

# 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](#)

[Stoud city Council](#)

[British History](#)

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# Moving to the UK During Brexit

## What impact does Brexit have on your move to the UK?

After many years abroad, I've finally decided to move back to the United Kingdom where I lived many moons ago.

*The first question on anyone and everyone's lips is 'But what*

*about Brexit?'*.

While I know that Brexit is a hot topic, and widely entertaining. To give you a small taste, just last week the local paper was voicing its concern about the 'sperm'. It seems that the Nordic countries have been the largest distributors, and now the English men are going to have to step up. I kid you not, here is the article:



Yes, it's funny, silly, and serious and has most Brits with their knickers in a twist... Brexit is providing mainstream media with an endless amount of juicy material. Yet, they like the masses that are read the papers, are pretty clueless as to what is going on.

Why would they be clear on it, even the politicians don't seem to know or agree on the facts. Right now, they are preparing for a worst-case scenario, what happens if there is no trade deal, they've termed it the 'No Deal' Scenario – this could change again next week... Stay tuned people.

To simplify the governments' terminology: The no deal scenario doesn't mean they are not working on a deal. So there *might* still be a deal. Just in case though, they've spent hours in creating a no deal worst case scenario. – although they don't think that by creating it, they are likely to *perhaps maybe* need it.



I think by the time they have come to a verdict (let's be honest, 2 years on and they're still talking rather than doing). Personally, by then I'll be living elsewhere.

## So can or can't I, you, we move to the UK?



Right now, this answer is the same as it was before Brexit was the spark of an idea. It depends on where you are from; many of the same rules apply as they did before Brexit.

As an EU citizen, I have the right – at this time – to live and work in the United Kingdom. If they do go ahead with the Brexit, they won't throw me out.

The pre-exit date is March 2019, if you arrive before this date, you have right to pre-settlement. If you arrive after this date, as an EU citizen you'll need to register yourself. The date of Britain's exit from European Union is December 2020, after which different rules may apply depending on our situation, which isn't fully clear yet – may depend on the deal, no deal scenario.

I was right to think that now is the perfect time for me to come back and spend some time in the UK. If you move here pre-exit – then you're as good as gold as they say in Australia.

At this point, I think there are more people jumping up and down, because people love drama, to complain and jump up and down. The reality is that other than the sperm, there isn't much to jump up and down about.

The ideas of stockpiling food, have years worth of medicine on hand and having to create your own sperm are a wee bit exaggerated.

Of course, I would like to take the opportunity to point out for the first time in recent history the Brits have finally focused on something other than the weather. And the weather has been brilliant, the best summer on recorded history. So maybe less worrying, more enjoying

**For more information (can't guarantee clarity):**

For anyone looking for up-to-date information, please check the [government website](#) on the subject.

Or this pretty [clear blog by the home office](#), or if you'd prefer the EU's take on what you can and can't do, then you can find that over on their [website here](#).

For those that are already living and working in the UK, you can apply for pre-settlement status, which you can find [more information on here](#).

For those of you looking for the facts the media won't share with you, and the stats they don't print. Perhaps you're looking for a bit of giggle, here is a great article on [Global Citizen](#). As they rightly point out, even the Queen is actually German. Maybe she can be the first to go?

If you are not an EU citizen, different rules will apply, the same rules as before the Brexit scenario. Visa and Immigration

information can [be found here](#).

### *To do List*

- ☒ walk dog
- ☒ sort out photos
- ☒ buy aunt's gift
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_



If you are moving abroad and not sure where to start, [download my free checklist](#) here, making your move that little bit easier.

Big thanks for Photo. By [Robert Tudor](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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# 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.

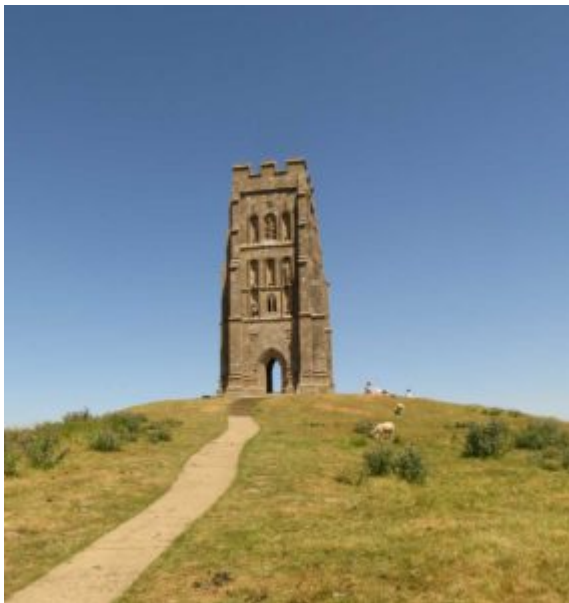
In the wise words of [Manon Tromp](#):

*"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.

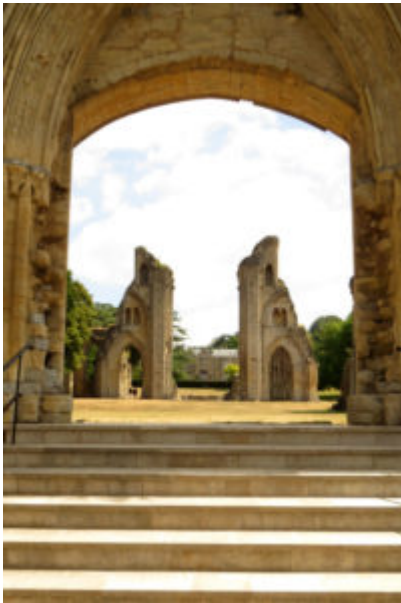
You can immerse yourself in these waters. The spring and its

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](#).

