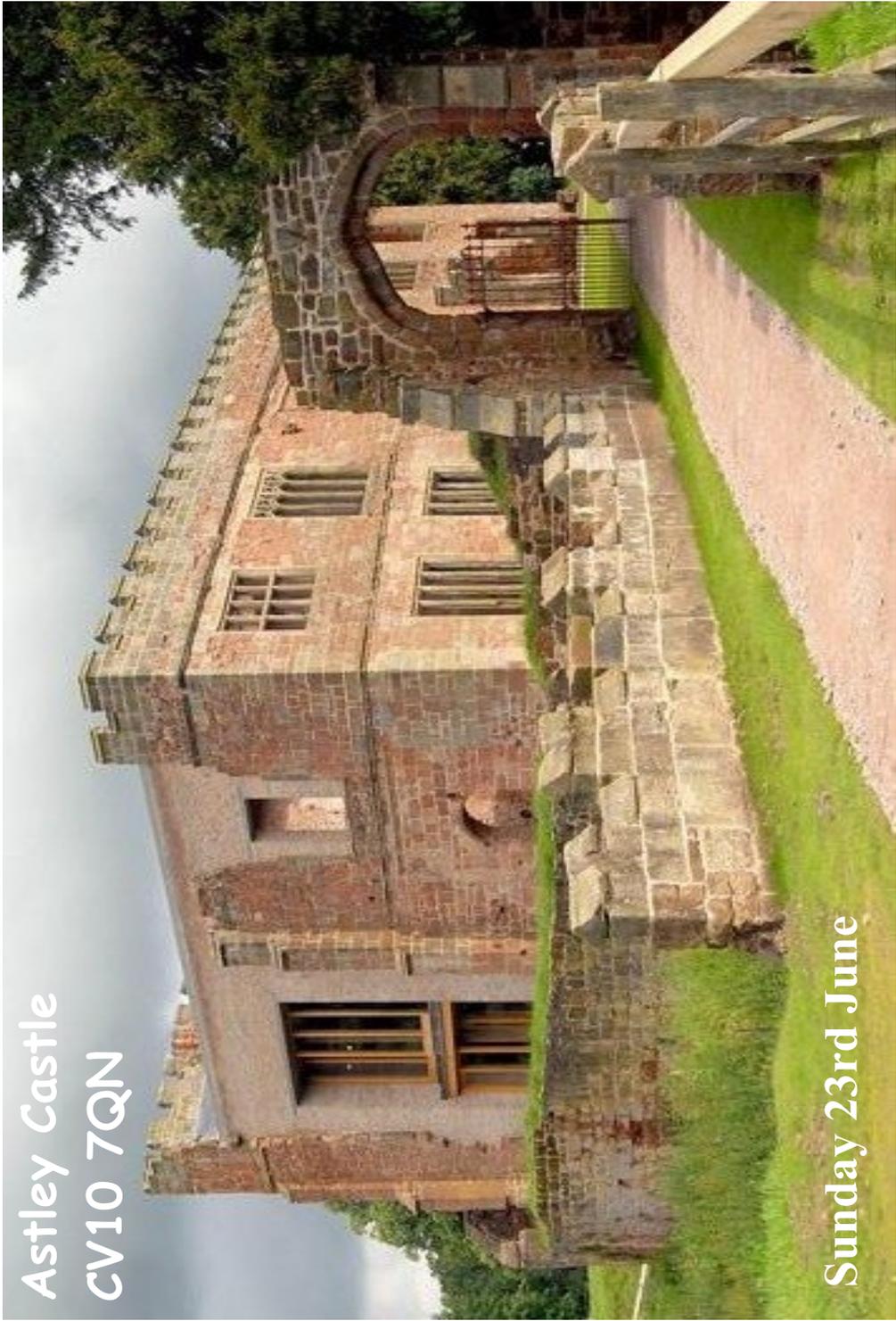
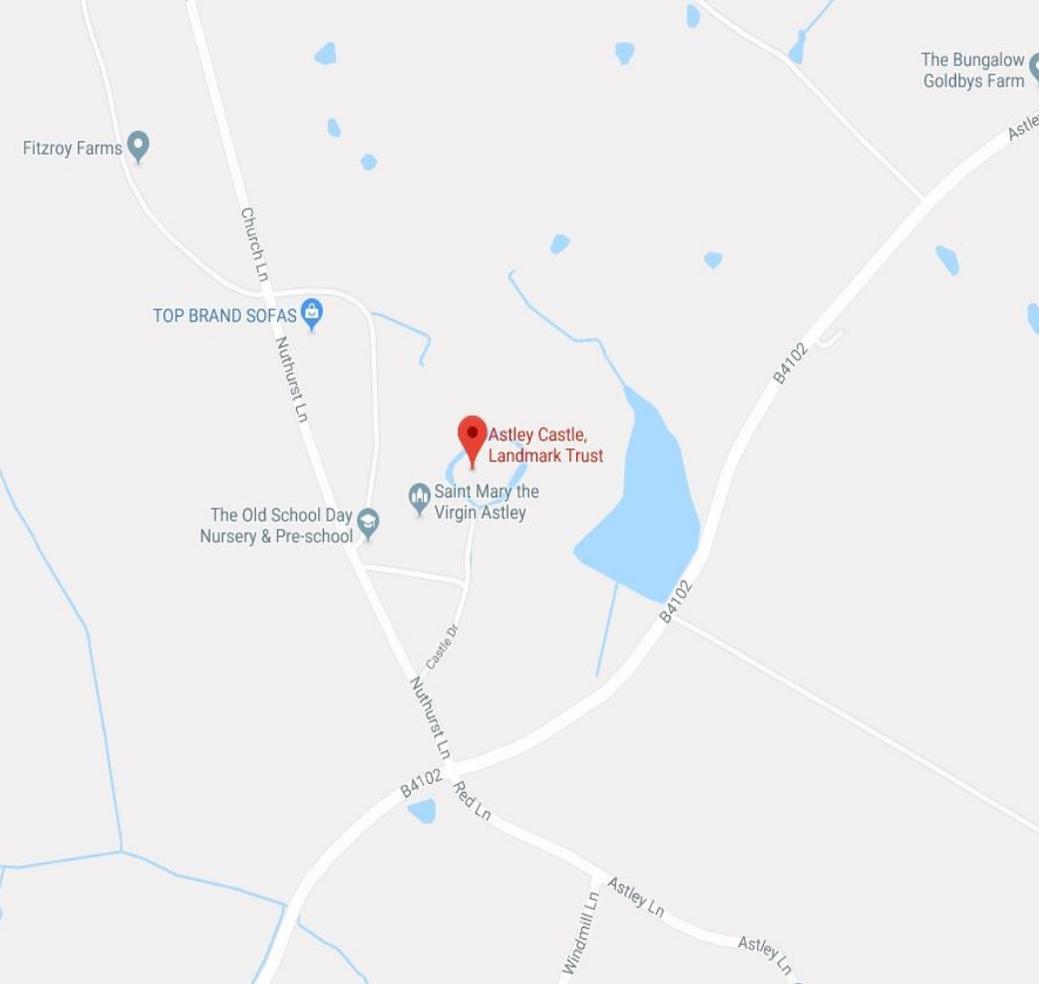


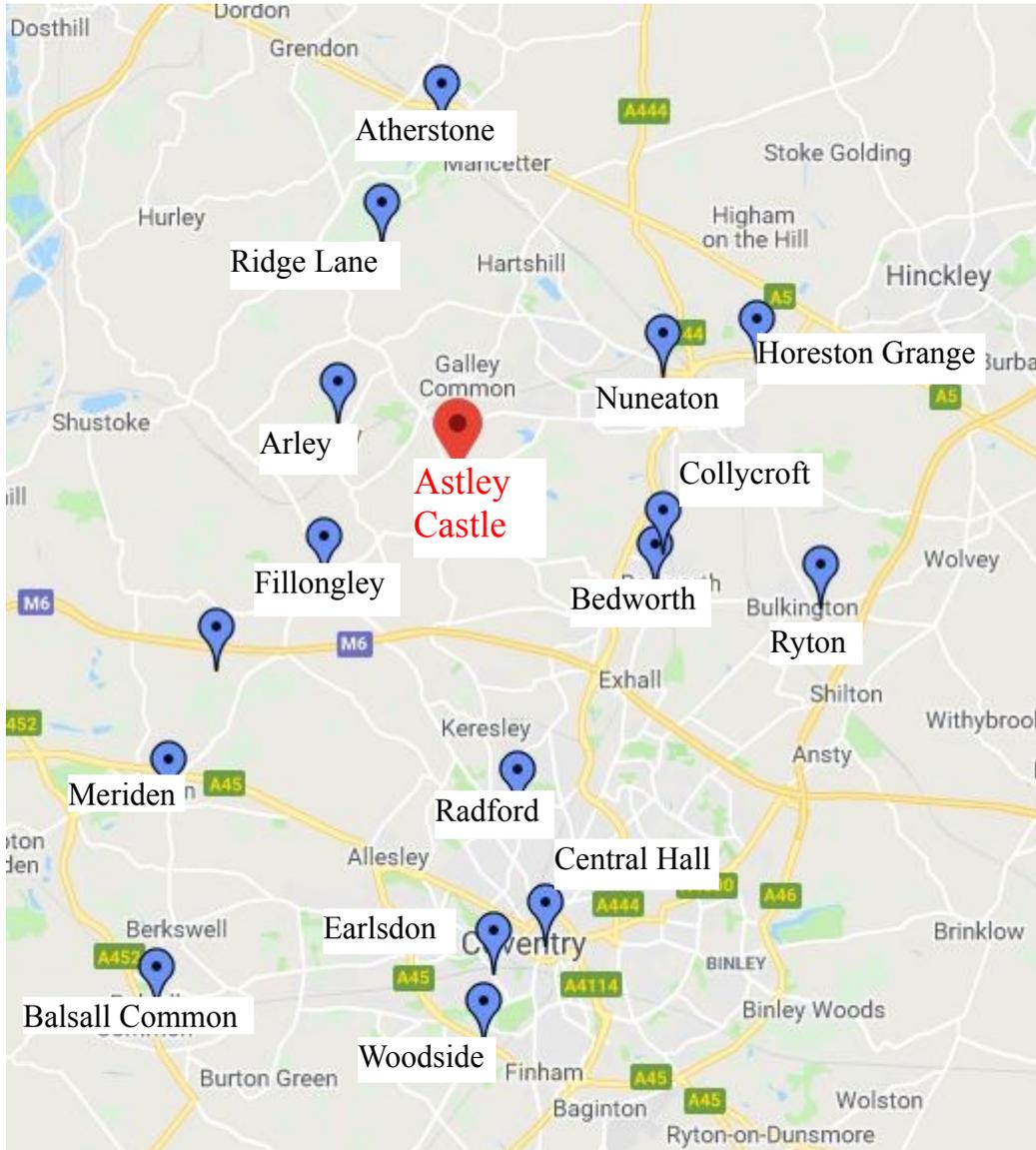
# Location of Astley Castle and Saint Mary the Virgin Church Astley



Astley Castle  
CV10 7QN

Sunday 23rd June

# Coventry and Nuneaton Methodist Circuit Visit to Astley Castle and Church



<b>Programme for the day (All timings are approximate.)</b>	
11:30	Our morning services finish
12:00	Passengers find their drivers / cars. Cars leave for Astley
12:15 - 12:45	Cars arrive and park
12:45 - 1:15	Picnic lunch in the gardens by the castle (or in cars if wet or cold)
1:15 - 2:30	Visit the inside of the castle (2 floors), walks around the gardens and moat
2:30	Walk to the Reading Room - cups of tea
After Cups of Tea	Visit the church, stay and chat in the reading room, or return to the castle and the grounds. Please note the Castle closes at 4:00 pm
3:20	Walk to the church for
3:30 to 4:20	Holy Communion service
4:30	Find cars, drivers, passengers - return home

We hope you will enjoy your visit and meet friends or make new ones. All donations given for this outing are supporting our 2nd Mile Project 2019 for Dummi International Aid.



## Ten Facts About Astley Castle

1. Astley Castle is an ancient building on a moated site which goes back to Saxon times and from the 12<sup>th</sup> century was the home of the Astley family and descendants.
2. Later it was used as a recuperation home for soldiers in World War 2 and then converted into a hotel and restaurant.
3. Abandoned when the lease ran out in 1978, some days later a suspicious fire gutted the castle. No charges were brought !!
4. Further destruction by thieves and vandals meant conventional restoration was not possible.
5. In 2005 an architecture competition was held to introduce well-designed accommodation into an ancient ruin.
6. It was won by Witherford, Watson Mann Architects.
7. Local people, schools and companies helped in clearing the site, designing gardens in the grounds etc.
8. In 2013 it won the Stirling Prize for Architecture.
9. The castle now has a new life as prestigious, self-catering holiday accommodation.
10. There are 2 open-weekends per year for the public to visit, June and September.

## Ten Facts About The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Astley

1. Records show that a church has existed at Astley since 1285.
2. In 1335 Sir Thomas de Astley, with permission of the Pope plus Lichfield and Coventry chapters, founded a 'Chantry' which was built in the Lady Chapel. Priests sang mass daily. Income from land provided funds and by 1340 there were 8 priests.

3. The 1343 church, built in the form of a cross with a central tower plus a spire, was sanctioned, by King Edward III and the Bishop of Lichfield, to be a collegiate church. Clergy numbers increased and their status changed making it like a cathedral.
4. A light from the spire always shone out after dark to guide travellers through the thick forest surroundings. It was called the Lantern of Arden.
5. In 1555 the land revenue money, used for funding the churches, was stolen and also the lead from the spire. In the following years, the weather played havoc with the underwork. The spire and tower gradually fell down. The church was almost a ruin!
6. In 1607/08 Sir Richard Chamberlayne (who now owned the castle) set about restoring the church. He pulled down the whole of the west part. The tower was rebuilt at the end of the choir, which became the nave. A small chancel was added at the east end. This is the church we see today.
7. The Newdegate family took over in middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A panelled oak ceiling was put up. Restored shields in the ceiling, recorded families known by the church. 17<sup>th</sup> Century wall paintings show Bible passages, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. The Choir stalls now have 14<sup>th</sup> century painted panels.
8. The 17<sup>th</sup> century altar picture, given by Sir Frances Newdegate in 1905, depicts the taking down of Jesus from the cross.
9. Some of the windows contain pieces of 14<sup>th</sup> century stained glass, some have modern glass. A 19<sup>th</sup> century window has been reinstated. On the east windows are painted the ten commandments in memory of the Newdegate family.
10. In 1910 Sir Frances Newdegate had the windows made double for warmth. They still gave enough light!!