

St. Anthony's Well (About 45 mins)

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Mostly Forest tracks, can be wet and muddy in damp weather.

Information for dog owners: No stiles, some sheep in the fields near the road.

St. Anthony's Well is a beautiful magical place, with some magnificent beech trees, vibrant green in springtime, turning to beautiful reds and ambers in the autumn. If you only have the chance to do one walk in your weekend, this is definitely the one!

From the car park go down the path past Wren and Robin Cottages. The path joins a more substantial track after a few minutes walking. Follow this path down to the road.

Turn left onto the road and then take the first right at Gunns Mill into Lower Spout Lane. Continue up Lower Spout Lane past the Mill / Asha Centre on your right-hand side, and then a cottage, also on the right.

A little further up there is a pool on your left close to the road. The well is directly above the pool in the woods.

Climb up above the pool following the stream and you will reach St Anthony's Well – a spring in the hillside which comes out into a man-made pool before flowing down the hill. It's a beautiful spot in spring and autumn particularly and worth spending a few quiet moments here.

St. Anthony lived in the 4th century and was canonised on January 17. He was an Egyptian of Christian parentage. His steadiness of temper and purity of soul is second only to his miracles associated with water. St. Anthony's Well is covered by a square stone basin, presumably for baptising the converted. There are two other springs, to the north and the south about 50 metres apart. The springs issue from quartz-conglomerates of the Upper Old Red Sandstone near the foot of the steep hill which is crowned with Carboniferous Limestone. The yield was 200,000 gallons a day in 1922. It was also noted that the pumping at Cinderford Waterworks, Greenbottom affects the yield at St. Anthony's Well.

The well is said to heal skin diseases and sore eyes. To do this it is necessary to visit the well nine times at sunrise during May and wash the skin. Most likely the well was a ritual site for a very long period of time. In the area around the spring prehistoric flint implements have been found, also Roman and Iron Age artifacts.

Look out for the stream with lovely little waterfall on the left, soon after you cross what appears to be a small bridge.

At the road you can either retrace your steps up the track back to the cottage, or for a slightly longer alternative route, take the rough tarmac road opposite Gunn Mill (not the main Road to Flaxley). Follow until you reach the Forestry Commission barrier, turn left before the barrier pass the dog exercise field on your right-hand side. Next turn left up the hill past Woodside Cottage to Shapridge Common.