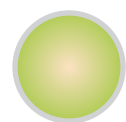


Trail Guide:



The world's biggest football game.

The 'Fancy That' Factor

The goals are 3 miles apart!

In 1928 the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII "turned up" the ball earning the game its "Royal" title. In 2003 the current Prince of Wales, Charles, did the honours

The ball is hand made in Ashbourne, the painted leather ball is filled with cork chippings so it floats in the river. The design of the ball reflects the person chosen to "turn it up" and weighs 4lbs

Men, women and children can all play and are either Up'ards or Down'ards, depending on the side of the Henmore brook on which they were born

The term a "local Derby" meaning a game played by two nearby teams, came from a similar game played in Derby until stopped in 1846

This walk takes you round the entire "playing field" - 3 miles long, 2 miles wide and Ashbourne in the middle. You can cheat a little and drive to the 'goals'. It's a 3 mile (5 km) round trip visiting both goals so allow 3 – 4 hours if you intend to walk to both. It's possible to park close to the goals – on the verge at Clifton and by the farm at Sturston so it can be done by car. Start by turning up at the "turning up" plinth, which is in the Shawcroft car park. This is where the game begins at 2.00pm on Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. From the car park you can either drive or walk to the two goals which used to be the Sturston and Clifton Mills.

This ancient game, also known as "hugball" has very few rules! It's been played in England since the reign of Henry II and in Ashbourne since about 1667. It was played throughout both world wars and despite many attempts to stop it, only the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 stopped the game.

Each day there's a lunch in the 18th century Green Man coaching inn in St Johns street, the special "Shrovetide song" is sung then the ball is "turned up" – thrown in the air – by a celebrity from the specially made plinth on Shawcroft. In 1928 it was "turned up" by Edward the Prince of Wales and in 2003 by Prince Charles.

Trail Key:



Walking



Car



Bus



Cycling



Scenic



Historic



Time



Distance

Difficulty Rating for walks:



Easy



Moderate



Strenuous

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

The 'rules' of the game:

Two goals, 3 miles apart, once old mill wheels, now concrete plinths with a circular target in the centre are on the banks of the Henmoor brook at Sturston and Clifton.

For the ball to be "goaled" the pre-chosen scorer is handed the ball, as the game is paused once it reaches the goal. The honour of scoring is done by standing **in the water** and touching the middle of the target 3 times. If you score you keep the ball which can be repainted for you and becomes a treasured possession.

The play can go anywhere in town but is supposed to avoid private property and the use of cars and motorbikes is banned! Such is the mayhem and the numbers involved that most shops and houses are boarded up for the two day festivities.

If the ball is goaled before 5 pm another ball is "turned up". If it's goaled after five o'clock then play is stopped for the day. If nobody has scored by 10 pm the ball is taken into custody by the police and returned to the Green Man!

From the "turning up" plinth, you can walk to **Sturston Goal** turning left into **Park Road**, then **right** into **Cockayne Avenue** and where it joins the **Green Road (B3035)** take the footpath on the **right**, after the school towards Sturston which will take you through Sturston farm and then to the right and back towards town still along a footpath avoiding Sturston Road which will be on your left.

Back at the **Shawcroft car park** again, you could get in your **car** and take the route to the **Clifton Goal** by turning **right** into **Park Road** up to the traffic lights, turn **right** into **Sturston Road**, proceed over the next traffic lights and continue on this road following the signs for Clifton. If you **walk**, then cross the car park go **left** by the Supermarket and walk through the bus station, turn **left** by the Beresford Arms, **right** at the next junction and follow the road to Clifton.

As you wander through the town and fields imagine what it must be like on the day of the game with thousands of spectators, hundreds of players hugging the ball, wet and excited. There are plenty of pictures and souvenirs of the game in the Tourist Information Centre situated in the Market Place and other bookshops.

This is real Derbyshire living heritage and if you want to see it for yourself then please come back one Shrove Tuesday or Ash Wednesday in the future:

2007 - February 20th/21st

2008 - February 5th/6th

2009 - February 24th/25th

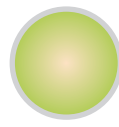
Ashbourne Trail No. 25

Shrovetide Football - a Right Royal Game



4.8km
3 miles

3-4hr



Key

