



Action Heart Walking For Life

Selection of Walks



**Action Heart
Walking For Life
In association with Stourbridge HF Rambling Club**

**Many thanks to Anthony Collis and Stourbridge HF Rambling Club
for there kind help with this booklet**

Useful Contacts:

Action Heart - 01384 292233 www.actionheart.com

Stourbridge HF Rambling Club – www.shfrc.org.uk

Walking For Health - 01242 533258 www.whi.org.uk

Dudley Health Improvement - 01384 366611

The Walkzone - plan your own walk : www.walkzone.dudley.gov.uk

Natural England : www.naturalengland.org.uk

Supported By



Walking For Health

What is a health walk?

The short definition of a health walk is:

"a purposeful, brisk walk undertaken on a regular basis"

It can include any walk which is specifically designed and carried out for the purpose of improving an individual's health.

With regard to cardiovascular health, the walk should be purposeful and 'brisk' (in other words more than just a stroll). Moreover it is a structured or semi-structured activity which is carried out on a regular basis as part of an individual's exercise regime.

Walking (without the 'health' bit) is a healthy activity in so far as any energy expenditure has health benefits, regardless of intensity.

In addition to this, organised walks (brisk or not) can have a health impact on individuals by providing an opportunity to socialise (good social networks enhance health) and a distraction from everyday stresses (stress contributes to poor health).

It is the relevant intensity of the walk for the individual and the regularity of participation that can really have an impact on heart health.

What to wear

A pair of comfortable shoes is the only equipment required when you first start walking. If your shoes continue to be comfortable then there is no need to go for anything else.

Some people, who have been walking for a while, and feel ready to move on to longer or brisker walks, want more information about footwear.

Any shoes that are comfortable, provide good support and don't cause blisters will do but here are some suggestions to help you find a suitable pair:

Casual shoes with heavy rubber soles are fine. Good running shoes with heavy soles are also suitable as are some of the lighter walking boots.

Whatever kind of shoe you select; it should have arch supports and should elevate the heel slightly. Make sure there is enough room for your toes.

Choose a shoe with uppers made of materials that "breathe" such as nylon mesh or leather.

For clothing choose loose fitting garments that allow you to move freely. Wear thin layers rather than heavy, chunky clothing.

If it's a warm day take a bottle of water

Why walking is the perfect activity for health

Regular walking has many positive benefits.

It can improve your:

- Confidence
- Stamina
- Energy
- Weight Control
- Life expectancy

It can reduce the risk of:

- Coronary heart disease
- Strokes
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Bowel Cancer
- Alzheimer's disease
- Osteoporosis
- Arthritis
- Anxiety
- Stress

A Health Walk is perfect as part of the Government's guideline of 5 x 30 minutes of exercise per week

The Walkzone - plan your own walk

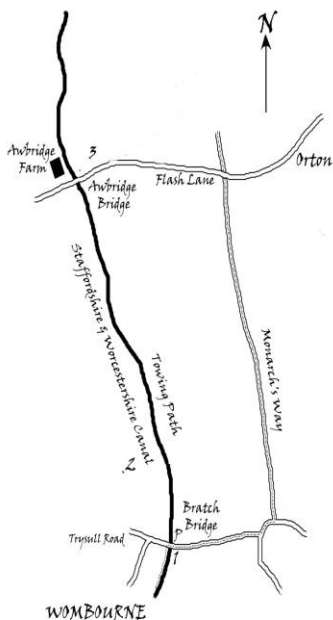
www.walkzone.dudley.gov.uk



Action Heart Walking For Life

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Wombourne	Walk 1	Staffordshire	
<p>The walk starts off along the towpath of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, which was opened in 1772, making it one of the oldest in the country. The canal runs from Stourport to Great Haywood near Stafford. Although locks are featured, the architect James Brindley preferred to let the canal meander rather than run in a straight line.</p> <p>The imposing pumping station at The Bratch was designed as a castle. It commenced operations in 1896 with two coal-fuelled furnaces to power the steam engines that pumped the water from deep boreholes in the sandstone below. The process was supplanted by gas turbines in 1960.</p> <p>At Awbridge there stands one of the oldest and most attractive bridges on the canal. Although some have been rebuilt this is a Brindley original.</p> <p>The railway walk - which is part of the Kingswinford Railway Walk (KRW) - follows the course of the line built between 1912 & 1925 by the Great Western Railway (GWR). It was a branch of the main line that linked Wolverhampton and Worcester. The line was single track, except for passing loops at Wombourne and other places. Passenger services ceased a few years after opening; thereafter the line was used only for freight traffic until it was closed in 1966. This was a result of the infamous Beeching Plan that axed thousands of miles of railway track throughout the country. The KRW extends for some 8 kilometres between the South Staffordshire border with Wolverhampton at Castlecroft as far as the boundary with Dudley at Wall Heath.</p>			
1½ / 2 hours	Easy	4 Kms / 2½ miles	By the Way
			<p>Start Point 868 938 The Bratch Locks Staffs/Worcs Canal</p> <p>How Far Away? 9 kms from Stourbridge</p> <p>Maps O.S. Explorer 219 Landranger 139</p> <p>Parking Free</p> <p>Facilities Refreshments & toilets at Wombourne Station (Limited availability)</p> <p>Terrain Towpath, Railway course and a short stretch of roadway</p> <p>Hazards Usual canal risks and lack of footpath along stretch of main road.</p> <p>Stiles None</p> <p>Pubs In Wombourne</p>

Staffordshire	Walk 1	Wombourne
1½ / 2 hours	Easy	4kms

The Bratch - Awbridge Bridge - Flash Lane - Kingswinford Railway Walk - Wombourne Station - The Bratch

A gentle stroll along canal towpath and the course of a dismantled railway line. The route is a popular leisure activity enjoyed by walkers, joggers, and cyclists plus - in certain sections - horse riders. This walk is suggested as being suitable for persons who prefer level walking conditions.

Walk Route

1 Go to the corner of The Bratch car park, cross the road and walk up the slope to the canal lock. From the canal bridge, pause to admire the façade of the impressive Water Pumping Station.

The Pumping Station, restored and operated by Severn Trent Water Authority, is a fine example of Victorian Gothic architecture.

2 Proceed along the towpath towards Castlecroft, with good views of Orton Hill on RHS. After approximately 1.5kms, pass under Awbridge Bridge & immediately turn sharp R to leave the canal.

3 Turn L along the lane. After 150m a fork is reached. Bear R & proceed along Flash Lane & pass under bridge. 60m after bridge, take path sharp L, to reach dismantled railway line. Turn L & walk along path for 1.5kms to arrive at the former station at Wombourne. Immediately after the station on the LHS is an exit. Go down the slope to the main road. Turn R - take care as there is no pavement or footpath - proceed 300m to return to The Bratch car park.

Habberley**Walk 2****Worcestershire**

Although Habberley Valley lies within two miles of the centre of Kidderminster it is one of the outstanding beauty spots of the district. It lies in a sheltered, secluded spot away from the eyes of motorists hurrying along the B4190 Franche to Bewdley road.

Not to be confused with the ditchless-hilly area near Great Witley, **Habberley Valley** was purchased by the Wyre Forest District Council in 1990 for use as a public space. It is designated as a Nature Reserve. The valley contains some small hills and sandstone cliffs. Tree enthusiasts will enjoy the considerable variety that is to be found here.

Centuries ago, when the River Severn was tidal as far as Bewdley, the salt waters flowed into the valley. As the sea retreated, the valley became a backwater, then a saltmarsh. In recent times, Habberley Valley has been a popular recreation area for Kidderminster weavers and Black Country workers, the latter often being bussed in by the charabanc load.

Habberley Valley has a long irregular mound known as the Giant's Grave. Legend has it that a great giant visited the valley and fell over the precipice of Ridgestone Rock, breaking his neck. He was too heavy to move so was buried where he fell.

1½ / 2 hours**Easy****4.5 kms / 2¾ miles****By the Way**

Start Point SO 803775
Habberley Valley Car
Park - off B4190

How Far Away? 9 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S.
- **Explorer** 218
- **Landranger** 138

Parking Free

Facilities None

Terrain Undulating field &
woodland paths plus a
lengthy stretch of quiet
lane walking - one steep
ascent at start

Hazards None

Stiles None

Pubs None

Worcestershire	Walk 2	Habberley
1½ hours	Moderate	4.5 kms

Habberley Valley - Trimpley - Easthams Coppice - Lower Habberley Farm - Habberley

SHFRC has many Kidderminster residents amongst its membership. Habberley Valley is a delightful location that lies to the west of the town. It's not too far from Stourbridge either! This walk is ideal for a summer evening stroll or a winter afternoon warmer! Don't be fooled by the distance; the early short, sharp ascent can surprise the unwary; after that it's all downhill!

Walk Route

1 Turn R out of the carpark & continue along the lane. Veer L & soon keep R at fork by 'Rose Cottage' sign. Take fp R & follow waymarkers 'Habberley Valley Circular Walk' (HVCW). Fp leads uphill, which becomes steeper & then up two flights of steps. At top, go through kissing gate (k/gate) & across field to another k/gate opposite. Proceed through wood following HVCW signs throughout. Go across drive & then across road through wood until fp meets another road on LHS.

2 Turn R, pass Trimpley House & go 200m along road. After Trimpley Farm, turn R along fp to enter field through k/gate. Hug hedge on RHS, through gate & then go diagonally L down field to single row of trees.

Wychbury Hill & Adams Hill at Clent are prominent on the horizon straight.

The urban sprawl of Kidderminster is visible on your RHS.

Continue down field to hedge, go R & then through gap to swap hedge side. Cut L across field to gate ½-way down hill; go L & then down to k/gate at bottom edge of wood, known as Easthams Coppice.

3 Follow fp L beside fence & stream, known as Honey Brook, a tributary of the River Stour. Continue on to k/gate & turn R along track. Note former dwellings dug into sandstone cliff on your LHS - these places were inhabited until 1949. Stay on vehicle track until it emerges on to road by Lower Habberley Farm. Cross road & go L & ahead at bend. Opposite Valley Close road sign, turn R down steep fp. At bottom, turn L & walk along woodland fp back to parked cars.

Stourbridge HF Rambling Club

Over 200 walks arranged annually!

We welcome enquiries from people interested in joining us! Walks take place - throughout the year - on Saturdays (usually half-days); Sundays (all-day) and Wednesdays (choice of all-day or half-day walks)

www.shfrc.org.uk

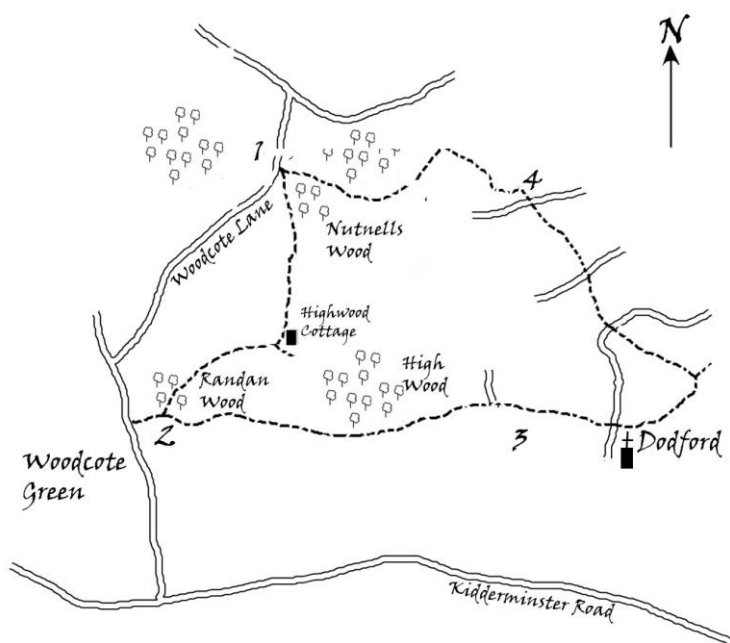
Dodford**Walk 3****Worcestershire**

Dodford is a village unlike any other in the county. It has neither centre nor village green. It was planned as a Chartist settlement, in the mid-19th century by a reformer named Feargus O'Connor, but the venture proved unviable, through the pioneer's genius for poor administration. The Chartist established a company to purchase farms, which were then sub-divided into smallholdings, each measuring 4 acres, to settle workers on the land.

Chartism was a radical democratic movement expressly concerned with the improvement of the working class. A Charter of six demands was drawn up:

- Every man should have the right to vote.
- People should vote in secret (by ballot).
- An equal number of people should vote in each district.
- Men should not need to be property owners if they wished to stand for parliament.
- Members of parliament should be paid.
- Parliament should be elected every year.

The company was stillborn in 1848 and O'Connor died in an asylum in 1855.

2 hours**Easy****5 kms / 3 miles****By the Way**

Start Point Woodcote Lane
Between Dordale &
Woodcote Green
922 736
3.5kms S of
Belbroughton

How Far Away? 18kms - Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer 219 Landranger 139

Parking Limited to 3 cars max.

Facilities None

Terrain Field & woodland
paths plus some quiet
country lanes

Hazards None

Stiles Few - most replaced by
gates

Pubs The Dodford Inn at
Dodford (not on
route)

Woodcote Lane - Highwood Cottage - Randon Wood - High Wood - Dodford - Nutnells Wood - Woodcote Lane

Enjoy this short walk at its best in early May when the bluebells are out and the bracken is still low. It also makes a lovely summer's evening stroll, a 'kicking up the leaves' autumnal ramble or a nice winter's day walk bring a warm glow inside and out. A true walk for all seasons!

Walk Route

1 From the parking spot take the bridle path into the woods. The path continues through woodland then opens out with a field on the LHS. Go through two bridle gates onto a track & turn R after Highwood Cottage. This track runs between a wood and a meadow. Continue past a white house with dormer windows; at end, turn L up track.

2 Pass Woodcote Cottage on the RHS and continue ahead up a drive (was a building site in Nov 2002). Cross a stile on RHS & follow route up through an open area and at the top bear L with heath on the LHS & silver birches on the RHS. *Look back for a lovely view of the Cleve Hills.* Pass the waymarker where the heath changes to meadow planted with a variety of specimen trees. At the bottom of the fp, enter High Wood. Ignore fp coming from the LHS, keep R between holly trees. The fp descends and meanders. Ignore all fps on LHS. At sign, keep ahead & after 375m at another sign keep R & go through a gate & leave wood. Cross a footbridge & follow fp up the field bearing slightly L to a gate and stile in the top hedge. Proceed ahead on a tarmac drive.

3 Continue to end where drive becomes a fp. Go down between hedges to a stile & then between

fences to another stile on RHS & down to road.

Take Rose Lane bway opposite. At end of concrete walk, ignore the footpath sign off to the RHS & go straight ahead along a rising stony path between hedge & bear R on a metalled road. Shortly ahead, turn L down 'Monarch's Way' fp - beware can be slippery when wet. Go through gate & over fb to emerge on lane beside Village Hall. Go ahead up Church Road & ahead at Victoria Road. At the top of the hill, at a t-junction, pause to look back over your left shoulder for views as far as Bredon Hill.

4 Turn L &, after 20m, turn R onto a fp down hill to steps to a fb over a stream after which the fp turns L & rises to follow the far bank of the stream. There are young oak trees on the RHS of the fp. Continue ahead until the fp turns R still with the young trees on your RHS & now with mature forest on the LHS. At edge of wood enter a field via a gate & pass a pond on your LHS. Follow the hedge on your LHS to 2 stiles. Ignore the stile into the wood but turn L over a stile through field with the wood on your RHS. At the far end of the field, enter wood via gate & follow faint fp as it winds generally R. Leave the wood & cross a small field to a kissing gate & return to parked vehicles.

"I have two doctors, my left leg and my right."

George Trevelyan. 1913

Stourton**Walk 4****Staffordshire**

The **Stewpony** Public House has made way for a housing development. The Stewpony is a corruption of Estapona, in Spain. It was the birthplace of a girl who married an English soldier during the Peninsular Wars. He returned to run the pub, and named it in honour of her local village, but the locals found the name too much of a mouthful.

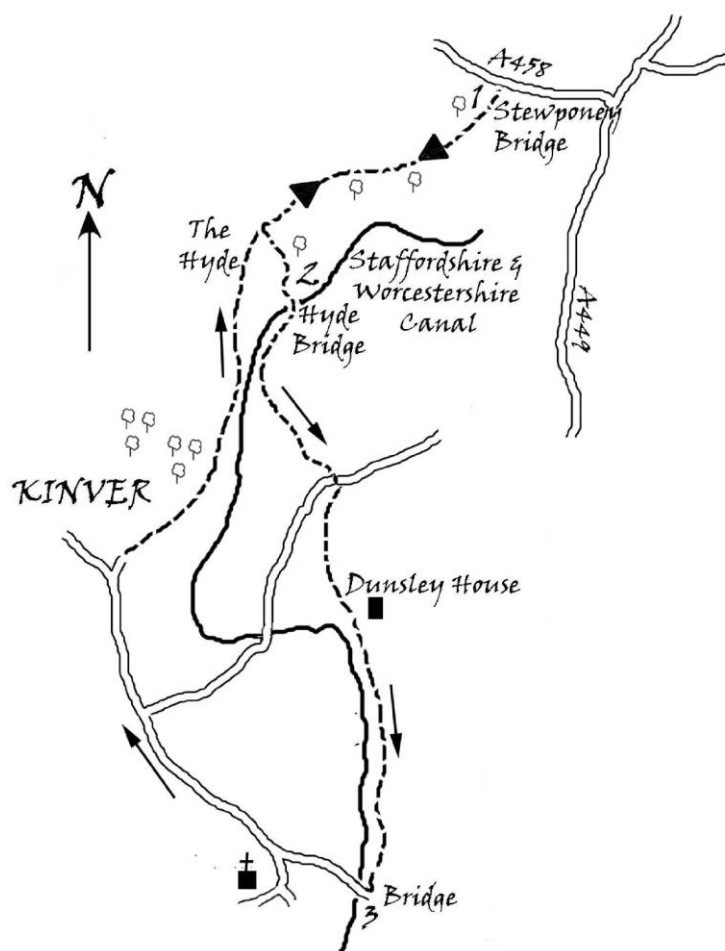
Stourton Court

The area north-east of Kinver - known as **The Hyde** - deserves more than a passing mention in industrial history. It was here that the first mill in England for rolling and slitting iron was erected. William Brindley, who owned these works, improved his processes by visiting the ironworking centres in Germany, while posing as a peripatetic half-wit, cunningly picking up valuable information behind his mask of genial eccentricity.

The area of **Gibraltar** takes its name from the sandstone rock that was left exposed when the canal was cut through in the 1770s - the name was certainly in existence in 1780. As elsewhere, there were a number of rock houses hewn in the rock face, which were declared uninhabitable in 1880, but boatmen and other workers continued to make use of them.

Deliveries today to the picturesque cottages can only be made by canal transport.

Whittington Horse Bridge is said to have gained its name because it was built to carry a packhorse route between Bewdley and Stourbridge.

2 hours**Easy****6.5 kms / 4 miles****By the Way**

Start Point	SO 861848 Lay-by on A458 past Stewpony Junction
How Far Away?	3 kms from Stourbridge
Maps O.S.	Explorer- Landranger 219 139
Parking	Free - limited space
Facilities	Available in Kinver
Terrain	Woodland, field & canal paths
Hazards	Normal hazards associated with canals
Stiles	6
Pubs	The Anchor en route Others in Kinver village

Staffordshire	Walk 4	Stourton
2 hours	Easy	6.5 kms

Stourton - Chance Wood - The Hyde - Dunsley - Gibraltar - Whittington Horse Bridge - Kinver - Chance Wood - Stourton

A walk that introduces a quieter side of Kinver. In autumn, the fallen leaves provide a special appeal that justifies walking part of the route twice - albeit in different directions.

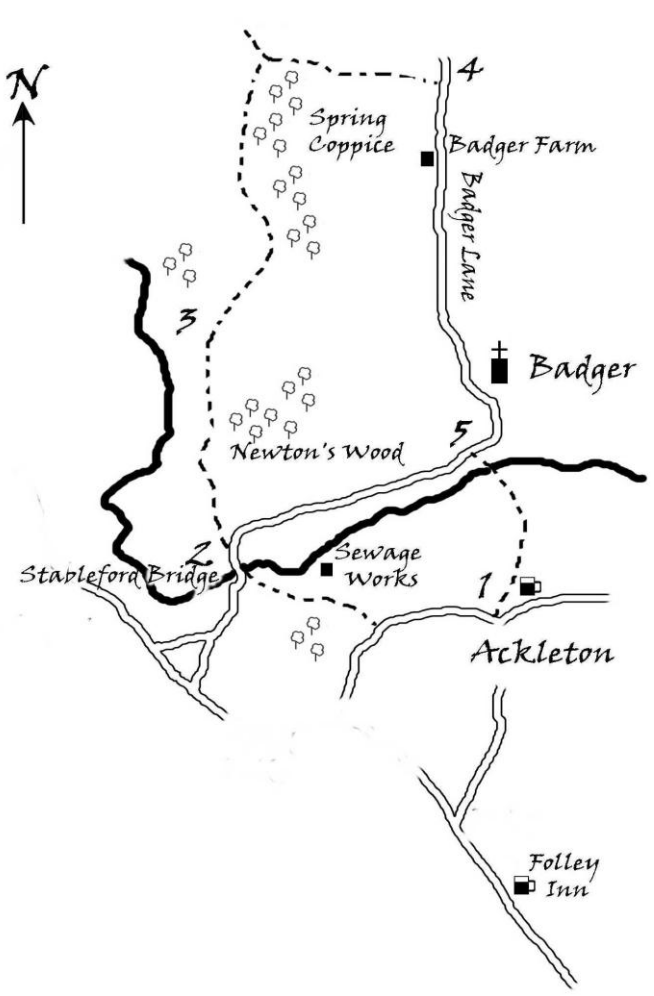
Walk Route

1 Walk up A458 for 200m and take fp L (opposite entrance to Stourton Court). Go diagonally R across field - walk in single file to avoid damage to crops. Cross stile and go down some awkward steps. Follow fp through glade and later through a redundant gate into wooded conservation area known as Chance Wood. The trail emerges through a kissing gate onto a lane with a choice of routes. Turn L and then L again along a bridleway to cross bridge over River Stour. Go past some wooden cottages - one is very dilapidated and looks as if it will soon collapse! Go over another bridge that crosses a watercourse that was used to power mills in days gone by. *The area was once littered with workshops processing iron!* At a British Waterways sign, bear R & go ahead to the canal towpath.

2 Turn R and within a few metres, turn L over Hyde Bridge in front of the lockkeeper's cottage. The trail passes a sandstone rock face, swings R and climbs gently above the canal. The path exits onto a road, which is followed to the main road straight ahead. Cross the road with care, go up the steps and turn L. Take the next turn R into Dunsley Lane. When the lane narrows, press on ahead. At Dunsley House, take the fp that starts just past and below the iron entrance gates. The fp drops down through woods & veers L past a Private sign. However, the owner acknowledges the Right of Way, which we follow. The

winding fp offers glimpses of the canal as it gradually loses height. Respect the various cottage owners' privacy as you pass close to their windows. *This area is known as Gibraltar and vehicle access to the properties is non-existent - hence all bulky deliveries have to be made by boat!* Pass through another kissing gate and walk over the field beside the canal - no towpath this side - until another kissing gate hidden in the trees. Turn R and follow the lane to the end. Cross Whittington Horse Bridge & go along the dirt track ahead.

3 Pass the Anchor Hotel & follow the lane up the hill. Continue on the same course for about 300m and pass the old Grammar School on the RHS before The Cross public house. Turn R and walk 50m to the road ahead (take care as there is no pavement). Continue along the High Street into Kinver village round the bend and turn R after the war memorial. Leave the Community Centre on the LHS & cross the sports field to the far RH corner. Go through a series of kissing gates & after walking between two brick walls, arrive at the place visited earlier in 1 above. Take the fp R (#23) and retrace route back through wood and diagonally L across field back to road & parked cars.

Badger		Walk 5	Shropshire
<p>The village of Badger has Anglo-Saxon origins - <i>Beghesovre</i> (<i>Beccer</i> - of the brook; <i>ovre</i> - bank, brink or shore; hence bank of the brook). Badger is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The church was founded in the 12th century and was restored in the 19th century. Wenlock Priory had manorial rights in Badger.</p> <p>Badger Pool is an enchanting sight with its bulrushes, water lilies, coots and ducks. The thatched and timbered cottages may rightly be described as a typical chocolate box scene.</p> <p>A plaque on the row of nearby cottages reads: 'AD 1500 These cottages were reconstructed AD 1963 by Margaret Ruth in memory of her parents the Rev. Archibald William and Mrs Ethel Dicks who gave fifty years devoted service to Badger. We can only repay the past by making the future indebted to us.'</p>			
2½ hours	Easy	7 kms / 4½ miles	By the Way
			<p>Start Point The Red Cow PH at Ackleton 771 988. <i>Turn N off B4176 by The Folly PH & proceed 1.6 kms</i></p> <p>How far away? 25kms from Stourbridge</p> <p>Maps O.S. Explorer 218 Landranger 127 & 138</p> <p>Parking Free at pub - ask first</p> <p>Facilities None on route</p> <p>Terrain Field & woodland paths plus some quiet lane walking</p> <p>Hazards Paths can be muddy and slippery in places</p> <p>Stiles 3 + awkward bridge</p> <p>Accessibility? After stage 2, the route is suitable for all persons</p> <p>Pubs The Red Cow</p>

Shropshire	Walk 5	Badger
2½ hours	Easy	7 kms

Ackleton - Stableford - Badger - Badger Dingle - Ackleton

A delightful walk full of rural sounds and sights - the very name conjures up images of Brock and other country animals. Badger village is enchanting. A surprise at every turn!

Walk Route

1 Turn R & walk down the lane for about 500m. As the lane bends L downhill, take the signed fp R over a stile into a pasture. Proceed ahead to R of trees & another stile. Go down a fairly steep hill (slightly L of straight) to meet the river & then clamber over 'gates' on a fb over the River Worfe into another pasture. Continue on same bearing with hedge & later Pump Station on LHS, to a stile & gate onto a lane at Stableford.

2 Turn R & proceed along the lane for 300m, past Stableford Lodge & the start of woods where the lane starts up a hill. On the LHS is a gated opening with a bway sign. Follow path (which can be muddy) through the wood. At RH bend, leave the bway & go through a gate on the L with a waymarker that leads through trees into a wide-open pasture.

3 Away on the LHS is the river; on the RHS is the edge of the wood just vacated. Maintain the same direction to a gate in another pasture & soon start to veer R away from the river towards the wood & to another gate onto a track. Proceed ahead & hug the edge of the wood. Pass a large pond on the LHS & soon the Worfe will return again below the walk. As the river veers away again, the corner of the wood is reached & the fp enters a large meadow, The grass path rises quite steeply with a raised bank in front and on the LHS. Follow the main path ahead (ignoring a turn to the R) to where the meadow flattens & then turn R along a path towards an opening

in some trees. On resumption, the path becomes more defined as a rough track that climbs through the trees and eventually opens onto a lane.

4 Turn R and walk past The Sett & Badger Farm. To the left may be seen the church spire of Pattingham. Continue along the lane, which soon bears L downhill & leads into Badger. Ignore the road to the L & Badger Church. Continue to the bottom of the hill to a junction. Turn R & pass thatched & timbered cottages on the LHS (note the plaque). After 100m turn L down a fp (waymark sign on fence post top.)

5 Take care down the path, which is rocky and can be muddy, but is a quite delightful 'fairy glen'. Pursue the meandering main path & listen out for rushing water. Follow your ears to small waterfall deep in the wood. A steep & often slippery path leads up L past the waterfall to rejoin the main path above. Turn R when rejoined & follow the path uphill along a 'cutting' through the wood.

6 At the top, the path goes diagonally across a field. At the far end of the field is a waymark on a path from which Ackleton Hall can be seen ahead. When the path meets the lane, turn L and within a few metres, the car park will come into view.

Hampton Loade

Walk 6

Shropshire

The **Severn Valley Country Park** has risen like a phoenix from the ashes of the slag heaps and derelict land that was part of the Alveley Coal Mine shut down in 1969.

The Visitors' Centre is open throughout the year except on Mondays and Tuesdays.

A limited range of refreshments may be available

Hampton Loade Forge started making iron in 1796. The Battle of Waterloo ended the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and by the 1830s, good quality iron production was in deep recession. Most of it went into the construction of gun barrels. In the 1860s, the forge ceased and became a rolling mill for tin plating. The forge and mill closed for good in the 1890s.

The **Great Western Railway (GWR)** opened in the Severn Valley in 1863 - within five years it had killed off all the river traffic of the Severn trows and barges that plied between Shrewsbury and Stourport.

Information regarding the **Severn Valley Railway** is to be found in the walk entitled 'Severn Valley'

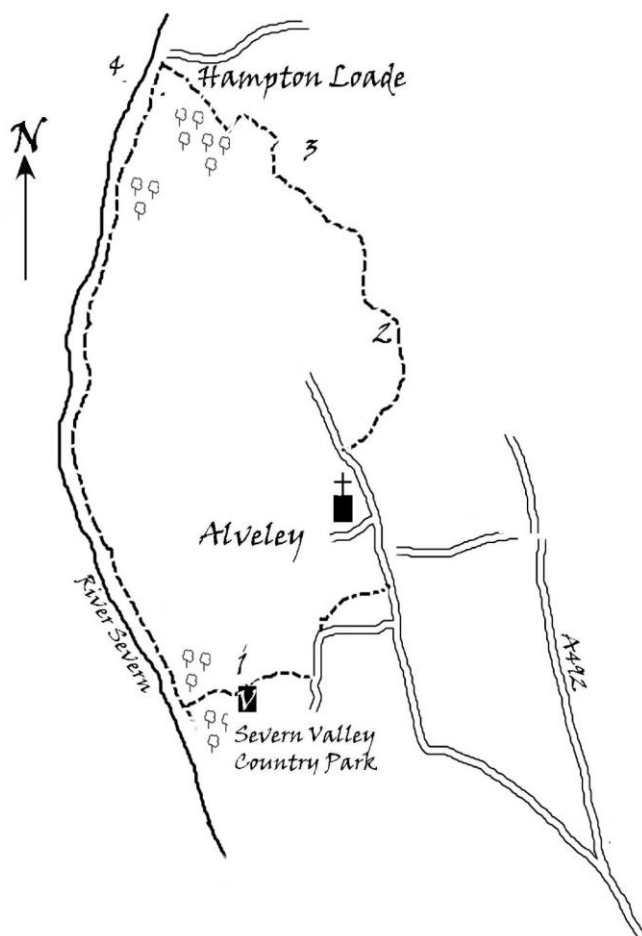
Further notes are contained on page 58

3 hours

Easy

7 Kms

By the Way



Start Point Severn Valley Country Park 753 840

How Far Away? 20 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer 218 Landranger 138

Parking Free

Facilities At SVCP and Alveley

Terrain Footpaths, bridleways and quiet lanes

Hazards Can be muddy in parts
The stretch along the River Sever must be avoided when the river is running high.

Stiles 18

Pubs River & Rail at Hampton Loade

The Lion Inn is closed

Three Horseshoes - Alveley

Shropshire	Walk 6	Hampton Loade
3 hours	Easy	7 kms

Severn Valley Country Park - Alveley - Lakehouse Dingle - Hampton Loade - River Severn - Severn Valley Country Park

This is a splendid walk at any time of the year - except when the River Severn is running high. Enjoy peaceful wooded glades, gurgling streams and quiet lanes before heading back down Britain's longest waterway - the M7. From across the river, nostalgic hoots and toots of the Severn Valley Railway are often heard.

Walk Route

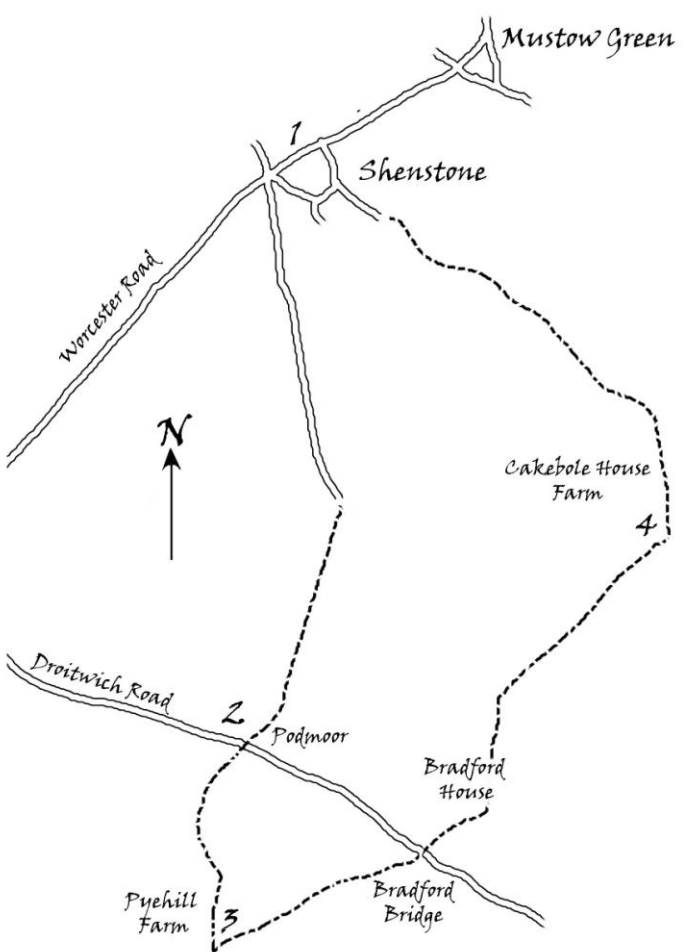
1 Leave the SVCP via the gate, at the bend, beyond the entrance to the Easy Access Trail. Proceed up the grassy slope, through a gate to a gap & gate in the top LH corner. Follow route with fence on LHS to a brick building. Take fp ahead to emerge on road. Turn L & pass Post Office and Pub. Before church, go R at road sign indicating 'Circular Route'. 200m after speed de-restriction sign, turn R down uneven bway that leads to stream - follow course L to plank bridge. Cross, & immediately go down R, then L up a bway leading from the stream. Pass beneath 3 pipes. After a shaded walk, emerge onto a rough farm lane. Proceed ahead to lane & then turn L.

2 At start of approach to another farm, turn L along bway, which descends to a bridge across the stream. Do not cross. Take fp R, up steep bank & cross (broken) stile into field. Keep left to cross next stile. Pass beside a derelict bridge & hug fence on LHS to end & cross (wobbly) stile along & down a shaded fp to a meeting of streams. Pause for refreshments. Continue across the LH (wooden) bridge to follow the course of the main stream (this section can be muddy even in dry weather). When a fence hinders further progress, drop down

to pick up a clearly defined route beside the stream. Continue until the way gives out onto a broader expanse of water & a cottage beyond.

3 At the waterfall, go R & cross bridge. Take fp ahead up through trees (not to cottage) & turn L along lane. Walk 10m, & turn L over stile. Beneath power lines, turn L & cross barrier. Follow edge of field down & round to R. Keep fence on LHS & pass under a second set of power lines. Eventually fence drops away suddenly, keep straight ahead, but look for (rickety) stile below in far LH corner. Pass derelict cars & go ahead to LH side of house & leave via driveway (It is the Right of Way!) Go R for ferry and River & Rail pub.

4 Resume walk route by taking lane that leads back past scenic cottages. At end of lane, take fp R that leads down to river bank. Switch onto auto-pilot & return along riverbank across 8 stiles & 4 plank bridges until the River Bridge at Alveley. Either, turn L to join way from bridge, or continue under bridge for short distance & take signed route L up incline back to the start by the Visitors' Centre at the SVCP.

Cakebole		Walk 7	Worcestershire
<p>Shenstone lies between the Catholic stronghold at Harvington Hall and the residence of the Bishop of Worcester at Hartlebury, though neither of these places is visited on this walk. Motorists barely give the scenery a second glance as they belt along the A450 to and from Worcester.</p> <p>The walk takes its name from a farm that is passed. The derivation of the name probably refers to cakes of 'bole' or clay of the soft, reddish-brown variety that is prevalent on the walk.</p> <p>Nearby Mustow Green takes its name from the fact that troops mustered on the village green in the time of the Civil War.</p> <p>This walk's route covers some quiet country lanes and paths across various fields. At one point the route passes straight through a garden nursery. Though the walk has little by way of gradients, there are wonderful views of the Malvern Hills to be enjoyed.</p>			
2½ hours	Easy	7.5 kms	By the Way
			<p>Start Point Hare & Hounds PH 1km beyond Mustow Green SO 861 737</p> <p>How Far Away? 12 kms from Stourbridge</p> <p>Maps O.S. - Explorer 219 - Landranger 139</p> <p>Parking Free - ask politely first!</p> <p>Facilities None on route</p> <p>Terrain Field paths and quiet lanes</p> <p>Hazards An awkward section along the A442 - also a need to cross the road twice</p> <p>Stiles Too many to count!</p> <p>Pubs The Hare & Hounds The Plough, Shenstone</p> <p>Oh!</p>

Worcestershire	Walk 7	Cakebole
2½ hours	Easy	7.5 kms

Shenstone - Podmoor - Bradford - Cakebole - Shenstone

It's best to get any lane walking out of the away early - so the longest stretch is done first of all! Thereafter, the route is mostly across fields and over stiles a-plenty! Enjoy the distant hills - the Clees and Malverns as they come into view. Can you pass The Plough without popping in to sample the Batham's brew?

Walk Route

1 From the carpark, walk past the pub along the A450 to the minor crossroads. Turn L & immediately take fork to R. Go along lane past Holly Cottage on LHS for 1.25km to next lane junction. Take fp R & follow hedge on RHS to end of grassy field. Go over the stile and walk diagonally down field to RHS of house at bottom.

2 Cross road to stile & go R of glasshouse. Go over 3 more stiles in quick succession. Continue on same heading to next stile that leads through a nursery. Descend field (large house on RHS) to trees. Cross stream by fb & over stile - beware as ground is always very boggy - children may need to be carried. Go across field to stile, bear L to another stile & follow fence/hedge on RHS for 450m to second lonely tree on LHS.

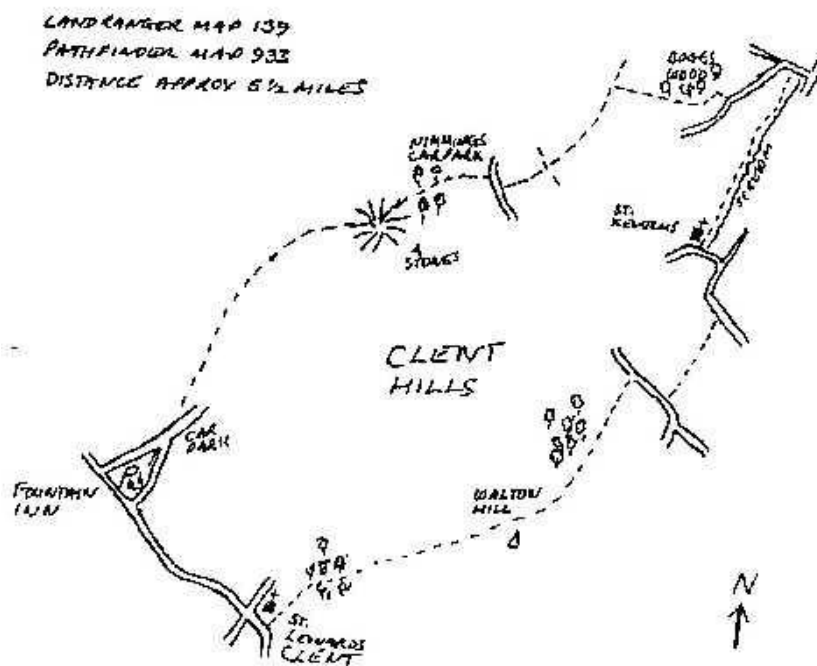
3 Here, turn sharp L & follow grass way to 2 gates leading to a bway. *(Possible pause for sheltered - out of the wind - refreshments along here!)* Continue to lane. Cross & take fp opposite. The Right of Way straight through the crops - otherwise make your way to a stile below the slope, before & to the RHS of a house. Go up field to another stile & A442 road.

Cross road with care to a k/gate opposite. Cross stile & pass tennis court on your LHS - cut across field to another k/gate & turn R onto track. Go past pool to end of track & continue on grass - turn R over stile (before green shed) then bear L across field to stile. Continue on diagonal - Bearing 56° - uphill to gate in RH corner. Walk 200m down lane to bend.

4 Turn L at Cakebole House Farm & enter field. Head for stile 300m diagonally opposite - again field may be under crop - nevertheless RoW Bearing is 344°. At stile, continue diagonally L to hedge corner on RHS. Go up field with hedge on RHS to stile & uphill & to RHS of lonely cedar of Lebanon & on to stile. Cross lane & take fp opposite - undergrowth can be thick - go to end & then L to emerge into field. Turn R. Hug hedge of field on RHS until large gap (waymarker) go through & bear L to gap in fence, then R along drive. Turn R into lane & pass The Plough. Go over X-road and R at next turn. Take fp L to far hedge then R to return to carpark.

Coronary Heart Disease

Coronary Heart Disease is the leading single cause of premature death for both men and women in the United Kingdom. Someone who is inactive has as great a risk of having heart disease as someone who smokes or who has high blood pressure or has high cholesterol; moreover inactivity is twice as prevalent in the English population as these other risk factors.



3 hours

Moderate

7.5 Kms / 4 1/2 miles

By the Way

St Kenelm's Church is dedicated to the memory of seven-year-old King Kenelm. The Mercian boy-king was murdered on the orders of his jealous sister, Quenrida, in AD 826. Legend has it that a spring of holy water spouted from the spot where he was slain. The place became a popular destination for a great number of pilgrims, who were attracted by the miracles of healing.

St Leonard's Parish Church in the village of Clent is built on sloping ground, its chancel several feet higher than the rest and leaning to one side.

The Clent villagers were so devoted to the Stuart cause that they annually celebrated the restoration of Charles II on the 29th May for many years. Early in the morning, everyone in the village went into the woods and fetched enough oak boughs to decorate the church tower until it looked like a gigantic tree. The boughs were pulled up to the top with ropes and deep indentations to the battlements may still be seen.

The rainfall on the Clent Hills finds its way to both the River Severn and the North Sea! From Walton Hill (the second highest point in the county) there is no higher ground, looking east, until the Ural Mountains in Russia!

Start Point Adam's Hill Car Park
SO 926 797

How Far Away? 5 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer - Landranger
219 139

Parking Free

Facilities Snack bar & toilets at start and on route

Terrain A short stretch of road walking is soon forgotten on paths up hills & across fields

Hazards Some parts can be very muddy and slippery (see text)

Stiles 10

Pubs The Fountain
The Hill Tavern

Worcestershire	Walk 8	Clent
3 hours	Moderate	7.5 kms

Mount Lane - Clent - Walton Hill - St Kenelm's - Bogs Wood - The Nimmings - Clent Hills Country Park - Adam's Hill

A short, challenging walk that takes in the imposing Clent Hills, mud, mud glorious mud stunning views and a thousand-year old murder scene. The area surrounding St Kenelm's church once supported a village that was known as Kenelmstowe.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Walk down the road & bear L along the narrow lane - Mount Lane - above the Fountain Inn - to pass by the Mount hotel & bear L onto another lane that leads to the cross-roads at Clent. Go up the narrow fp on the RHS of the church & then up a steep field incline. Continue through a k/gate & along a well-defined woodland bway up to the summit of Walton Hill. Pass the trig point & continue ahead to the end of the ridge.</p> <p>2 Turn R down the fp ('North Worcestershire Path' - NWP). After the bend, turn R down some wood steps (can be slippery) to the lane & cross to the stile opposite. Veer L across the field (often muddy) to a stile. Turn L into a lane & turn L again to church. Take the fp on the RHS of the lych gate; over stile & follow fp R down wooden steps (always slippery). Follow the fp down with the brook on your RHS & stay on course through several fields to reach a track beside a gate marked Field Cottage.</p> | <p>3 Turn L along farm track (ignore other fp signs) & proceed for 200m to waymark sign at edge of Bogs Wood. Turn R. Cross stile & follow fp (can be wet & muddy) along edge of wood. Continue through fields until another fp enters from RHS (where two gates meet). Turn sharp L uphill & follow hedge on LHS to stile in top LH corner. Continue to climb, veering R to another stile & emerge onto lane opposite 'The Nimmings' car park, complete with refreshment kiosk & toilets.</p> <p>4 Proceed along well-defined path (suitable for all abilities) - passing under 'welcome' sign to the view point. Go down 10m, then turn L along bway (not along NWP ahead). Continue descent (some spectacular views before you) until a staggered fp junction. Turn R & descend curved fp to arrive above The Hill Tavern. Continue down road to start point.</p> |
|---|--|

Calorie Information

To be used as a guideline

For an average adult weighing 70kg (11 stones) walking a mile at a comfortable pace, burns about 100 calories. The heavier you are the more you burn. Also routes with hills will burn more calories than flat ones.

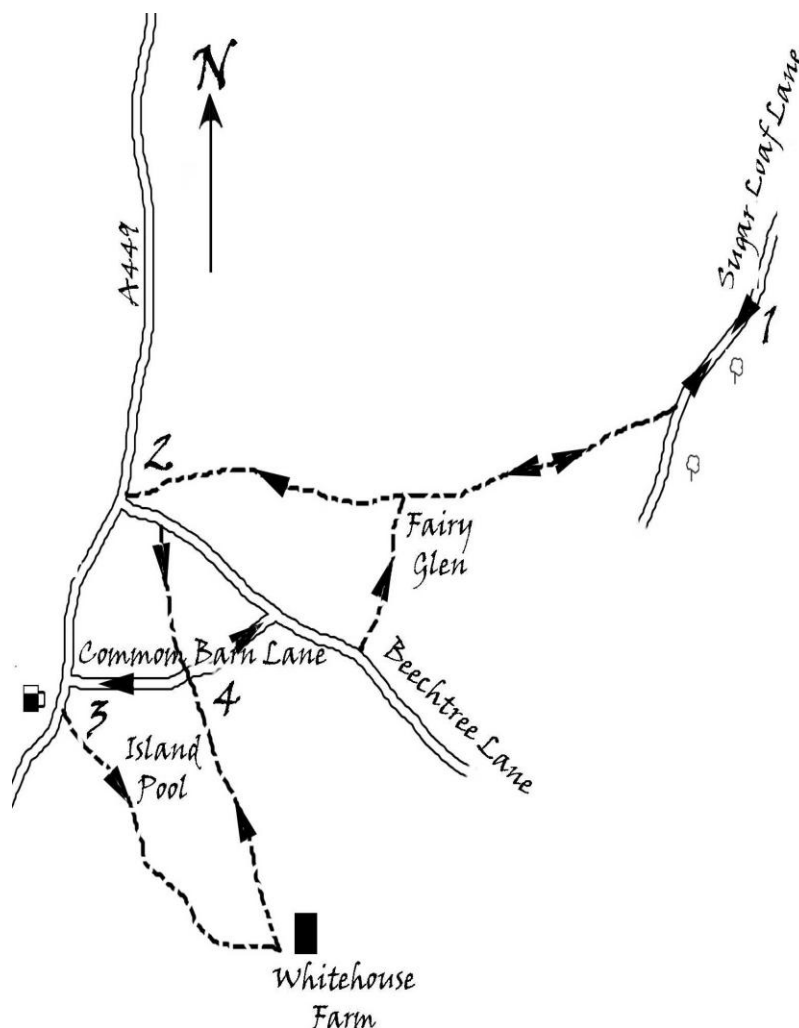
Fairy Glen**Walk 9****Worcestershire**

The landscape to the west of Stourbridge has a number of small hills that afford expansive views. **Sugarloaf Lane** takes its name from the eponymous mountain and Brecon Beacons, which can be seen on a clear day.

The bridle way between Sugarloaf Lane and Fairy Glen can be churned up horses hooves. A variety of deciduous trees - predominantly sycamore, but also ash, hawthorn, hazel and oak provide a pleasant, shaded setting.

Fairy Glen is a small area of woodland that is a mass of bluebells and other wild flowers in the spring.

Part of the walk follows the route of the **North Worcestershire Path** that runs from Kingsford Country Park, south of Kinver Edge, to Majors Green near Wythall. The length of the NWP is 43 kilometres (27 miles). A pine cone symbol marks the course of the NWP

2½ hours**Easy****8 Kms****By the Way**

Start Point	High Acres Nursery, Sugarloaf Lane Iverley SO 878 814
How Far Away?	4 kms from Stourbridge
Maps	O.S. Explorer 139 Landranger 219
Parking	Grass verge. Please park with care & consideration
Facilities	None, except pub (see below)
Terrain	Bridleways & footpaths, which can be muddy in wet weather. Some quiet lane walking plus a short stretch of busy road (see next)
Hazards	The A449 - see text
Stiles	10
Pubs	Cookley Arms A449 Cookley (formerly the Island Pool)

Worcestershire	Walk 9	Fairy Glen
2½ hours	Easy	8 kms

Sugarloaf Lane - N.W.P. - Fairy Glen - Island Pool - Whitehouse Farm - Common Barn Farm - Fairy Glen - N.W.P. - Sugarloaf Lane

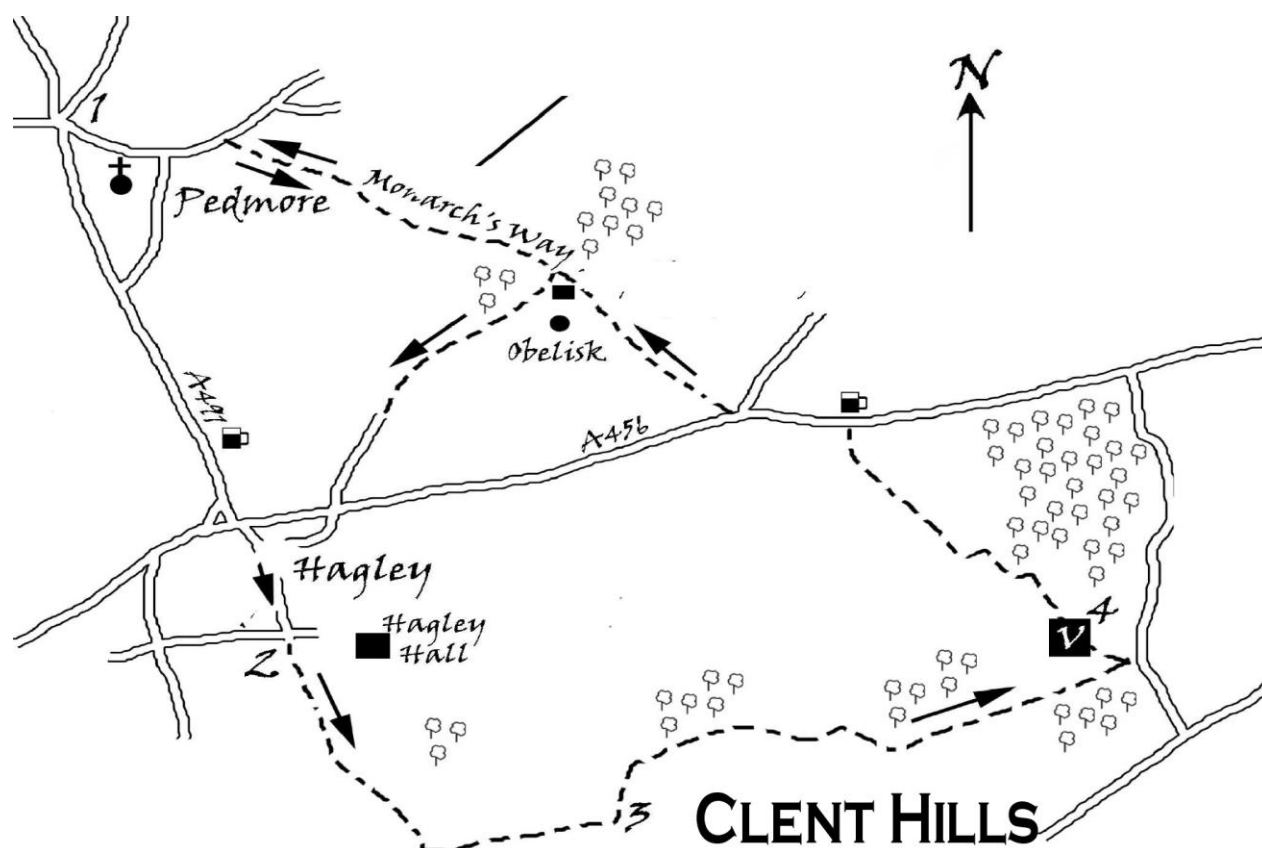
This was a favourite walk of the late Margaret Coakes, a much-loved and respected SHFRC club member. She enjoyed the peace and solitude that this walk can provide - despite being so close to Stourbridge. There are stunning views to be enjoyed, especially from the top of the steps (see text) and from Fairy Glen itself.

1 Walk down Sugar Loaf Lane, past the nursery and some houses on your LHS. At the point where the lane bends, bear R along a waymarked bway - "North Worcestershire Path" (NWP). The path can be muddy after wet weather, but can be negotiated with reasonable care. Ignore all paths leading off to the left and right. When path enters trees with woodland high on LHS, bear R and descend to stile. Cross and follow NWP waymarker diagonally across 3 fields and stiles to corner of last field by A449 road. Do not cross road.

2 Instead, turn L up Beech Tree Lane for 10 metres, then R onto fp across field to Common Barn Lane. Turn R and walk down lane towards the fast & busy A449. It is necessary to turn L & walk 100m to the bend. *However, the pavement is on the opposite side of the road. Tree branches may impede your progress. You must decide whether it is safer to cross the road - and back again - or walk along the verge.*

3 At the bend, take the fp L - "Ismere" & walk beside Island Pool. In due course, pass a flight of 84 steps on your RHS. Continue ahead, under a dead tree, towards Ismere House - in the distance on a hill. However, the fp, which at times can be flooded, veers away L to arrive by Whitehouse Farm. At pond, turn L & pass farmhouse on your RHS, over stile & between paddocks. Walk diagonally across 3 fields with Kinver Church directly ahead on horizon. Follow footpath signs to Common Barn Farm. Cross stile and pass through garden to Common Barn Lane.

4 Turn R and walk up the lane. At junction, turn R and continue along Beech Tree Lane. Pass Beech Tree farmhouse, & 300m later, turn L along bway leading to woodland knoll, known as Fairy Glen. Follow the route as it veers R (enjoy the bluebell display in April) & rejoin the outward bway back to the lane. Turn L & walk along Sugarloaf Lane back to parked vehicles.



3 / 3½ hours

Easy

8.5 kms

By the Way

Designed in 1754 by Sanderson Miller for George, 1st Lord Lyttelton, **Hagley Hall** was the last of the great Palladian houses to be commissioned. It replaced the previous hall, which was a timbered building. Hagley Hall is set in 350 acres of superbly landscaped Deer Park and beside rolling hills with views far and wide. It is still the home of the Lyttelton family.

The **obelisk** is a prominent landmark. An amusing statue of Frederick, Prince of Wales, dressed as a Roman emperor originally perched on top of the tall, thin column. As it was a gift from the prince, a friend of Lyttelton's, its erection was inevitable. The slogan daubed on the base of the obelisk refers to an unsolved murder that was committed before the 1939-45 War.

The **Temple of Theseus** was completed in 1761. It was built in memory of the 1st Lord Lyttelton's poet friend, James Thompson. The Doric style templ was the first work of 'Athenian' Stuart - he received £20 for designing the building. The Temple's location was specifically chosen to provide a pleasing view of the Malvern Hills. It was renovated, but has now fallen victim to vandals.

Start Point SO 911 823
The Foley Arms, Pedmore

How Far Away? 3 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer 219
Landranger 139

Parking Free, but ask first!

Facilities Refreshment kiosk & toilets en route at The Nimmings

Terrain Footpaths & bridleways - some may be muddy.

Hazards Crossing the busy A456 - twice!

Stiles 15

Pubs The Foley Arms (at start)
The Badgers Sett A456

Pedmore - Wychbury Ring - Hagley - Clent Grove - The Nimmings - Hagley Hill - Wychbury Ring - Pedmore

This is another fine example of a local walk. Although it nudges the Clent Hills, it does not actually tackle the popular routes. Instead, you will be rewarded with a view of three follies (one requires a slight detour), a possible sighting of his Lordship's deer and the contentment of an enjoyable and pleasant walk.

1 Walk along Pedmore Lane. Opposite number 35, turn R & pass through kissing gate & go uphill with farm on RHS. Go L by metal gate. Beware barbed wire fence - upper parts of the fp can be very muddy. At top, cross metal barrier & go through wood. Emerge in open field. Turn R & go along grassy way passing the **obelisk** on your LHS. See note below. Go over stile ahead & continue straight down veering L to stile with pumping chambers on LHS. Cross stile opposite & down lane to busy A456. Cross road with care. Turn into School Lane & follow winding road to junction by Hagley Hall entrance.

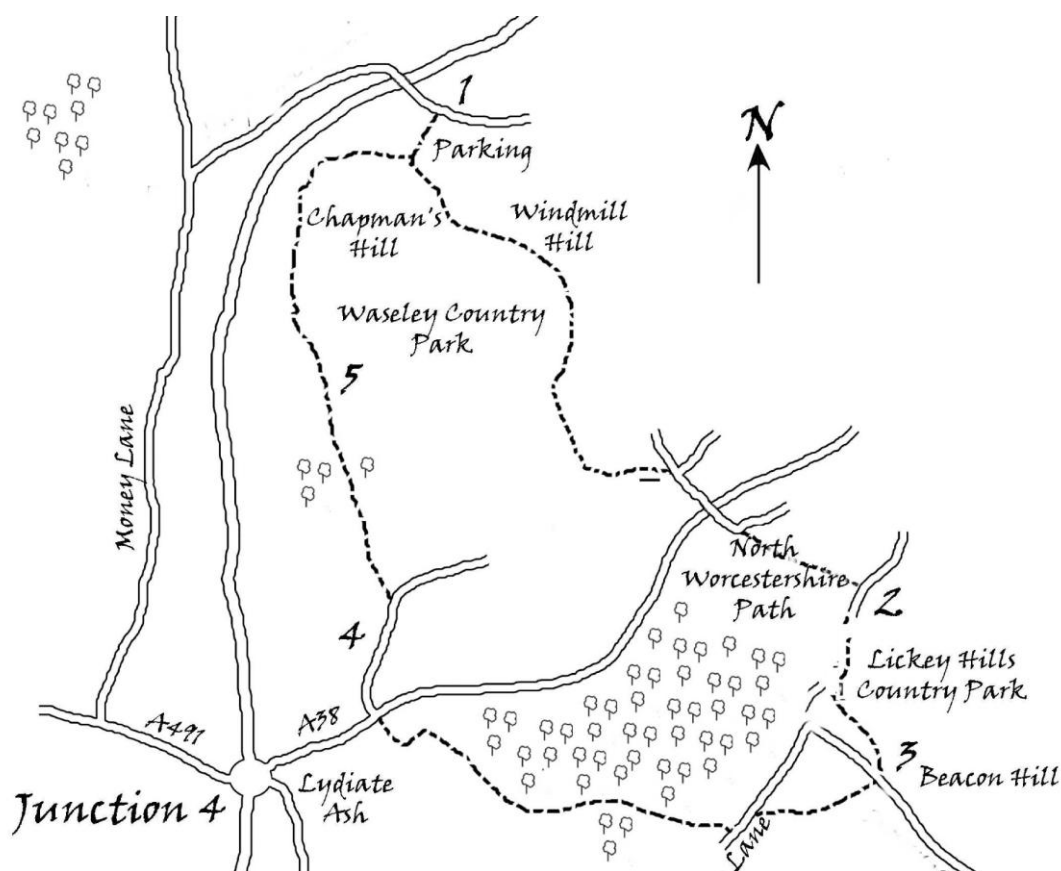
2 Go up North Worcestershire Way (NWP) fp ahead, beside water fountain. Follow route with Hall on LHS & open fields on RHS. Stay on path ignoring fps off, pass through a metal chicane followed later by a squeeze stile. At cross-roads, turn L & walk between two holly hedges. At T-junction, by bungalow, turn L & 40m later turn R over stile & continue ahead, keeping a rill on your LHS & passing Sunfields Children Home on RHS.

Go with fence on your LHS as bway winds right uphill. At gate by house, leading to castle, turn R. This is another folly known as the **Ruined Castle**. Proceed uphill - route can be very muddy in places. At junction by National Trust sign, join fp & go L. Continue ahead, as fp merges with bway & pass under height restriction. Carry on to The Nimmings car park, where refreshments & toilet facilities may be available.

4 Go down steps on RHS of kiosk then through 3 kissing gates & fields. Pass through Stu's Spinney as you head for wood ahead. Cross stile, go L & cross another stile. Walk length of field to far RH corner. Turn R along track & continue until junction before houses. Bear R across stile to A456 ahead. Turn L & cross fast dual carriageway with care. Ignore fp on RHS opposite houses & continue to roundabout. Cross Wassell Grove Lane & go L for 10m. Turn R down bank to stile & hug fence on RHS to line of trees beyond monument. Retrace outward steps back to starting point.

If you wish to visit the **Temple** - follow this short detour.

1a After passing obelisk, bear L down hill - passing pumping chamber on your RHS. Go down into hollow between two clumps of trees. Hagley Church should be directly ahead of you - but in the distance. Bear L & climb rise to the **Temple**.
Return to main route. Walk down to obvious track leading through evergreen trees. Pass through metal gate & ahead to stile. Descend to another stile by larger pumping chamber. Previous route arrives at this point from the RHS. Resume main route description above "Cross stile opposite & down lane to busy A456".

**3 hours****Moderate****9 kms****By the Way**

In 1907, the Cadbury family gave 520 acres of land in the Lickey Hills to the people of Birmingham - despite 90% of the area being in Worcestershire!

Beacon Hill is the highest point of the Lickeys. The hill has been used as a beacon for centuries to warn the population of impending danger or invasion!

Start Point Waseley Hills Country Park GR 973 783 (Off Gannow Green Lane)

A-Z Page 118 - Ref. 1A

How Far Away? 14 kms from Stourbridge

Maps - O.S. Explorer 239 Landranger 139

Parking Pay & Display

Facilities Snack Bar, Information & Toilets at start

Terrain Field & woodland paths; some quiet lane walking

Hazards No serious obstacles

Stiles 10

Pubs None on route

Worcestershire	Walk 11	Waseley & Beacon Hills
3 hours	Moderate	9kms

Waseley Hills Country Park - Windmill Hill - Beacon Hill - Beaconwood- Chadwich - Chapman's Hill - Waseley Hills C.P.

A pleasant, undulating walk that provides extensive views of urban Birmingham and the Black Country on one side and rural Worcestershire on the other.

1 Leave the car park, go R then walk up the hill to steps on LHS of pylon and follow the North Worcestershire Path (NWP) way marks. Keep to R of toposcope. Ignore stile on LHS & keep straight ahead along ridge for 500m. Go through two kissing gates, ascend slope & eventually descend to another car park on your LHS. Turn L along the road & turn R; cross the bridge over the A38. At the end of the bridge, go R up a bridleway between trees, still following the NWP waymarks. Ignore fp on LHS halfway up slope, but bear L at next fork (waymarker missing on post). Follow fp downhill & head L to wooden gate. Keep R at fork then turn L along a grassy fp that passes behind some new houses and emerges onto a lane.

2 Cross the lane with care. You are now approaching the Lickey Hills Country Park. Turn R immediately and follow a path, parallel with lane, uphill through trees to arrive on open grassland on the top of Beacon Hill (300m / 987 ft). Head for the 'turreted' Cadbury monument.

3 Continue past the monument to the carpark & road. Turn L & walk along the road for about 160m then turn sharp R on a waymarked path. The path crosses a field, a drive, and continues diagonally across 2 more fields to a lane. Turn L & go 50m along the lane,

then turn R onto a track past Beacon Farm. Continue straight onto a fp & pass a small stagnant pond. The fp makes a long descent through woodland & finally ends at a metal gate leading into a private garden. Proceed through - it is the Right of Way & emerge on a dead-end road. Turn L to the wooden barrier & then join the lane R & go under the A38.

4 Proceed past the turning to Chadwich Manor, up the lane, round the bend & pass some cottages and then go L over a stile, in the hedge. Cross the field diagonally to a concrete track on the RHS. Turn L & follow track. Climb the stile that is on the R of some gates (NT Footpath sign on RHS) & follow the short path through the woodland.

5 Climb a stile into a field & go to far RH corner. Clamber over another stile and take the bridleway ahead. Follow track across a drive. Proceed along an off-muddy way & turn R at corner. Go ahead at junction by Chapman's Farm & follow lane round to R. 30m after Nailer's Cottage, bear R onto fp & aim for LHS of pylon. As you proceed, a signpost will come into view by hedge. Cross two stiles & hug LH hedge back to the start.

Did you enjoy this walk? Like to join Stourbridge HF Rambling Club?

SHFRC organises walks throughout the year. Choose from Wednesdays (usually full and half-day options) Saturday afternoons and Sunday (all day) walks.

For latest information, go to www.shfrc.org.uk

Claverley was mentioned in the Domesday Book as *Claverlege*, its origin being from the Old English word 'claefe' (clover) and 'lea'. The village has a delightful collection of buildings overlooked by a large red sandstone church, which is typical of this area. A few minutes spent inside the church will amply reward the visitor.

All Saints Church is especially notable for the wall paintings that were 're-discovered' in 1902. Though on a much smaller scale, the friezes are similar to the Bayeux Tapestry and date back to about 1200.

Around the nave are a number of panel recording details of bequests left by various residents for certain less fortunate members of the parish. The bequests made by Robert Dovey in 1702 are particularly amusing!

Each year during July a **Flower Festival** is held at the Church. Some of the residents also open their gardens to the public. Details may be obtained from the village Post Office.

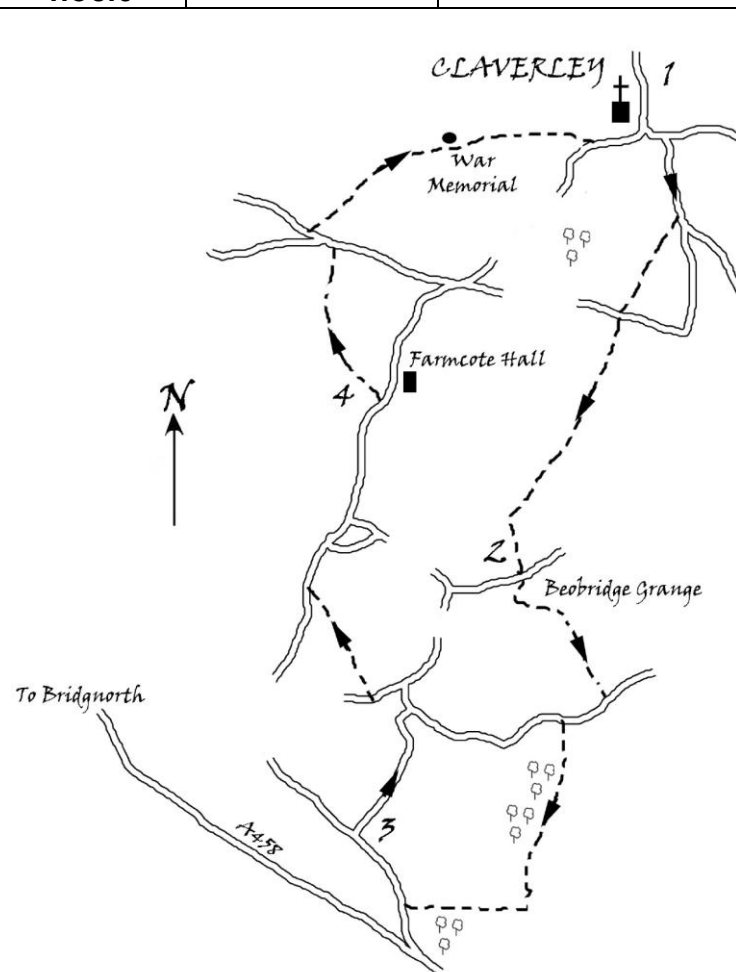
Further notes are contained on page 58

**3 / 3½
hours**

Easy

9.5 kms / 6 miles

By the Way



Start Point High Street,
Claverley village
SO 794 994

How Far Away? 16 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer - Landranger
218 138

Parking At the rear of either pub
See panel below

Facilities The Post Office / General
shop is closed Sat p.m. &
all day Sunday

Terrain Across fields and along
quiet country lanes

Hazards Keep children away from
the pool in the early part
of the walk

Stiles 9

Pubs See below

Claverley - Beobridge Grange - Rookery - Lower Common - Sytch House Green - Farmcote - War Memorial - Claverley

Claverley is a rare example of a village that has been developed yet has not lost its essential character. The village still supports three pubs! Away from Claverley, there is a maze of lanes with as many as five routes leading off at some junctions. This is a gentle walk in an area still dominated by arable farming

1 Leave the village via High Street. At corner past last house, cross stile on R & go diagonally L across field to gap in hedge. Continue on same course to gate at bottom of next field. Cross lane & stile opposite. Follow fp beside stream & cross stile. Skirt pool on RHS, go through gate & veer R towards barn. Follow RoW across field to stile in near LH corner ahead. Cross into next field & hug hedge on LHS. At hedge end, continue ahead across field to far side & join field track, with hedge on RHS, to lane at Beobridge Grange.

2 Pass through farmyard & bear L up short concrete track. At end, veer R into field & then hug hedge along LHS of field as route bends (ignore opening on LHS) to LH corner. Go through gap into next field & continue on same course towards trees ahead. Meet a grass track & waymarker - follow track ahead to lane. Turn R & walk along lane for 400m to top of rise. Turn L at gate onto bway. Proceed ahead & cross tarmac drive & on to far LH corner. Pass through gate

behind tree. Continue ahead along edge of wood to gate & into field - stay on RHS along track. At track meeting point, turn R & proceed straight ahead to gate, followed by two fields to road. Titterstone Clee is on the far horizon.

3 Turn R & at Lower Common, turn R again. Bear L at fork & proceed to next fork. Turn L (ignore fp beside cottage) & follow lane for 150m. Turn R up unsigned bway. Bear R onto lane & pass Farmcote Farm & two period properties on RHS to junction. Bear R at Corner Cottage & follow lane towards Farmcote Hall.

4 Turn L up drive before Hall T turn R through field & pass between sheds into next field. Go ahead to gate & on to 2 fence barriers & across large field towards woods. Exit field at gate, turn L along lane for 50m & then at 'Lawn Turns', turn R along bway (on RHS of metal gates) to end. At War Memorial, veer R along metalled drive to end. Turn L & follow road back to village.

Don't want to walk alone?

If you are uncertain about finding your own way, even with our route instructions, don't feel confident about going out on your own, or just want some company, you are welcome to join us. An experienced leader leads each walk.

Walks vary in length and difficulty and take place each week on Saturdays, Sunday and Wednesday.

Check on the website for latest information

www.shfrc.org.uk

Saltwells**Walk 13****West Midlands**

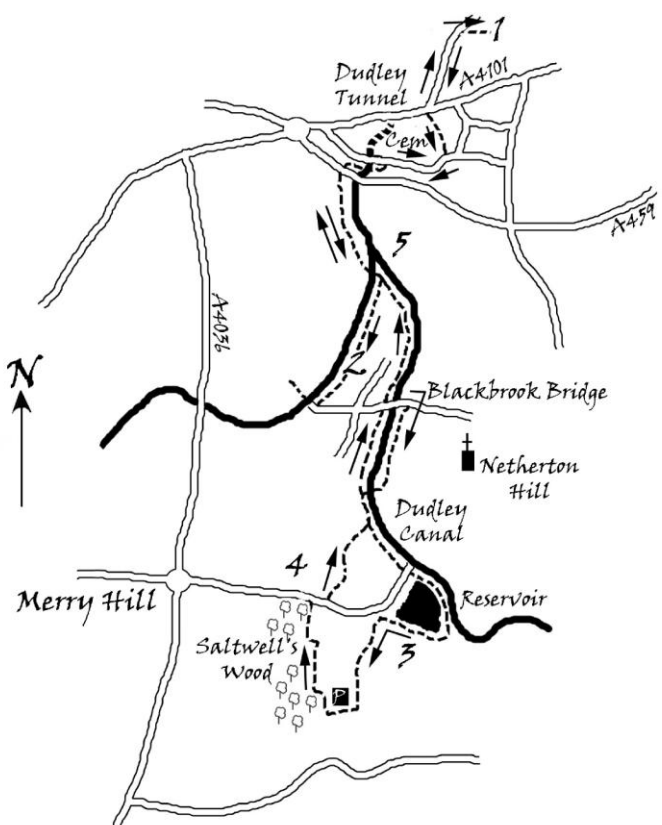
The **Dudley Borough Trail** is held annually in May. There are four walks of varying distances. The longest - a marathon in the true sense of the word - follows much of the borough's boundary. The Saltwells walk is the shortest of the four and arguably, the most attractive.

The 9.5km walk makes its way along the towpath of the **Dudley Canal**. As you join (or leave) the towpath, take a few moments to marvel at the mouth of the **Dudley Tunnel**. Note that there is no towpath - it was omitted in order to save cost. This meant that horses had to be led over the hill, while the boats had to be 'legged' through the tunnel. The tunnel, of nearly two miles length, took seven years to construct and was completed in 1792.

On **Netherton Hill**, gorse covers a large expanse that, until the 1960s, was an area of open cast coal mining. Almost two hundred years earlier, Lady Dudley planted **Saltwells Wood** in the 18th century to hide the scars of coal mining.

A saline spring at **Saltwells** had been reported as long ago as the 17th century. In 1831, a certain entrepreneurial proprietor, named Holloway, advertised that at Lady Wood Spa (presumably that name sounded better than Saltwells) he had hot and cold baths always at the ready and rooms "neatly fitted up for the accommodation of invalids". Grand claims to cure "cutaneous eruptions without medical assistance" did not save the project from failure.

The claypits at **Saltwells** supplied raw material for ceramic manufacturer, Royal Doulton. The nature reserve takes its name from 17th Century brine wells, developed in Victorian times and closed after WW2.

2½ / 3 hours	Easy	9.5 kms (6 miles)	By the Way
			<p>Start Point Dudley Leisure Centre Dock Lane off Wellington Road SO 936 899</p> <p>How Far Away? 8 kms from Stourbridge</p> <p>Maps O.S. Explorer 219 Landranger 139</p> <p>Parking At Leisure Centre</p> <p>Facilities At Leisure Centre and Saltwells Inn (if open)</p> <p>Terrain Towpaths & woodland ways plus tarmac at start</p> <p>Hazards Dual carriageway, steps, towpath & quarries - not much else!</p> <p>Stiles 3</p> <p>Pubs Saltwells Inn SO 934 869</p>

West Midlands	Walk 13	Saltwells
2½ / 3 hours	Easy	9.5 kms

Dudley - Dudley Canal - Blowers Green Pump House - Netherton Reservoir - Saltwells Nature Reserve - Dudley Canal - Dudley

An urban walk along towpaths and through a Nature Reserve. Not so long ago, the area was chock-full with industry - clay, coal and iron. Now this part of the Black Country is reinventing itself as a leisure facility. This walk forms part of the annual Dudley Borough Trail.

1 Walk down Dock Lane & turn L into Wellington Road. At traffic lights, cross Stourbridge Road. Enter the cemetery by the small gate to the L of the lodge. Walk down the drive & exit R onto Clee Road. After 250m, cross the dual carriageway with care & follow the cycle path until steps on LHS. Descend to canal towpath & walk towards viaduct ahead. Cross first bridge & follow new towpath under viaduct. Proceed past Blowers Green Pump House and under bridge. Continue crossing canal via fb to LH towpath.

2 Immediately before Peartree Lane Bridge, turn sharp L off towpath, down road & continue up Blackbrook Rd. After steep bridge, turn R through gate and follow way for about 250m. Cross stile on R over metal bridge & turn sharp R & under Cattle Bridge. Cross cast iron bridge & follow towpath under High Bridge & then pass under a pipe across canal. Continue past reservoir on RHS, until corrugated fence. Leave towpath & go through Sailing Club car park towards exit.

3 Cross stile on L, immediately before exit & house - follow fp into Saltwells Nature Reserve. (Heed warning signs about dangerous cliffs on RHS). At fp junction, turn R (keeping wooden fence on RHS) & R again (fence still on RHS). In 30m, take LH

fork & bear L to gate. Turn R & go through car park (Saltwells Inn on LHS). Keep straight ahead - along dismantled railway path. At 5-way junction, bear R & walk 350m - at fork go R. Continue on path until stile at end & turn R onto road.

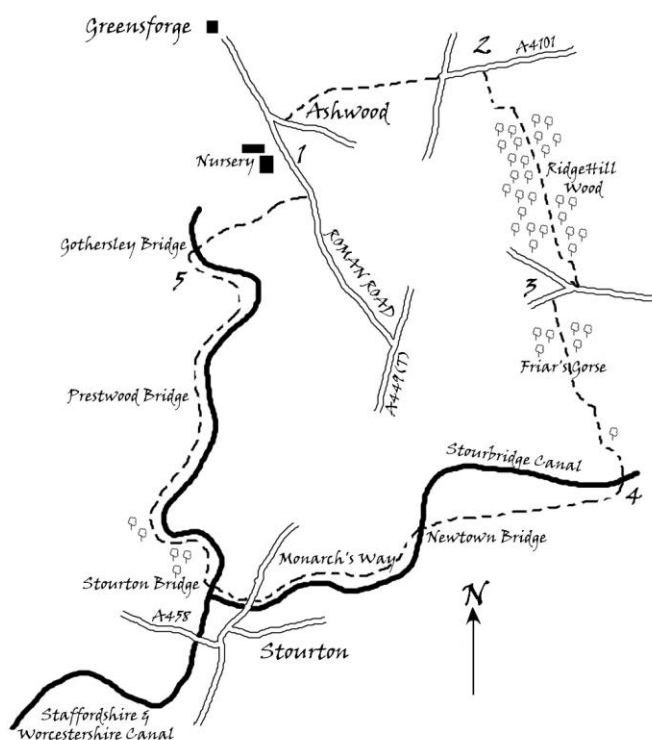
4 Turn L into Farm Road & L again into Lodge Crescent. Opposite No: 26, take rough path on L. Follow path uphill to R & meet metal & cast iron bridges. Do not cross bridge. Turn L onto towpath & follow canal. Continue under Blackbrook Bridge. Immediately before next bridge, scramble up bank on LHS to road. Go R & cross main road. Turn L & go over bridge.

5 Turn R to rejoin towpath on LHS of canal, with Pump House on RHS. Pass locks & cottage. Go under viaduct. Cross small bridge & turn R along towpath leading to Dudley Tunnel. Turn L before tunnel & climb steps - turn R at top. Cross dual carriageway at pelican crossing. Turn R into Clee Road & L at end through cemetery. Cross Stourbridge Road with care & walk up Wellington Road. Cross and turn R into Dock Lane. Return to Leisure Centre.

Dudley Borough Trail

SHFRC is proud to have been associated with the DBT since its inception in 1980. The DBT is held in May each year and offers a choice of four walks: 6, 12, 18 and 26 miles in length. A shorter **Action Heart** Amble is also available. All walks start at Dudley Leisure Centre, off Wellington Road.

Further details may be obtained from any library within the borough or check the Stourbridge News.



3 hours

Easy

10 kms / 6¼ miles

By the Way

There are canal walks and there are canal walks! Both sections of towpath walking on this route is delightful and interesting. However, the early part of the walk follows the ridge along **Ridge Hill Wood** - a pleasant stroll at any time of the year. After the road crossing, more woodland paths follow until the path joins the **Stourbridge Canal**, the course of which is loosely followed and passes under the A449. Here, note the slit in the tiny iron footbridge that allowed the horse to pass without being unhitched from the towed vessel.

At Stourton Junction, the walk heads north along the "**Staffs & Wuss Canal**" - a 46 mile stretch - that links the Trent & Mersey Canal and the River Severn. The waterway that runs in sympathy with the "S&W" is **Smestow Brook**, which rises near Wolverhampton. This brook is the River Stour's main tributary. The canal wends its way between leafy glades and beneath sandstone outcrops. At a sharp left turn before the aqueduct, quiet walkers may be rewarded with the glimpse of a heron.

Continued on page 58

Start Point	Ashwood Nurseries SO 864 879
How Far Away?	5 kms from Stourbridge
Maps O.S.	Explorer - Landranger 219 139
Parking	Free - park away from nursery entrance
Facilities	Excellent tea-room at nursery. None on route
Terrain	Easy paths, mostly flat throughout
Hazards	Crossing the A456 & usual hazards associated with towpath walking
Stiles	3
Pubs	None on route

**Ashwood - Ridgehill Wood - Lawns Wood - Friar's Gorse
Stourbridge Canal - Prestwood - Gothersley - Ashwood**

A border walk, but never boring. This is a lazy, meandering walk that digresses between counties. Even the canals wander as if seeking to find the easiest - though not necessarily the shortest - course. There is much to enjoy. However, the 'quiet noise' of hurrying traffic reminds us that we are only a hop, skip and jump away from the Black Country.

1 Continue down the Roman Road and turn R up Doctors Lane. Bear L by houses onto bway that leads past farm & on to busy A456. Cross road with care & proceed along A4101 for 250m.

2 Turn R up rough track 'Ridgehill Cottage'. At turn in track, go ahead & turn L on entering Ridgehill Wood. Immediately opposite 1st house, turn R & take route between 2nd & 3rd of three beech trees. Follow way to top & then go L. Switch onto auto-pilot & go straight along ridge - look out for views to right & squirrels everywhere. There are no waymarkers, but the route is quite obvious. Evergreens start to mingle with deciduous trees on LHS. When the wood begins to peter out, veer L & join track as it continues ahead, then drops away sharply L to fp behind houses. Cross stile & turn R at road. Keep L at fork & 100m later, turn L over hinged stile into field.

3 Hug RH hedge & bear R onto well-trodden fp that winds between field & woodland. Ignore turning on RHS. You are now in Friar's Gorse. At local 'Spaghetti Junction', follow main path L towards line of houses high above on LHS. Soon after intrusion of fence, bear R down steep slope. At X-paths, go ahead & across fb over River Stour & up to canal towpath. Cross bridge & immediately bear R through barrier into field. Bear L away from canal to follow

'sheeptrail'. Aim for tall, white marker in distance ½way between canal & wood. Cross stile & pass paddocks followed by pet crematorium. Continue straight ahead, passing narrowboat building yard to Newtown Bridge.

4 Cross bridge & go R along towpath of Stourbridge Canal (joining Monarch's Way). At second lock, cross canal & pass under road bridge. Pass Stourton Bottom Lock, cross bridge #33 & follow towpath R towards Wolverhampton. You are now on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, with the River Stour on LHS. There is much to see along the way. As the canal turns L, keep eyes open for herons that frequent the pool opposite. An aqueduct carries the canal over the river. Shortly afterwards, lookout for the Devil's Den in the sandstone. Pass under Prestwood Bridge #34 followed by the remains of Gothersley Roundhouse.

5 Leave towpath at Gothersley Bridge #35 & turn R up narrow lane to road. Turn L & follow road to Ashwood & carpark. (N.B. There is no access to Ashwood Nursery over Flatheridge Bridge).

Blakedown & Churchill**Walk 15****Worcestershire**

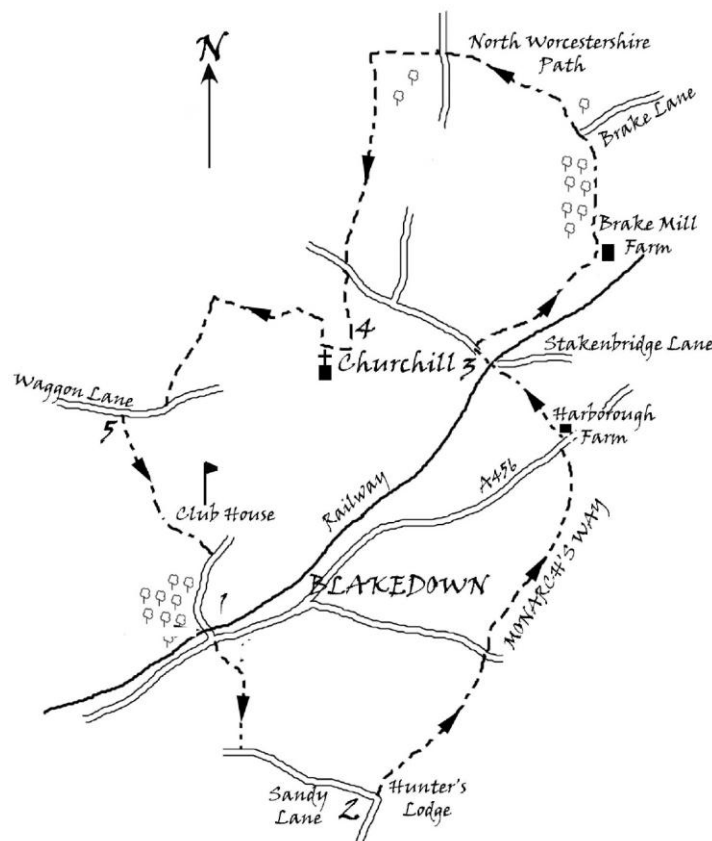
Blakedown and Churchill make up the eponymous parish, which received mention in the Domesday Book. Of the two villages, Churchill has remained a quiet backwater, whereas Blakedown has been subjected to heavy traffic on the busy A456.

Blakedown was situated on the saltway, which since Roman times brought links between Droitwich and the outside world.

The area around Blakedown contains a labyrinth of pools and streams whose waters run off the nearby Clent Hills. In years gone by, the flow was dammed to provide power for the forges and mills that flourished in the production of spades and shovels in particular.

The notice board proudly proclaims the church as that of St James the Great - Churchill-in-Halfshire, the latter being one of the ancient Hundreds into which the county was divided for judicial purposes.

A 'Beating the Bounds' walk - an annual procession around the ecclesiastical border takes place in May. Anybody and everybody is welcome to participate.

3½ hours**Easy****10 kms****By the Way**

Start Point Anywhere in Blakedown village on A456

How Far Away? 8 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer - Landranger
219 139

Parking Behind Post Office or Pub car parks with prior permission

Facilities Limited availability in Blakedown; none on route

Terrain Mostly undulating
bridleways & quiet lanes

Hazards Crossing the A456

Stiles 9

Pubs The Old House at Home
The Swan - both at
Blakedown

Blakedown - Sandy Lane - Stakenbridge - Palmer's Hill - Churchill - Blakedown

A delightful walk that provides some splendid views - it's hard to imagine that the hustle and bustle of Birmingham, the Black Country and Kidderminster is only a hop, skip and a jump away.

1 Walk down the A456 & turn L opposite Churchill Lane. Bear R between two houses & at the top, turn L along road. Ignore bway on LHS & continue past fp signs for 600m to corner by 'Hunters Lodge'.

2 Turn L onto Monarch's Way & walk past pools & paddocks to road. Cross Belbroughton Road & maintain course with wood on RHS. Ignore fp crossing. At end, leave field & follow route beside house & on lane to road. Cross A456 with care & take bway before Harborough Farm. At end of grassy way, emerge on road & go under railway bridge (take care awkward bend for traffic & restricted pavement for walkers).

3 Turn R over stile between barn conversion and pool. Walk with series of pools on RHS to Brake Mill Farm. Leave Monarch's Way & go L up bway on LHS of house. At top, ignore RH turn & press on ahead (now on North Worcestershire Path). After 50m, turn L. At lane, cross & climb bway ahead. (This section can be very muddy in wet weather, but improvements are in hand). At top, turn L (leaving NWP) & walk along field ridge with superb views on both sides. Follow

route as it leads between two fences & descend to road. Cross & go through gate opposite. Go over four stiles to be greeted with delightful view of church and hill. (At gate, by last stile, go R along track to road & church, if desired).

4 Resume walk at gate. Cross stile on LH of gate & follow route uphill (not incoming route to other stile). Cross & turn R, hugging RH fence. At crest of hill, bear L to waymarker & follow fence to corner. Proceed over stile down old cobbled cart track - ignore 1st turning at meeting of three fields. Turn L at next junction. Walk straight for 500m along field paths. At road, turn R.

5 After 240m, turn L between concrete posts down bway beside golf course. Continue for 650m until bway emerges on lane beside golf club entrance. Bear R & follow road back to A456. Turn L & retrace your steps to the starting point.

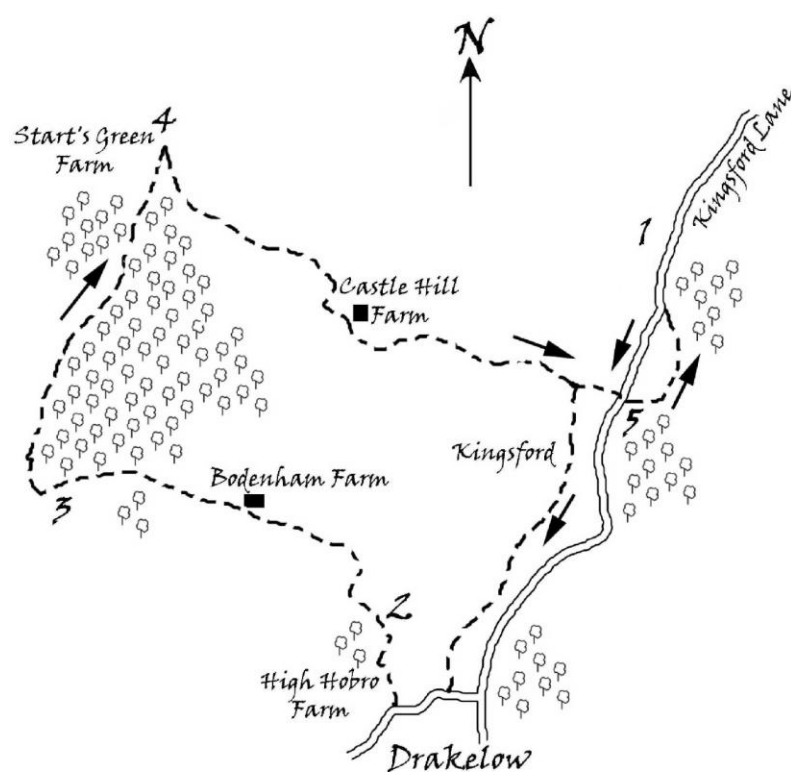
The walk embraces short sections of two long distance paths. The North Worcestershire Path (identified by the pinecone symbol) and as described in 2-3, and part of the Monarch's Way that meanders for almost 1,000 kms between Worcester and Shoreham, Sussex.

Bodenham**Walk 16****Worcestershire**

Many people visit and enjoy **Kingsford Country Park** without realising that they have been in it. This area of north-west Worcestershire covers some 200 acres and lies south of Kinver Edge, which is located in Staffordshire. For extra confusion, many of the walks weave in and out of Shropshire. The land is mainly given over to conifer plantations but birch is also much in evidence. The area takes its name - Kingsford - from the fact that King John once had a hunting lodge in the vicinity of Castle Hill.

The southern section of the walk passes close to **Drakelow**. This is a huge underground network of tunnels that was hewn out of the sandstone to provide a safe place to maintain production of auto parts during World War II. In later years, it was converted to become a bunker form which regional government could function in the aftermath of a nuclear attack. The tunnel is now believed to have been sold to a private buyer. It is open to the public on certain days of the year.

The walk passes close to the **Bodenham Arboretum**. Tree trails, a magnificent laburnum tunnel, wild life, waterfowl and a Millennium Gazebo are all part of the Bodenham experience. The Arboretum and Earth Centre offer several beautiful strolls set around lakes, pool shaded dells and glades with over 2,600 varieties of ornamental rare shrubs, trees and flowers.

3½ / 4 hours**Easy****10 kms / 6½ miles****By the Way**

Start Point	Kingsford Country Park. Kingsford Lane SO 821 823		
How Far Away?	13 kms from Stourbridge		
Maps	O.S.	Explorer	218
		Landranger	138
Parking	Free at Kingsford Country Park		
Facilities	Toilets at Car Park No other facilities here or on route		
Terrain	Bridleways, paths & quiet lanes throughout, though some parts can be muddy after wet weather		
azards	One steep descent down flight of steps		
Stiles	11		
Pubs	None		

Continued from opposite page

5 Cross the road and bear L up a steep path through the pines. At a fp crossing - turn L down a winding fp to two trees with red rings. Bear L onto a wider fp. Ignore rising paths on RHS. The way leads to a timber barrier, pass through & bear L. At the next fork go L to a pole barrier & a clearing. Go diagonally L to the car park

Worcestershire	Walk 16	Bodenham
3½ / 4 hours	Easy	10 kms

Kingsford Lane - High Hobro Farm - Bodenham Farm - Arley Wood - Starts Green Farm - Castle Hill Farm - Kingsford

This walk provides extensive views over rolling countryside. Bodenham Farm has been transformed into a splendid arboretum that contains more than 2,000 species of shrubs and trees.

1 Walk down Kingsford Lane & turn R up lane before post-box. By house on RHS, cross stile opposite, & go to next stile. Keep straight along route of over varying surfaces. When confronted by barn, veer L then R past Lower Kingsford Farm. Pass holiday park on LHS. At end, turn R along lane for 200m until signpost 'Little Hobro & Bodenham' - turn R. Follow lane & bear R at sign onto rough track. Bear L at junction.

2 Where track goes left to gate, continue ahead on fp ahead. Follow fp to end & turn R. Eventually cross a stream followed by a stile into a steep field - ignore metal gate & hug fence on LHS. Enjoy a free glimpse of Bodenham Arboretum as you skirt field & buildings. After barn, go through kissing gate & bear R along track with barns on RHS. At fork before house, turn R over grid & descend hill to pass pond. Turn R to trees above & head for far RHS of the ridge. Pause to admire the panoramic view. Bear R down slope to stile below on opposite side. Cross the stile, & follow fp down through trees to clearing & awkward steps. Take care! **Steps are slippery when wet & treacherous when overgrown.** At the bottom, cross the stream & gain the field beyond. Hug the RH edge of this large field past a series of R of W confirmations (there are at least 9 partly hidden) until stile on RHS. Cross stile & turn L.

3 Hug edge of wood, until a stile leads onto a farm track. Turn R until hairpin bend. Then go ahead through trees on a gradually descending bway past several old quarries. Beware of barbed wire guarding against drop. Continue to the

bottom of the valley where the bway turns sharply R & a stream enters from the LHS. **Caution! Read to end of paragraph before continuing!** Look up & note direction of overhead power lines. Step across stream & go up the steep slope ahead. The path here is very poorly defined so the overhead power lines give you the direction to follow. At the top of the rise follow power lines (impenetrable scrub) until a forestry road is met. Alternatively, stay on bway until it meets the forestry road. Turn L & follow road as it passes under the power lines. Continue on track for 800m - ignoring LH turn - & pass a wooden barrier after Wyre Forest 'Shatterford Wood' sign.

4 300m further on, turn sharp R along a bway. Parts can be very muddy, until the ground opens out on both sides. There are extensive views as far as Bredon Hill & The Malverns on the RHS. The bway follows an undulating ridge to Castle Hill. At a clump of trees, keep to the left following a 'path' sign past a stagnant pond on to a bridle gate & stile. Bear R across field to a similar gate, below ruined Castle Farm buildings on RHS. Go down track past double gates. Bear L, in front of a cottage. Ignore turn on LHS. Follow the track & past a pool then farm buildings on LHS & a barn conversion complex on the RHS. Soon the track becomes a road dropping down hill & passes the stile crossed earlier & meets a road T-junction.

Continued at bottom of opposite page

Although the walk is centred on Great Witley, much of the route passes through the area of **Abberley**, which gives its name to the village, a hill, a hall - now a school - and a clock tower. Abberley village possesses two churches - one a ruins - and a pub. The chancel of St Michael is all that remains of a Norman church built on a Saxon site. It is still in use for christenings having been lovingly restored. The interior is well worth viewing. It was here that during the restoration of the walls that the famous set of 15th century silver spoons was found - they are now preserved in the British Museum. The village boasts the ghost of the 'White Lady' who wrings her hands over what is said to be a child's coffin lid let into the floorboards of the nearby rectory.

John Joseph Jones, whose family fortunes were derived from the Manchester cotton industry, erected the familiar landmark of Abberley **Clock Tower** in 1883. He had it built as a memorial to his father; others disagree and say that its purpose was to serve as a time-keeper for his farm workers. The tower, known locally as Jones's Folly, stands at 49 metres and cost £12,000 to build - a considerable amount in Victorian times. The tower contains four floors - a sewing room, a cloakroom, the belfry and a louvred lantern. Not everyone is pleased by the aspect. 'It is a landmark where no landmark is needed, and accords ill with the rural scene' wrote Arthur Mee in *King's England*, Worcestershire volume. Others see the structure as an eye-catcher designed to cock a snook at the grandeur of their noble neighbours at Witley Court.

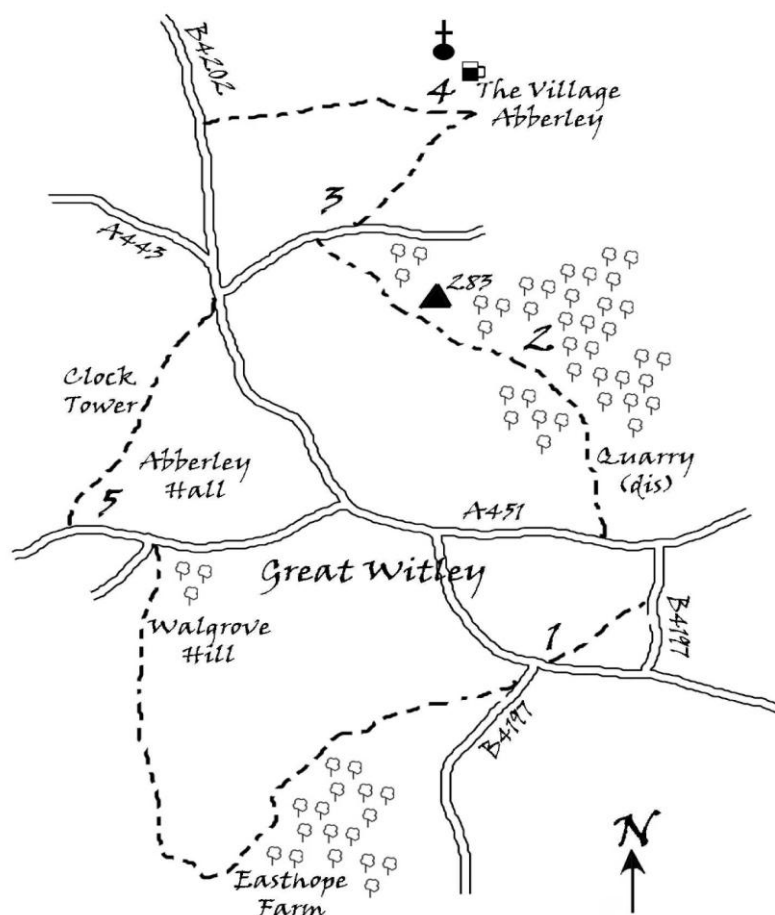
Further details are contained on page 58

3½ / 4 hours

Challenging

10 kms

By the Way



Start Point Great Witley Village Hall
Off A443 Opposite B4197
turn to Martley
SO757 657

How Far Away? 25 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer 204
Landranger 138

Parking Free

Facilities Farm shop & pub on route

Terrain Some strenuous climbs and descents - hill & field paths

Hazards Very slippery descent down to Winniats Way before Abberley. Take extra care when wet

Stiles 15

Pubs The Manor Arms

Worcestershire	Walk 17	Great Witley
3½ / 4 hours	Challenging	10 kms

Great Witley - Abberley Hill - Abberley Village - Clock Tower - Walsgrove Hill - Easthope Farm - Great Witley

A walk to challenge the notion that the Pear County only has the Clent Hills and the Malverns to get the heart pumping! Inexperienced walkers are warned that there are two steep climbs on this walk.

1 At the exit of the carpark, turn L & immediately L again, taking the fp that goes diagonally across the field. Emerge on to a road & go L to the A451 T-junction. Turn L & after 80m, take the b'way R before the farm shop. Proceed ahead, going uphill for about 300m to arrive at a fork. Bear R (following waymarks) & walk steeply up Abberley Hill (ignoring fp to the R). At an unmarked fp crossing, turn L, still going slightly uphill, to meet a track with Worcestershire Way (WW) waymark. Turn L & follow waymarkers along the ridge. *Enjoy the views (especially in winter).*

2 The route meanders through trees & eventually, the fp hugs a metal fence on LHS. *Along here are a number of suitable locations for a refreshment stop after the arduous climb. Views of Abberley Hall School, the Clock Tower and the Teme Valley may be enjoyed.* After a viewpoint on LHS, beware of some iron couplings (potential trip hazards) that are relics of World War II. Soon after, pass a Triangulation Point. Keep on the WW, descending gently to a stile onto a lane (known as Winniatts Way).

3 Turn R along lane for 150m; take fp L down steep gradient - can be slippery at anytime - (there are some steps to start). Cross stile & down the side of a field (note pool on L) & past a house. Climb 3 stiles - passing through paddock - & straight across next field to stile hidden in bottom LH corner. Turn R along concrete drive to Abberley village. *Take time to visit the Norman church*

built on Saxon foundations. Note the many coats of arms on the Manor Arms opposite.

4 Follow the road L (uphill) - ignore 'Coffin Path' on R to the new Abberley Church, but go L through k/gate. Follow fp along field edge & later metal railings on the RHS to houses ahead. At the road at New Abberley, turn L & after 500m, go L on the A443. Very soon afterwards, turn R up b'way opposite Winniatts Lane. This track passes beneath the Clock Tower. Go straight at the junction by the school for 400m to ornamental gates & the B4203 road. Turn L & after 130m, turn R up a lane.

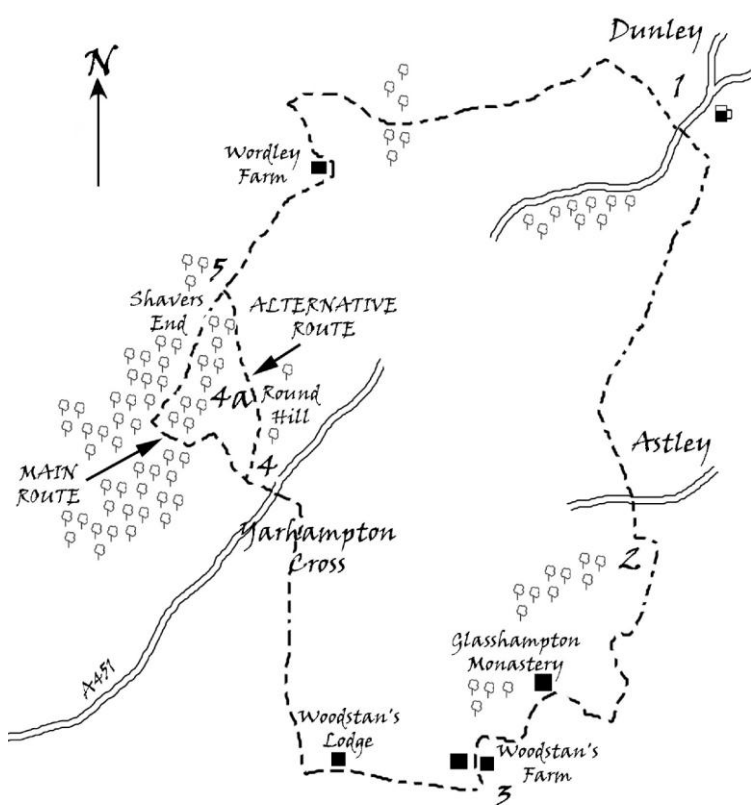
5 Ignore first stile, but after 80m go L onto the WW & follow fp diagonally steeply up Walsgrove Hill. Cross stile & follow ridge path, cross 2 more stiles until the fp reaches a stile in the field hedge on LHS. Cross this stile & walk along edge of field for 35m. Do not go R over next stile! Instead, turn L & hug hedge on RHS down to ramshackle Easthope Farm. Go through the farmyard (this is the Right of Way) to meet lane. Go L along lane for 700m to a t-junction. Turn L &, at fp sign, go R over stile & hug fence on RHS. Cross next stile (heading towards distant house). At end of field, cross a double stile (second one rickety) & then across the field to stile (with pond beyond). Turn L & pass in front of house. At the road, go L & soon arrive at the car park.

Astley**Walk 18****Worcestershire**

The village of **Astley** has been connected with the parish for over 90 years and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The name is Saxon based, formerly Æstleah, Eslei and East-Ley. The ley part indicated a woodland clearing or a filed or meadow. Astley is not a typical village. Large in area, but having no centre, it is a collection of scattered hamlets.

The first evidence of the church is about 1102 with the largest part of the construction being completed in 1289. There is evidence of a Norman well along a footpath nearby the church. It is marked Priors Well on the map. Inside the church are to be found painted tombs of members of the 16th century Blount family - Walter and Robert and their respective wives, Isabel and Anne, all surrounded by their children.

Father William founded the Franciscan monastery - the order of the Divine Compassion - at **Glasshampton** in 1920. It was built on the site a handsome manor house that was burnt down by a careless worker in 1810. This ancient site is also mentioned in the Domesday Book.

3½ / 4 hours**Moderate****11 Kms / 6¾ miles****By the Way**

Start Point The Dog, Dunley
789 691
On the A451

How Far Away? 24 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer Landranger
204 138

Parking Bottom car park at pub,
with prior permission

Facilities Farm shop at
Yarhampton

Terrain Fields, woodland paths,
quiet lanes & bridleways

Hazards A451, steep paths &
do not cross fences near
quarry area

Stiles 20

Pubs The Dog

Alternative Route (omitting section 4 opposite) **This shortens the route by about 2 kms**

4a Veer L to sign & stile hidden in far hedge (RHS of power line). Turn L then R to metal gate. Take route beside gate with wire fence on your RHS & ahead through wood gate. At faded marker signs, continue straight ahead, hugging fence on RHS to far RH corner of field. The fp joins the Worcestershire Way & proceeds straight ahead with the steep sided Shavers End on your LHS. Carry on until the route meets the lane (beside the quarry gates).

5 Return to route directions on opposite page

**Dunley - Astley Church - Glasshampton - Woolstan's Lodge -
Yarhampton - Abberley Hill - Shavers End - Wordley - Dunley**

Certain sections of this fine walk are demanding - children must be properly supervised and dogs kept on a lead in sections 4 onwards. **An alternative route, which omits the steep climb and descent in section 4, is described at the bottom of the opposite page. The route is rejoined at section 5.**

1 Walk past pub along A451 and turn L up Dark Lane. Go R at 'Hillcrest Sunrise' & continue ahead up field to stile in far LH corner. Cross two stiles. Head for distant tree in front of church & cross field. A waymarker will appear in the hollow. Adjust direction for tree & continue ahead. At second stile, bear L to row of houses - cross lane & take fp opposite, on RHS of end house, to wood fence & stile. Follow fp to emerge in garden of Astley Church.

2 Exit down steps & turn L past 'Pinners' to stile & go ahead, but do not cross second stile. Instead, turn R along bway (replace locking collar on gate) & walk down to fp T-junction. Turn L & follow fp across ivy-clad bridge over brook & climb slope ahead through trees to emerge in field. Turn L & hug fence on LHS, then go across field to fence opposite. Turn R & again walk with fence on LHS to stile. Cross & turn R along fp to vehicle track. Turn R & follow track past monastery - track becomes grassy way. Proceed to diagonally opposite LH corner. Continue in same direction, cross lane & go down fp, hugging fence as it turns R. 25m after turn, bear L to pass tree on your LHS & head towards farm. At end, turn L & follow farm fence & cross ladder stile by barn. Bear L & then turn L down track away from Woolstan's Farm.

3 Turn R & walk along lane for 600m to pass Woolstan's Lodge on RHS. *Look out for Abberley Tower on the right horizon.* Carry on for another 200m & then turn R over stile. Go straight up field, over rise, to redundant stile. Walk down field to metal gate & stile at bottom (*beware beehives on RHS*) & uphill keeping to RHS of barns. Go ahead over two stiles, hug hedge followed by open area on RHS & proceed to track & LH bend. Stop. Follow waymarker on RHS along fp to emerge on lane. Turn L & proceed to main road. **Cross**

A451 with care & immediately enter field opposite Farm Shop.

4 Veer L to sign & stile hidden in far hedge (RHS of power line). Turn L then R to metal gate. Take route beside gate with wire fence on your RHS & ahead through wood gate. Bear L to projecting corner & then veer R to metal gate in LH fence & join the Worcestershire Way (WW). **This route is very steep.** Follow route uphill to WW sign - do not follow left, but continue ahead up hill with wire fence & quarry on your RHS. At top, again ignore direction sign to left but go straight & follow fp R to skirt quarry. Continue along ridge until waymarker directs you L & down hill. **Beware, as descent is steep & can be very slippery.** Follow signed route down that ends with a **flight of very steep steps** to emerge onto a lane. Turn R.

5 Take fp L opposite quarry gates & walk across 2 fields towards farm. Follow track around Wordley Farm - be prepared for five noisy dogs - instead of taking stile, go R through gate into field to gate opposite. Pass across dam, then across field. At fence opposite, go L along fence to find stile. Cross & make a difficult descent to fb over brook. Follow markers (suspended plastic strips) up opposite bank. At proper waymarker, turn R down fp & cross another fb & turn R to go uphill. Keep R at gate & hug fence round property to reach & cross another fb. Climb bank to stile. Cross to next stile in LH corner (*the pub can be seen from here!*), then another field to gate & ahead to join farm track. After bungalows, turn R & cross field, veering slightly L to gate & then continue ahead to A451. Turn L & return to parked vehicles.

Harvington

Walk 19

Worcestershire

Harvington Hall is a moated, medieval and Elizabethan manor house. Humphrey Pakington built the house in the 1580s. In 1696, the Hall passed by marriage to the Throckmortons of Coughton Court, who owned it until 1923. Many of the rooms retain their original Elizabethan wall-paintings.

The Hall contains the finest series of priest holes or hiding places anywhere in the country. These were included in the original build at a time when it was high treason for a Catholic priest just to be in England. There are hiding holes all over the house that take the form of secret attics, trapdoors, moving panels and of course secret passages. One of the holes is gained by lifting false stairs, with an aperture for food to be passed up for the banqueting hall.

During the 19th century the Hall was stripped of furniture and panelling and the shell was left almost derelict. However, in 1923 it was bought for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, which restored it and now opens it to the public. The Hall is available for private hire for wedding receptions, family or business occasions.

The memorial in the adjacent churchyard commemorates the life of the resident priest, Blessed John Wall, who in 1679 became one of the last two martyrs of the Roman faith in England.

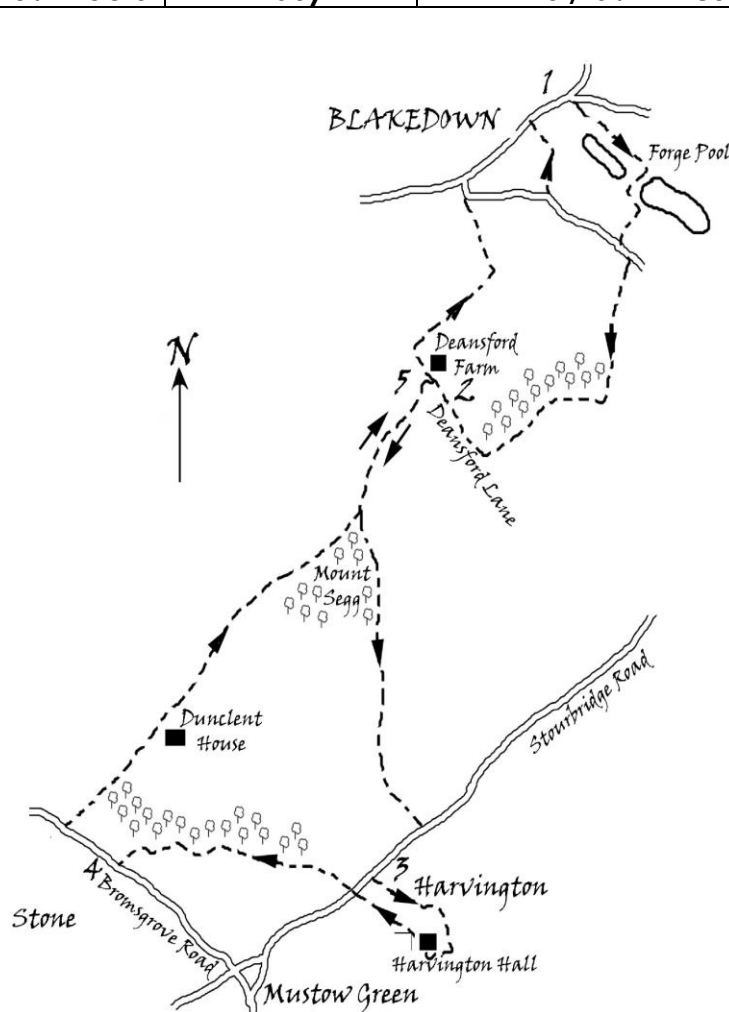
Garden lovers will enjoy a visit to **Stone House Cottage Gardens** - these delightful walled gardens contain over 3000 plants, climbers and herbaceous plants.

3½ hours

Easy

11 kms / 6¾ miles

By the Way



Start Point

Blakedown Village
A456 Worcester Road
Blakedown

Grid Ref.

SO 879 784

How Far Away? 8 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S.

Explorer 219
Landranger 139

Parking

Behind Post Office & shops (opposite Old House at Home) At pubs (with prior permission)

Facilities

At Blakedown and to a lesser extent at Harvington

Terrain

Mostly field and woodland paths plus some quiet lane walking.

Hazards

Crossing the A450

Stiles

5 (3 on shorter walk)

Pubs

The Old House at Home
The Swan - at start
The Dog at Harvington

Worcestershire	Walk 19	Harvington
3½ hours	Easy	11 kms

Blakedown - Mount Segg - Harvington - Stone - Dunclet - Deansford - Blakedown

Starting from Blakedown, this walk includes easy field and woodland paths, a choice of pubs at the start (and finish) plus another halfway round for good measure! Harvington Hall is well worth a separate visit - without muddy walking boots!

The walk can be shortened to a distance of 4 kms (Omit paragraphs 2,3 & 4)

1 Go down Forge Lane (LHS of Old House at Home PH, Blakedown) to end & go L through Millennium Green. Follow fp on RHS through gap to end. Turn R & cross dam with Ladies Pool on your LHS. Bear L at fp fork & proceed up slope. Continue along fp to Sandy Lane. Turn L & after 100m, take fp to R & follow undulating route for 500m. At track, cross stile & walk ahead to woods. Cross fb & stream, exit wood & turn R. Follow fp with wood on RHS to Deansford Lane. Turn R & walk up lane.
If walking shorter route, go to para 5 now.

2 Turn L on bway opposite Deansford Farm. Follow track L then R & across bridge over stream. Go ahead with wood on RHS up sandy bway. Bear L off main bway & follow LH path up steep slope. Bear R at top, passing 'Private' gate & carry on to a hunting gate in LH corner. Hug RH edge of field. At next field, cross diagonally to far LH corner, passing an oasis of trees on your RHS. Join cinder track & proceed to reach A450 road. Turn R & walk to The Dog PH.

3 Cross main road with care & go up lane to Harvington Hall. Go round moat to join fp on opposite side & pass lake on RHS.
Return to A450 & cross with care. Take fp opposite on LHS of The Dog. Go along fp, veering slightly left, before lonely tree, to

go down into dip. Cross track & fb across brook. Climb to top of rise & turn R. Keep to upper path. At metal gate, cross barrier & skirt RH edge of field with wooded valley below on RHS. Follow fp as it snakes along contour to eventually arrive beside brick tower folly at nursery. Continue on fp around field as it turns L to reach A448.

4 Turn R & walk past church, then downhill & turn R up 'No Through Road'. When lane veers off, continue straight along track & eventually through gate, at hairpin, along fp into woods. Continue straight until arriving at bridge crossed earlier. Retrace steps to lane by farm.

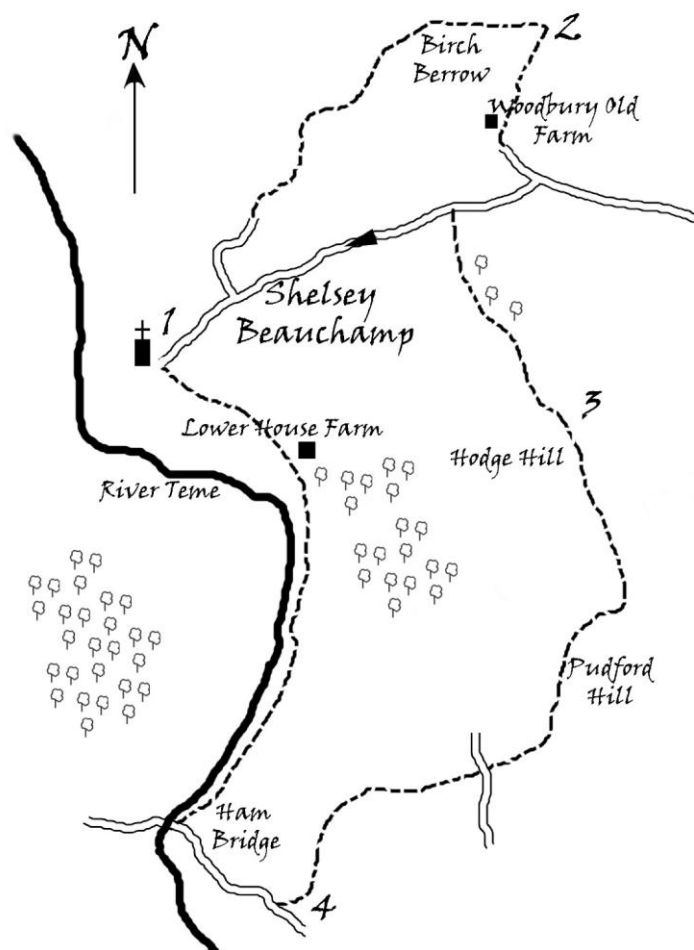
5 Walk up Deansford Lane (continuing from earlier route). After 250m, opposite entrance to wood, turn R onto obvious path & begin long traipse up slope. Turn L at top & follow fp to emerge beside large houses. Turn R & walk 450m along New Mill Lane, then (opposite gas sub station) turn L down bway between houses. Follow fp down to drive, turn L to reach A456, then go R to retrace steps to parked vehicles.

Shelsey Beauchamp**Walk 20****Worcestershire**

Shelsey Beauchamp is not to be confused with its two nearby counterparts - Shelsey Kings and across the Teme, Shelsey Walsh. The Parish of the three Shelseys has a population of fewer than 200 people. **The Church of All Saints** at the start of the walk originates from the 14th century, but was largely rebuilt in the mid-19th century. The views to be enjoyed from the ridge of **Rodge Hill** are magnificent.

On the last leg of the walk, the route passes a cider apple orchard contracted to supply Bulmer's of Hereford. Not so long ago, much of the Teme Valley was filled with hop fields and orchards, alas no longer.

The tranquil setting of the valley is shattered on certain days of the year when the air is filled with the noise of cars or motorcycles competing in sprint hill climbs on a steep private road. Established in 1905, by the Midlands Automobile Club, Shelsey Walsh provides the setting for the world's oldest motoring contest of its type.

3½ / 4 hours**Moderate****10 kms 6½ miles****By the Way****Start Point**

SO743 635
From Great Witley, follow
B4197 for 2.5kms - then
turn R along lane to
Shelsey Beauchamp.

How Far Away? 28 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S.

Explorer	150
Landranger	204

Parking

Park beside church
(services permitting)

Facilities

None on route

Terrain

Field & woodland paths,
some quiet lane walking

Hazards

Long, gradual climb at
start of walk; tricky
descent off Pudford Hill

Stiles

12

Pubs

None

Shelsey Beauchamp - Birch Berrow - Worcestershire Way - Rodge Hill - Pudford Hill - Ham Bridge - River Teme - Shelsey Beauchamp

A beautiful area close to where the shires of Hereford and Worcester meet. Steep wooded valleys and ridge walking provide some inspirational views. Choose a fine day - the route deserves it!

1 From the church, follow road towards Martley for 200m. Turn L up lane with 'No Through Road' sign. Follow route round bend as it narrows & climbs. At turning to Redhill, go ahead between fences & climb sunken b'way up to lane at hamlet of Birch Berrow. Turn R up lane for 120m & turn L up Worcestershire Way (WW) fp. Pass chalet to lane & onto rusty barn ahead. Cross stile & quit WW - bear R behind gate (note small wooden sign pointer). Cross stile & follow track R along contour. Pass over stile on RHS before farm & keep L to pass in front of wall of property to stile in corner. Cross & turn R until a set of gates & fp crossing.

2 Drop R over stile into field & valley. Hug fence on LHS & cross stile before gate & turn R. Clamber over horse jump & go down field to centre gap - pass through & bear R to stile by telegraph pole below house. Take care as stile & steps down to lane may be overgrown. Turn L & follow lane to junction. Turn R towards Shelsey Beauchamp. Ignore b'way on LHS. Pass quarry entrance & turn L to regain WW. Continue along a pleasant woodland fp until a vehicle track is met. Go L uphill to emerge in field. Turn R & go along Rodge Hill ridge. Savour some stunning views.

3 Continue until 3-way finger post sign is reached - follow WW South route, which continues ahead (not through gate) along ridge. At next track junction, leave WW & bear R down grassy b'way. Take care, as the slope's camber is awkward. At gate, turn R (beware of insects on gate posts) & descend to iron gate & lane. Take hidden fp opposite. Bear R & proceed across fields & stiles (swapping fence sides) & turn R after a stile in hedge on LHS into a field of nettles and thistles! Hug RH fence to end of field & go L with reservoir on your LHS to house & lane.

4 Turn R along lane past double bend to Ham Bridge. Do not cross bridge - turn R into field at start of bridge. Keep to LHS of field above river & continue as fp eventually enters wood. When route bends R uphill, turn L through gate along wooded fp. The river can be glimpsed below on LHS for a short while. Cross stream & enter field (church can be seen ahead to left). Hug hedge on RHS up slope. Cross gate below farm to swap hedge sides & continue to far end of field and leave by gate in LH corner to join track past cider apple orchard back to church and starting point.

The Teme River

In flowing from the moors of mid -Wales for a brisk 75 miles, the Teme drops a spectacular 435m (1,427 ft) to its confluence with the Severn, south of Worcester.

Continued from opposite page

6 Cross the river bridge & walk up the lane passing Arley station. 450m after the railway bridge, take a fp L into Seckley Wood. Keep to the track & ignore a fork on the LHS. Go through a double wooden gate & go R at fork, with open ground high on the RHS. Where the open ground ceases, go L at a fork. This fp immediately bends right (having ignored a steeply descending track on LHS). The high level track circumvents the valley until a track t-junction is reached - turn L. After 20m, go ahead at a track crossing to follow a marker post with a single red ring. After 20m, turn R at a post marked with red & green rings. At the next junction, look for post with red & blue rings - turn R to return to the car park.

The beautifully restored **Severn Valley Railway** offers a sixteen mile journey through the glorious countryside from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth, crossing the border from Worcestershire to Shropshire north of Arley station. The SVR is sure to delight people of all ages - for the young ones, Thomas the Tank Engine; for the not so young, membership of the SVR opens up the chance to realise childhood ambitions 'to be an engine driver.'

3½ / 4 hours	Easy	12.75kms	By the Way
			<p>Start Point SO 765 744 Hawkbatch Car Park B4194 NW of Bewdley</p>
			<p>How Far Away? 19 kms from Stourbridge</p>
			<p>Maps O.S. Explorer 218 Landranger 138</p>
			<p>Parking Free</p>
			<p>Facilities Facilities in Bewdley Delicious ices in Arley village store!</p>
			<p>Terrain Woodland paths, river walks, farms, town & village - plus a steam railway!</p>
			<p>Hazards This walk is unsuitable if & when the river is high or in flood</p>
			<p>Pubs The Harbour Inn, Arley Wide choice in Bewdley</p>

Severn Valley	Walk 21	Worcestershire
3½ / 4 hours	Easy	12.75 kms

Hawkbatch - Dowles Bridge - Bewdley - Crundalls Farm - Hall's Farm - Bite Farm - Eymore Wood - Arley - Seckley Wood - Hawbatch

It is difficult to conceive a walk in more beautiful surroundings - the Severn Valley is a delight at any time of the year. The magnificent Georgian town of Bewdley is matched by Arley, the prettiest Severn side village. The station is often used by film companies to provide period authenticity.

1 Go to the far RH of the carpark - a post with red & blue rings indicates the route - follow this path to a t-junction & turn R. At a wooden barrier at a track crossing, veer R & immediately L. The new route is marked by a single red ring. After 1km, ignore a LH fork to maintain a slight descent towards the river. At a Forestry Commission 'No Fp beyond this point' sign, turn L to eventually emerge on road into Caravan Park. Cross road & follow fp (now with yellow waymarker). As the way passes a line of brick inspection chambers, take track R that continues descent. Soon, a fp on the RHS (yellow arrow) is reached - follow this way to arrive at riverbank.

2 Turn R & cross stile along river path towards Bewdley. Pass under a bridge that conveys Birmingham's water supply & later pass the ruins of a bridge that carried the railway to Cleobury Mortimer. Continue on same path to reach Bewdley. Cross the road bridge & at the end by Bridge House, turn L. After a few metres, follow the fp sign that bears R along a narrow fp into a caravan site. Bear L through the site, proceed to the vehicle entrance. At the road, turn L & pass River Way Drive. After 200m - opposite house # 23 - turn R onto a fp that leads under the railway bridge.

3 Cross stile, proceed along fp ahead, which leads up through valley. A fence on your RHS is reached, which leads to a corner of 2 fences. Turn R through gate towards Crundalls Farm. Continue along double hedged track for short way & pass through a metal gate. With hedge on LHS, continue to & go through a gate in hedge corner just before farm. Bear L to corner of

a fence. With hedge now on your RHS, proceed ahead to & cross a stile. Maintain course ahead onto a driveway & emerge on road. Turn L towards Trimpey.

4 The road - Crundalls Lane - becomes a muddy bway. Pass through a steel gate keeping the hedge on RHS with Hall's Farm in the distance. At another metal gate, with farm on RHS, follow farm track passing to the LHS of farmhouse & a rusty white tank. After passing through farm & reaching a track, take the route L & go under power lines. By Hillcrest house, turn L. Soon follow fp R with hedge on RHS. Continue, over a stile & bear L towards Bite Farm, crossing 3 stiles. Pass the farm buildings & join a farm track to leave the farm. 25m further on, cross a stile on the LHS & bear L with Bite Farm on the LHS.

5 Continue along the waymarked fp, in front of Bite Farm, cross 2 stiles then diagonally across field to reach a stream & stile, after passing under power lines. Turn L along the hedge to a gate. Ignore gate - instead, turn R, keeping a wire fence on your LHS. On reaching a road, turn L towards Arley. After about 1½ kms, & a sweeping LH bend with a WW sign on the right, continue on the road to a 2nd WW sign also on the RHS opposite a parking sign. Takes this fp which meanders through the forest & drops down to the river & joins the 'Severn Way'. Continue along the riverbank to Arley village.

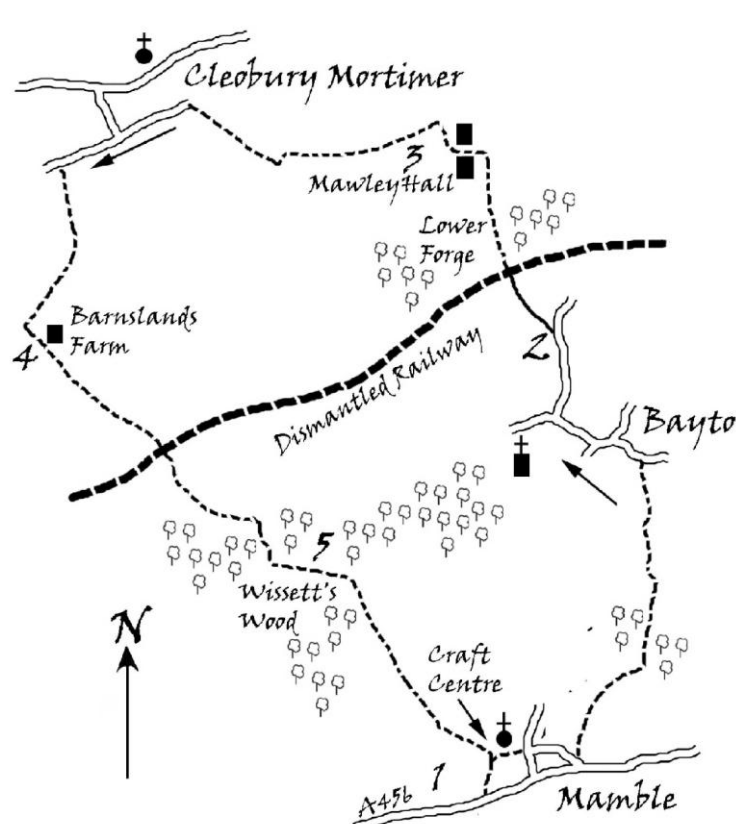
Continued on opposite page

Mamble stands on high ground near the Shropshire border. It seems that the area dates back to Roman times, for a Roman brick-kiln was discovered with about 10,000 bricks and the pipes used for bringing water from a neighbouring spring.

This walk passes two splendid country houses - **Mawley Hall** and **Shakenhurst**. The former was the home of the Blounts - a redoubtable family. When the nearby railway was constructed, they saw to it that Cleobury Mortimer station was built an inconvenient two miles east of the town, so that the line could not be seen from the Hall. Shakenhurst - the home of the Meyseys - means sanctuary, as it was in olden days. Legend has it that the Catholic Mawley Hall and the Protestant Mawley Hall were constantly at loggerheads. The witch at Mawley put a curse on Shakenhurst, saying that no son would ever inherit the estate - it has always passed through the female line.

The Blounts were involved with the **Sun and Slipper**. The sun is a heraldic reference to the Blount family. The slipper is said to refer to an occasion when one of the ancestors was awakened by Roundheads to fight a duel on the stairs of the inn. He did so in his slippers! It is claimed that a bloodstain on the stairs has resisted all attempts to remove it.

The crooked spire of the Church of the Virgin Mary at **Cleobury Mortimer** has been caused by its oak beams becoming warped by wind, rain and time.

4½ / 5 hours	Easy	12.5 kms / 7¾ miles	By the Way	
			Start Point	SO 686 713 Large lay beside A456 past Mamble turning
			How Far Away?	27 kms from Stourbridge
			Maps	O.S. Explorer 218 Landranger 138
			Parking	Free - Picnic tables provided
			Facilities	At Mamble Craft Centre Available in Cleobury Mortimer (not directly on route).
			Terrain	Mostly field & woodland paths
			Hazards	Take care when crossing A456 and also bridges over river
			Stiles	31
			Pubs	The Sun & Slipper, Mamble. Large choice in Cleobury Mortimer

Continued from bottom of opposite page

5 Proceed through Wissett's Wood until an obvious route is reached by a warning sign about mines! Take route ahead & continue straight on at bend to leave wood & cross stile into field & immediately turn R & look for stile in LH corner (pool on LHS). Cross field to far LH corner & across next to farm lane. Cross stile & continue on same course back to Mamble. At stile, either go L to visit Craft Centre or retrace steps to starting point.

Worcestershire	Walk 22	Mamble
4½ / 5 hours	Easy	12.5 kms

Mamble - Bayton - Lower Forge - Mawley Hall - Cleobury Mortimer - Barnslands Farm - Shakenhurst - Wissett's Wood - Mamble

A walk that crosses counties, small hills, farmland, a landscaped park and woods, with a meandering river and dismantled railway to add further interest - what more could you want?

1 Cross road with care & walk towards Mamble. Immediately after smaller lay-by, turn L behind houses & at end of 'entry' cross stile into field. Bear R to stile on RHS of Craft Centre. Go along driveway by house to emerge on lane. Continue to t-junction. Turn R & then L to pass front of pub & on to red phone box on RHS. Turn L down fp opposite. Cross over stiles through successive fields. Look out for a derelict brick barn ahead & slightly to the left. When field with barn is reached, cross field diagonally to stile in RH corner stile & follow fp beside hedge on your RHS down hill & round to left. Look for another stile - it is below, in line with barn, but may be hidden by foliage. Cross stream & climb opposite, bearing R to far corner at intersection of paths. Turn L along fp that leads down & across Mill Brook - go up through wooded area to emerge in large field. Hug fence on LHS & continue to eventually emerge on lane. Turn L & follow lane to enter village of Bayton. Keep L at junction then bear R by memorial. Turn R at end of lane. Walk down lane & ahead at sign pointing to Norgrovesend Farm.

2 At bend, cross stile towards Lower Forge. Hug fence on your LHS until dismantled railway. Cross & follow fp ahead through woods to arrive at Lower Forge (a meeting of paths beside a pool). Turn R up slope along track that becomes an avenue of trees. Maintain this route for 1km passing Mawley Hall. At tarmac junction, turn R & soon turn L down hill beside walled garden. Follow fp as

it turns L & hairpins R. Continue until a fb appears on LHS to cross over River Rea.

3 Walk up field ahead & successive fields to lane. Turn L up lane for 50m & then turn R at lane bend to enter field. Bear R to stile - the crooked steeple of Cleobury Mortimer church is directly ahead. Maintain this course & descend to a stile before houses. Do not cross stile. Turn L & hug fence behind houses to lane - go L & follow to road. Go uphill until sign on LHS for Veterinary Surgery & Brewery. Take fp behind hedge & cross stile into muddy field. Go over stile at bottom & pass pool on your RHS. Bear R up field to stile on RHS & over next field - on same course - to stile & lane. Cross over stile opposite & walk in same direction until a farm road is reached. Turn L & go down through yard of Barnslands Farm.

4 Go ahead, leaving road, pass milking shed on your LHS to metal gate. Cross three fields. At the start of the fourth field, bear R to fb & cross River Rea. Continue over stiles & dismantled railway to stile opposite & into field. After passing hollow on your RHS (a pool may be present). **Pause!** Veer L up slope to fence ahead. At fence, go L & hug fence to corner. Follow fence R - large pool is on your RHS. Emerge onto parkland, cross estate drive & go to stile ahead. Go down valley to stile at RH corner into woods. Join forest road & go L to bridge. After bridge, turn R. **Pause!** Walk a few paces to find an unmarked uphill grassy way through wood.

Continued at bottom of previous page

SHFRC operates a 'Three Free Walks' offer whereby interested persons are welcome to participate in three separate walks before deciding whether or not to join.

For more details, contact any club member or visit our website:

www.shfrc.org.uk

The Sheepwalks

Walk 23

Staffordshire

The walk passes along the drive of **Enville Hall**. A disastrous fire took hold in the early 1900s. One of the footmen was instructed to call the fire brigade. He duly obliged and rode a bicycle to Stourbridge to summon help! Look out for the **ice house** - some 200m past the farm on the RHS, which kept the Hall's perishables cool before the fridge was invented!

The rock houses at **Holy Austin Rock** were inhabited until the early 1950s. The dwellings are now under the care of the National Trust and may be visited at advertised times.

On Kinver Edge, the route turns off at the start (or end) of three **Long Distance Footpaths** - the North Worcestershire Path (43 kms), Staffordshire Way (148 kms) & Worcestershire Way (75 kms).

Quiet lanes and woodland paths provide a very agreeable approach to **The Sheepwalks**, an area of rolling heath that is quite out of character with the rest of South Staffordshire.

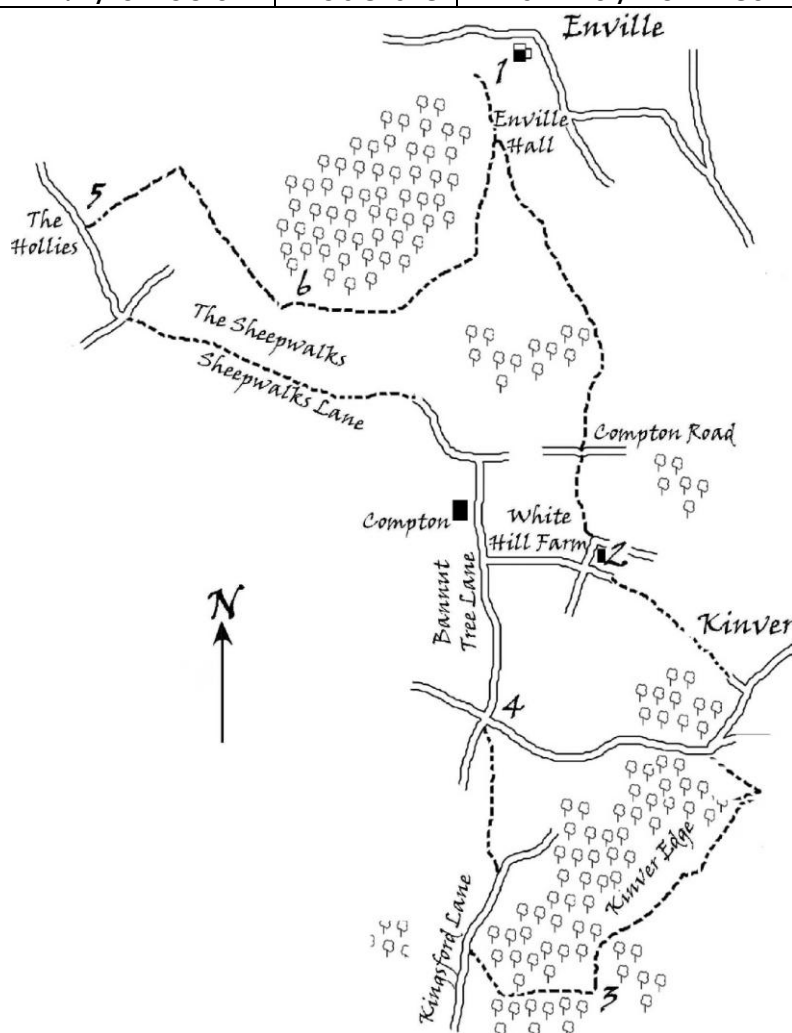
As you descend The Sheepwalks, on the way back to Enville, look out for a **derelict church** in the wooded area on the LHS. (Don't go anywhere close as it is unsafe).

4½ / 5 hours

Moderate

16 kms / 10 miles

By the Way



Start Point

SO 825 868 Enville
Turn by War Memorial

How Far Away?

9 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S.

Explorer Landranger 218 138

Parking

Free
Ask at pub (if open)
or try the Cricket
Club (along drive)

Facilities

None on route

Terrain throughout.

Easy paths or quiet lanes
Three sharp ascents

Hazards

None

Stiles

12

Pubs

The Cat, Enville - None on
route, but a good selection may be found in
Kinver.

Enville - Staffordshire Way - Holy Austin Rock - Kinver Edge - Bannut Tree Lane - The Sheepwalks - The Hollies - The Sheepwalks - Enville

One of the best walks in the local area - three short, but sharp climbs offer some superb views - the rest of the walk is none too bad also!

1 Walk along the drive past Enville Hall on RHS. Pass the pool & continue straight ahead along a rough path, through trees. At a fork keep straight. Continue straight - ignoring any turns L or R. Cross Compton Lane and take stile opposite. After a gentle climb along a wooded path, arrive at a corner of a lane.

2 Turn R & after 50m, take a fp L signed Staffordshire Way. Follow fp through wood and beside wire fence. Climb stile & descend into field. Maintain same direction to rear of houses. Cross stile & follow fp behind houses to road. Follow to end & turn R up road to junction; turn R again & cross to fp sign 'Holy Austin Rock'. Follow path up to Rock Houses (NT property). Return to route by walking down to garden gate, turn R and follow steep fp up through trees. At clearing, take fp R to complete climb up to toposcope on top of Kinver Edge. Walk along Kinver Edge for 1.5 kms, leaving NT property at wooden barrier, until a 3-way signed Long Distance Path junction is reached.

3 Ignore all 3 & go in the fourth direction down an unsigned fp off the Edge. Follow it down. When it levels out, continue to Kingsford Lane & turn R. Walk up lane for 550m. Soon after lane enters wood, take fp L (may be hidden by foliage), climbing gradually & then

4 hug edge of wood to emerge above valley and Valehead Farm. Skirt round

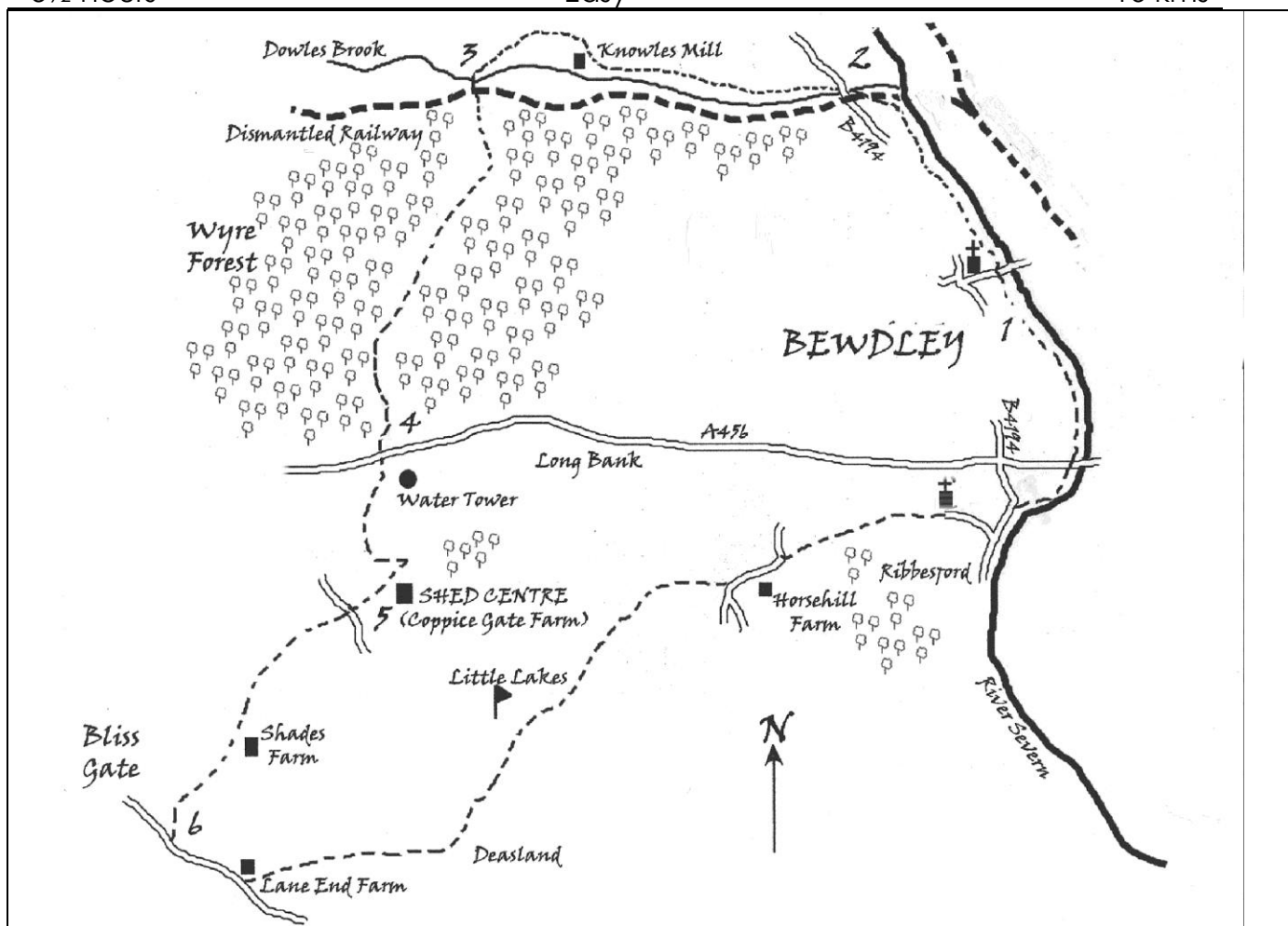
the paddock & leave via gate on LHS of house. Follow fp through more paddocks & exit over stile to field. Cross to lane opposite.

5 Follow lane N uphill & ahead at X-lanes along Bannut Tree Lane, past

6 Brindley Hall & Union Hall Farm on LHS, to T-junction. Turn L & follow lane to fp on R before Compton Court Farm. Cross two stiles & turn L up field, behind farm. Follow fp, parallel to lane, until lane bends L. Bear R & start to climb The Sheepwalks. Note fp waymarkers ahead to guide you. At top, veer L to trees, & then follow descent to lane below. Emerge & follow lane in NW direction.

7 Immediately past The Hollies, take a fp R & follow LH edge of 2 fields. Take fp R & follow LH hedge of undulating field & another to arrive at edge of trees. Go R & follow tree line beyond hidden pool & take fp L. Cross stream with care as surrounding area may be boggy. Take a deep breath & go straight ahead up The Sheepwalks again (follow waymarkers on horizon). At top, pause to admire views.

8 Proceed ahead to L of trees & follow direction with wooded area on LHS. Continue descent, keeping L Cross stile & and head NE along track towards farm. See Enville Hall behind ornamental lake on LHS. Before farm, take fp on L behind barn & follow to stile & cross into parkland of Hall. Go through kissing gate & return to starting point.



5½ hours

Easy

16 kms / 10 miles

By the Way

Continued from next page

6 Cross fb over Gladder Brook. Turn R by 15th tee & proceed between group of trees towards another tee (hill with clump of trees atop on your RHS). Head now for trees at far top end of course to stile. Cross & hug LHS fence as it skirts huge field. Go ahead into next field, ignoring stile on LHS, to eventually join a 'Permissive Route'. Follow track through woods to tarmac lane.

8 Turn R along driveway to Horsehill Farm. Turn L along lane. After 250m, bear R down stony track & keep R by farm outbuildings to stile. Pass through horse pasture & stile, then through woods & steeper descent to Church; continue to road & turn L to return parked cars or join riverside path and walk back to Bewdley.

Further information about this walk may be found on page 58

Start Point	SO 788 741 Parking area off B4194 before Ribbesford turn
How Far Away?	12 kms from Stourbridge
Maps	O.S. Explorer 218 Landranger 138
Parking	Free or P&D in town
Facilities	Full choice in Bewdley
Terrain	As stated in heading
Hazards	Do not attempt walk if river is on flood alert.
Stiles	17
Pubs	Only in Bewdley

Ribbesford - Bewdley - Dowles Brook - Long Bank - Lye Head - Lane End Farm - Gladder Brook - Horsehill Farm - Ribbesford

This walk has it all except hills! A riverside walk, fine Georgian town, ghostly railway, babbling brooks, forest trail, fairways and farms by the bucket load. There's only one short incline during the whole distance!

1 From the carpark or lay-by, walk to the river bank and proceed L along fp, passing under by-pass & along Severnside South. Go under road bridge in Bewdley. Continue along tarmac path & then on river bank to fb, below old bridge supports. Turn L onto track beside Dowles Brook to stile & road. Turn R & walk 30m to supports of another bridge.

2 Turn L, beside private drive, & follow fp, crossing brook along the way. At lane, turn R & pass over bridge (note flood holes) by isolated 'Oak Cottage'. Continue along lane passing kennels, then alongside brook. Ignore gate into Knowles Coppice Nature Reserve. Carry on past Knowles Mill & enter Wyre Forest Nature Reserve. Go ahead at junction & walk on past Coopers Mill Youth Centre & soon cross fb over brook.

3 Turn R & soon bear L up steep slope away from brook, but above a small tributary. On reaching gate, cross dismantled railway line & proceed through gate opposite & on up forest track for 500m. Quiet walkers may be rewarded with a glimpse of deer. Look ahead for a waymarker (just past a fenced area on LHS) & then bear R through trees. Pass plaque on LHS with Saint George buildings beyond. Continue on winding fp. Go L at fork & pass a fenced area on LHS. At a fp junction go ahead with house high on hill

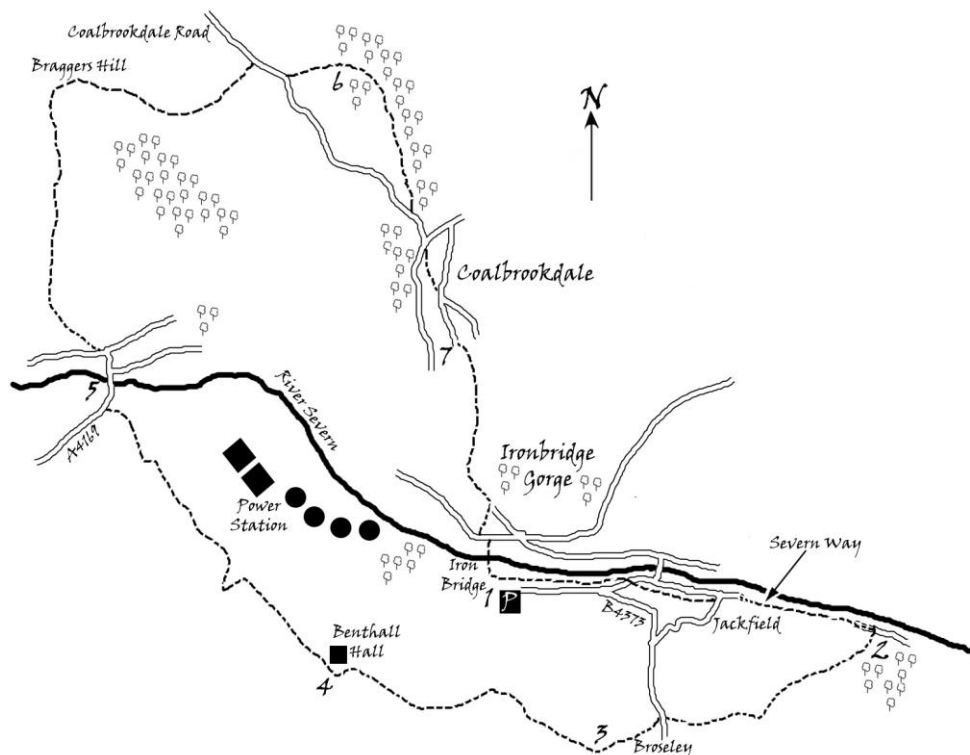
on LHS. Leave forest through gate & walk up lane. Ignore fp turning on LHS.

4 At main road, turn L. Cross A456 with care & turn R along drive beside Long Bank water tower. Go ahead & pass private garden sign & cross stile on RHS. Pass through successive fields as fp descends - ignore fp on RHS - keep ahead with lake beyond. Cross stile beneath wood. Follow gently undulating fp along fringe of wood. At fp t-junction, turn R to lane & then pass garden shed centre (formerly Coppice Gate Farm). Continue along tarmac lane to road.

5 Cross road & go up bway opposite. After buildings, walk down a sunken way that leads down to a fb, ford & gate for horses. Pass through Shades Farm & then along grassy way through 3 fields to arrive at stiles in & out of private garden. Turn L along gravel lane, pass Bine Mill to emerge on tarmac road at Bliss Gate.

6 Turn L & walk along road for 450m - ignoring fps on RHS. Immediately after Lane End Farm, turn L & hug LH fence to stile in corner. Cross next field, now hugging RH hedge, take fp R, *after gap*, & duck under bough to cross plank bridge & stile then veer L up field to stile. Take fp beside Deasland House gate, joining the Worcestershire Way. Hug fence on RHS down to golf course & cross fairways to trees at bottom.

Route continues at bottom of page opposite

**6 hours****Moderate****17.5 kms / 11 miles****By the Way**

Ironbridge was declared a World Heritage Site in 1986.

The bridge was erected in 1779 and opened to general traffic on New Year's Day in 1781. It was to become a great attraction and visitors came from all over the world to marvel at this great feat of engineering and skill. It was not surprising that those closely involved with the building of the bridge conceived the idea of a hotel to accommodate the vast numbers of visitors. Abraham & Samuel Darby, William & Richard Reynolds, John Wilkinson, Joseph Rathbone and others who had connections with the building of the bridge formed a tontine. See the toll charges above the Tourist Info Centre!

A tontine is an annuity scheme whereby several subscribers invest in a common fund out of which they receive an annuity that increases as subscribers die until the last survivor takes all.

Further information may be found on page 59

Start Point Ironbridge
South side of bridge
SJ 673 032

How Far Away? 34 kms from Stourbridge

Maps O.S. Explorer 242 Landranger 127

Parking By bridge - pay & display

Facilities Available at Ironbridge
Some at Broseley

Terrain Mostly paths & tracks;
Two long climbs; one
arduous ascent

Hazards Crossing A4169 & B4380
roads

Stiles 13

Pubs Choice in Ironbridge &
Broseley

Continued from opposite page

7 Cross & turn sharp L & with hedge on LHS until it swings away, go through gap ahead. Cross 2 more fields into woodland. Continue to & cross railway to metalled lane & on to main road. Cross with care & take fp on LHS of Valley Hotel to emerge at riverside. Turn L & follow river back to bridge & carpark.

Shropshire	Walk 25	Ironbridge
6 hours	Moderate	17.5 kms

Ironbridge - Jackfield - Corbetts Dingle - Broseley - Benthall - Buildwas - Braggers Hill - Loamhole Dingle - Ironbridge

We make no apologies for the travel distance, but this has been our most popular Sunday walk for the last two years! Ironbridge - the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution - is a living museum. The town together with the surrounding, dramatic gorge has been designated a World Heritage Site. There is so much to see that a day's visit just isn't long enough.

1 Walk downstream along dismantled railway track following Severn Way (1.3 km) to emerge on road at Jackfield railway sidings. Continue ahead on road & bear L at Jackfield Tile Museum. Go down Church Road, past the church. At end of road, go ahead beside river to end of track, then bear R on to road by black & white building. Turn L at Mawes Craft Centre & follow fp to the Boat Inn. Note markings of flood levels on door.

2 Leave the Severn Way & bear R gently uphill & under railway bridge to a fork in the road. Go L along track & cross stile opposite cottage. Proceed up Corbetts Dingle. At gate, ignore track to right & keep straight to metalled road. Keep ahead to the main road. Turn R along the B4373. After 30m, take fp on LHS of Tollgate Cottage. Follow fp, climbing gently to emerge at road.

3 Turn L & R to enter High Street, Broseley. At mini roundabout, bear L to 'Benthall'. After 800m of steady progress up Barrattshill & Benthall Lane, turn R by bus stop into a no-through road. After 50m, turn L over stile into field. Hug RH hedge to stile. Cross & turn L, with hedge on LHS, go diagonally across field to pylon & stile beyond. Cross & keep fence on LHS to another stile beside pylon & continue along avenue of chestnut trees. At end of trees, turn L on fp to a wooden gate onto road. Before crossing road to track opposite, pause to look at Benthall Church.

4 Proceed along track (Shropshire Way) past Benthall Farm. At fork, go L over stile onto track through woods. At clearing, turn sharp R & descend steeply towards Buildwas Power Station. Where track bends sharply left, take fp R to metal gate. Proceed through caravan park onto metalled road until A4169 is reached. Turn R over bridge to T-junction. Turn L along B4380.

5 (From here a pleasant riverside walk will take you back to Ironbridge). After about 150m turn R by postbox & climb gently to track by gate. Continue ahead up track for 1,200m. After power line, cross track & almost at top, look for stile R onto 'Shropshire Way'. After 100m turn sharp L & make short, steep ascent of Braggers Hill. Turn R & head for mast. Cross stile by mast & go diagonally across field to stile midway between farms. Turn L along track to road & then turn R to T-junction, then L to Leasows Farm.

6 Pass through gate on RHS & follow diagonally L of pylon to enter Loamhole Dingle. Follow fp through dingle, down steps until The Ropewalk. Walk along this delightful fp & go over stile on R signed Hollybank. Climb fp to emerge on road beside house. Cross to stile opposite then over 2 fields to next stile & 3rd field heading for Buildwas chimney stack to stile in hedge.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Continued from Individual Walks)

Ashwood - Walk 14

At **Gothersley** there are remains of a Round House that was originally built to house a wharfinger in connection with the local ironworks. The building became derelict and finally collapsed during a storm in 1991.

Claverley - Walk 12

There are three pubs in Claverley and all welcome walkers. Both The Crown and The Plough are pleased to allow walkers to use their car parks; probably the same can be said for the Kings Arms though permission should not be taken for granted as that establishment only opens in the evenings. Naturally, they hope that some business may be placed their way either after the walk or some other occasion; each house enjoys an excellent table reputation. Not too far away is the equally appealing Lion O' Morfe.

Great Witley - Walk 17

Nearby Witley Court warrants a special visit. It is located 1km south of the A443 at the end of a poorly maintained road. A disastrous fire in 1937 reduced the magnificent residence to its present state; it is now in the care of English Heritage. The nearby church was spared and must be viewed internally - be prepared for a dramatic surprise. James Foley, the Stourbridge iron magnate, built Witley Court. Before the fire, the residence was a familiar venue for social events with many royal and noble visitors.

Hampton Loade - Walk 6

The unique, privately-operated **Ferry** across the river at Hampton Loade (passengers only) uses the current for its motive power. The boat is attached by a running line to an overhead wire across the river, so that by throwing the long rudder in the required direction the ferry is swung sideways across the river. The return trip is made by reversing the position of the rudder. Crossings are only available on weekends and Bank Holiday between 29 March and 15 July. Thereafter, it operates daily until 15 September - all trips however are subject to water levels. The fare is 50p each way.

"Time!" was called at the **Lion Inn** on 13 April 2003. The writer was fortunate enough to enjoy a couple of last pints, on that day, during the course of this particular walk. During alterations to convert the pub back to its original composition of three separate cottages, a young girl of about three feet tall, wearing a long period dress, has been sighted on three separate occasions.

Mamble - Walk 22

The crooked spire of the Church of the Virgin Mary at **Cleobury Mortimer** has been caused by its oak beams becoming warped by wind, rain and time.

Wyre Forest - Walk 24

The handsome town of **Bewdley** is a splendid sight, especially when approached from Kidderminster or Stourport along the eastern riverbank. In Elizabethan times, the town was a prosperous port and trading town. Many years later, the townspeople firmly opposed the idea of a canal, which subsequently was built at nearby Stourport - this enabled Birmingham to be linked with the river and provided a route and gateway to the outside world. Bewdley's importance and influence decreased as a result.

The ruins of the **railway** bridge supports are seen where the walk leaves the riverbank. The bridge spanned the river and carried the train between Bewdley, Tenbury and Woofferton. It must have been a pretty journey. It is said that the train crew used to throw corn seed onto the single line in the hope of collecting a pheasant supper on the return trip!

The area of **Wyre Forest** was once so vast that Wyre-castre, or Worcester, was originally in the forest. The county also takes its name from the forest.

The church at **Ribbesford** peeps shyly above the trees as the steepest descent of the walk is made. The wooden door dates back to Norman times. Rudyard Kipling was married in the church in 1892. It was by all accounts 'an exceedingly good marriage'.

One lord of the manor hanged himself in Ribbesford House. His valet found him, but fearful of his master's temper, ran to Bewdley to ascertain what he should do - alas he returned too late! A more recent inhabitant was General de Gaulle who took refuge here in World War 2 when Vichy France was occupied by the Nazis.

Regular Action Heart Led Health Walks take place from various locations

Please contact Action Heart on 01384 292233 for details.



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