

## Sports on the Bath Grounds

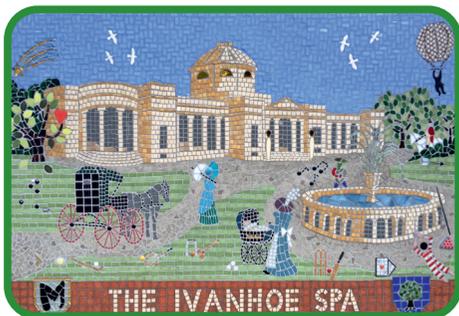
The Bath Grounds have a fine sporting history. Ashby Hastings Cricket Club and Ashby Bowls Club are long standing residents. In the past the grounds have also hosted shooting, tennis, archery, croquet, hockey and football. County Cricket was played on the Bath Grounds until 1964.



*Ashby Ladies Croquet Club, early 1900s*

## Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds

The Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds were formed in 2014. The aims of the community group are to work and campaign to protect and improve the Bath Grounds as a free, public access park and recreational facility for the benefit of the whole community. Why not join us. Please see our website for details [www.bathgroundsfriends.com](http://www.bathgroundsfriends.com).



*Mosaic of Ivanhoe Baths*

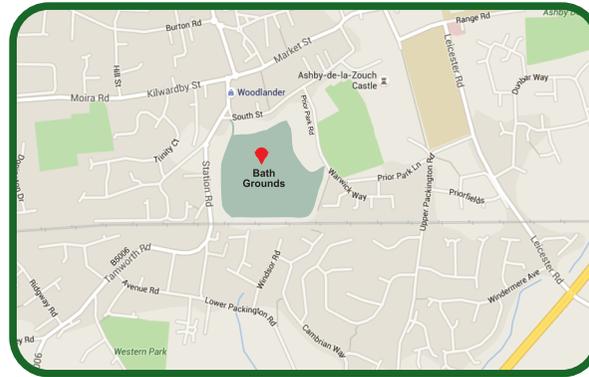
Please respect and help look after our Bath Grounds.



*Pride in our Bath Grounds*



## Finding the Bath Grounds



The Bath Grounds are located a few hundred yards from Ashby Town Centre behind the Royal Hotel. The main entrance is opposite the Loudoun Memorial at the corner of South Street and Bath Street. There are also entrances from Prior Park Road and from just beyond the Royal Hotel on Station Road, which is a continuation of Bath Street and leads to junction 12 of the A42 out of the town.

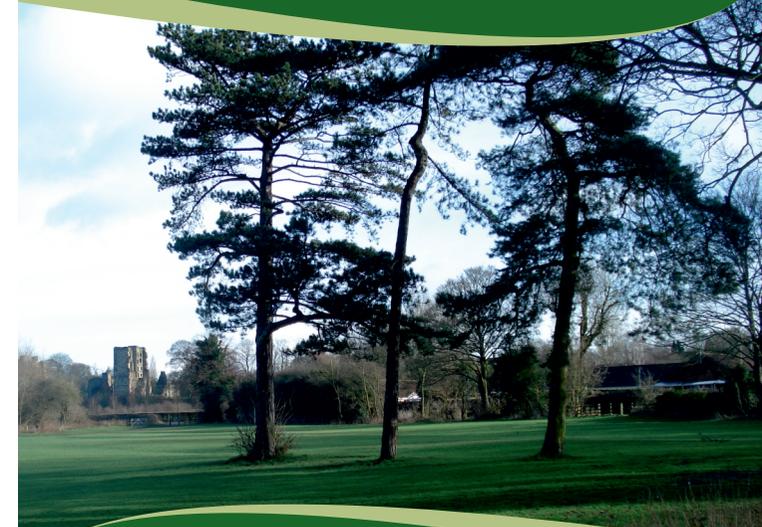
## Heritage Trail

The Bath Grounds Heritage Trail includes five new interpretation boards, which describe the fascinating history of the Bath Grounds, four waymarkers and two community created mosaics installed in a circular route around the grounds.

The path from the South Street entrance to Prior Park Road is constructed from Breedon Golden Amber gravel. Its eastern arm, through the trees, follows the line of one of the original Pleasure Ground carriage drives.

The path, Heritage Trail and this guide were developed by the Friends of Ashby Bath Grounds, in partnership with Ashby de la Zouch Town Council, with the assistance of Ashby Museum. They were funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and North West Leicestershire District Council.

# Ashby de la Zouch BATH GROUNDS HERITAGE TRAIL GUIDE



Discover Ashby's historic Bath Grounds, once home to the Ivanhoe Spa.



[www.bathgroundsfriends.com](http://www.bathgroundsfriends.com)

## Introduction

Ashby's historic Bath Grounds are a beautiful recreational parkland close to the centre of Ashby de la Zouch. They are an ideal spot for a short stroll or a picnic when visiting the town. They form part of Ashby's "green corridor" which runs between the Georgian Royal Hotel and the medieval castle.

The Heritage Trail provides an insight into the Bath Grounds' fascinating past and present. It comprises a series of heritage interpretation boards, numbered waymarkers and community created mosaics installed in a circular route around the grounds. We hope you enjoy your walk around the trail. Please respect the Bath Grounds and help us to maintain them as the 'Jewel in Ashby's crown'.

## History

Ashby's historic Bath Grounds have been enjoyed by residents and visitors to Ashby for 200 years. Known previously as Hall Meadow, they were laid out formally as an area of fashionable 'greensward' for the benefit of visitors to the new Ivanhoe Baths, built in 1822, at the western end of the park. They included a carriage drive and footpaths used for 'sedate and genteel recreation'.

## Castle Fish Ponds



Community Mosaic celebrating Fish Ponds

The brook provided fresh water for the ancient settlement of Ashby and the castle. The castle's fish ponds were also located here. These artificial pools of slow moving, fresh water were used to breed and store fish as a sustainable medieval food supply.

On their eastern side, the Bath Grounds are bounded by the former course of the now culverted Gilwiskaw Brook.

## The Ivanhoe Baths

1800 - 1817 – A saline spring was discovered at Moira's 'Bath Pit'. Small scale baths were established in Moira, owned by the Rawdon-Hastings family.

1818 - 1819 - Lack of inns and lodgings and proximity of mine shafts resulted in the decision to transfer the Moira brine waters to Ashby de la Zouch.

1822- Building of the Ivanhoe Baths on the south side of the town, near the Castle, funded by the town and Francis Rawdon-Hastings Esq. Robert Chaplin was chosen as the Architect. Cost of building the Baths - £16,000.



The mineral waters from Moira were poured into large tanks and brought by canal and later by railroad to Ashby. The waters were transferred to an underground brick reservoir capable of filling 2000 baths.

At Ashby you could *'take the waters'* as a medicinal drink or; *'be totally immersed in water or sponged in the problem area.'* Application of the water was either; *'as a flow, in the stream bath, through a tube directing it to a particular spot on the bathers person'* or *'as rain, in the shower bath, where its activity is thrilling and diffusive over the head and shoulders.'*



Unfortunately, Ashby failed to gain the fashionable status it needed for long term success as a spa town. The Baths were closed in the 1870s due to lack of patronage. The end came in 1962 when the Ivanhoe Baths were sadly demolished.

## Fayres, Shows and Carnivals

After the decline of the Ivanhoe Baths, the Bath Grounds flourished, becoming Ashby's focus for outdoor community activities. Their heyday was the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when they hosted Grand Bazaars, Whit Monday Gala Fêtes and the annual Flower Show. The Bath Grounds still host many community events including the Fake Festival, Jim's Tractor Rally and the Gusto Food Fair.



## Dolly Shepherd

One of the most popular attractions to the Bath Grounds was the Edwardian Parachute Queen, Dolly Shepherd. Described as a *'rather daring and impetuous girl'*, Dolly was a very popular entertainer in a period when balloonists drew huge crowds.

Dolly made her first solo parachute descent from a balloon on the Bath Grounds in 1904.

She made two jumps at Ashby in 1908. During one Ashby descent, an embarrassing moment occurred when a gust of wind blew her off course into a barbed wire fence which ripped her knickerbockers from waist to knee. She was rescued by a local *'Sir Galahad'*.

Dolly's last jump was in 1912 when she decided she had pushed her luck enough. She wrote an autobiography of her exploits, *'WHEN THE CHUTE WENT UP'*.



# ASHBY BATH GROUNDS HERITAGE TRAIL

## The Loudoun Memorial

Standing near the Bath Grounds' South Street entrance, this Grade 2\* listed memorial is to Edith, Lady Maud Hastings, tenth Countess of Loudoun (1833-1874). It was one of the last designs by the eminent architect, Gilbert Scott, and completed in 1879. It stands on the site of Gawbey's Hole, a water pump where much gossiping was 'wont to take place'. The inscription on the memorial is by Benjamin Disraeli.



## The Ivanhoe Baths

The Ivanhoe Baths was an elegant Neo-Grecian building constructed in 1822, for the first Marquis of Hastings, to exploit the saline waters from nearby Moira. It featured a 150ft colonnaded front with 32 Doric columns and a classical dome. It was demolished in 1962.

By 1827 the Royal Hotel, Rawdon House and Terrace and Ivanhoe Terrace had been completed nearby. These, and the later Midland Railway Station, are all Grade 2\* listed and accredited to the architect-surveyor Robert Chaplin. Chaplin, who also designed the Baths, worked in Ashby between 1831 and 1850.

## Rawdon Terrace and Ivanhoe Terrace

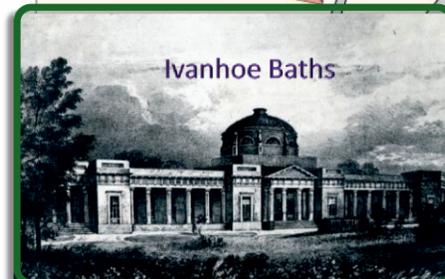
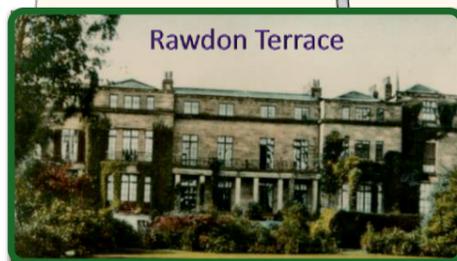
These beautiful, Georgian terraces were built prior to the Royal Hotel to accommodate important visitors to the Baths. At that time, they both had open views and access onto the Bath Grounds.

## The Royal Hotel

Opened in 1827 to accommodate a rapid increase in visitors to the Ashby Spa Town, the Royal Hotel was originally known as the Hastings Hotel. It boasts an inspiring central stairway and entrance portico

## Midland Railway Station

The station was built in 1849 in a similar style to the Ivanhoe Baths. The Leicester to Burton Railway was influential in bringing visitors from far and wide to Ashby Spa. The tram lines can still be seen in the station forecourt.



## Ashby Castle

Built as a manor house in the 12th century, and becoming a castle in the 15th, Ashby Castle was the seat of Edward IV's Lord Chamberlain, Lord Hastings. It was damaged during the Civil War. The picturesque castle ruins and grounds were a major attraction for visitors to Ashby Spa. They can be seen across the fields from the eastern end of the Bath Grounds. Today they are maintained by English Heritage and are open to the public.

## Key to Heritage Trail

### Heritage Boards

- 1 Welcome Board and Map
- 2 Ivanhoe Baths
- 3 Fayres, Shows and Carnivals
- 4 Ashby Castle Fishponds
- 5 Sporting Heritage

### Heritage Waymarkers

- A Gilwiskaw Culvert  
The Gilwiskaw Brook through Ashby was culverted from 1855 onwards. It now flows beneath the Bath Grounds and under the railway line.
- B Railway Arch  
The new railway arrived in 1849 and Ashby became Thomas Cook's first 'pic-nic party' destination from Leicester.
- C Memorial Clock Site  
The Webster Commemorative Clock stood here for many years. Erected in 1957, it marked the outstanding cricketing achievements of Paul Mead Webster, including 10 wickets for 26 runs in 1932. The clock can be seen in the 1994 hockey match photo on Board 5.
- D Ivanhoe Baths Fountain Site  
An ornamental spring water fountain once stood here, close to the steps of the Ivanhoe Baths.

### Community Mosaics

The mosaics were designed by local artist Di Lorriman and realised by local mosaic artist Llynda Baugh.

- M1 Ivanhoe Baths  
Llynda made this magnificent mosaic in her Thringstone studio. It represents the Ivanhoe Baths in their heyday with the many sporting and community activities that took place there. It includes a shooting-star tribute to Ashby's much-loved Lorna Titley who passed away whilst it was being constructed. It was unveiled by Ashby's Mayor, Mike Ball, on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

- M2 Fish  
Produced during community mosaic workshops in the spring and summer of 2016, this beautiful mosaic recalls Ashby Castle's ancient fishponds which were located nearby.