

The Pentrich Revolution Bicentenary

Walk 22

- On 9th June 1817, over 300 men set out for Nottingham from villages on the Derbyshire-Nottinghamshire border.
- They thought they were part of a 'general rising' to bring down an unjust and oppressive government. Motivated by poverty and hunger, all efforts to gain a hearing suppressed, and having no vote, many saw an armed revolt as the only alternative.
- Unbeknown to them, the Government 'agent provocateur', William J Oliver had encouraged the armed revolt. Rebel leaders had already been arrested and only a handful would take up arms in Huddersfield and Nottingham. The Derbyshire men were to be used as an 'example' to others.
- Ambushed by troops, the marchers fled and many were arrested. At their trial in Derby, three - Brandreth, Ludlam and Turner - were sentenced to death. They were to be hanged then beheaded. Fourteen were transported to penal colonies in Australia, others imprisoned. Their families were evicted and homes destroyed.

The other walks in this series

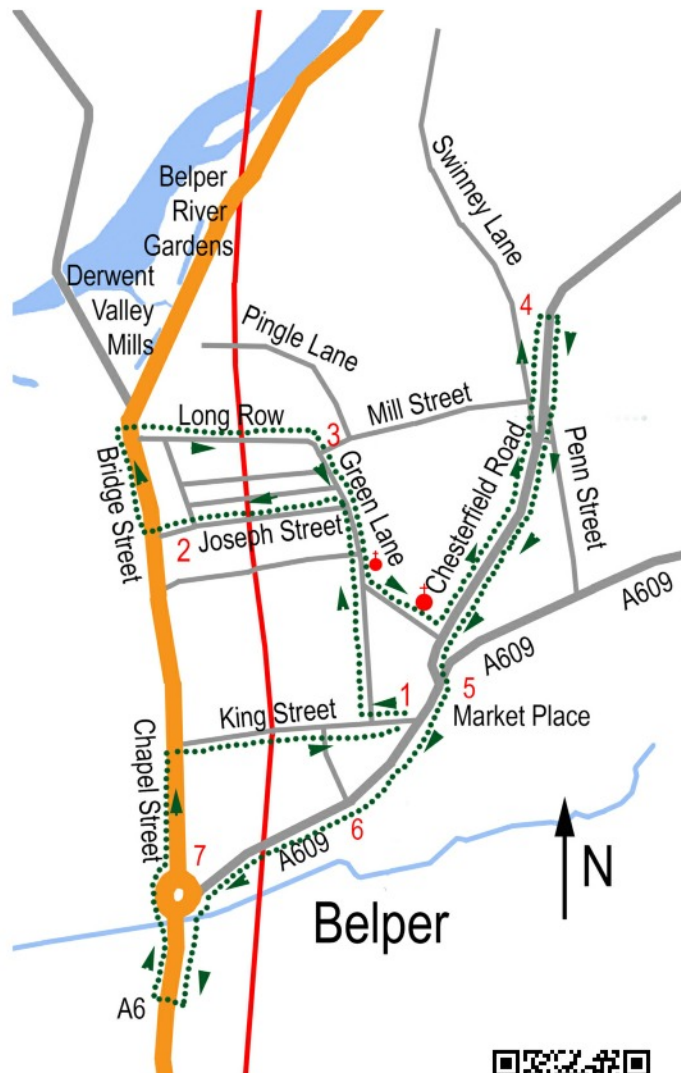
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|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Nottingham, England. | 10. Heanor, England. |
| 2. South Wingfield, England. | 11. Langley Mill, England. |
| 3. Fritchley, England. | 12. Eastwood, England. |
| 4. Heage, England. | 13. Giltbrook, England. |
| 5. Pentrich, England. | 14. Sutton in Ashfield, England. |
| 6. Alfreton, England. | 15. Derby, England. |
| 7. Swanwick, England. | 16. Sydney, Australia |
| 8. Ripley, England. | 17. Parramatta, Australia |
| 9. Codnor, England. | 18. Kiama, Australia |
| 19. The full route of the march, England. | |
| 20. The aftermath | 21. Ambergate, England |
| 22 Belper, England | |



**Belper
Town Council**



**THE PENTRICH
& SOUTH WINGFIELD
REVOLUTION GROUP**



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Charity Incorporated Number 1166940

The Pentrich & South Wingfield Revolution

Walk 22

Belper. England



Market Place
©Photo Sylvia Mason



www.visorando.co.uk
Walking software and app



Distance: 3.5 miles. Care needed when crossing roads.
 Difficulty: Urban walk of pavements with steep hills & steps
 Park: The Market Place car park or the Station.
 Start: The Cinema King Street. OS ref. Explorer 259 475350

Men from Belper may have joined the march but none were arrested to confirm names, unlike from neighbouring villages like Heage. The walk will explore the part that Belper played in the events and how it later took up the cause of the 1817 rebels.

1. Start at the Ritz Cinema on King Street. Walk down the hill to the first right turn, Green Lane, and walk along it past the former Unitarian School, and the Unitarian Chapel on the side street to the right. Stop at Joseph Street on the left.

The Strutt family played an important part in the events of 1817. While opposing violent rebellion, as Unitarians showed sympathy for the poor and they applauded reform movements. Joseph Strutt joined the Pentrich curate Wolstenholme and Mr Higginson, the Presbyterian minister, in supporting the prisoners and their families. The Strutts were removed from the Grand Jury at Derby as they were not trusted to do the Tory Government's bidding. Strutts kept close links to the defence solicitor Thomas Wragg and Joseph Douglas Strutt was horrified at the executions in Derby. Unbeknown to them rebels like John Brown of Ilkeston were able to influence others in the Belper Militia while Strutts were serving as its officers.

2. Turn left down Joseph Street passing the Nailers Workshop and the 'Clusters' on your right, before continuing into Crown Terrace. These were all built from



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1785 -1805 by the Strutts. Turn right at Bridge Street and walk to the right. Stop at Long Row to see the mills across the road.

The Strutts provided housing of good standard for families. Employing mainly women and children in the mills, many men worked as Nailers or Framework Knitters. This discouraged rebellion, especially with factory overseers living next to them in the 'clusters'.



©Photograph Sylvia Mason

3. Walk up past more Strutt houses on Long Row and turn right at the top back onto Green Lane. Continue back along Green Lane, passing Short Row, before turning left to pass St. Peter's Church to Chesterfield Road. Turn left up the hill to Swinney Lane.

Pentrich leader Thomas Bacon and his brother John were captured and transported. John's son Miles hid in Pentrich Church, escaping when soldiers came. Claiming he jumped the canal at Hartshay, he fled to Leicestershire, where he settled at Whitwick, to continue his trade as a framework knitter. Marrying Elizabeth Griffin, they started a family. The eldest he named after Jeremiah Brandreth. Returning to Belper in 1836 he lived at Swinney Lane (1841 Census), Laund Nook (1851), and Field Head (1861 and 1871). He died in 1879 at 84. He hid his links to Pentrich until the 1860s, still fearing arrest. Miles' mother, like others, was thrown out of her home in Pentrich, ending up as a pauper in the old Belper workhouse. Miles returned to Belper to free her from its harsh conditions.



Miles Bacon

4. Continue to walk up Chesterfield Road, with the view over the valley on your left. The site of the old Belper workhouse is across the river from the Mills. Continue up the road to see Laund Nook, now a street across the recreation ground on your right. Retrace your steps down Chesterfield Road, formerly Field Head, and continue to the Market Place.

Miles lived in Belper in a time of unrest as the fight for social and political justice continued. Men and women from Belper played an important part in this fight. Many joined unions; framework knitters, like Miles and his sons, cotton spinners, horse nailers, iron workers and miners. The Derby Turnout of 1834/5 was supported by Belper Nailers with a 6d levy, while workers at Brettle and Ward's

came out to support the march from Derby. In 1835 the Nailers themselves held a six week strike. In 1842 and again in 1845 Brettle's framework knitters held strikes against pay cuts and miners organised in the 1840s against 'truck' payments (being paid in goods not money). The call for the vote for all adults was taken up by Belper men like James Vickers of Bridge Street and Thomas Meakin of Brookside, who spoke out for the vote from 1831 onwards.

5. The Market Place

In 1839 the Chartists took up the call for the vote. Large meetings were held for the People's Charter on the Market Place, petitions signed, and well known leaders like Feargus O'Connor came to Belper. By 1842 Belper had one of the largest branches of the National Chartist Association in the county with 290 members. The Strutts feared a rebellion and fortified their mill with cannon, however when hundreds went on strike for the Charter in August 1842, mass meetings held on Holbrook Moor were peaceful.



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6. Walk down Cheapside and the A609 New Road. On the left is Brook Street, home of Thomas Meakin, and on the right is Strutt Street, where there is a public toilet available.

7. Continue, over the railway line, to the roundabout. Turn left along Derby Road to see Babington Hospital, then return to the roundabout

Babington Hospital, the former Union Workhouse built by George Gilbert Scott in 1840, is a fine building but hated by many. When a suspicious fire started in 1841 a large crowd gathered and threatened those who tried to put it out. The memory of the Pentrich Rising was not forgotten in Belper. In 1872 Belper Nailers, like luddites, smashed 'tommy hammers', used to make cheap nails and reduce pay. They called the machines 'Olivers'; an echo of the 1817 Rising.

Return along Chapel Street, with the De Bradlei Mill, formerly Brettle's warehouse, on your left. Turn right up King Street to walk back up the hill to the Ritz Cinema.