



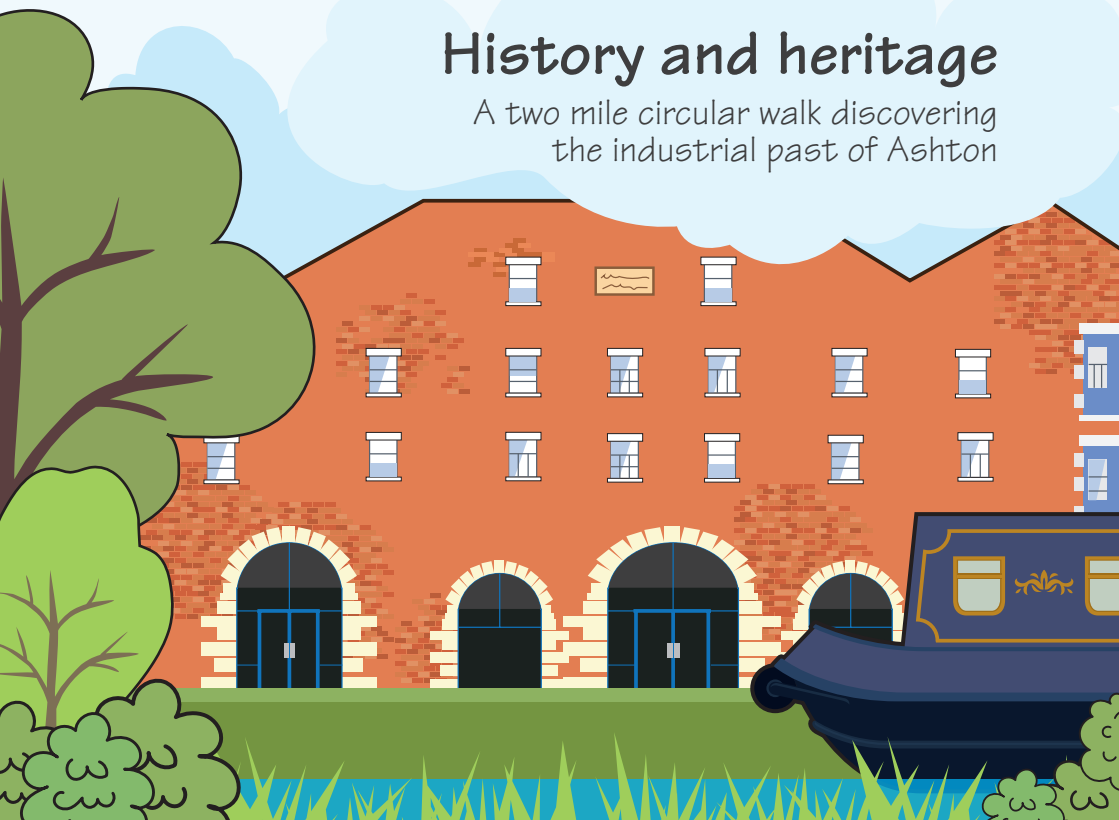
A series
of circular walks
exploring the
countryside from
Portland Basin

Let's go...

Walking!

History and heritage

A two mile circular walk discovering
the industrial past of Ashton



START

Portland Basin Museum

Portland Place, Ashton-under-Lyne
OL7 0QA. Tel: 0161 343 2878



The Ashton Canal was completed in 1796 mainly to transport coal to Manchester.

1 Leave Portland Basin Museum from the main entrance and turn left. Follow the building left down to the canal basin past the café and right along the footpath above the Ashton Canal towards the tall chimney.

Turn left then left again, down the steps onto the canal.

2 Turn left and go under the bridge and walk along the towpath with the canal on your right. Opposite Oxford Mills, the towpath climbs over bridge 27a that once spanned the entrance to a short arm running parallel with the canal. This was Prince's Dock, which served a small railway-canal interchange.

3 Leave the canal at the wrought iron Jeremy Brook Bridge 27. Turn right onto the path across the playing field and head for the far corner. Turn left onto Portugal Street then right along Ann Street, the site of Hugh Mason's Institute.



The Institute housed a library, smoking and chess rooms, at a cost to Mason of £4,500. Image courtesy of Tameside Local Studies & Archives

4 Turn left onto Clyde Street. Turn right past the garages and left onto Hamilton Street. Cross the road to look at the statue of Hugh Mason facing the houses locally known as the 12 apostles. This ornate terrace was built for Mason's employees.

5 Follow Stockport road past the two rows of shops. Cross at the road crossings into West End Park and St. Peter's Churchyard. Follow the path to the right, keeping the church on your left. St. Peter's, built in 1824 is a grade 2* listed Commissioners' Church. It has a rose window by Welsh Artist David Evans. The large 'boulder' in the churchyard is in memory of Thomas Boulton.

6 Use the crossing to reach Henry Square. Walk through St. Petersfield, Ashton's new urban business park, along Old Street to Central Library, Art Gallery and Archives Centre.



Ashton Old Baths opened in 1870. Initially the pools did not have a water filtration system, but were refilled every Tuesday. The charge for swimming was six pence on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, but only two pence from Friday to Monday, when the water was somewhat dirtier!

7 To return to Portland Basin, cross Old Street towards the major crossroads. Head for the Suzuki garage and Portland Mill across from Asda. Turn right after the mill onto the towpath. Cross the footbridge into the Basin.



Portland Basin's 1867 Octagonal chimney stands on the site of the Samuel Heginbottom's five-storey cotton spinning mill built in 1831. It is 204 feet high (64 meters) and has an unusual tulip shaped top.



Hugh Mason

'The most powerful man in the business, social, religious and political life of Ashton'.

Mason built up what he saw as a model, industrial community around his factories, with comfortable housing and recreation facilities for his workers. These included a sports ground, children's playground, swimming and washing baths. In 1871 he became the first local employer to give his workers Saturday afternoons off; a step which other employers often, reluctantly followed.

Mason's workers certainly enjoyed better conditions than others in the town, but he expected them to follow his own strict moral codes; there were no public houses in Mason's community and all Ashton knew what was meant by an 'Oxford Education'

He was mayor from 1857-1860 and was elected MP for Ashton in 1880.

This is one of a series of walks designed to show you the world which is to be explored outside Portland Basin.

Look out for...

Three Canals and a River

A three mile circular walk through varied landscapes of industry and countryside.

The Heart of the Tame Valley

A four mile circular walk along canal towpaths and riverside paths.

