.
 - 5 Through another kissing gate you enter a second field.
 - 5 Ten Tree Field; its name actually comes from the word tentre, as in a tentre frame which would be used for drying cloth, and not from the number of trees!
- A gate will let you into Parbutts Lane - named after Thomas Parbutts whose headstone is in the churchyard - and back to Church Street. However, to complete your walk, continue round the field's edge. Leave the field by the kissing gate which takes you into an avenue of trees and through a curved path onto Old Hall Street. Turn left to walk back towards the Cross.
- 6 Directly opposite you are the houses of Chapel Rise, built on the site of the 1872 Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.
 - 7 The Old Hall - now a nursing home - was the home of the Breretons.
 - 8 The Smithy Garage and Anvil Cottage mark the site of the village blacksmith's forge.
 - 9 The Crown was a coaching inn - in the 1830's, coaches from London and Shrewsbury passed through Malpas daily enroute to Chester.
 - 10 The Red Lion, another coaching inn, now has a 1920's facade. King James VI of Scotland (James I of England) is said to have stayed here.
- You're now back at The Cross - why not try one of the other walks?

Paying your dues
Tithes, or one tenth of the produce of a village's fields, were collected in barns for payment to the church. This tax in kind was paid by the local people to the church until the 1830s, when it was changed to a cash payment.

To the manor born
The Breretons were the Lords of the Manor until the late 17th century. The present Old Hall dates from 1768 when the original hall was burnt down. In the 16th century, the Breretons kept a fool called Thomas Boswell to entertain them.