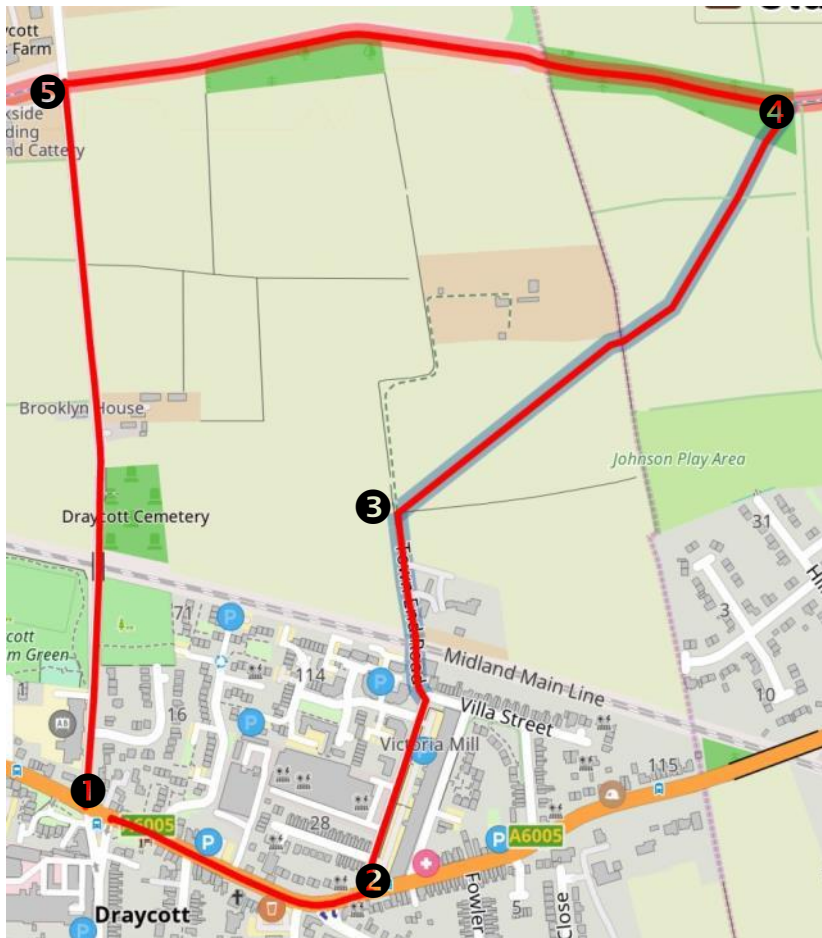




Derby and Sandiacre Canal

Draycott Walk



Starting from the centre of Draycott, this loop takes you through the historic heart of the village before joining the canal, just under 2 miles in total.

Access: There are a few parking bays in Draycott Square, usually occupied but adequate on-street parking around. Alternatively, there is roadside parking near the Co-op Cottages and the walk can be started from ⑤. Draycott is served by the indigo bus service between Derby and

Nottingham via Long Eaton (www.tinyurl.com/trentindigo).

1. Starting from Draycott Square (pictured right), head down the main road towards Breaston until you reach the junction of Town End Road and turn left. You are now following part of the Midshires Way, a 225 mile long-distance waymarked footpath from Bledlow in Buckinghamshire to Stockport.



2. You are walking the length of Victoria Mills (photo top of next page), an imposing building that dominates the centre of the village. This Grade II listed building was built between 1888 and 1907 as a lace mill, reputedly the largest in the world. It was nearly destroyed by fire in 1902. Originally, a steam engine drove the machinery on all four storeys but this was removed around 1958. It was rescued from dereliction at the start of the 21st century and is now apartments.



When you reach Villa Street, bear left on to the track, immediately left of Villa Motors.

3. When the hedgerow on the right ends, there is a squeeze stile which takes you diagonally across the field. At the next field boundary, take the footpath which veers slightly to the right (ignoring the wider track and the apparent path that goes hard left along the boundary. In about 200 yards, go through another hedge and into the woods onto the canal route.
4. The Midshires Way follows the canal route to the right, but you turn left; about 250 yards down the path you will pass under a girder bridge. This carries the main water supply to Leicester from the Derwent Valley reservoirs. A further 500 yards brings you to Hopwell Road.
5. You can return to the centre of Draycott by turning left.

But across the road, you can see the Co-op Cottages, currently under restoration by the Society. These were built around 1820 and originally used for drawing cotton. This only lasted a decade or so before they were superseded by larger mills in the village. They were then turned



into accommodation, at one stage housing nine families. Reduced to “only” six dwellings and eventually with electricity, these were occupied until 1985. After that, they were allowed to fall into disuse, until bought by the Society in 2017, with an objective of restoring the building for residential and commercial units as well as a base for the Society. Completion was planned for 2020.

In front of the cottages, the canal route is now obvious, often with a small stream. This will be the eastern end of a project to put a "Golden Mile" of the route into water. If you want to walk this stretch along to the bridge, you can then return to the centre of Draycott by turning left on to the road. In 1999, Railtrack (now Network Rail) determined that the problems of increased flooding of the main rail track to London had arisen because the canal was no longer draining land to the north of Draycott. Working with the Trust they agreed to dig out a drainage ditch along the canal line, which would capture the water and direct it to a pipe under the railway track and into the River Derwent. However, this excavation was not to canal dimensions and the project will remedy this as well as providing leisure amenities (a slipway to allow small boats and canoes to access the water, mooring points at each end, angling facilities and outdoor swimming). It is hoped to start work in 2020.

If you are interested in more history of Draycott, there is an active history group (www.tinyurl.com/draycotthistory); they have several publications, including one on the fire at the mill, which can be bought at Wilson's Chemists and Dundas Butchers.