

Ledbury, Small Town Big Heart

Whether you are visiting England from abroad or on a weekend getaway. Ledbury in Herefordshire has a little something for everyone.

Ledbury, is more than an old market town with a colourful history, photogenic streets, and Tudor buildings. It has heart.



You can visit many of the historic buildings for free, and find them manned by volunteers who are both passionate and knowledgeable. They'll be happy to guide you around and answer questions.

It also home to Church Lane, one of the most photogenic streets in the UK, that you can visit in real life rather than on Instagram.

If you also look very carefully you may even see the little fairy doors. There is a fairy door map and trail in the shops around town. [Here is a page and map to help you out.](#)

The village is also well-known for its [Poetry festival](#) that held each year in June

and July. That brings in poets from all over the country and world.

Recommended spots to see and visit in Ledbury:

Market house

This old Market house takes the center stage on the town's main street. It's unique in that the stilts are exceptionally high. Completed in 1658 and built in Tudor style. The original use was for storing crops, after that, it was the town hall. Today it still plays the role of meeting house and hosts a small Saturday market.



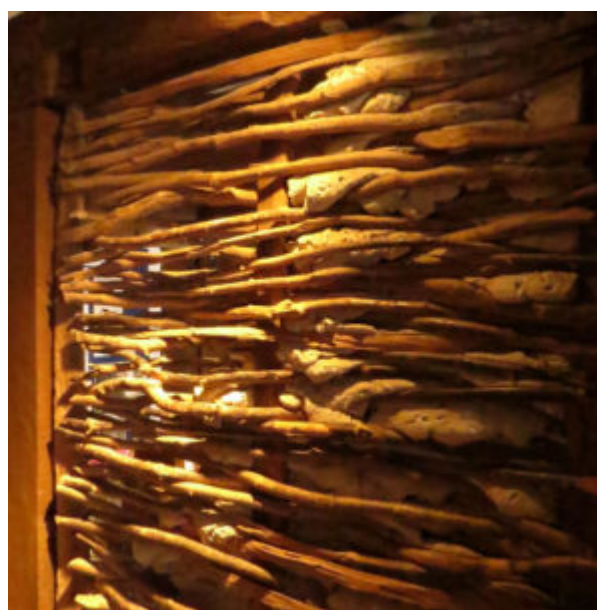
Butchers house

Was built in 1581 and was originally located on the main street. Yet, they moved it to make the street wider in 1979.



It now houses a museum rather than the Butchers shop. In the museum, you'll find a Shoe bath, which I had never seen or heard of before. It was for inhabitants in Ledbury that didn't have a bath at home. Men would carry this bath from house to house, so the inhabitants could bathe.

Address: Church Lane, Free Admission Open daily, including Sundays from 1st April to 31st October from 11am to 5pm. Outside of these dates, please make an appointment via [Ledbury Civic Society](#).



Old Grammar School

Across from the Butchers house, you'll find the Old Grammar school. Interesting for kids to have an insight into schools

of the past.

I liked the wattle and daub, display. An insight of the inside of a Tudor style building wall.

Church Lane, Free Admission

The Painted Room



The wall paintings go back to the 1560's, at the time they were a cheap alternative to tapestries.

The paintings were colourful and included religious inspirations (threats) of the day. The volunteers can tell you the whole story and explain the context.

Church Lane, Free Admission

The Masters House

This refurbished historic house is now home to the local library. Be sure to check the website before you go, as there are free tours available every so often. They also host talks from historians, writers, and

poets. Adam Horovitz was the poet in residence Ledbury in 2015, and he wrote a few great poems about the building. [They can be found here](#).

St Katherine's, Bye Street, Free Admission

Hellens Manor



While this isn't in Ledbury, it is close enough to warrant a visit. Now, I am not the 'let's do a tour', type of traveler. As the Manor is still in use today, the only way to visit the manor is with a tour.

Which is well worth it. There is so much history here that you would never get the full story on a simple plaque.

The guide lives on the property and has an in-depth knowledge of the history of the house, as well as being an incredible storyteller.

My two favorite stories were that of the ghosts. The first being Hetty, who ran away with the stable boy who she'd fallen in love with. When he died she returned to the house. Due to the family's shame, they kept her room locked in her room for

the next 30 years. Here she etched "It is a part of virtue to abstain from what we love if it should prove our bane", into the window with her diamond ring.

The second death took place in 'Bloody Mary's' room. Here a priest was running g to



escape from soldiers but instead, he ran straight into the second group and was brutally murdered. If you look carefully, you'll find the marks of the attack on the wall and floor.

People who have stayed in the room have claimed to see his ghost, running back and forth in a panic.

The building itself is also fascinating, in how it carries the living history of its past and present owners over the different time periods. It was one of the best tours I've been on, and the highlight of my time in Ledbury.

Address: Much Marcle, Herdforshire
Website <http://www.hellensmanor.com/>
Admission costs: £9

Recommended places to Eat:

[The Malthouse cafe and Gallery](#), Church Lane: Home cooked

quality food.

Ice Bytes, 38 the Homend: Ice cream parlor

Recommended Places to Sleep:

[The Feathers Hotel](#), 25 High Street

[The Talbot Hotel](#), 14 New Street

[The Bullshed](#), While it's not in Ledbury, it is nearby. Its boutique style and comfort is worth experiencing if you are escaping the city for a few days and looking to treat yourself.



Church Lane



Bloody Mary's
Room, Hellens
Manor



Bloody Marys room



Bloody
Marys Room



Hellens Manor



Hellens Manor



Ledbury



Ledbury Clock Tower



The Butchers House, Ledbury



Ledbury Countryside



Hetty's Room

Tour of Ebley Mill: a Historic walk through England's Industrial Wool Trade



Cathedral of Cloth, Ebley Mill Walking Tour

Do you ever have those moments, when you see an antiquated building, and have a curiosity to peek inside?

I do. I love old buildings. I love the architecture that has weathered time, and societal fluxes. As much I as I love the outside, I am always curious about what they look like inside too. So, I jumped at the chance to do a free tour of the Ebley Mill in Stroud.

Richly woven tales by our guide brought the old mill to life. In our imagination, we strode through its various incarnations. Imagined ourselves surrounded by the clamorous sounds of the mill in action. The same sounds that would have echoed through the valley, followed by the wafting scent of wet wool.

We got to hear the stories of its heyday and slow demise.

The origins of Ebley Mill:

The exact dates aren't too sure. However, there are mentions of two mills being near this site as early as the 1300's.



One mill was for milling corn, and the other for fulling the wool. Which was a process of beating the wool down so that the fibres would further entwine. Resulting in a sturdier and weatherproof fibre.

The Mills brought prosperity to the owners and being a clothier at the time was good business. While the business boomed and ebbed the company grew. When the original owners sold it off, it was perfect timing for the following owner.

As the French civil war broke out, the army's need for uniforms made from quality English wool was in demand.

How the war lead to a boom in the Wool trade

Half the wealth of England rides on the back of the sheep

An Old English saying, that serves to remind us of the prestigious history of wool. Romans also wrote home about the high quality of the wool when they arrived at the British Isles.



The wool was as much for survival in a cold and rainy climate, as it was for fashion. There is nothing as sustainable, warm & weatherproof.

Which is why the fabric is popular for military uniforms, leading to a boon in orders. The profits of which financed the first building of the Mill that we see here today.

While a later war paid for the extension of a second building, which was originally 7 stories high. An epic explosion in the boiler room blew 5 of those floors. It was rebuilt and then damaged by fire damaged before it was rebuilt once more.

Peace and the changes in the Textile industry

As peace reigned, without uniforms to make, orders declined. The Mill had an equal measure of tough times in it's past.



By the 1960's it was struggling, and the introduction of

synthetic fibres didn't help. The mill innovated with the times, creating new products by blending fibres with the wool. Yet, in the end, it couldn't compete with other manufacturing costs and processes.

Sadly, by the late 1980s, it went bust and Ebley Mill's grandiose buildings left to ruin.

A New life for the Mill and Local council



In the 1990s the building's were bought and refurbished. It now houses the Stroud local council and its local departments.

Restored, it stands to watch over this Cotswold valley as majestically as it's always done. A nod to its heyday, Ebley Mill was a state of the art building, the first Mill in the area of that style and size. Although, many other mills soon followed suit.

A walking tour of the Mill through time:



The tour put on by the Stroudwater Textile Trust, gives us the opportunity to see the behind the scenes. We got a wander through the building and see the touches of the mills past. A past etched into the beams and walls.

It's as though the Mill reaches out and tells us its story, of all the architects and owners past and present.

While the mill no longer processes wool. The richness of the stories, history and its beautiful buildings remain.

A reminder of the past that lives on and is spun into the days and lives of the council and local residents today.

A Thank you for the walk down memory lane:

I'd like to finish with a heartfelt thank you to our guide, and her memorable stories. To the [Stroudwater Textile Trust](#) for organizing and promoting the tours. To Stroud City Council for preserving the old mill, and allowing us to wander about and learn it's rich history.

The exhibition 'Cathedral of Cloth, that was also on site, there is also a book available on the subject.

There are likely to be other tours in the future. If you are visiting or living in Stroud, keep an eye on the website of the [Stroudwater Textile Trust](#) for dates. It's well worth a visit.



Resources:

[Stroudwater Textile Trust](#)

[Stroud city Council](#)

[British History](#)

A Seekers Guide to Glastonbury

Welcome to A Seekers Guide to Glastonbury and it's sacred sites, for those that are seeking the magic, with both feet on the ground. Here is my advice on the best way to visit a

sacred site to make the most of the magic you'll encounter.

A few tips to keep in mind when visiting a sacred site:

1. Everything is frequency. Sacred sites also hold a specific frequency stronger than most. And we all hold our own frequency. Simply said some will resonate with you and some will not. Don't take it personally.
2. Do to give yourself the time and space to sit and see if you connect to the place.

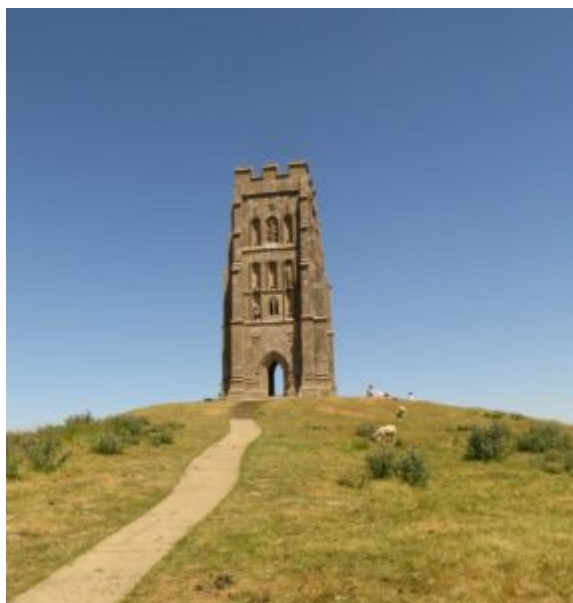
In the wise words of [Manon Tromp](#):

"Let go of expectations, go with the flow and take your time to let Avalon do what it needs to do".

I also agree with [Freddy de Silva's](#) views on why we visit sacred sites (paraphrased): Every sacred site we visit awakens a spark in us, and takes us forward on our journey of self-evolution. As each of us is on our own unique life pilgrimage, we will each experience it in our own way.

Which is why I put together my own Seekers Guide to Glastonbury;

A Pilgrimage to Glastonbury Tor



Glastonbury Tor is a magical spot. To connect and feel the energy of the land, I choose to walk up to the top of the Tor barefoot. Being so steep, every step was a reminder of how unfit I was feeling – I ended up feeling more out of breath than enlightened.

To keep myself going I imagined all the pilgrims that had walked the path before me. All the ceremonies and processions that the hill must have seen over the ages.

I hoped that by the time I got to the top that the veils would lift and Avalon would appear before me. Needless to say, that didn't happen.

Instead I went and found a quiet spot to sit on the hill. A quiet place to sit and feel all that I couldn't see. To connect to the energy of the site.

It was pretty magic.

If you find yourself at a sacred site do find a quiet place away from everyone else. A place to connect, to go within and meditate on what you feel and what emerges within you. Churches are often built on Sacred Sites, which were often built on the earth's energy or Ley Lines.

Sacred sites have also had people making pilgrimages to them for thousands of years. Using them for their intentions, prayers and ceremonies. Put all this together and you end up with a magical energy for us all to tap into. Sit in the glow of those energies and let them share some of that subtle to strong magic with you. It is free to visit the Tor, you can find information on the National Trust's [Website here](#).

Getting your toes wet at Chalice Well

Chalice well sits at the bottom of the Tor, across the road from the White Springs. It is a small park that costs £4.50 to enter. It's a peaceful garden, well tended and with many areas to sit and reflect and meditate.



The ice cold red spring water at Chalice Well is the stuff of legends. One story is that the water gets its red colour from Joseph of Arimathea who added a few drops of Jesus's blood to it. Another is that it is the spring of eternal youth and has healing properties.

The fact is the iron oxide gives the water the reddish colour. The well has been in use for thousands of years and is a constant 11 degrees all year around. There is a small pool

you can walk through, and it's pretty cold!

You can drink the water from the spot where you'll find the lions head. Legends say it gives eternal life, I did have a drink so let's see if that is true. Only time will tell.

It's a lovely garden, and well worth the entry fee and a visit.

[Chalice wellsprings is run by the trust, website here.](#)

Address: 85-89 Chilkwell Street.

Dive into the Sacred White Springs

The White Springs sit at the foot on the Tor, managed by volunteers and open in the afternoons. It is free to enter.

You can immerse yourself in these waters. The spring and its pools are lit by candlelight. While I stood in the darkness and I wasn't sure if I wanted to risk slipping across the cold stones into a pool of water.

So I drank some instead and wet my feet with it outside and hoped that would suffice.

[The White Springs website can be found here.](#) Address: Well House Lane.

Time Travel to Glastonbury Abbey



At a cost of £7.50, I had to consider whether it would be worth it to see an old ruin. The curiosity of seeing King Arthur's tomb and the original church of Joesph de Armithea drew me in.

I am so very glad it did. The museum itself wasn't that interesting. And I have my doubts that King Arthur ever existed let alone lay there. Rumour has it this was most likely the churches medieval money-making marketing ploy.

So while I didn't see a tomb fit for marketing, or bones. I did have the pleasure of visiting one of the oldest medieval kitchens in Europe. And a chance encounter with Alice from the 1500s.

Alice was busy working and complaining about how a woman's work is never done. Before beginning her story of the kitchens and abbey's history. We sat down and had a nice long chat about ages past.



I heard that my fellow countryman from the Low Lands (Netherlands) visited the abbey in the 1500s. Brought over for their skills in silk weaving with the intention to teach those skills to locals. It was believed they spent time living in the kitchen of the Abbey. They never did have the opportunity to pass on the skills. They fled when Catholic King Henry came into power. As did most Protestants to avoid prosecution.

I did the day tour with Alice later in the day, and also learnt that the Abbey was at once the richest in the country. Pilgrims and visitors coming from far and wide to visit the holy site, seeking to clear their sins.



Luckily the wealthy people had the most sins. Which they could absolve for the right amount of money. Which is why the wealthy landlords left all their holding to the abbey in the hope of eternal redemption.

Now in a cruel twist of fate, it is the same wealth that destroyed them. The greedy king, who had spent all his money

on war decided to put the abbot on trial. The abbot was found guilty, hung and quartered at the top of the Tor. The Abbey ransacked and it's wealth sold and left to ruin.

You can enjoy the interesting stories and rich history by taking one of the guided walking tours that is included in the entrance fee. There is a tour every hour until 4 PM.

[The Glastonbury Abbey website is here.](#) Address: Magdalene Street.

St. Margaret's Chapel and Almshouses



This is a quiet secluded garden off the street. At the entrance, You'll find a finger labyrinth, which is a meditation in itself and fun. You can pray or meditate in the small old chapel or garden. The little courtyard almshouses were once hospital rooms built in the 11th century.

One of them is open and set up with furniture from the era. You can see how small yet gracious it was. Those that had to stay would have been well looked after.

While the walls of the courtyard in ruin from the onslaught of time. There are lovely details to the garden and can see that the place is up kept with love. Address: 46 Magdalene street.

Wearyall Hill and the Holy Thorn



The Holy Thorn, is where the original staff of Joseph of Armithea took root and grew, the tree is still there. It pains me to write that vandals killed and chopped branches from the tree. So it isn't half of what it once was.

The tree, or the remaining stump is still there and still holds an incredible energy. I recommend putting your hands on it and feeling it's warmth.

It costs nothing to visit, and has great views over to the Tor and the rest of Glastonbury.

More Magical spots to visit

Glastonbury is full of unusual shops, people and places that

you won't find on your average High Street. From the magic shop like the [Cat & Cauldron](#), where you can buy a real wand, staff or a host of other magic book and paraphernalia.

Lovers of the Esoteric and metaphysical books can [visit Avalon Library](#). In the same arcade 2-4 High street, is [Star Child](#), an incredible essential oil and herb shop. And upstairs you'll also find the [Goddess Temple](#). Which hosts speakers and events most nights of the week.

Anyone for cuppa tea & a scone?

[The Abbey Tea Rooms](#) has stunning views of the ruins and some of the best Tea + Scones with clotted cream and jam and other English goodies which will give you the energy to climb the Tor or walk the Abbey gardens. Address: 15 Magdalene St.

For those that might be looking for a stronger sacred drink, the [George's hotel and Pilgrims Inn](#) is a lovely old fashioned English Pub in a well preserved medieval building.

You can even [book a night and stay over the inn](#), if you dare, its known to be haunted and you can read about a [few spectral accounts and ghost stories of the Inn](#).

Where to Stay in Glastonbury

I was lucky enough to spend 3 weeks doing a work exchange through [Workaway](#) at [Earth Spirit Centre](#). Incredibly lucky to met some truly magical people. The centre also runs incredibly workshops throughout the year, so be sure to check their calendar to see what's on.

[AirBnb](#) is also highly recommended, particularly [Earth Mama's House](#) that is run by [Manon Trump](#). Manon also runs tours

to [sacred sites including Stonehedge and Avesbury](#).

The Magic never ends

Glastonbury can be many things, quirky, magical, spiritual and at times over the top. Is it a reflection of our inner selves, is it whatever we want it to be (yes, be prepared for fairies and men with arrows and crossbows walking along the high street).

It can have moments of feeling like it is spirituality gone mainstream. Yet, it is still enchanting. The people I met there is that they are all doing whatever they want, being whoever they want and living life as they want – blissfully content.

In this crazy world – maybe this is the sanity of it all. There isn't any seeking, but an authentic way of being. And that, in itself is kinda Magical.

For Further reading:

Freddy de Silva's [Website](#). Freddy de Silva's book: [The Divine Blueprint](#).

Manon Tromp's Website, you can also find her on the Mystical Tours website.

Anyone interested in visiting Avesbury Stones can [read more here](#).



