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TROUSERS**

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'Absolutely amazed with the quality and fit of these trousers. Very functional and comfortable. Excellent for hiking and fast scrambling.'

27 GORGEOUS WALKS

All over the UK: get fit, feel great this spring!



Country Walking

Spring
2020

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❖ JAPAN'S CAMINO ❖ PILGRIMAGE ANCIENT & MODERN ❖ YOUR STORIES

What a view!

Hidden gems that
make *great* walks

**BIG TEST:
WATERPROOFS**

BECAUSE THERE'S
NO SUCH THING
AS BAD WEATHER!



+ **WALKING FESTIVALS:** DISCOVER SOMEWHERE NEW IN GREAT COMPANY **LITTLE SWITZERLAND:**
A THRILLING WEEKEND IN SHROPSHIRE **IT'S SPRING!** GET YOUR 1000-MILE PROGRESS CHART



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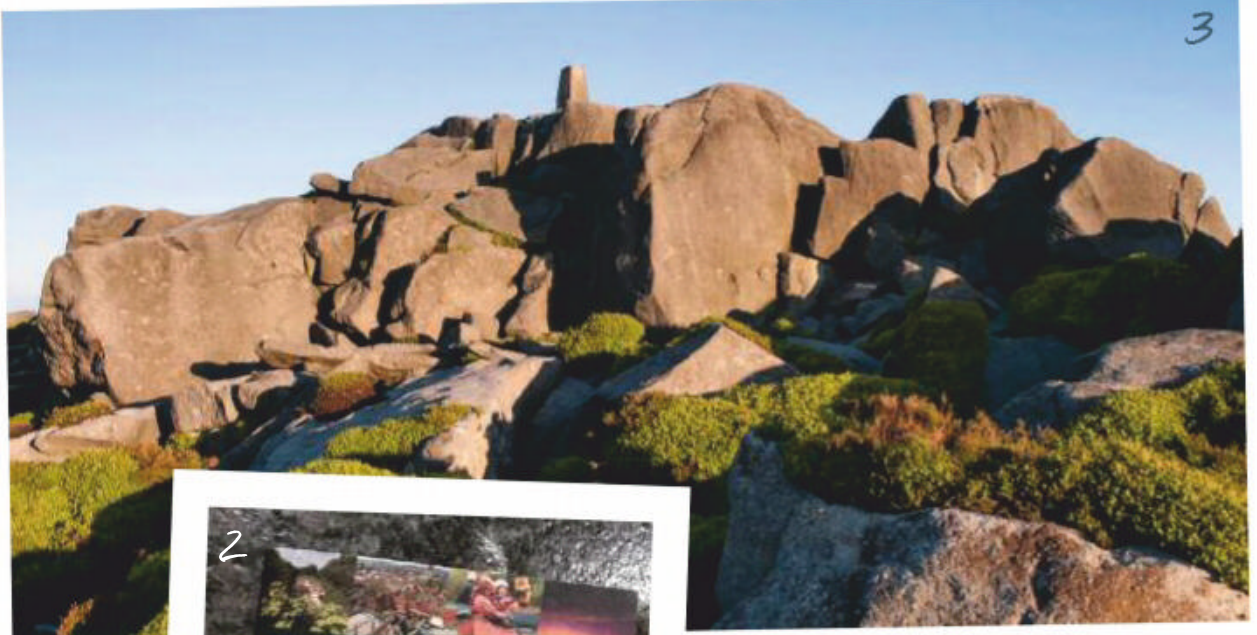
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This month I've been...

1 Battling the wind... I SAID I'VE BEEN BATTLING THE WIND!!!

2 Re-joining the YHA and looking forward to many stays in delightfully unpredictable places in delightfully unpredictable company too this year! Love the YHA!

3 Thinking about the many micro-pilgrimages I've made to those cathedrals of the countryside – hills capped with trig points. Slap!

Welcome

When the universe burst into existence 18 billion years ago, in what could have become known as the Colossal Kapow, it taught us one of life's most valuable lessons – that something can come from nothing. Which is reassuring when you're at one of those points in life when you see nothing but a featureless, even meaningless, wasteland around you. It's a position many, perhaps most, of us find ourselves in at one time or another. And there are many who'd say walking – the simple act of putting one foot in front of the other – is about as close to 'nothing' as makes no difference when it comes to taking decisive action to improve your outlook.

But walk for 20 minutes and already something's coming on stream in your body which has the unmistakable savour

of something you really needed – a thirst simultaneously discovered and quenched. Walk regularly and it feels like all the moving parts of your body and mind are enjoying an intensive oil bath. Walk a long way on a journey of special significance – in company or alone, to a place of personal or spiritual succour, a day or a week or a thousand miles away – and the effects can be literally life-changing. And if you're thinking 'That's fine for some, but I'll still be the same old me', consider spring or the alphabet. One constrained to a meagre 26 letters, the other to the same endlessly recycled matter it's used for millions of years – yet both nevertheless capable of infinite renewal, novelty and wonder. Onward, pilgrim!

Guy

Guy Procter, Editor



On the cover

Looking toward Yr Eifl from Morfa Nefyn on the North Wales Pilgrims Way. Our feature starts on page 32.

PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

Talk to us!

Share your pics, questions, have a natter – we love to hear from you:

facebook.com/countrywalking

country.walking@lfto.com

twitter.com/countrywalking

IN THIS ISSUE...



Guy Hayward

Co-founder of the British Pilgrimage Trust, Guy tells us why it matters in modern times and how we can help create a pilgrimage network.

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Rachel Broomhead

Rachel left as much of herself behind as she could as she embarked on one of only two UNESCO World Heritage listed pilgrim routes.

Page 60



Richard III

Deputy editor Nick made it his pilgrimage to help rehabilitate a much-maligned king (seen here playing the Circle Game) in Wensleydale.

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showers and renewal
– and fresh paths:
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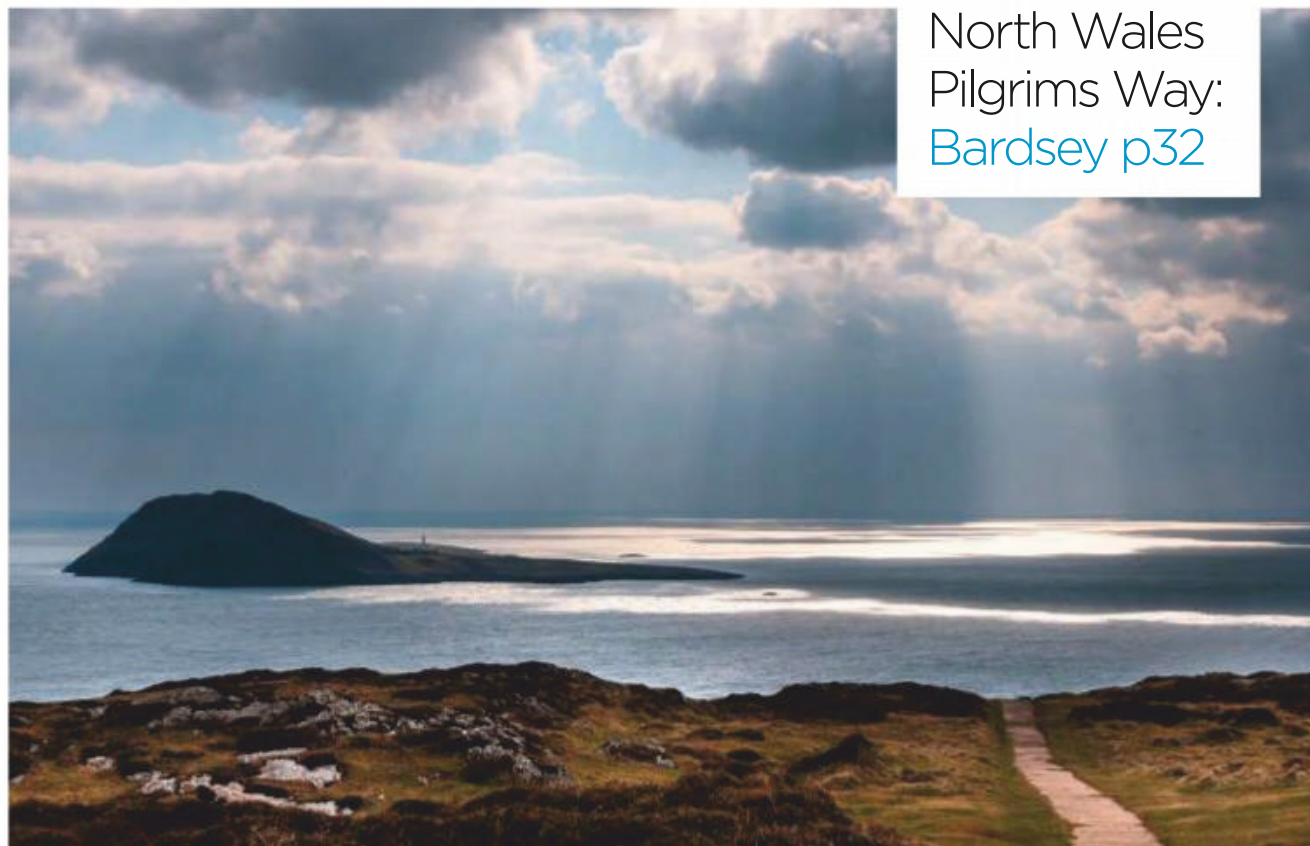
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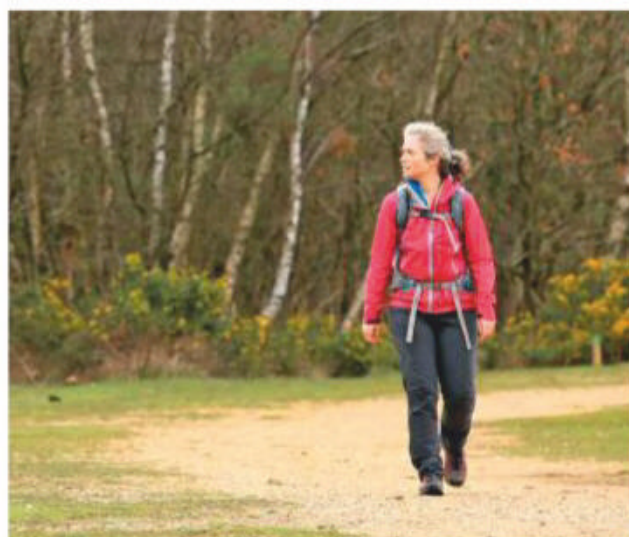
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“When a story about
the Lakes makes
The Sun you suspect
it must have been
a slow news day”

STUART MACONIE p29



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27 NEW ROUTES

Get out more this month!

Step-by-step directions
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all over the country.

► TURN OVER FOR MORE...



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GET
IT EARLY
FOR LESS:
SUBSCRIBE
PAGE 50

Find a great walk near you!

Highlights from the 27 fantastic walks in this issue...



SOUTH WEST



Swimbridge, Devon

Stride out across rolling hills from the North Devon village where the terrier-breeding 'Sporting Parson' was vicar.

[TURN TO WALK 1](#)

SOUTH EAST



Bradwell on Sea, Essex

Swing by one of England's oldest and loneliest churches amid mudflats and marsh on the otherworldly Essex coast.

[TURN TO WALK 7](#)

MIDLANDS

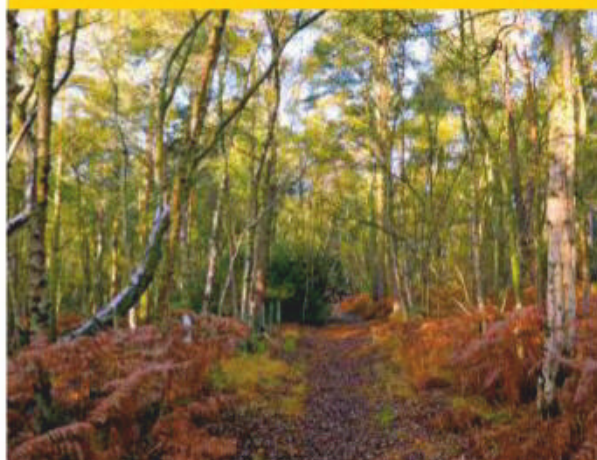


Winster, Derbyshire

Join the Limestone Way across Bonsall Moor to visit the *other* 'Wensley Dale' on the Peak District's southeast fringes.

[TURN TO WALK 12](#)

EAST



Castle Rising, Norfolk

Sally forth from the impressive remains of a castle keep through the woods and commons characterising West Norfolk.

[TURN TO WALK 14](#)

NORTH WEST



Hallin Fell, Cumbria

Walk a circuit of the characterful fell on the shore of Ullswater – 'the best views for the least effort' in the Lake District.

[TURN TO WALK 16](#)

NORTH EAST



Highcliff Nab, N. Yorkshire

Drink in sweeping views over coast and vale from a rocky outcrop at the forested edge of the North York Moors.

[TURN TO WALK 19](#)

WALES

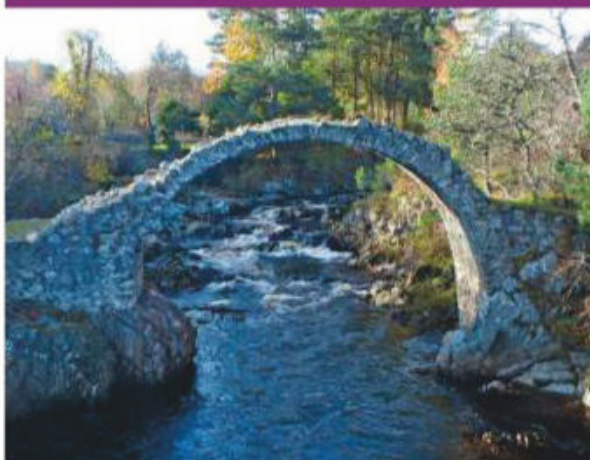


Manorbier, Pembrokeshire

Follow clifftop paths around hidden coves from the 'pleasantest spot in Wales' where a castle guards the beach.

[TURN TO WALK 21](#)

SCOTLAND



Carrbridge, Highland

Be enchanted by the Highlands' oldest stone bridge on a forest loop with far-off views of the mighty Cairngorms.

[TURN TO WALK 26](#)

CLASSIC



Hindscarth, Cumbria

Sidestep the crowds in the Lake District on a little-known horseshoe traversing the ridges above the Newlands Valley.

[TURN TO WALK 27](#)

NSPCC

“I knew it would be tough, but the stunning scenery and support from my team mates made it unforgettable!”

©NSPCC 2019. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Registered charity England and Wales 216401, and Scotland SC037717. J20191396. The people pictured are volunteers. Photography by Nick Hodgson.

Take on the Peak District Challenge with #TeamNSPCC

Peak District Challenge 4-5 July 2020

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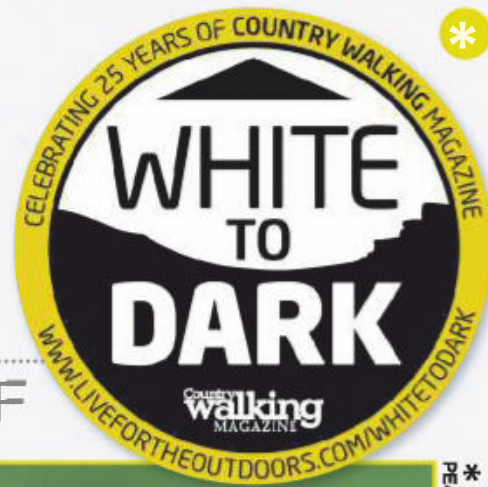
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WILDLIFE

THE SEASON OF MADNESS!

Sprinting, dancing, scrapping, kicking: welcome to the crazy world of the March hare...

IT'S ONE OF the defining sights of early spring: adult hares engaged in one of the weirdest, most frenetic and occasionally most violent rituals in the calendar of British wildlife.

There are all sorts of variations, but the general gist is: a pair of hares (sometimes two males, sometimes male and female) square up and lash out at each other with their forelegs, boxing until one lowers its ears and backs down – at which point, the 'loser' sprints around in crazy circles, until suddenly they both stop and look into the distance, as if waiting for someone.

We think of it as a March thing, but some experts reckon it isn't confined to this month: they may be doing it in February (but it's too dark for us to see them) and in April (but the

grass in their meadows has grown tall enough to conceal them). And we're still not sure if it's courtship, rivalry, territorial dispute – or a mix of all three.

But the madness of March hares has contrived to give them special kudos down the ages. It's said that the Celtic queen Boudica (AKA Boadicea) would release a pair of hares before a battle to augur success, while in the 15th century hares were commonly thought to be witches in disguise.

For now, we'll leave you with some of the ridiculously entertaining nicknames the hare has had down the aeons, as listed in the medieval poem *The Names of the Hare*, translated by Seamus Heaney...

*The quick-scut, the dew-flirt,
the grass-biter, the goibert,
the home-late,
the do-the-dirt.*

*The starrer, the wood-cat,
the purblind, the furze cat,
the skulker, the bleary-eyed,
the wall-eyed,
the glance-aside
and also the hedge-springer.*

*The stubble-stag,
the long lugs,
the stook-deer,
the frisky legs,
the wild one, the skipper,
the hug-the-ground,
the lurker.*

*The creep-along,
the sitter-still,
the pintail, the ring-the-hill,
the sudden start,
the shake-the-heart,
the belly-white,
the lambs-in-flight.*

*The stag sprouting
a suede horn,
the creature living
in the corn,
the creature bearing
all men's scorn,
the creature no one
dares to name.*



PHOTO: BIOSPHOTO/ALAMY

* DID YOU KNOW THAT COUNTRY WALKING HAS ITS OWN TRAIL? THE WHITE TO DARK IS A GLORIOUS 27-MILE ADVENTURE, SPLIT OVER THREE DAYS, RUNNING THROUGH THE PEAK DISTRICT FROM BAKEWELL (IN THE WHITE PEAK) TO HOPE (IN THE DARK PEAK), TAKING IN STAR LOCATIONS LIKE MONSAL HEAD, CRESSBROOK DALE, STANAGE EDGE AND WIN HILL. IT'S PERFECT FOR A SPRING EXPEDITION; YOU CAN DOWNLOAD THE DETAILS AND ROUTECARDS FREE OF CHARGE AT LFTO.COM/WHITETODARK

Music from the DREAMSPACE

How do you turn a great walk into a piece of music? Composer, wanderer and South Downs obsessive **Damian Montagu** has the answer...

INTERVIEW: NICK HALLISSEY

I KNOW IT will sound pretentious when I say this, but the South Downs wrote this album."

Damian Montagu is verbally kicking himself after saying this, but I urge him not to. Because I've listened to said album, *A Walk into Reverie*, and I know exactly what he means.

He's not the first composer to translate walking into music; he's part of a proud lineage that includes Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Eleanor Farjeon and (more recently) Ludovico Einaudi. But what marks out Damian's work is that it is hitched to specific set of landscapes: the South Downs.

Since moving to the Hampshire end of the Downs a few years ago, Damian has been enchanted by the scenery on his doorstep. Both his previous album – *In a South Downs Way* – and the new follow-up were composed on walks over the Downs, and given life in the studio he has built in their shadow.

"It started because I was going out on the Downs to walk with the dogs every day, and these melodies would come into my head as we walked," he explains.

"I'd either hum or whistle them into my phone to preserve them until I could get home and work on them. It was a delightfully unplanned experience."

The album is divided into themed tracks such as the ethereal *Sussexscape*, wistful *Chestnut Paths* and the playful *Shadows*, punctuated by shorter sequences called *Reveries*.

"The reveries reflect the almost meditative experience of walking," says Damian.

"It's those moments where you suddenly realise you've drifted a million miles from screens, phones and emails and you're entirely in your own thoughts. The music drifts into the dreamspace, just as I did on my walks."

One of the most affecting pieces is *The Boar's Head*, which commemorates

'I was going out on the Downs to walk with the dogs every day, and these melodies would come into my head as we walked.'

the Battle of the Boar's Head during the First World War. On 30th June 1916, three battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment were ordered to attack the German line in a bid to distract the enemy's attention while the Allies prepared for the Somme offensive.

The engagement was disastrous; some 1300 Sussex men were killed or injured, and the battle has come to be known as 'the day that Sussex died'.

"I was so moved by that story when I heard it," says Damian.

"I kept walking past little farms and villages and imagining the families just waiting for the news to arrive that their loved ones were gone."

Damian has worked with Sussex artist Russell Cobb to create an animated version of *The Boar's Head* in which illustrations of Sussex men lost in the battle merge with images of the conflict, before nature takes over the landscape once more. You can find it on the South Downs website at bit.ly/sussexboar

Although Damian usually walks alone when composing, he's also walking the South Downs Way in stages with a group of friends – including *Downton Abbey* and *Paddington* star Hugh Bonneville, with whom he collaborated on his previous album.

"Hugh provided beautiful spoken-word poetry for *In a South Downs Way*," says Damian.

"The original idea was for him to read existing works by people like Edward Thomas or William Wordsworth, but



▲ THE VOICE AND THE MUSIC

Damian with his friend and walking partner Hugh Bonneville, who provided the poetic accompaniment for *In a South Downs Way*.



▲ THE DAY THAT SUSSEX DIED

Haunting images from Russell Cobb's animated version of *The Boar's Head*.

◀ A MAN ON A JOURNEY

Damian Montagu taking a stroll on the Downs above his home and studio, seeking his next moment of musical inspiration.

Hugh handed me this scrap of paper with these wonderful lines that he had written about his love of the Downs.

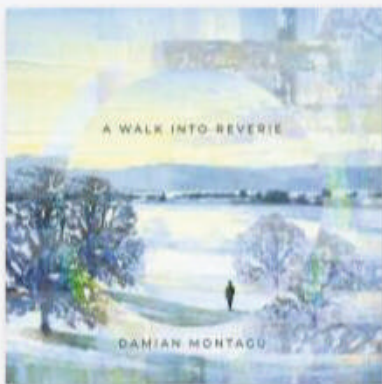
"My co-producer Stewart Prosser and I urged Hugh to provide us with more of his original words because they fitted so well with the music."

(The album was so successful that the pair and their musicians ended up performing it at the Glastonbury festival, which Damian describes as "a weird and wonderful experience, in the middle of the muddiest Glastonbury in years".)

The Spotify version of the new album includes a 29-minute continuous mix, with the aim of allowing the listener to walk into their very own reverie.

"Not everyone wants to walk with music and most of the time I feel the same," Damian explains.

"But sometimes it can enhance the experience of being outdoors if you're listening to a piece of music which responds to the outdoors. I hope people might try it out, whether on a real walk or just when they want to sit or lie down and imagine themselves on a walk they love."



► A *Walk into Reverie* and *In a South Downs Way* are both available on CD or as downloads from the usual platforms. Find out more at walkuponengland.com

'One sold, one given'

Meet the new UK brand that will sell you a jacket and give another to the homeless...

ONCE IN A while, a new gear brand comes along with a game-changing idea. **Dark Peak** is firmly in that class.

Launched last year in Sheffield by passionate walkers Allen Holland and Will Parsons, Dark Peak (named after the local landscape) makes just one product: the **NESSH insulated jacket**.

It comes in two variants, one using responsibly sourced 850 fill power goose down, the other using vegan and allergy-friendly 3M synthetic insulation. Both cost £175 and are available in a range of colours for both men and women, and according to Dark Peak they are designed and manufactured to compete with top-end insulators from the likes of The North Face and Arc'teryx.

But the big difference is this: for every jacket sold, Dark Peak donates a partner jacket to the homeless, through a global charity called One Warm Coat; hence the slogan: 'one sold, one given.' The extraordinary business model is financed by the fact that Dark Peak has cut costs by launching through Kickstarter and only selling online via its own website, rather than through retailers.

Allen says: "We felt it was important to build our new business around the idea of giving back. I think it resonates with people, because they know that by buying our product, somebody else who is cold – and desperately needs warmth – gets a jacket as well."



The NESSH jackets have recently arrived in the *Country Walking* office and are already living up to the promise of holding their own against the better-known brands. Lightweight (both versions weigh in at 340g in a men's medium), compressible, sharply cut and smart looking, they might lack the instant warmth of a more substantial insulator but their performance on the go is beautifully adaptive, and the soft hand-covering inner cuffs (with thumb loops) are a welcome refinement.

The drawback is because they are online-only you can't try one on before you buy, but so far that's looking like a small drawback compared to the quality, affordability and social conscience of the product.

► Full details at darkpeakgear.com

GET SET FOR KESWICK!

Love great walks? Enjoy beautiful films about mountains? Quite like moshing along with Britpop-era superstars? Then you need the Keswick Mountain Festival in your life. The three-day event returns to Crow Park in the heart of the Lake District from 15th-17th May, boasting a huge range of walks as well as running, cycling and open water swimming events, live music and guest speakers.

Walking events (sponsored by Fjällräven and Hanwag) range from a Three Peaks Challenge (an 18-mile hike around Derwent Water summing Cat Bells, Walla Crag and Latrigg) to a puzzle-solving Family Challenge.

Post-walk, you can take in a screening of *Life of a Mountain: Helvellyn*, the third and final film in Terry Abraham's trilogy of beautifully-shot mountain movies (with a star turn by our very own Stuart Maconie) or wig out with Nineties pop-rock imps Space and find your groove with a DJ set from Huey Morgan, BBC 6 Music presenter and frontman of Fun Lovin' Criminals.

Tickets are available now; details at keswickmountainfestival.co.uk



WALKING FESTIVALS

Cross breezy downs and clifftops with the Isle of Wight Walking Festival (2 – 17 May).

WALKING FESTIVALS

What are they and why join in? Here's the low-down on walking festivals in 2020.

PHOTO: PATRICK EDEN/ALAMY

THEY ARE WHAT Hay is for book-lovers or Glastonbury means to music fans. That's one way of describing walking festivals. Springtime heralds the first crop of these 'wanderfully' eclectic events, which take place up and down the UK from now until autumn.

Centring on towns, national parks and tramping across entire counties, walking festivals celebrate the simple joys of getting around and exploring the world on foot. As you'd expect, walks are at their core, with packed programmes of guided hikes and rambles. If you love walking with like-minded people – on your doorstep or further afield – walking festivals are for you. They're a sociable and stimulating way to see the country. Just enjoy the sights and let someone else lead the way.

Most festivals cater for everyone, laying on daily walks of varying mileages and grades. There are expert-led walks for history buffs and naturalists, map-reading workshops and foraging forays. And if you're up for a serious challenge, many festivals include a long-distance yomp or peak bagging extravaganza in their line-up. Come the evenings, local pubs and social venues will open their doors, laying on music, food and excellent craic for sore-footed walkers.

Festival walks are usually free, but you'll often need to sign up in advance. Some events charge small fees for each walk to cover extras or transport.

Here are just a few of the walking festivals due to kick off in 2020. See the end panel to find the rest.

Make friends for life at the Haltwhistle Walking Fest (2 – 10 May).



PHOTO: MARJORIE BAILLIE

SOUTH

27 August – 1 September

White Cliffs Walking Festival, Deal & Dover, Kent

End summer on a high where Kent's chalk downs meet the English Channel in style. 38 guided walks roam the clifftops and countryside of this AONB, with many celebrating its rich history and natural heritage. In previous years, festival highlights have included storytelling ambles and an ice cream walk from the aptly-named village of Ripple. Most walks cover between 5 and 12 miles, but if you're feeling ambitious there's the White Cliffs Challenge. www.whitecliffswalkingfestival.org.uk

24 April – 3 May

Mole Valley Ramblers Spring Walks Festival Dorking, Surrey

www.molevalleyramblers.org.uk/festival

TOP PICK!

14 – 17 May

Wotton Walking Festival Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

www.wottonwalkingfestival.com

13 – 28 June

North Wessex Downs Walking Festival Wiltshire/Oxon/Hants/Berks

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/walking-festival

19 – 25 September

Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival Sidmouth, Devon

www.visitsidmouth.co.uk

MIDLANDS

14 – 17 May

Bishop's Castle Walking Festival, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire

Explore deepest Shropshire in balmy late spring with a programme of 24 walks over four days. Bishop's Castle is a market town with the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

TOP PICK!

I have done Corsham Walking Festival several times. Really enjoyed it. Like-minded people walking together. Eileen Cook, Facebook

on its doorstep. Guided festival walks delve into quiet valleys, enchanting forests and cross airy hilltops. There's a family-friendly nature walk, a foraging walk and a walk with a literary twist. Evening activities include a tour around one of England's oldest breweries.

www.bishopscastlewalkingfestival.co.uk

16 – 28 May

National Forest Walking Festival, Leics/Derbs/Staffs

www.nationalforest.org/visit/national-forest-walking-festival

18 – 21 June

Church Stretton Walking Festival, Church Stretton, Shropshire

www.churchstrettonwalkingfestival.co.uk

1 – 5 July

Evesham Walking Festival Evesham, Worcestershire

www.eveshamramblingclub.org.uk/walkfest

2 – 4 October

Ross Walking Festival Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

www.walkinginross.co.uk

EAST

9 – 31 May

Suffolk Walking Festival, Various, Suffolk

One of the 120 walks and events across England's easternmost county this May is a ramble around Ed Sheeran's favourite castle. Locals and visitors are invited to join a mix of easy strolls and long hikes, including the 'Go West' challenge walk, which covers 75 miles and touches five long-distance paths over five days. For those who like to take it slow, there's a forest mindfulness walk to enjoy. This year's festival kicks off in the pretty town of Clare.

www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk

NORTH

28 Apr – 4 May

Ride2stride, Settle, North Yorkshire/Cumbria
Let the train take the strain with the walking and music festival which sees you ride



Winchcombe Cotswolds Walking Festival (15 – 17 May).

PHOTO: NICK TURNER/ALAMY*

the rails of the spectacular Settle-Carlisle Line through the Yorkshire Dales and Eden Valley. Led by experienced leaders, all walks start and finish at stations on this famous railway. The festival centres on the Ribblesdale town of Settle, with pubs along the line hosting visiting folk musicians. Walks range from easy to strenuous, with Ingleborough and Malham Cove on the bill.

www.ride2stride.co.uk



WalkFest 2020 in the beautiful North York Moors (23 – 25 May).

PHOTO: EBOR IMAGES

1 – 31 May

Greater Manchester Walking Festival, Greater Manchester

www.gmwalking.co.uk/festival

2 – 10 May

Haltwhistle Walking Festival Haltwhistle, Northumberland

www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org

20 – 21 June

Rosedale Walking Festival Rosedale Abbey, North Yorkshire

www.rosedaleabbey.com/walking-festival

19 – 27 September

Richmond Walking & Book Festival, Richmond, North Yorkshire

www.booksandboots.org

WALES

5 – 6 September

Corwen Walking Festival Corwen, Denbighshire

Spend a delightful weekend in North Wales' glorious Dee Valley, with 23 guided and self-led walks to choose from around the small town of Corwen at the foot of the Berwyn Mountains. Offering long hill days and gentler low-level walks, this friendly festival also includes a navigation workshop and a pop-up outdoor shop. And the walking doesn't stop as night falls, with a twilight ghost walk on the cards. You can also look forward to evening entertainment in town.

www.corwenwalkingfestival.co.uk

15 – 19 April

Chepstow Walking Festival Chepstow, Monmouthshire

www.walksinchepstow.co.uk

30 May – 7 June

Gower Walking Festival Gower Peninsula

www.gowerwalkingfestival.uk

2 – 4 October

Montgomery Walking Festival, Montgomery, Powys

www.montgomerywalkingfestival.co.uk

SCOTLAND

8 – 14 May

Newton Stewart Walking Festival, Newton Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway

Now in its 18th year, 2020's

TOP PICK!

I've done the Angus Glens Walking Festival multiple times and it was always great. It's very handy for those linear walks you wouldn't normally be able to do without the transport to or from the start and end points.

Philip Murray, Facebook

festival is celebrating Scotland's Year of Coast and Waters. Expect invigorating spring hikes along Galloway's gorgeous coastline and walks exploring the numerous lochs dotted across the wild Galloway Hills. Also in the line-up of over 30 guided walks is a 'Waterfalls and Bluebells' walk and a trek up the Southern Uplands' highest peak. Every ability is catered for and local experts are on hand to interpret the area's fascinating geology, heritage and wildlife.

www.walkfestnewtonstewart.com

24 – 26 April

Galashiels Walking Festival Weekend, Galashiels, Borders

www.galawalk.co.uk

22 – 25 May

Drovers' Tryst Walking Festival, Crieff and Strathearn, Perth & Kinross

www.droverstryst.co.uk

12 – 21 June

Moray Walking & Outdoor Festival, Moray

www.moraywalkoutdoorfest.co.uk

TOP PICK!

DISCOVER MORE!

Country Walking's complete guide to 2020's walking festivals lists over 100 events across the UK. Find full listings plus our interactive map at: www.livefortheoutdoors.com/festivals

Walking Weekend

CHURCH STRETTON

Steep hills and deep valleys, sweeping heather moorland and panoramic views... welcome to Shropshire's 'Little Switzerland'.

WORDS: ROGER BUTLER

PHOTO: DAVID LYONS/ALAMY

ALPINE ENGLAND

Tempting peaks like Caer Caradoc earned the picturesque town of Church Stretton its petit Swiss nickname.



The View

The picturesque town of Church Stretton might have been made with walkers in mind. The glorious Shropshire Hills rise in every direction and slopes of green and russet seem to tumble right down into the little market square. The area was soon dubbed Little Switzerland when visitors started to arrive in Victorian times and some of the large villas that appeared still retain hints of Alpine décor. Today, the heather-covered hills are valued for their varied wildlife, geology and archaeology.

To the west, deep valleys – locally known as hollows and batches – cut into the steep muscular contours of the five-mile Long Mynd, while a 5000-year-old track called the Portway runs along its crest. On the east side of town, an arc of prominent hills is criss-crossed by a network of breezy paths. Legend says that Caer Caradoc, capped by the earthworks of a large Iron Age fort, was where Caractacus made his famous last stand against the Romans. It's the sort of place where walking boots are almost obligatory.

The word is...

The National Trust café at **Carding Mill Valley** sells yummy cakes and is a great starting point for long, circular walks across the Long Mynd. **The Bridges** pub in Ratlinghope is also a winner.

Jodie Gemma, [f](#)



YHA Wilderhope is a fantastic place to stay and a short drive from Church Stretton.

Carly Morson [f](#)

Try **Ragleth House B&B**, a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse in the centre of town. Double rooms from £110 (01694 720227; raglethhouse.co.uk). For something a bit different, bunkrooms and private doubles (with meals, too) are available at the gliding club on top of the Long Mynd, where you can even take a taster flight. Stay from £10pn (midlandgliding.club; 01588 650206)



Berry's is a fantastic café, full of character and charm with amazing food. It's a wonderful little town. **Kay Barron** [f](#)

"The whole area around Church Stretton is a great place to get some fresh air and the views are simply outstanding. We have looked after the Long Mynd for more than fifty years now and since grazing was reduced the heather-covered plateau has returned and rare wildlife has re-established itself."

Pete Carty, National Trust

► NOW DO THE WALKS!

Turn to the back of the magazine and look for **Routes 9 & 10** for detailed walk directions.



BROUGHT TO YOU IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Bridgedale



Rohan



Ordnance Survey

FUJIFILM



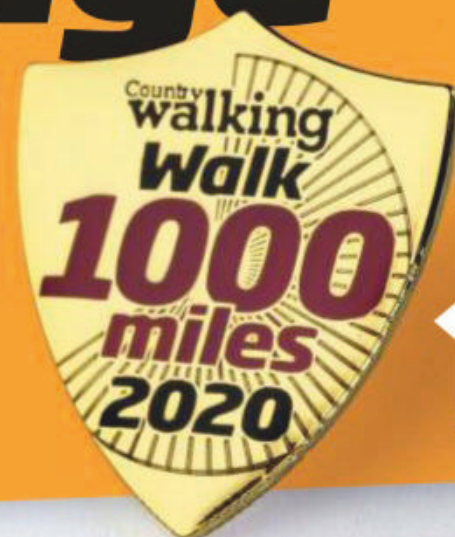
SCARPA



One year, one hour a day, one incredible result!

Mini-challenge MANIA!

Silly, stretching, seasonal: our mini-challenges help spice up your quest to walk 1000 miles in 12 months. Here are the first winners!



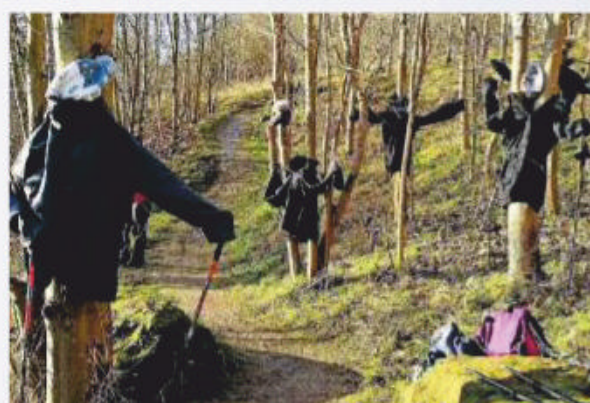
COMPLETE A MINI-CHALLENGE AND YOU COULD WIN A GOLD BADGE!

#minichallenge1

Dress a tree in a coat

WE ALL NEED some extra motivation to get out there sometimes – and ‘little’ and ‘often’ are our surest tools for success in the quest for 1000 miles. Our **mini-challenges** are one way of helping. But don’t worry if you’re just starting out and certainly don’t worry about ‘falling behind’ – there is *no-one to fall behind* but the old you. You’ve got 12 months to do this, and forming the happy habit of a daily walk is the most important thing. You’ll be amazed how slow to grow your target daily mileage is. Even if you’d just sat on your bum every day of 2020 until 1 March – your daily target to hit 1000 miles by 2021 (now only 10 months away) rises scarcely half a mile, to 3.27 miles a day – perhaps 10 minutes more than your original target. So be kind to yourself, but be firm too when self-doubt tries to hold you back from **DOING** it and **ENJOYING** it – every itty-bitty step.

► **Winner?** Email sara.mattick@bauermedia.co.uk to claim your prize



▲ ‘It was a woodland rave!’ – **Barbara Mawbey**



◀ ‘It took ages to get our jackets to stay in place, luckily there was no one else around to see how BARKing mad we looked doing this 😂’ – **John Waters**



◀ ‘The children found it hilarious and loved that I’d dressed up our Tree-men bird feeders.’ – **Robbie Collin**



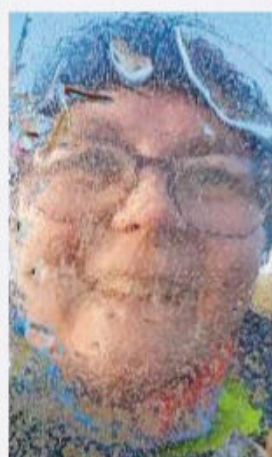
▲ ‘I say, that tree’s wearing a jacket... No it ent!’... Sorry, it was funnier in my head. – **Jade Adams**

#minichallenge2

Take a n-ice selfie



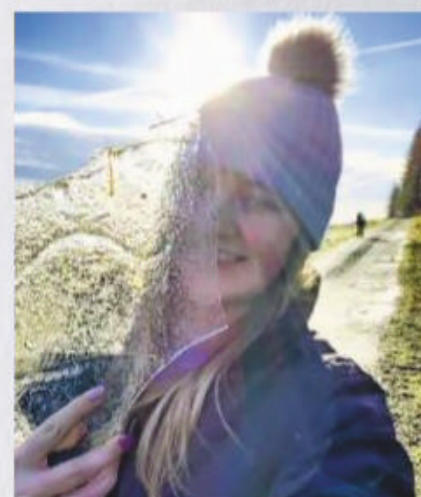
▲ **Mostest!** **Debbie Williamson**



▲ **Artiest!** **Mandy Proud**



▲ **Biggest!** **Jill Bradbury**



▲ **Sunniest!** **Rachel Bell**

#minichallenge3

A brew with a view



▲ 'This morning just as the sun was rising as we started the ascent of Ben Wyvis, we just had to stop for a brew!' **Louisa Burnett**



▲ Apple for teacher? Go on then... **Wayne Turner** (44, cheese lover, Veteran, single)



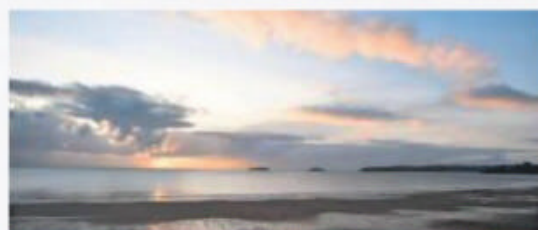
▲ 'My son has autism, agoraphobia and social anxiety so rarely leaves his flat. Today he asked to go for a drive through the countryside and on the way we could see this view and a footpath to it. We talked about the mini-challenges and I asked him to walk with me and be my photographer, and he did! We walked two miles - and more importantly we laughed. It was just one of the best days in the last couple of years. The #walk1000miles challenge has brought me new friends and fitness already and now some joy with my boy!' - **Amanda Hana**

▼ 'My first mini challenge completed on time. We'll ignore the fact that I'd poured most of it down my leg mind...' **SJ Ebdon**



#minichallenge4

Capture sunrise & moon glow



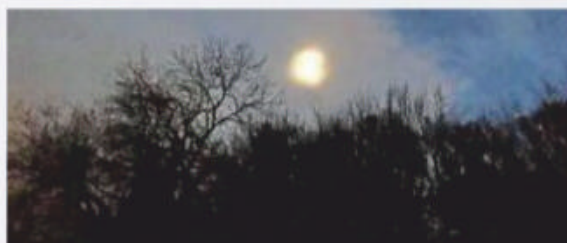
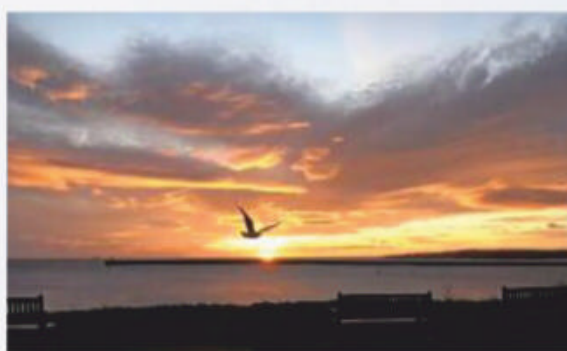
▲ 'I love walking on the beach, and Friday I was lucky to catch the sunrise and the sunset with the moon high in the sky - although it was blooming chilly!' - **Holly Wilson-Walker**



▲ 'This morning the sun was struggling to get up and over the mountain and tonight the moon is sparkling against the dark sky!' - **Lisa Muzzey**



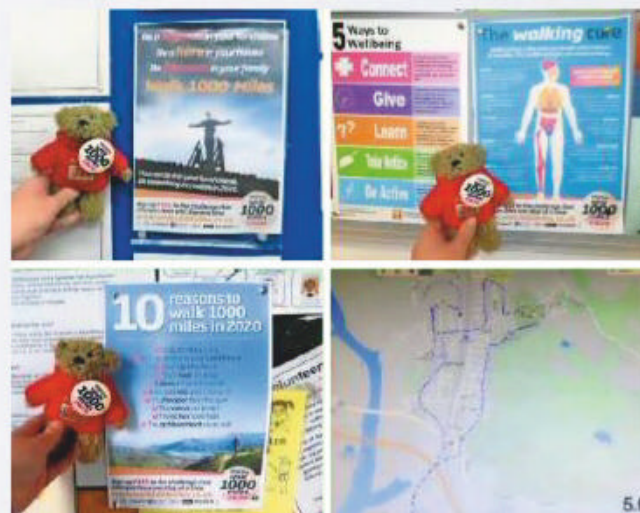
▲ 'This is quite an achievement because I'm most definitely not a morning person but these mini-challenges take us out of our comfort zone!' - **Michelle Martin**



▲ 'The joyous anticipation of watching the sun rise vs the extreme relief of getting back to the car before it gets properly dark' - **Ruth Taylor**

#minichallenge5

Spread the word



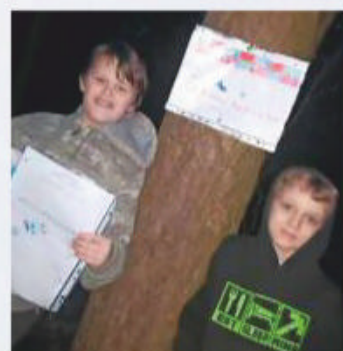
▲ LOCAL PARK!

'Determined to win a Golden Badge - and to hopefully get others involved in this amazing journey of course!' - **Cwtchy Gran**



▲ WIN-WIN-WIN!

'Donated blood, asked the nurse in charge if I could leave some posters on the donors' refreshments table. ('Please do!'), and it was a return trip of 3.3 miles!' - **Don Lane**



▲ HOME-MADE!

Maz Wilson's boys made their own brilliant posters and they went up on the walk home from school! "They'll stay up for a week as the boys don't want them to damage the environment if they fall off" says Maz. Heroes!

▲ POSTER-BOMB!

'Poster-bombed my village today - the pub, campsite, parish hall noticeboard, Exmoor camping barn and Bridgetown cricket club!' - **Glenna Waterhouse**



TAKE PART! THIS MONTH'S MINI-CHALLENGES ARE ON PAGE 21

And *breathe*...

Pilgrimages come in all shapes and sizes but each has something in common: they're the walks that help us achieve peace or new purpose in some aspect of our lives. These are the walks that meant most to these 1000-milers...

'Shed the cloak of grief and the sun came out'

'It had been a rough year, having lost my lovely dad to cancer and got divorced. But I realised on a trek in Costa Rica that there was still so much happiness to be had. I found a letter tucked into my rucksack from my children saying how proud they were that I'd decided to do the trek on my own, and how much they loved me. I felt empowered. Standing with my feet in the Pacific Ocean at the end of the trek I realised I'd finally shed the cloak of grief and the sun had come out.' **Karen Hegarty**



Out of the darkness

I walked after one of the worst night shifts I've had in 10 years of nursing. No debrief, or cup of tea, or cuddle were going to clear my head the way the walk did. I could have stayed in but I would have stewed it over and over in my head. The 'what ifs' and the 'could haves/should haves'. That walk grounded me. It made me realise nature takes its course, no matter our interventions. It made me realise that I'm only one person in this huge world. It made me feel able to go back to work with a fresh, clear head.' **Aimee Reynolds**



'I thought my time was gone'

'Walking up Snowdon in 2018, my first proper mountain after Catbells, and in my 65th year. I really thought my time for climbing mountains was long gone. But I did it as a result of #walk1000miles with a dear friend.'

Pete Ashmore

'I still carry his lead'

'For me it was a week after losing my best buddy. I almost cancelled the trip as I was in no fit state. But it created the most amazing moment and this image is now a canvas on my wall. I still carry his lead on walks a year later. It was forecast to be miserable but the higher up Snowdon we got the weather got better. We rushed the last stages as I really wanted to be at the top for sunset, and when we got to the summit it was empty. We were the only two on the mountain and we sat and watched the most amazing sunset. It was pure therapy and will never be forgotten.' **Andy Greaves**



'The day I realised I love walking'

'Kaikoura, New Zealand, in June 2003. I'd just quit my job as a solicitor and took a month off to travel. I'd just got off the boat from whale watching off the coast (saw three whales that day!) and decided to walk back to my hostel, which was only 10-15 minutes away. I was so caught up by the beauty of the place - the rocky coastline, the snow-capped mountains - that I walked past my hostel and Kaikoura town, and found myself a good five miles along the coast when it was starting to get dark. That was when it hit me that I'd had a beautiful day, I was in a beautiful place, and oh wow, I could walk! That was the day I realised I loved walking.'

Anis Ibrahim



Acceptance

'When my husband died I was beside myself, but I was so busy learning how to be a lone parent I couldn't think about much. When I could it was so raw and so painful – it was as if someone had slashed me across the face. With time though, I started to walk along parts of the Welsh coastal path with a friend. It was so beautiful – and we walked and talked and it helped both mind and body. But the moment that crystallised my acceptance of my changed life was walking past an old mine working near Black Cliff on the Pembrokeshire Coastal path. It's a scar – it despoiled somewhere untouched. But it's broken down now, with greenery covering its rough edges and I thought, this is like me. It's not pristine but it's okay. It's part of a greater whole and the scar on this landscape doesn't matter so much. And that puts my pain, and my scar into context. And that helps.'

Helen Brace



PHOTO: TRAVELLINGLIGHT/ALAMY

50 years' wait

'When I was little we used to visit a family friend in Fort William. As we drove up there I always used to say I am going to climb that one day – that being Buachaille Etive Mor. Over 50 years later the day finally arrived on 12 June 2019. The weather was perfect. Blue sky you could see out to Mull from the summit. Along with 'The Ben'. The views down Glen Etive were fantastic. It was amazing. It was also my first Munro. It will always be my special place.'

Jacquie Varley



Out of the shadows

'My daughter is disabled – it wasn't immediately obvious when she was born, just a gradual realisation as she missed her milestones. Obviously the people who we saw day to day knew she couldn't walk, but friends and family who lived further away and who we only keep in touch with on social media didn't. I wanted to announce it to the world in a way that didn't bring on an immediate 'pity party' and didn't know how to do it. And then her nursery did a sponsored walk and we signed up. I took her walking frame (a big thing that she literally sits in the middle of), and she 'walked' with me crawling behind, moving her feet one at a time. We took pictures, put them on social media, with the amount she had raised. Instead of a pity party we got comments congratulating her and saying well done – and we finally moved out of the shadows and said 'This is us!'

Lorna Fillingham



'All the self-doubt went away'

'Last year for my 50th birthday I walked from Sowerby Bridge to Castleford along the canals over three days with my best friend – for me this was a huge challenge. It was the first time I'd walked that distance and it was the first time I'd ever carried a backpack. I weighed 22 stone when I did this, and have fibromyalgia and Ehlers Danlos Type 3. This walk meant more to me than anything else because I realised I COULD do this – all the self-doubts in my head went away. Now I'm more determined than ever to get to my 1000 miles this year, having fallen short in previous years. I'm walking every day, looking into walking holidays and most of all enjoying it.'

Jo-ann van der Westhuizen



1000 miles of therapy

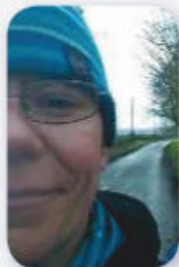
'My pilgrimage was doing this challenge in 2019 – it was my therapy, after my husband passed away. My walks give me time to process my thoughts – I don't always make sense of them but I can file them away in a part of my head that needs visiting less and less. My walks have encouraged my independence, increased my confidence and given me a grand sense of achievement. I'm a Badger, I have a gold badge, I've had my name in the magazine, been part the 'best bits' videos and I'm part of the best group of people! I am beyond proud.'

Gillian Snelgar

Keep *breathing...*

'Found a love I'd misplaced'

'Two years ago I started walking from Land's End to John o'Groats – an odd week here and there because of work commitments – following the South West Coastal Path and covering 22-25 miles a day. I focussed on doing the challenge as quick as I could manage – exhilarating but totally exhausting. Eventually though I slowed down and learned to enjoy the journey, the scenery, villages and people along the way. I'm currently as far as Worcester and plan no more than ten miles each day, intending to thoroughly enjoying each step until I finally reach John o'Groats. Along the way, I've found the love for the outdoors which I'd misplaced somewhere around my Twenties.' **Kathryn Tarr**



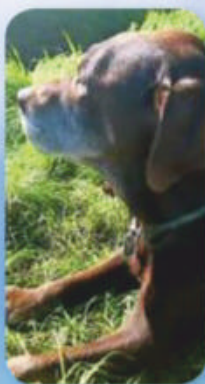
The long goodbye

'September 2016 I said goodbye to my big bear of a dog Bruce. On the morning of the day we went for our last walk together. It was a short walk but it took us over three hours as we spent time



plodding along the river and sitting together on the banks watching the world go by. It was a lovely warm day and a perfect day to say goodbye. Not the longest of walks in sense of distance but a walk that I wish could have lasted forever, a walk that will be forever treasured. This is the last picture I took of him sat on the banks of the river watching the ducks swim by and the dragonflies buzz about.'

Tanya Dutt



'I felt him with me'

'In 2017 I took a solo holiday for the first time in decades and walked in the Yorkshire Dales where I was born. The walk that meant so much to me was from Kettlewell up over the tops and eventually down into Starbottan and back along beside the River Wharfe. We had planted a tree in a new wood along the route when my father died in 1998 and I felt him with me, in his polished walking boots and red rucksack and his tie... always a tie.'

Rachel Kirk



'Changed my jaded view'

'Walking the 800km Camino de Santiago – a medieval pilgrimage route across Spain – changed my jaded view of humanity by showing me a community of people each on their own quest yet helping each other along the way.'

Jerry Everard



'We cried on the way up, and laughed on the way down'

'My husband had died five years before, but I'd finally met someone else, fallen in love and we'd even talked about getting married – before he ended it, going off with my best mate shortly after. The mate had been my rock since my husband died. I lost her, the man I loved, and the future I thought I was heading for – as well as my marbles for the best part of the following year! Then I walked the Coast to Coast with an incredible lady, my friend Kate [top right], who knew when to talk and when to walk and let your feet and mind do their healing thing. Those two weeks put me back together in a way I will be forever grateful for. Life is wonderful and for living, but it's hard sometimes to remember that. The picture is from the highest point of Kidsty Pike – the turn around day both in the walk and for me... We cried on the way up, and laughed on the way down. Utterly brilliant day and memory!'

Marie McNally

You can start your challenge any time. It's 2.74 miles a day. For all the info: walk1000miles.co.uk/signup



'I LOVE LOVE LOVE IT!'

Stripey, badgery, meaningful, snuggly, neck-thing is the hit of the #walk1000miles shop!

Each stripe represents the change in temperature from 1850 to the present and was created by climate scientist Professor Ed Hawkins MBE at the National Centre for Atmospheric Science. Swap some driving miles for walking ones and you're helping move things in the right direction – in comfort and style! **#walk1000miles goodies from £2.20 – badges, medals, T-shirts & more.**



'Keeps you warm, keeps you cool and so comfy you'll forget you're wearing it hours after a walk'

Carol Bianca

COMPETITION

WIN A ROHAN HELIX JACKET WORTH £275

#walk1000miles' clothing partner Rohan makes the best-designed, most comfortable, understated yet high-performance apparel for your 1000-mile journey – and many thousands of miles beyond. With a waterproof level that surpasses most other waterproofs and breathability that rivals some of the best softshells, the Helix Jacket is Rohan's most packable, softest, quietest and lightest hardshell. Try it to believe it!

► HOW TO ENTER:

www.walk1000miles.co.uk/articles/rohancomp1



Strike gold! New Mini-challenges

Will you win a money-can't-buy **Golden Badge** on one of your walks this month?



11 WALK TO WORK

Park (or alight your public transport) a mile and a half or so from work and bracket your day with a 30-minute wake-me-up detox walk. Tell us how it feels!

Use the hashtag:

#minichallenge11



PHOTO: TETRA IMAGES, LLC/ALAMY*

12 PHOTOGRAPH A BUTTERFLY

Emerging from hibernation on warmer days, butterflies like the peacock, comma and brimstone are joyous harbingers of spring!

Keep eyes peeled!

#minichallenge12



PHOTO: NATUREPIX/ALAMY*

13 COOK WITH NETTLES OR WILD GARLIC

Make nettle tea or soup or put wild garlic in a pesto, risotto, pasta or omelette. Because they're young and delish right now, and haven't you always wondered?

#minichallenge13



PHOTO: IMADRI/ALAMY*

14 TALK TO A STRANGER

We're all part of the human family – speak to someone when you're out walking, and tell us how it went. Get a photo if you can but it's not essential. Making the connection is the thing.

#minichallenge14



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

15 STRANGE CARGO

Take an incongruous item for a walk, and photograph it far out of its element. (Toaster? Ironing board? Office phone? Mower? Spacehopper? TV? Train set? Teenager?)

#minichallenge15

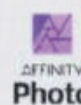


PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

How to enter

Upload photo evidence including the relevant hashtag (check your spelling!) in the main #walk1000miles Facebook group by **26 March**. Winners will be announced in the magazine. New challenges every issue!

BROUGHT TO YOU IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



#WALK1000MILES UPDATE

PARTNER FOCUS: SCARPA

No place too far

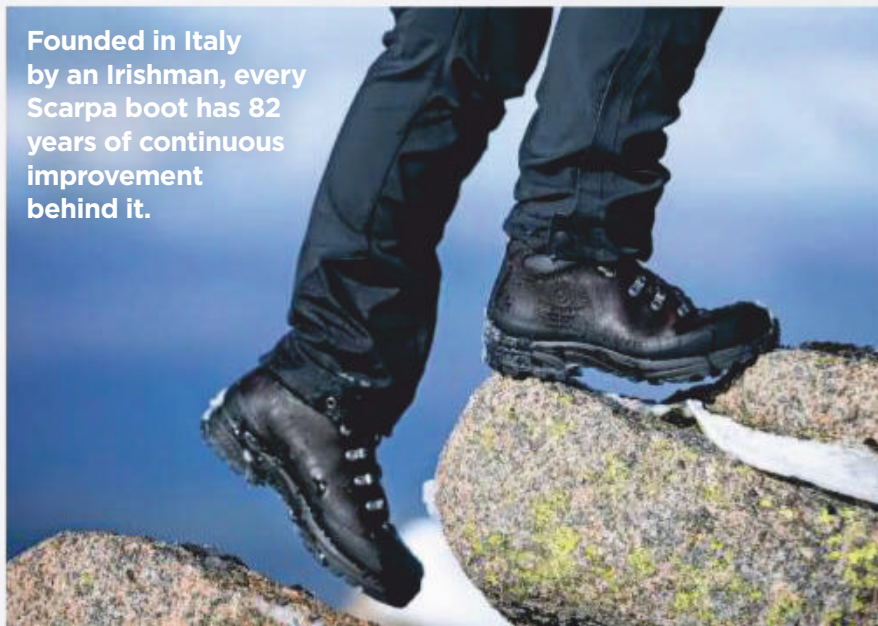
Boot partner **Scarpa** explains why they love #walk1000miles – and two boots that will take you all the way, and beyond.



THIS IS THE third year that SCARPA will be a proud sponsor of the **Walk 1000 miles** challenge. We at SCARPA love helping people get connected to the outdoors where they can lead a healthier and happier lifestyle. This is why our motto is 'No Place Too Far'.

We are certain that our wide range of boots and shoes will help you achieve your goal while keeping your feet, warm, dry and comfortable. As a world leader in footwear production, look no further than SCARPA to help you perform during your **Walk 1000 miles** challenge.

Founded in Italy by an Irishman, every Scarpa boot has 82 years of continuous improvement behind it.



TWO OF OUR FAVOURITE BOOTS



Go high and go long



Your friend in the hills

SL Active

The SL is the 9th generation of this classic, tough trekking boot, now even more luxurious and comfortable, while still being fully compatible with C1 walking crampons.

The SL is now built on the latest **TM** last shape, giving an improved heel fit and closer fit across the forefoot. The redesigned upper uses a soft nubuck leather cuff with a cut out at the Achilles, as well as redesigned flex zone, giving greater comfort on long descents and ascents in the mountains. The speed lacing system gives a sure hold across the instep, and the plush leather lining inside the boot is instantly luxurious and comfortable.

The SL is built using a 2.8mm **Sherpa leather** (the toughest and most waterproof of any full grain leather Scarpa uses) impregnated with HS12 and built as a one-piece construction for durable weather protection. The SL also uses the **Vibram** biometric trek sole for traction and support when carrying a large pack. The leather and 37.5 lining (and lack of membrane) make this a brilliant boot for warm weather trekking.

► Available in both Men's and Women's

Terra GTX

The Scarpa Terra is the bestselling model in its range and the perfect boot for UK hillwalking conditions, the soft leather upper is incredibly comfortable straight out of the box, and the revised stitching pattern makes it even more dependable. A **Gore-Tex** waterproof membrane ensures your feet stay comfortable in any weather conditions. The **Vibram Energy II** is now even more durable, and the PU cushioning layer now offers more stability and support for all day comfort. The overall fit of the boot has been improved, with slightly more space around the toes, and it's perfect for use every day.

► Available in both men and women's



SCARPA.CO.UK

Your View

EMAIL: country.walking@lfto.com ★ FACEBOOK: facebook.com/countrywalking ★ TWITTER: twitter.com/countrywalking

WRITE
TO US AT:
Country Walking,
Media House,
Lynchwood,
Peterborough
PE2 6EA



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Music to our ears!

Listening to classical station Scala on the way home from work recently I heard Nick Hallissey's suggestion about doing a 'sunrise walk'. One of the places recommended was St Martha's Hill near Guildford, not too far from where we live. Suggesting it when I got home got a positive response, so last Saturday morning we set out before dawn and walked up the hill through the wood to the church at the top. Fabulous birdsong, amazing views and then just the most wonderful sunrise. We agreed that being out at that time, watching the sun come up as everyone else was waking up in the valley below, was an unforgettable experience.

Thank you for the fabulous suggestion in the first place! And in fact the story didn't end there...

I mentioned to my Mum we'd done it and she said when she was a girl, she'd often catch the train with my granny to Guildford, walk up St Martha's Hill and sit outside the church to admire the view. It had always been her favourite walk when she was little. I'd never known that. Listening to her reminiscing was really lovely.

So, a doubly special walk. Thank you.
Rachel Cannon, Email

► You can hear Nick on Mark Forrest's show on Scala, Wednesdays at 4.30pm.

A PAIR OF BERGHAUS BOOTS FOR RACHEL!

The author of the letter of the month wins a pair of **Berghaus Hillmaster II GTX** boots worth £160. One of Britain's best-loved traditional walking boots, the Hillmaster now features full grain Pittards leather from a UK tannery, joining the Vibram sole unit, Gore-Tex lining and great fit, performance and comfort. www.berghaus.com



Aim for that tuft!

I enjoyed your article on Navigation and thought I'd pass on one of my techniques. When walking on a bearing especially in mist or at night, look along the bearing for a feature: rock, tree, patch of heather anything that is slightly different. Then walk to it and then look along your bearing for another feature. This allows you to avoid obstacles without being thrown off your bearing. In days before GPS when map and compass was the only way to navigate we used to send a member of the party ahead and use them as the feature.
Neil Bailey, Email



Tape it up

Looking for a blister tip? The best prevention I've used is Micropore (or similar) paper tape, normally used to hold surgical dressings without damaging the skin. I put this across the ball of my foot, with snug walking socks and shoes, and never get blisters. The idea comes from a study of endurance runners. Thanks to those researchers!

Peter West, Email

Views in brief

This heart appeared in the sea at Amble. Dedicated to the one I love – but don't tell my husband ;) – **Margaret Vickers**

On our way home! Our old girl isn't up to long walks anymore, but we don't want to leave her. She loves the bag, and even falls asleep! – **Laureen Smith**

Amazing day yesterday! We definitely got the weather! – **Lisa Lou**

A three-mile mostly uphill walk to this spot for an overnight camp under the stars in Wales – **Kirk Paton**

Energising light in Goring Heath, Oxfordshire! – **Gini Blake**

Chart for chart's sake

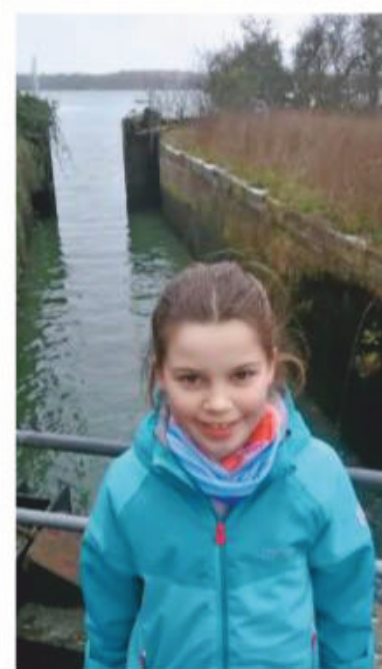
We love the magazine but having a three-and-a-half year old and an 18-month-old, most of the walks are future aspirations. We're starting to try and build up our family walks, at present somewhere close to 2.5 miles max (and we all feel we've done a marathon at the end of it!). So while we aspire to the 1000 mile challenge, could you perhaps bear with us for a few years? How about producing an inspiring kids progress tracker for a more achievable Walk 100 Miles? Kids love charts! Wish us luck for our next challenging walk, a whopping 2.25 miles near Pewsey. **Judith Giles, Gloucestershire.**

►Great idea, done! Download your printable 100 mile chart from www.walk1000miles.co.uk/charts – **Ed.**



Mission accomplished

My daughter Amelie (10) enjoys my subscription to CW. We're lucky to live within walking distance of Chichester Canal, so what better place to start our **Mission 2020** 'Waterworld'? [March CW.] Today we walked from the Basin all the way to the sea – four miles. We were thrilled to see a kingfisher on our walk, as we'd never seen one on the canal before. With a volunteer-run café at the start, and a bus to bring you home again, it makes a perfect family-sized route. Amelie is pictured in her 2020 climate-striped #walk1000miles neck-tube. It was my birthday present.



I'd recently given one to a colleague who was leaving to start a new job as a climate change officer in the north-east – it seemed such a perfect gift! **Catherine Cannon, Email**



▲ We told the farmer we were on our way, so he rolled out the red carpet!

Becky Firth,
Alport Derbyshire

WHERE'S KES?

Every month our favourite spaniel Kes goes walkies somewhere in the issue, and we want him back! Can you help find Kes?

Kes the conker-colour Cocker is an inveterate explorer, often finding his way into the unlikelyst of places when we're busy putting the magazine together. In fact he's hiding out in this issue for you to find! Spot him (not on this page) and you could win over £45 worth of Lifeventure goodies – just email the page number where you found Kes to: ifoundkes@LFTO.com by March 26, 2020 putting 'Kes Spring' in the subject line.

And congratulations to **Prue Barry from Oxford** who spotted Kes sniffing around the trig point Black Crag in the Lake District on page 64 of the February issue, and wins this month's prize!



GREAT PRIZES



LIFEVENTURE

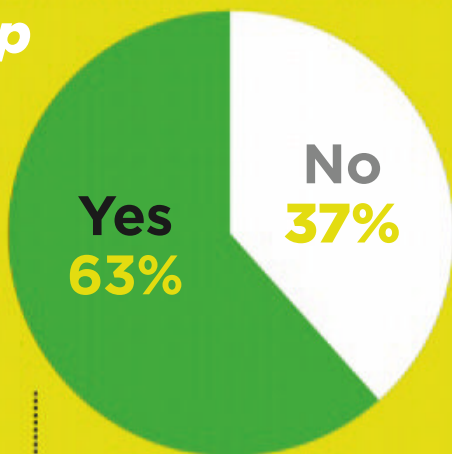
THE WALKING POLL

Should we stop changing the clocks?

- As someone living in the far north this issue always annoys me. Even when the clocks go back the sun doesn't rise until after 9am on the very shortest days of the year – this would make it after 10am with BST. Kids walking to school in the pitch black doesn't seem particularly safe to me. This issue only ever seems to be raised by folk living in areas with much more winter daylight – **Philip Murray**

- It's quirky. I vote to keep it – **Marion Knight**

- The logical thing would be to stick to GMT and change the normal working hours instead - in summer change from working 9-5 to working 8-4 or whatever. Different industries, schools and parts



of the country could then do their own thing. And if you stick to GMT, sundials work all year round. No batteries needed – **Martyn Wynne**

- I'd vote for GMT+2 in the summer. Take an hour of pre-6am daylight that most of the country never sees and put it in the evening. It would boost the economy (warmer longer evenings promoting a more European flavour to the UK) and give more time for an evening walk in daylight – **Matt Horsley**



Every little helps

Fitness doesn't come naturally to me, but I've loved walking since I used to go exploring with my Dad. I try to fit in as much of it as possible – If I need to go to town, I'll walk. If I go to visit a local friend, I'll walk. I only take the car if absolutely necessary. My daughters are totally used to being picked up from school and having to trudge the mile trip home. They've never complained! I always love seeing the reactions of their friends who come back for play dates and often exclaim 'Are we there yet?'. Secretly I think they all enjoy the trip though. Having the girls, we have to be careful with our finances but we all need an indulgence now and again, right? I had a monthly make-up beauty box, but now common sense has now prevailed and I've ditched the beauty box in favour of issues of *Country Walking*! Result!

Liz Rumble, Bracknell

Tea break

Walking wordsearch

Signs of spring: there are 10 to find and one bonus word!

JUST FOR FUN

V C E L A D I N E S T I E G D
C G A C O A V Z G B B V Q X A
B S B I I L M N Q I U E E D F
B U P L X Z I R L R T R O L F
V W M C O L Q S A D T Q V E O
B C T B K S V O M S E A L L D
L K A C L W S I B O R T D Y I
U X U I G E J O S N F M T L L
E D P E S U B Y M G L F Y N S
B G Z Q K X S E G Q I Y O K Y
E H R F M X T Z E Q E O G J R
L E F F K U S N R S S P S K A
L V W S N O W D R O P S R M L
S N X A B C A W W I I U P N O
W I L D G A R L I C N T C A U

- BIRDSONG
- BLOSSOM
- BUMBLEBEES
- BUTTERFLIES
- CELADINES
- DAFFODILS
- DUCKLINGS
- LAMBS
- SNOWDROPS
- WILD GARLIC

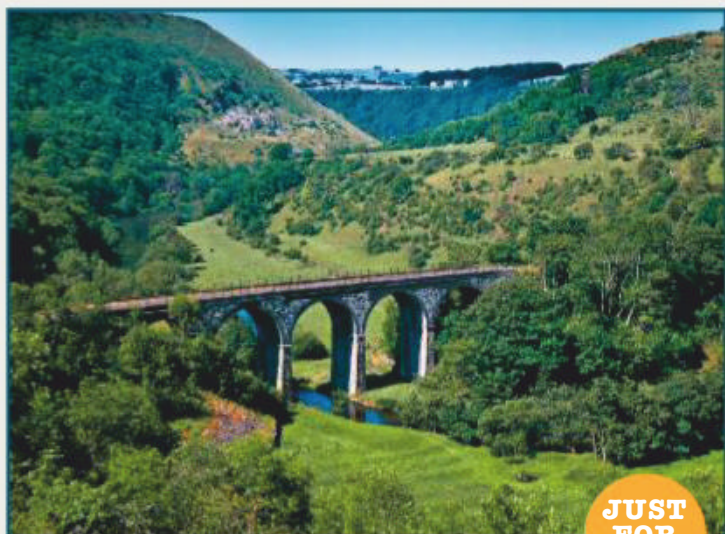


PHOTO: BRIAN LAWRENCE/ALAMY*

Where is this?

JUST FOR FUN

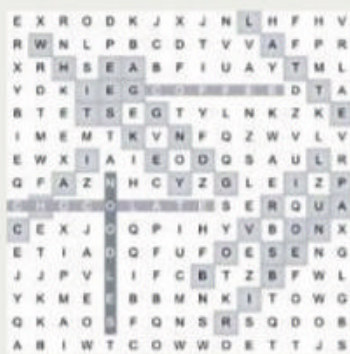
Country: _____ (Apprentice)
National Park _____ (Master)
Specifically it's: _____
_____ (Maestro)

Last month's answers



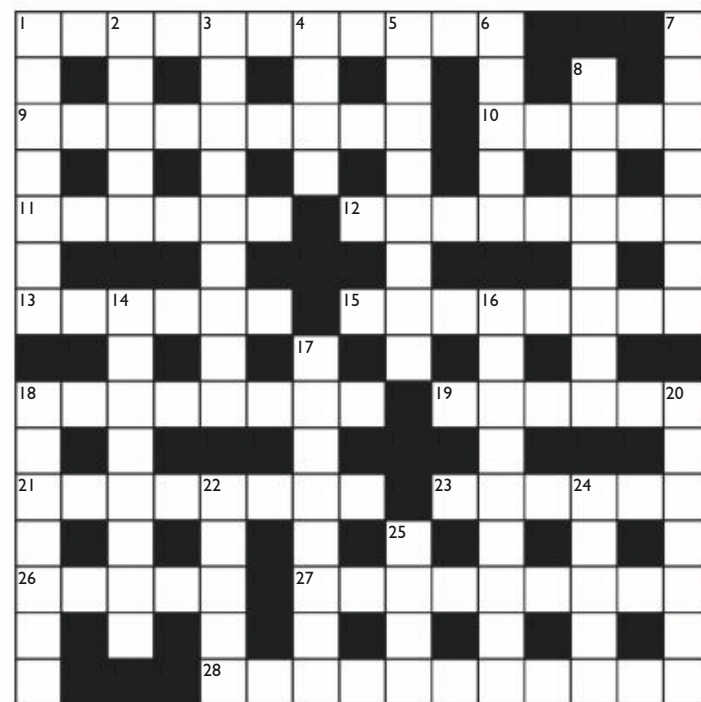
PHOTO: A.P.S. (UK)/ALAMY*

WHERE IS THIS?
Windermere,
Lake District, England



PRIZE CROSSWORD

By Will Adams



MARCH ANSWERS

SCAFELL DORSET
UNNE I H X S
SHELTER SNOWMEN
TICE WHO N O A
RIDER I WEDLOCK
A O CAN D R E
NETWORK SCAR
S E O S A B
G FOWL STAMINA
GR F OAK I CENI
OVERFED I ICENI
R S P GOD S D L
SHUTEYE DULLARD
ELAR A E L O
STAKES WESTERN

FEBRUARY WINNERS

Linda Ball, Twickenham
Heather French, Stafford
Jon Raymond, Swindon

March issue winners will be published next month.

► Full terms and conditions can be found at greatcompetitions.co.uk

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Closing date: March 26, 2020

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► Bauer Media Group consists of Bauer Consumer Media Ltd, Bauer Radio Ltd and H Bauer Publishing Ltd.

ACROSS

- 1 Stray cow lost way round beginning of December on path from Chipping Campden to Bath (8,3)
- 9 They're starting out from Garsdale Head inn surrounded by ales! (9)
- 10 Come together for a bit of a run - it energises! (5)
- 11 Some shelter at Hereford, to a certain extent (6)
- 12 These bad changes in Gwynedd town (8)
- 13 Dreadful battle for electronic device (6)
- 15 Convolvulus on wide bend, unusually (8)
- 18 Puts everything to the torch in Wharfedale fell-racing village? (8)
- 19 Animals on wild shores (6)
- 21 In pain from walking, or of toes damaged (8)
- 23 See 6 down
- 26 Performer puts beacon centrally on Dartmoor outcrop (5)
- 27 Poor heart sad about end of ramble - cry a little (4,1,4)
- 28 Could new Del Mar boots aid this circulation? (11)

DOWN

- 1 Taxi rate revised for nightclub entertainment (7)
- 2 Clothes thus close-fitting? Prepare spaghetti, omitting peas (5)
- 3 Ramblers from Wolverhampton? (9)
- 4 Vegetable seen on the Staffordshire Way (4)
- 5 A WI tries modifying this climbing shrub (8)
- 6 & 23 across Young people can stay here, but unfortunately shut the loo after end of May (5,6)
- 7 Country that's possibly led with rain! (7)
- 8 Extraordinary trimness of churches at York and Beverley! (8)
- 14 Resort on the Mawddach Way might be tram hub round centre of shops (8)
- 16 Perhaps too near dirty dogs initially - this might stop them smelling! (9)
- 17 New loafers containing carbon for out of doors (2,6)
- 18 Animal on a bluff, wandering with no end of vegetation (7)
- 20 Put preservative on sheep at Devon National Trust property (7)
- 22 Sort of bush, right! (5)
- 24 In part her enjoyment in that place (5)
- 25 Go in front, starting leisurely, ending 'at double'! (4)

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Stuart Maconie

Snowflakes in the Lake District?
Or just a storm in a teacup?

WHEN A STORY about the Lake District makes the front page of *The Sun*, you suspect it may well have been something of a slow news day.

Yet there it was, in that strange period between Christmas and New Year (perhaps the slowest of slow news periods): the splash headline **'THE FLAKE DISTRICT'**, with the bullet-point sub-headings:

● **BOSS: PARK TOO WHITE**

● **HILLS 'NOT INCLUSIVE'**

The 'flake' jibe referred, of course, to snowflakes. The derogatory term meaning over-sensitive and culturally 'woke', which seems to have begun in the book and film *Fight Club* – in the latter of which Brad Pitt tells the audience: "You are not special. You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake". As originally intended, it was a smart and provocative line of thinking, an interesting riposte to what seemed a growing trend towards rampant individualism and a certain whiny sense of entitlement.

But the line was taken up by sections of the alt-right and has become both ubiquitous and scattergun in its deployment. A cheap way to slight the views of anyone younger or more thoughtful than oneself.

And at the turn of the year it was deployed in response to some comments by the head of the Lake District National Park Authority, Richard Leafe. In the wake of a report that claimed our national parks needed to become more welcoming, he said: "We are deficient in terms of young people, we are deficient in terms of black and minority ethnic communities and we are not particularly well-visited by those who are less able in terms of their mobility. Our challenge is to see what we can do to reverse that, to encourage people from broader backgrounds and a wider range of personal mobilities into the national park to be able to benefit in the same way as other groups do."

The story was about the restoration of the Keswick to Threlkeld Railway Path. Formed from the trackbed of a disused railway line, this accessible

Found On Foot

Speaking of cairns; I think even the most devout cairn-hater would respect the extraordinary Riksrøysa/Riksrösen: a line of austere, shapely stone cairns dotted along the 1000-mile border between Norway and Sweden. Another list to tick one day!

► Hear Stuart on **Radcliffe and Maconie**, BBC 6 Music, weekends, 7am to 10am.

trail became impassable in 2015, when Storm Desmond washed away the old railway bridges across the River Greta. There is a proposal to restore it as a fully Tarmacked path to provide 'multi-access' for all.

But this is where the story went wrong. In amongst a perfectly reasonable point – that access for all abilities, ages and ethnicities was an admirable goal – it was somehow extrapolated that Mr Leafe felt the Lakes were simply too rugged for millennials.

The region's aldermen puffed their chests with indignation. Keswick's deputy mayor, Paul Titley, said: "If you get wet, it won't hurt you. If you get cold, put something else on," and councillor Adam Poxon was quoted thus: "If you don't want to walk in mud you shouldn't come to the Lake District. It's nonsense."

But then a considered response came from a very unexpected corner. Former *Britain's Got Talent* winner Paul Potts tweeted: "I've walked along the path that [they] want to Tarmac. It was a former train trackbed. It can be kept to the same standard with Tarmac and be accessible to disabled people."

I can see both points of view. Those of us who are fit, sighted, mobile and comfortable with the culture of walking should surely try and share that pleasure rather than restrict it. When I hear people calling for cairns to be destroyed, saying "You shouldn't be up there unless you can navigate," and opining that the fells are no place for the unfit or unskilled, I can detect a sour, macho exclusivity below the surface.

But what Mr Leafe was saying was that it should be possible to provide easier, more accessible experiences amongst all the rugged mountain drama. The wild places of Lakeland, Scotland and Wales will always be only really accessible to the most able-bodied. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to make spaces and places and routes that every ability and mobility can enjoy, within those amazing landscapes. Don't tell people they won't get wet, or get lost, or get tired though. Tell them they'll love it instead. **CW**



ILLUSTRATION: STEVEN HALL

Walking Festivals 2020

MAY

ALTON'S WALKING AND CYCLING FESTIVAL

1st - 31st May 2020



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MAY

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A three-day festival to celebrate walking in Milton Keynes. We have 20 walks to choose from suitable for all ages and abilities.

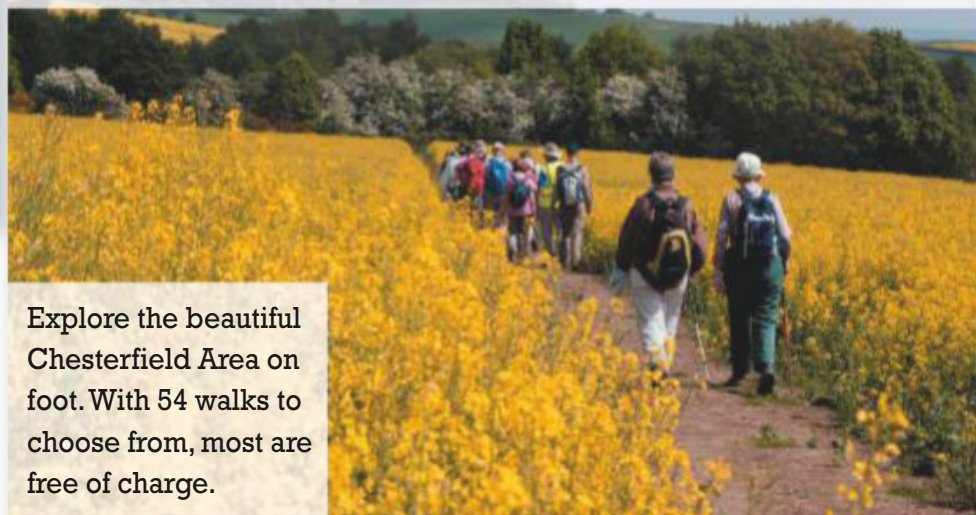
www.theparkstrust.com

The Parks Trust
MILTON KEYNES

MAY

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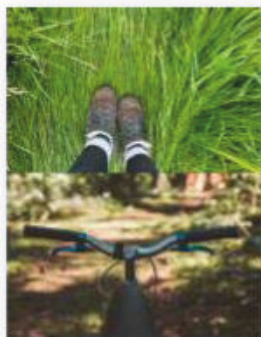
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MAY

JUNE



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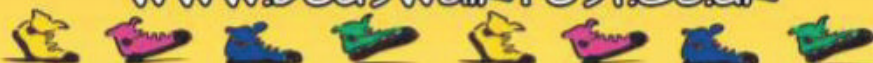
SEPTEMBER

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Walking Festival

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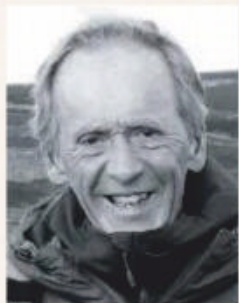
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Sidmouth Walking Festival

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19 - 25 September 2020



Geoff Holland

A *Country Walking* route writer celebrates a new decade on a long walk in the Northumberland hills...

I WAS LOOKING FOR a walk to celebrate a 'landmark' birthday, the passing of another year and the genesis of a new decade. I wanted something to test my ageing legs and lungs, a kind of walking MOT, whilst revisiting places which had excited me most over many years of wandering my local hills. In the event it was a no-brainer, a high circuit of Northumberland's premier hill, the 'muckle' Cheviot.

To many, the Cheviot Hills are a mystery, a range of rounded hills quickly by-passed on the dash north to Scotland's rugged Highlands. From afar there's nothing particular to catch the eye, and The Cheviot itself – the highest peak at 815m – has been called 'an evil blanket of peat'. But dig deeper and you'll begin to understand how these dual-nationality hills can reel you in, like a trout from a clear Cheviot burn.

At first, it might be mild curiosity, a walk on a well-worn route with views over this 'land of far horizons'. Then the bug begins to bite, as you discover lonely meltwater channels and ice-gouged hollows, steep valleys and fast burns, shapely shanks leading to windy summits and quiet cleughs. Each detail feeds your obsession in a never-ending cycle of discovery.

This time I set out from the Harthope Valley, as the dawn mist burnt away. I was heading first to the secluded Lambden Valley, the Hawsen Burn guiding me steadily uphill. The air was warm like freshly baked bread and spring was on the rise as I walked on to Goldscleugh, the last working farm in the vale.

Then west to Dunsdale for the climb to Bellyside Crag, 770 metres up and the highest crag in the county. Two miles later I was clambering over peat hags to its top, ready for a break in my high-level trip over the Cheviot. The view was vast, with waves of hills rolling to the thin blue line of the North Sea.

With a long way still to go, I walked towards the rim of the ice-crafted Bizzle, its breathtaking crags home to climbing routes with evocative names like Lost World and Spitfire. Next was Braydon Crag,

Found On Foot

The Bellyside Burn on this walk is as wild a place as you could hope to find.

I spotted a flash of reddish brown here, a strong looking roe buck with a fine pair of antlers. Perhaps sensing my presence, he stopped grazing, looked up and assessed the situation before he bounded uphill, his white rump rising and falling with each easy movement.

Geoff Holland is a *Country Walking* routes writer and author of multiple guidebooks about Northumberland.

an outcrop where I spotted the scant remains of an ill-fated B17 Flying Fortress. It was a place for quiet reflection, remembering the many airmen who lost their lives in these hills during the 1939-45 conflict.

Ready to eat, I threaded my way to the south edge of West Hill for lunch. High above Hen Hole, this promontory offered a panorama across the finest natural feature in the county, where it's said you might 'hear the horn of the hunter who was lured into the sombre glen by a mountain fairy'. All I could hear was the College Burn, far below my outstretched feet, tumbling over a series of waterfalls.

From here, an intermittent path hugged the 700 metre contour as best it could to Auchope Cairn. Up on the western extremity of the Cheviot, this iconic spot teeters on Northumberland's 'ragged edge'. It is a wild, elemental place, enjoying one of the grandest views in the Cheviot Hills whilst snuggling up to the Anglo/Scottish border. It's said on a clear day you can see Lochnagar on the royal estate of Balmoral but, despite regular visits to a certain firm of opticians, I am yet to see Prince Charles' favourite mountain.

The mainly-paved Pennine Way guided me the next couple of miles to the summit of the Cheviot, crowned with a huge concrete plinth and a regulation size triangulation pillar. Only then did I encounter my first *homo sapien* of the day as he traipsed across the vast Cheviot plateau. Pleasantries exchanged, I paused a moment, sipping the remnants of my drink, like I had on so many occasions in the past.

I was now a septuagenarian embarking on a new decade, no longer that fleet-footed 30-something, racing across the roof of Northumberland on an early morning run. Yet, with a bag full of memories accumulated over years that now seemed to have passed in the blink of an eye, I was looking forward, mulling over a host of possibilities for my next walk in these superb northern hills. My walking appetite was as sharp as ever. **CW**

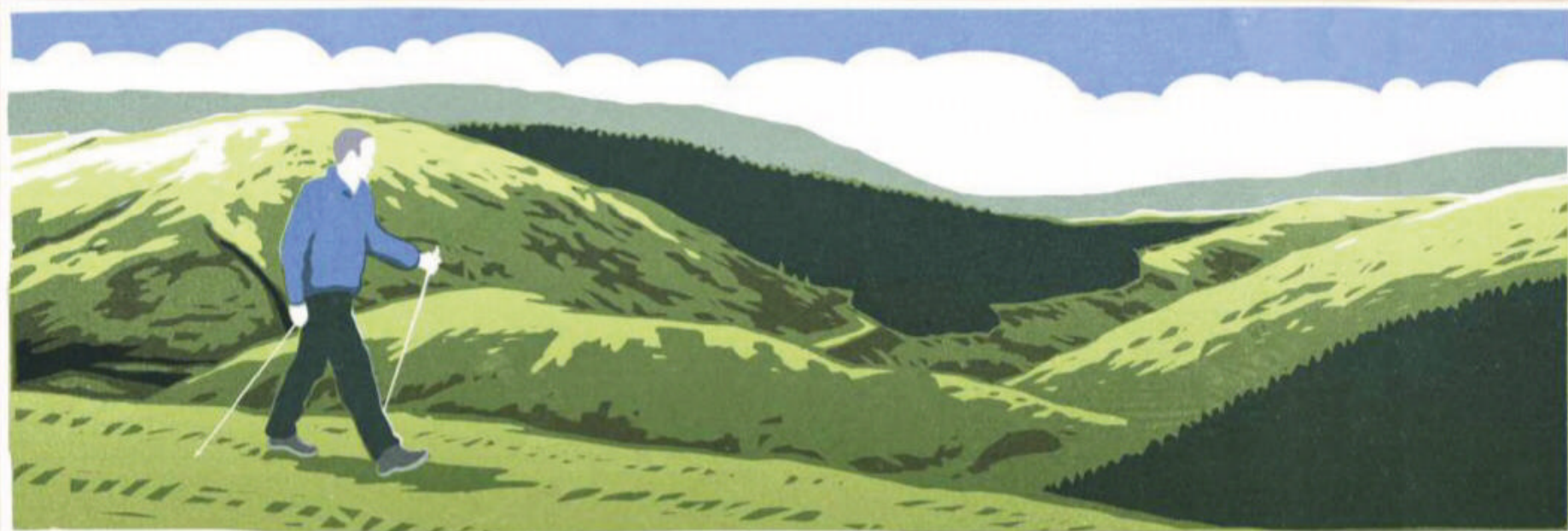
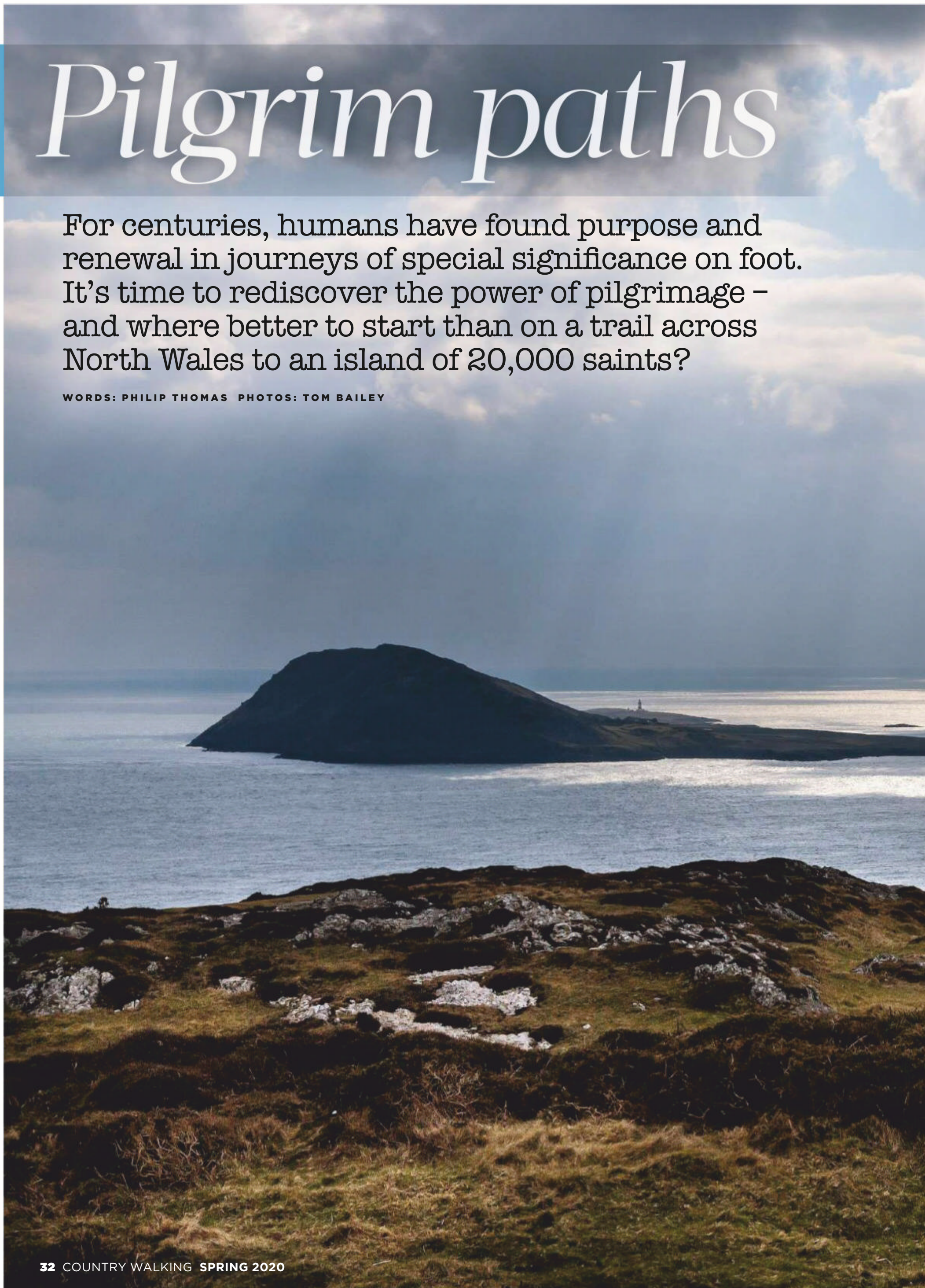


ILLUSTRATION: STEVEN HALL

Pilgrim paths

For centuries, humans have found purpose and renewal in journeys of special significance on foot. It's time to rediscover the power of pilgrimage – and where better to start than on a trail across North Wales to an island of 20,000 saints?

WORDS: PHILIP THOMAS PHOTOS: TOM BAILEY



WHAT MAKES A pilgrimage? The devout walker and Anglo-French writer Hilaire Belloc summed it up beautifully. 'A pilgrimage ought to be nothing but a nobler kind of travel' he wrote. 'The best way of all is on foot... with the sky above, and the road beneath, and the world on every side, and time to see all.'

Traditionally, a pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a holy place and faith motivates many pilgrims today. We live in an increasingly secular world, but pilgrimages are seeing a huge resurgence. And it's not just true believers who are following Belloc's example in droves, reviving a millennia-old way of travel. More and more of us – staunch atheists included – are stepping outside the ordinary and embracing the idea of life-affirming journeys on foot.

A pilgrimage can be a ritual outing to a special place or a walk in the footsteps of a personal hero. Some will go it alone, but for others it's a journey best shared. For a day, a week, a month or more, they leave everyday pressures behind and are blissfully lost in the slow rhythms of the path. A break from the daily grind, it's a time to unwind, reflect and connect with nature and history. It's more about the journey than the destination.

Across Britain and Europe modern pilgrims are rediscovering the ancient ways followed by Christian pilgrims in the Middle Ages. In Britain, this was a golden age of pilgrimage, when shrines

at Canterbury, Walsingham, Iona and St David's drew in the faithful from far and wide. Most pilgrims journeyed on foot and for many it was a rare chance to escape humdrum medieval life.

We know something about Britain's medieval pilgrims from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, published over 600 years ago and among the first books printed in English. His motley (and not entirely pious) cast of characters make the most of their journey from London to Canterbury Cathedral, exchanging stories in taverns along the way. Their convivial spirit lives on.

Chaucer's merry band followed Watling Street, but others converging on the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket walked an ancient trackway along the North Downs, now called the Pilgrims' Way. But it's not the only 'Pilgrims' Way' you can still walk today. There's another venerable trail traversing the hills and coast of North Wales, on course for Bardsey – the 'island of 20,000 saints'. And it's as soul-lifting now as it was in centuries past. ▶

▼ HOLY ISLE

Fabled final resting place of Celtic saints, Bardsey Island (Ynys Enlli) marks the end of the 135-mile North Wales Pilgrims Way.



► GUIDING HEIGHTS

Soaring 1841 feet above Caernarfon Bay, Yr Eifl heralds the coastal stage of the North Wales Pilgrims Way.

‘The Welsh Camino’

On a map of Wales, Bardsey Island (Ynys Enlli – *island in the currents*) is the speck of land at the snout of the Llŷn Peninsula. It’s about to be gobbled up by the dragon’s head lunging 30 miles into the Irish Sea from the western edge of Snowdonia. This remote island lying off a sparsely populated peninsula is about as far-flung as you can get in the British Isles. Which is probably why Saint Cadfan founded a monastery there in the 6th century.

Where Abbot Cadfan led and was laid to rest, others followed, and Bardsey’s reputation grew as the ‘holy place of burial for all the bravest and best in the land.’ He and 19,999 other Celtic saints are said to lie in the island’s sacred ground. This ‘Gate of Paradise’ drew Christian pilgrims in their thousands and by the Middle Ages, it was decreed that three pilgrimages to Bardsey equalled one to Rome. The pilgrims stopped coming when Henry VIII dissolved St Mary’s Abbey in 1537, but they weren’t forgotten.

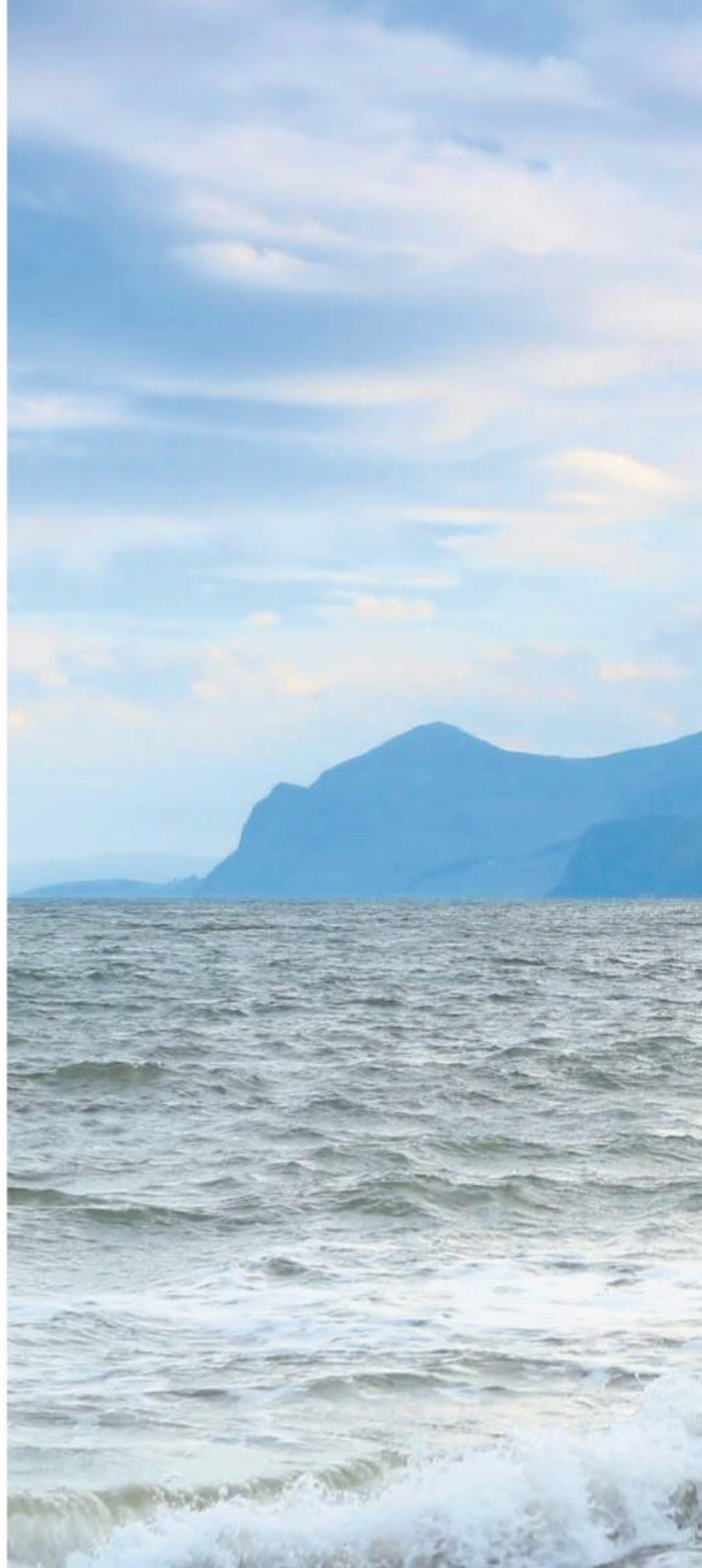
In 2011 a new pilgrimage route to Bardsey was created: the North Wales Pilgrims Way. It’s been dubbed the ‘Welsh Camino’ in a nod to the Camino de Santiago (the Way of Saint James) – the world-famous network of pilgrim routes converging on Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain.

Pilgrims’ progress

Beginning near Holywell at the ruins of Basingwerk Abbey (once a hostel for Bardsey-bound pilgrims), the North Wales Pilgrims Way calls in at the holy wells of St Beuno and St Winefride, on course for St Asaph Cathedral. Thereafter, it coils west across the Denbigh Moors and threads south around the foothills of Snowdonia via the cathedral at Bangor. The trail meets the coast again at Clynnog Fawr, where pilgrims traditionally mustered for the final miles down the Llŷn Peninsula. It’s here the modern Pilgrims Way merges with the Wales Coast Path, tracing the peninsula’s north coast. ►

▼ TIME & TIDE

When tides allow you can pick your way along the shore to Porthdinllaen, where fishing and shipbuilding once flourished.







Anglicised as the 'The Rivals', their Welsh name means 'the forks'.

◀ TEST OF FAITH

Left and below: With waves smashing into the rocks below, scrambling down to St Mary's Well is not for the fainthearted.



Walking all 135 miles between Holywell and Aberdaron takes around two weeks, with ample time for mindful lingering. But if you're time poor or not up to the full distance, you can walk the trail's coastal finale over two or three days. A convenient place to join the route is the seaside town of Nefyn. It sits at the western foot of **Yr Eifl** – a trio of granite peaks ranged over Caernarfon Bay.

After Morfa Nefyn, the second port of call on the journey west is pint-sized Porthdinllaen. The handful of dwellings which make up this former fishing village cluster under green cliffs on a splinter of land extending half-a-mile into Caernarfon Bay. Unless you're fortunate enough to call it home, this isolated community is only accessible by foot or boat. But in summer that doesn't deter beach-goers, who can wet their whistle at the Tŷ Coch Inn, stepping straight from the beach into the bar.

Looking back the way you've come, Yr Eifl's pronged summits muscle for attention across the bay, leaning broodily over the sea. Had 19th-century engineers realised their plans it would be very different view today. Various schemes promised to make Porthdinlleaen a major port, but none got off the drawing board. Only pleasure yachts call here today, joined by the grey seals who come to feast on fish in the seagrass meadows. The headland welcomes numerous winged pilgrims too, among them agile sand martins which flock here every summer to nest in the cliffs.

Beyond Porthdinllaen, the coast path wriggles southwest, tucking around secluded coves and gurgling streams, which tumble to the shore. The ground slumps to low, black cliffs, scoured



WET YOUR WHISTLE

Pincer between jagged rocks, secluded Porthor also goes by the English name of 'Whistling Sands'.

Pilgrim-ernalia

Kit and keepsakes no pilgrim should go without...

Scallop shell

The traditional emblem of St James, the scallop shell became a universal symbol of pilgrimage. Worn by pilgrims, it also adorns churches and signposts on many pilgrim routes. Medieval pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela would take home a scallop shell as memento of their journey.



Staff and hat

In the Middle Ages, a trusty wooden staff and a wide brim hat marked you out as a pilgrim. Today many modern pilgrims adopt this customary get-up. But it's not just about looking the part. Your **hat** shades you from the sun on the open road, **while** a staff can steady your stride and propel you **onward**. To quote the British Pilgrimage Trust, it's 'a **classic** renewable logistical solution for pilgrims'.



Passport

It won't get you through border control, but a pilgrims' passport (or 'credential') will prove you're a *bona fide* pilgrim. On some pilgrim routes, this record of your travels entitles you traditional hospitality along the way. At the start of the North Wales Pilgrims' Way you can pick up a passport at the Greenfield Valley Visitor Centre and collect stamps at churches and shops on route.



PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK



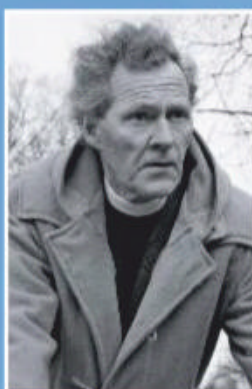
▲ FROM PARSONAGE TO PUBLIC HOUSE

Built in 1823, the Tŷ Coch Inn at Porthdinllaen started life as a vicarage. At one time, it was one of five pubs on the beach, serving the village's thrifty shipbuilders.

into ragged shapes by the waves. On your landward side, sheep and cattle graze the coarse pasture, where traditional stone-faced banks called 'cloddiau' hem the fields.

Finding your stride, you haven't far to go before clapping eyes on the sandy beach at Towyn. Half a mile inland from here, Tudweiliog was a staging post for pilgrims in the Middle Ages. They would have said prayers in the church of St Cwyfan's medieval predecessor (apparently founded by the 7th-century saint himself). Today's pilgrims can still find warm hospitality here at the village inn.

The next eight miles of the coast path unfold in a glorious tapestry of greens, ochres and teals. Cove after cove, each rocky inlet seems lovelier than the last. The mile-wide, bull's horn sweep of Traeth



LLŶN'S POET PRIEST

Hunkered above the sands at journey's end in Aberdaron is the squat 12th century church of St Hywyn. Take a gander inside the 'Cathedral of Llŷn' and you'll find an intriguing replica of the flimsy coracles medieval pilgrims departed for Bardsey in. Their perilous crossing inspired one of Wales' greatest poets, who was vicar here from 1967 to 1978, and it's a collage of his poetry which greets you as you enter. Nominated for the Nobel Prize in 1996, his name was **R.S. Thomas**.

Birdwatcher, pacifist and fervent Welsh nationalist, the Reverend Ronald Stuart Thomas was born in Cardiff, 1913, but grew up in Holyhead, the son of a sea captain. A career spent in rural Welsh parishes shaped the austere characters and bleak landscapes of his poetry, and his last posting on the Llŷn Peninsula would inspire his most impassioned work. He had, in his own words, come 'to the end of his own personal pilgrimage'. This was the 'true Wales' of his imagination.

Remembered as a kind but at times cantankerous figure who spoke in a refined English accent, Thomas was known to wander alone along the shore, deep in meditation. Troubled by modernity, he was a frustrated soul, but found succour in nature and was a visitor to Bardsey's bird observatory.

Retiring to Y Rhiw, a tiny village up the coast, he left a spiritual and poetic legacy, enshrining Aberdaron in verse.





▲THE CYCLE OF REMEMBRANCE

Prayer stones dedicated to lost loved ones are left in St Hywyn's Church at Aberdaron. Every October, they're returned to the sea and a new 'cairn' is begun.

Penllech can't fail to impress, but it's the pristine acre of sand at Porth Iago which stops many walkers in their tracks, tempting them off-path for a paddle. Like pilgrims past, you could take another detour inland here, to the grassy remains of St Merin's Church. This wayside chapel fell into decay after the reformation, as pilgrimages went out of fashion.

A mile down the coast, the ivory white crescent of Porthor begs for you to de-boot again and let your toes breath. Listen as you walk barefoot along the foreshore and it's soon clear how this beach got its English name: Whistling Sands. Take slow, heavy strides on a warm day and you'll hear the grains squeak as they rub together. Like Porthdinllaen and Porth Ysgaden, this tuneful beach had a surprising past as a trading harbour. Coal and lime were brought ashore here, exchanged for local farm produce. The old coal store is now a café.

From Porthor you can cut overland to Aberdaron and the modern embarkation point for sailings to Bardsey at Porth Meudwy. But keep faith with the coast path and you won't go unrewarded. Ahead, the land buckles to a rugged string of gorse-flecked hills. Skirting the highest, there's a palpable sense of nearing journey's end as the peninsula tapers, and at last Bardsey's leviathan form appears on the horizon. It's an elating sight and feels like you've reached the edge of the known world.

From the peninsula's outermost point on blustery Mynydd Mawr, you can make out the ruins of St Mary's Abbey and the 200-year-old lighthouse at the island's tail end. Two miles of surging water separate Bardsey from the mainland, giving the island its Welsh name Yns Enlli – 'island in the



currents'. Before braving these treacherous waters, medieval pilgrims prayed for a safe crossing in St Mary's Church. Only a footprint in the turf survives today, lost among the ridges and furrows of an ancient field system. But you can still enjoy a cleansing draught from St Mary's Well, where pilgrims cast off for the holy island. Blessed by the saint, this miraculous freshwater pool fills a small cleft at the base of the cliffs, reached by shinnying down a nerve-jangling set of rock-cut steps.

For today's pilgrims, the journey's not yet over. Aberdaron calls, where you can rest the night and awake refreshed for the boat trip to Bardsey. The last four miles of walking give way to reflection, as the coast path turns north into Aberdaron Bay. As you walk, you might ponder those who came before you and ask yourself: what will I take away from my time as a pilgrim? Your feet may be sore and your body tired, but your soul is richer for it. **CW**

▲WILD COAST

Watch the sea for dolphin pods and porpoises. These untamed shores are alive with chough, kittiwakes and guillemots too.

▼THE ISLAND THAT INSPIRES

Bardsey's English name is thought to mean 'Island of the Bards'. It continues to be a muse for artists and poets.



Plan your trip



WALK IT

Everything you need to know about walking all 135 miles of the **North Wales Pilgrims' Way** (including planning, accommodation and guidebooks) can be found at www.pilgrims-way-north-wales.org. To sample the trail over two or three days, we suggest walking the last 26 miles, which overlaps with the **Wales Coast Path** between Nefyn and Aberdaron. Be aware that buses back from Aberdaron don't run on Sundays. Get a map and GPX for this linear route from the **OS Maps** website and app: www.bit.ly/cw-nwpw. You can also download an 8-mile day walk around the tip of the **Llŷn Peninsula** at www.livefortheoutdoors.com/bonusroutes



GETTING THERE

As there's no formal long stay parking, we recommend making this trip by public transport. Take a **Cambrian Line** train to Pwllheli Station (0333 3211 202; www.tfwrail.wales) and catch the **number 8 bus** to Nefyn (Mon-Sun: 01758 720904; bustimes.org/operators/nefyn). If you are driving, we suggest parking considerably on-street in Nefyn.



GETTING BACK

Catch the **number 17 bus** from Aberdaron to Pwllheli (Mon-Sat: 01286 66031; bustimes.org/operators/Berwyn). If you've parked in Nefyn, you'll need to change here for the number 8 (see above).



VISITING BARDSEY

You can round off your pilgrimage with a day trip to **Bardsey**, with boats sailing from Porth Meudwy near Aberdaron. Trips run on every day of good weather from March to November, costing £32.50 for adults and £20 for children. Crossings take half-an-hour each way, with 4 hours to explore the island. Booking is



essential (07971 769 895; www.bardseyboattrips.com). You can also enjoy a short break on the island, staying in one of the traditional cottages let by the **Bardsey Island Trust** (07904 265604; www.bardsey.org). Stays in Lloft Nant (sleeps 2) cost from as little as £250-a-week in the low season (not including boat fare).



WHERE TO STAY

8½ miles into our taster of the pilgrimage route, *Country Walking* stayed just off trail at **The Lion Hotel** at Tudweiliog (01758 770 244; www.lionhoteltudweiliog.co.uk). A traditional, family-run inn providing cosy rooms and home-cooked meals, it offers B&B for £80pn in a double or £50pn in a single. Depending how you break up your walk, there are various accommodation options on or near the route, including campsites and B&Bs. Further down the coast are rooms in the bunkhouse at **Aberdaron Farm Holidays**, which sleep from 3 to 8 people, costing from £20pppn (01758 760345; www.aberdaronfarmholidays.co.uk)



WHERE TO EAT

Early into the trail and at its end in Aberdaron, there are various pubs and cafés in the villages by the coast. Don't miss the **Ty Coch Inn** at Porthdinllaen (01758 720498; www.tycoch.co.uk). Right by the beach, patrons can only access this characterful pub by foot or boat. Down the coast, you'll find light refreshment at **Caffi Porthor** by the Whistling Sands and at **Cwt Tatws** boutique and café at Towyn.

“There is an island there is no going to but in a small boat the way the saints went, travelling the gallery of the frightened faces of the long-drowned, munching the gravel of its beaches.”

R.S. THOMAS, PILGRIMAGES



PHOTO: BARDSEY BOAT TRIPS

‘A rhythm that helps us connect’

2020's the year of cathedrals and pilgrimage, and it doesn't matter what your beliefs – a long walk to a special destination is ‘a fundamental impulse’ with surprising power, says Guy Hayward.



▲ ONWARD, PILGRIM

Guy Hayward's mission is to see more people of myriad beliefs – and no belief at all – discover the power of pilgrimage.

BRITAIN'S 42 CATHEDRALS are linked to the surrounding country by green lanes and footpaths – and they make the perfect focal point for a walk of special significance, says Guy Hayward, co-founder the British Pilgrimage Trust, urging Britons this year to realise the power of walks to help us move forward in our lives.

‘The first thing you have to is to remove the barrier of belief. The latin root of the word pilgrimage is ‘stranger through the foreign fields’. Which actually has nothing to do with religion but is more to do with that sense of feeling foreign or like you are in a special new place, even if it's part of your own land. It's flexible – bring your own beliefs.

A lot of people ask if it involves whipping yourself as you walk along. It's weirdly common – almost like if you are not doing it, you're not doing a proper pilgrimage. I tell them it's a lot more positive than that and you can make your life better by doing it – it doesn't matter how long the journey is. Others ask if it's a nostalgia thing, or like a historic re-enactment. To which I'd say...

Is sex nostalgic, because we've always been doing it? We have *always* been doing this, it's a part of who we are. In nature and human history you can see countless examples of living things making long journeys, to complete themselves or to keep themselves alive. Like salmon swimming 3000 miles across the world to find their home, or swallows and our hunter-gatherer ancestors seasonally migrating. When I did my first long walk, it felt in a funny way a more natural way of being than the life I had been living.

Cathedrals are just places that are designed to alter your state of consciousness. For hundreds of years, in some cases 1000s of years, people have been kneeling, looking up at the stained glass windows, crying and feeling their greatest worries and also asking for their greatest hopes here. They're not places you have a meaningless chat. Even in London, if you go off the busy streets and go into a church, it's suddenly silent and regardless of what you believe, that experience is amazing.

At the end of a journey walking through nature, when you get to a cathedral, you're suddenly surrounded by a different level of human endeavour. They were built to the highest ability that could be

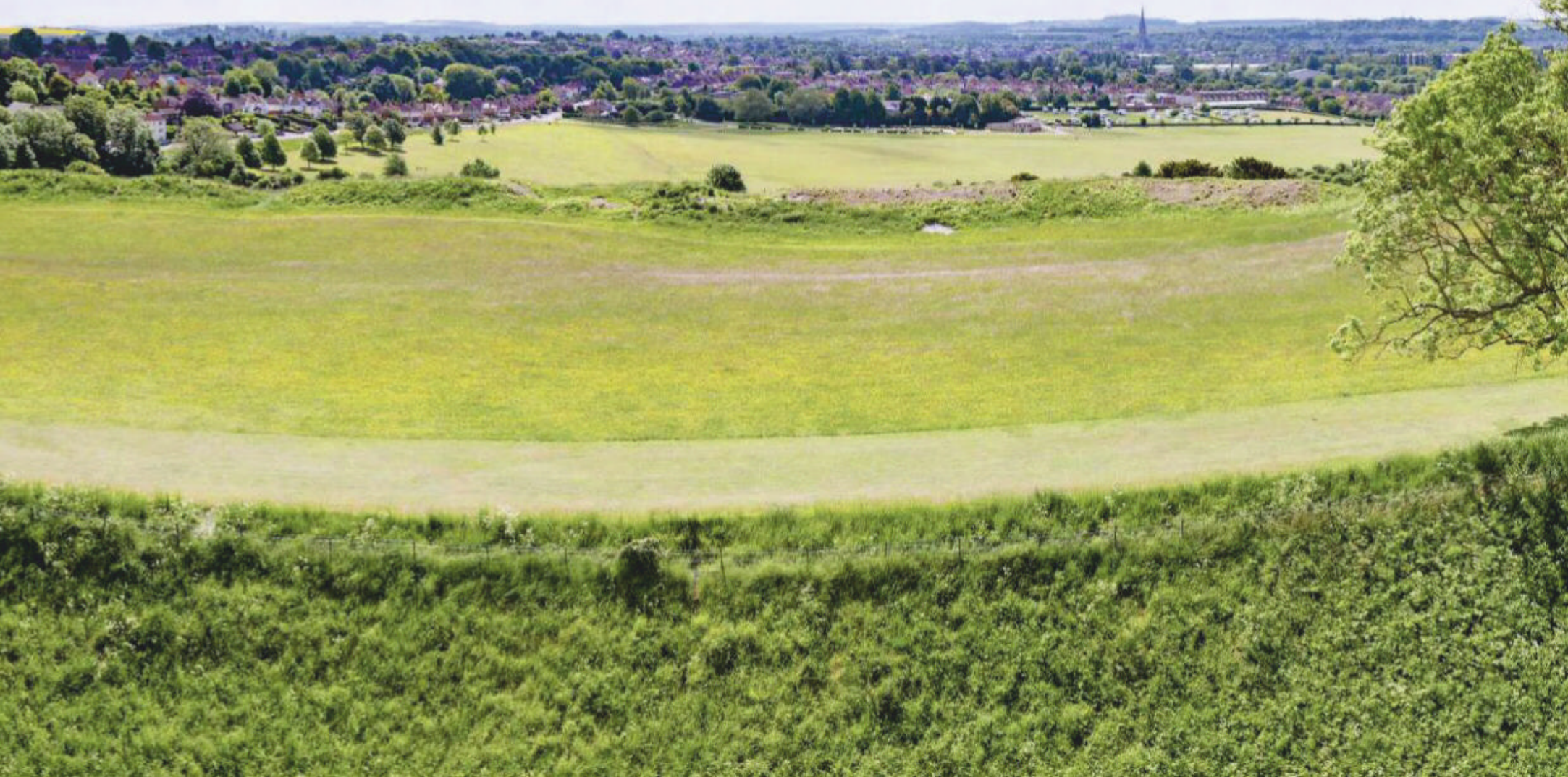


PHOTO: PETER PACKER/ALAMY



mustered, by people who would take years doing it, even give their lives to it. They're usually massive, and the geometry of everything is beautiful, the echoes and the sounds through the stone, the stained glass create psychedelic, kaleidoscopic light over your eyes. Everything is beautiful and it raises the game of the journey when you finish it.

Completing a significant journey is a fundamental impulse of being on this planet. Holy places can give a pilgrimage a structure but the journey can be very personal. If I do a pilgrimage to Canterbury, Walsingham or Lindisfarne, classic Christian holy places, the way I make it my own is to set an intention at the beginning of the journey about what I want it to be about for me. Maybe something I want to bring into my life or let go of, or a question I want resolved in my life – to find a new way forward. You dedicate the journey to that and just so happen to visit places along the way that may or may not resonate. You *will* have breakthroughs.

Our footsteps fall in sync when we walk and talk.
It's a rhythm that helps us to connect.
Looking in the

“Our footsteps fall in sync when we walk and talk. It's a rhythm that helps us to connect.”

same direction, rather than at each other, frees up conversation too, allowing people to talk about things they don't usually. And the fact you're going to the same destination – have a shared purpose – somehow enables you to talk to each other, no matter what your differences. Pilgrimage is about connecting with your companions, with strangers you meet, and with nature, plants, animals, the sky, weather and whatever you want – the cosmos, the universe, God, however far you want to go.

My favourite kind is a river pilgrimage, from the source of the river to where it meets the sea. It's a natural metaphor for life. At the beginning a pure trickle of water, and as you go down the river, it's wider and more tributaries add new influences and by the end, it's less pure and more complex, then it meets the sea, the vast oneness of everything. And because humans have always settled along rivers, you always have human interest along it.

I want readers' help to create more one-day pilgrimages to more cathedrals. I want people to feel the 'can do' pilgrimage attitude, to create routes for others to follow, so I can gather them all at britishpilgrimage.org. But more than that I want more people to experience what pilgrimage – large or small – can do for them. Through history, we've come up with different systems to find purpose in our lives, and I think with pilgrimage – focusing on a journey of particular meaning, and intention – we've got a brilliant one right at our feet.

► For pilgrimage ideas, 1-day cathedral pilgrim routes and to submit your own, visit www.britishpilgrimage.org

◀ RAISING THE GAME

A destination such as a Cathedral can't help but raise the stakes of your journey – even if your pilgrimage is only a day long says Guy.

▼ JOINING THE DOTS

The ancient earthworks at Old Sarum suggest themselves as a natural waypoint on a pilgrimage toward Salisbury Cathedral.

PHOTO: DMITRY NAUMOV/ALAMY

In search of the bunch-backed toad

Location pin icon
Middleham
Castle



PHOTO: WORLD HISTORY ARCHIVE/ALAMY

Had a winter of discontent? Turn it to glorious summer with a pilgrimage on the trail of the *real* Richard III...

WORDS: NICK HALLISSEY
PHOTOS: TOM BAILEY



*'Sent before my time into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable that dogs bark at me as I halt by them.'*

If you've only ever thought of King Richard III in terms of murder, chicanery, a lumpy shoulder and a car park, you don't know half the story.

For a start, the murder, the chicanery and even the shoulder are not proven beyond doubt. In some corners of our nation, you can be run out of town for mentioning them. In York, for example, Richard III is a criminally maligned hero, and you say different at your peril.

But also: if Britain ever had an outdoorsy monarch, I think Richard III was it.

Of all our sovereigns, Richard has the richest connections to beautiful landscapes. Northamptonshire, Yorkshire, Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire: this was a king who liked to get about. And he *enjoyed* being outside: he was a horseman, a swordsman, a falconer. He had a decent knowledge of herbs and flowers, and he chose the wild boar as his emblem.

That's partly why I chose him as my pilgrimage subject. But also, he and I have history.

I've had an obsession with Richard which began at university in 1995, when I played

him in William Shakespeare's renowned hatchet-job, *Richard III*. Don't get me wrong, it was tremendous fun and it's a masterpiece of language and plot and all that. It's the play that gave us a dozen zingy lines from 'now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this son of York' to 'my kingdom for a horse'.

But it *is* a hatchet-job. Shakespeare calls him a 'poisonous bunch-backed toad,' a 'bottled spider', a 'hellhound', and a 'foul defacer of God's handiwork'. He portrays Richard ordering the murder of the Princes in the Tower, with the aim of seizing the crown of England for himself.

And thus 'Dick the Bad' has been the pantomime villain of British history ever since.

But it didn't take me long to realise that Shakespeare's play is about as accurate a rendition of medieval history as *'Allo 'Allo* is an accurate picture of the French Resistance. We'll get to what's fact and what's fiction later. But if you want to get to the roots of everything that Richard *really* was, you have to go for a walk.

In Wensleydale. ▶

▼ CASTLES IN THE AIR

The earthworks of William's Hill give a perfect view over the castle at which Richard III spent his teenage years and married life.





'I am too childish-foolish for this world.'

You can walk in the footsteps of Richard III in a dozen sweet locations around the country, from the castle in Northamptonshire where he was born on October 2nd 1452 to the battlefield where he met a sticky end at the age of 32 on August 22nd 1485. (See our panel at the end for more on these.)

But for this story, I've come to his happy place: Middleham Castle.

It's in Wensleydale in the Yorkshire Dales, which is of course one of the finest walking landscapes in the country. But most people's Wensleydale wanderings take them to the western end of the dale; to Aysgarth, Askrigg and Hawes. Middleham is at the *eastern* extremity, just south of the market town of Leyburn. It's the flatter, gentler end of the valley, where the scenery is more about low moors and limestone edges than the high, wild stuff that lies to the west.

Arriving in Middleham, history looms large straight away. There's Middleham Castle, its ruined towers standing guard over the gateway to Wensleydale, and the starting point for a fabulous walk in the footsteps of a teenage Richard.

The castle contains the definitive history of Richard at Middleham, but here's a very potted version as we head out into the fields.

Richard's entire life is set against the backdrop of the Wars of the Roses: an epic clash between the rival houses of York (represented by the White Rose of Yorkshire) and Lancaster (represented by the Red Rose of Lancashire). Throughout the 15th century, the throne of England changes

hands half a dozen times between the two houses, with bloodshed marking each transition.

Richard is a Yorkist, and his family's power and influence is focused firmly on Yorkshire: this is where they and their allies have their land and estates. Among them is Middleham Castle, owned by the Neville family, of which Richard's mother Cecily Neville is a member.

So when Richard's older brother Edward IV wins the throne for the House of York in 1461, he gives his ten-year-old sibling the title Duke of Gloucester and sends him up here to a safe Yorkist stronghold to learn the art of war.

And that's where we come in. This green upland, crowned by what was then an immense and imposing fortress, was Richard's schoolroom and his playground.

His mentor was the castle's master, Richard

▼ **FALLEN FORTRESS**

Middleham Castle was a Yorkist stronghold throughout the Wars of the Roses (except when Richard Neville decided to switch sides), but fell into disrepair and ruin in the 17th century.

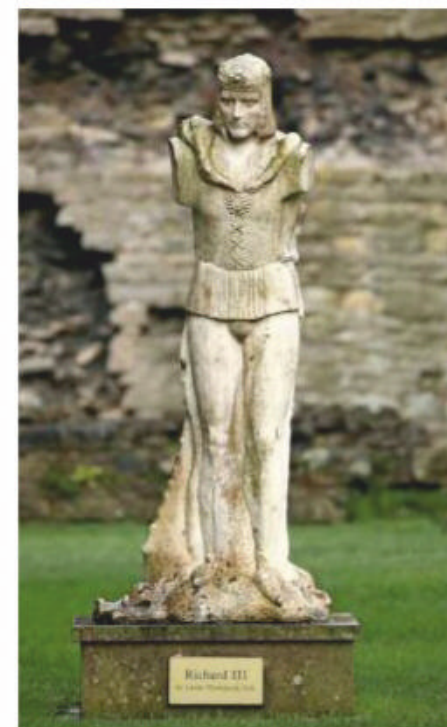


PHOTO: KING RICHARD III VISITOR CENTRE



◀ THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

As if to emphasise the need to reassess the legacy of 'Dick the Bad', a rainbow comes to an end in the castle he loved.



Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick. This extraordinary character played a preposterous role in the rise and fall of three different kings of England (hence his nickname Warwick the Kingmaker), switching allegiance between York and Lancaster as it suited him. But at this point he's firmly Yorkist, and Edward IV pays him £1000 – a small fortune – to school young Richard as a knight.

And this might just have been the happiest time and place in Richard's entire life.

*'March on, join bravely,
let us to it pell-mell!'*

On a rise just south of Middleham Castle is the *original* Middleham Castle: a ring-and-bailey fort known as William's Hill. It's believed the original castle was built around 1086 by 'Alan the Red', one of William the Conqueror's most trusted lieutenants, as the Normans sought to subjugate the rebellious factions of the north of England, who were (naturally enough) not too happy about being conquered.

From the earthworks of this original prototype, you get the very best view of the later Middleham Castle, just as young Richard would have done – apart from the fact that the castle is now in ruins.

Crossing the hilltop, a path wends down to the River Cover. This has come tumbling down out of Coverdale, one of the lesser-known Yorkshire Dales which is well worth a pilgrimage of its own.

Heading along the riverbank, it's easy to see why life here might have appealed to Dick the Lad.

By the time he came here, he had been through a lot. For a start, the disability. Though the 'crookback' legend is probably exaggerated, his exhumation from a car park in Leicester in 2012 revealed that he had scoliosis of the spine, a condition that would have rendered everyday life painful from infancy.

On top of that, his father was killed at the Battle of Wakefield when Richard was eight, and his mother had been tormented – possibly assaulted – by Lancastrian forces in an earlier conflict.

And the times were still volatile. Although the Yorkists now had the power, there were plots and machinations all over the country, and Richard's training was focused on preparing him for future conflict. But there were surely days when he could walk out here in the Broad Acres and feel that all the *sturm und drang* was a very long way away.

Rarely more so than at Pinker's Pond. This circular tarn is one of only a handful of natural bodies of standing water in the Yorkshire Dales, the other notables being Malham Tarn and Semer Water. The reason for the scarcity of lakes and ponds is limestone: the defining rock of the Dales is so porous that lakes can only form when there's a pocket of tougher sediment beneath the limestone, as there is here. ▶

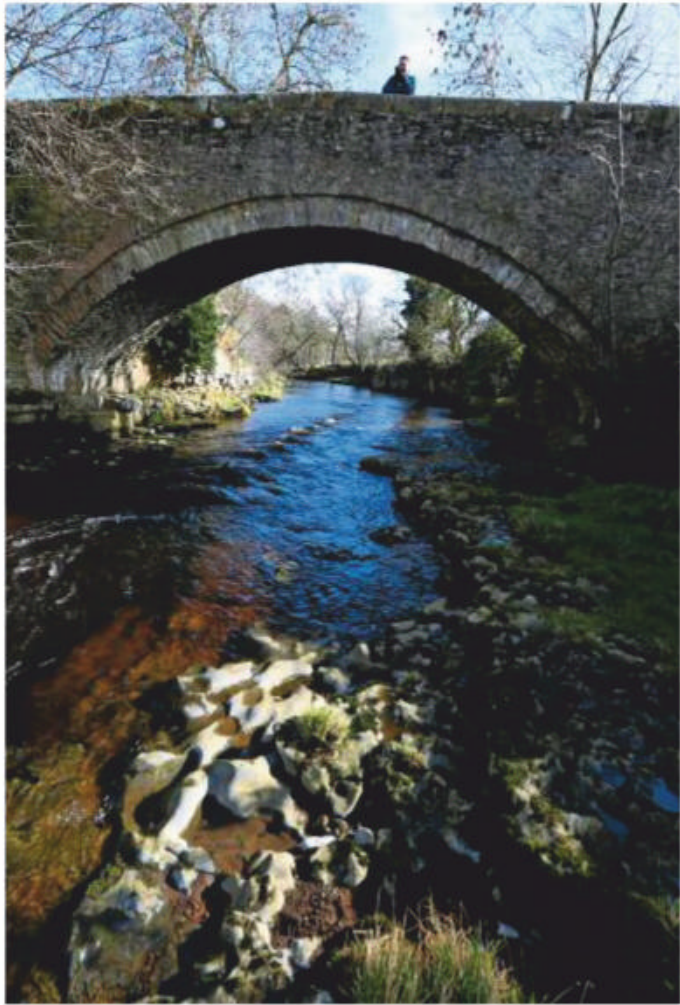
"Arriving in Middleham, history looms large straight away. There's Middleham castle, its ruined towers standing guard over Wensleydale, and the starting point for a fabulous walk in the footsteps of a teenaged Richard."

▲ NOT QUITE THE CROOK

A statue of a young and rather dashing Richard has pride of place within the ruined walls of Middleham Castle.

◀ THE KING IN THE CAR PARK

A replica of Richard's skeleton can be seen at the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester, near where his body was discovered and exhumed in 2012.



▲ A DAY IN THE DALES

Clockwise from top: Heading into the broad acres of Coverdale after leaving Middleham; a colossal tree root system by the River Cover; the calm waters of Pinker's Pond; and bidding farewell to the River Cover as we cross the wonderfully named Hullo Bridge.



The pond is a popular picnic spot at weekends, but if you can get it on a quiet day it's a real gem; a haven for ducks and aquatic insects; windswept but cosy.

A short climb above the pond brings us to Middleham Low Moor, a pronounced, flat-topped ridge that forms the southern wall of Wensleydale. At the top, a gleaming white fence runs the entire length of the moor, marking the boundary of one of the most picturesque upland gallops in the country.

Today this part of the world is synonymous with horseracing. Thoroughbreds and champions have been trained up here since the 19th century, a development of which we can only assume Richard would have approved. Thanks to Warwick's tutoring he became a formidable horseman, leading cavalry charges in several battles – including his final, fateful engagement at Bosworth Field. The chronicler Jean Molinet claimed that Richard was only felled at Bosworth after being unseated from his mount – a white courser – when it became stuck in marshy ground.

This account, of course, gave rise to Shakespeare's line: "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!", as Richard desperately tries to fight off the advancing Lancastrian forces on foot.

Up here, today, he would find horses aplenty.

'The king's name is a tower of strength.'

A more recent hero of the Low Moor gallops is Willie Carson. As a youth, the future Champion Jockey was apprenticed to the nearby riding stables at Tupgill Park and trained up here in his prime. In fact, Willie's first winner – at Catterick in 1962 – was named Pinker's Pond. Tupgill itself is now home to the Forbidden Corner, a maze of woodland tunnels designed for family adventures.

From the upper shoulder of the moor, a view unfolds into the depths of Wensleydale. Crowning the horizon is the fine prow of Penhill, and beyond it are mighty hillsides like Stags Fell and Great Shunner – the business end of Wensleydale.

Descending from the moor, the route crosses the broad grin of the valley floor to reach the River Ure and, in short order, the village of Wensley.

It's strange that Wensley is never thought of as the 'capital' of Wensleydale, despite giving its name to the valley. Most of the dales are named after their rivers – Swale, Ribble, Wharfe, Aire, Cover, Nidd – by which rationale, Wensleydale would be Uredale. But even carrying the name, Wensley loses out to Hawes, Aysgarth, Askrigg and Bainbridge in the



◀ MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE!

A ridiculous 18th-century rendition of Richard riding into battle at Bosworth (but at least he doesn't look like a monster.)

PHOTO: CHRONICLE/ALAMY

fame stakes. It has its own quiet charm, though – not least the Three Horseshoes Inn, which makes a pleasing pause on our route. (It's little surprise that a pub in this horseracing heartland should have an equine theme, of course.)

The return leg traces the meandering River Ure back along the valley, with Middleham Castle hoving swiftly back into view on the horizon.

Arriving back in the village, a visit to the castle is a must. Now in the care of English Heritage, it combines the splendidly physical activity of climbing the twisting staircases and turrets with a sumptuous visual history of the building – including, of course, its most famous resident.

Richard lived at Middleham, on and off, for much of the rest of his life. The relationship with Warwick soured, however: in the late 1640s Warwick sided with the Lancastrians *against* the Yorkists and imprisoned Edward IV at Middleham while he helped restore Henry VI to the throne. But a few years later Edward won his throne back, Warwick was killed, and Edward gave the Neville estates to Richard, marking his new role as President of the Council of the North.

Richard went on to marry Warwick's daughter Anne, and Middleham Castle became their marital home. Their son Edward was born here in or around 1473; the castle's records include payment for a jester to entertain him.

Then we hit all sorts of trouble. ▶



PHOTO: KING RICHARD III VISITOR CENTRE

▲ FACE OF A MONARCH

A much more accurate rendition of Richard, which resulted from a close study of his skull in 2013.

▼ WINNING AT A CANTER

Penhill creeps into view beyond the Middleham Low Moor Gallops, which have helped to train countless thoroughbreds.





The facts are that in 1483, Edward IV dies and his 12-year-old son becomes Edward V, with Richard as Lord Protector. Richard arranges for the king and his younger brother to live at the Tower of London – until they are declared illegitimate and vanish later that year, never to be heard from again.

No one knows what happened to them, which of course gives rise to the idea that Richard killed them to take the throne himself.

Whatever the truth may be, Richard becomes king on 26th June 1483, and his two-year reign is fraught with political and military wrangling. He also has to contend with the death of his son Edward a year later, at the tender age of 12. Contemporary accounts indicate that Richard and Anne suffered ‘grief bordering on madness’.

It all culminates in the Battle of Bosworth Field on 22nd August 1485, when the Lancastrians team up with the Welsh Tudors to inflict a final, crushing defeat in the House of York. Richard is slain, Henry Tudor takes the throne as Henry VII, and Richard’s naked, mangled body is dragged away and hastily buried in Leicester, its location lost for 527 years until someone digs up a car park.

The Tudors are then firmly in charge for the next 118 years, during which time Richard’s name is comprehensively blackened. Not least, of course, by William Shakespeare, whose monarch and patron Elizabeth I is – you guessed it – a Tudor.

“History is written by the winners, and in this case the winners had the greatest writer of all time on their side. Richard never had a chance.”

History is written by the winners, and in this case the winners had the greatest writer of all time on their side. Richard never stood a chance.

‘Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons’

I’m not the only one who’s got a thing for the bunch-backed toad. Al Pacino once made a film called *Looking For Richard* about his own search for the real king, and there’s a whole society devoted to clearing his name. Few monarchs have as much intrigue and misadventure wrapped around them as he does – and no monarch has a play so thrilling and so revered to their name, hatchet-job or not.

▲THE RUINS OF WENSLEYDALE

The Mount Tower (foreground) is echoed by the much larger remains of Bolton Castle on the far side of the valley.

►URE VERY WELCOME

Arriving at the River Ure at Wensley, the village that named the famous dale.

Still looking for Richard

Where else can you walk in the footsteps of the Boar?

Fotheringhay, Northamptonshire

Here’s where it all began. Richard was born in Fotheringhay Castle near modern-day Peterborough on October 2nd 1452. The castle was a Yorkist stronghold and was a favoured residence of Richard’s parents. Over a century later it became the prison of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was beheaded at the castle on February 8th, 1587.

►WALK HERE: Download **Fotheringhay** at lfto.com/bonusroutes



LUDLOW, Shropshire

Richard’s father (also called Richard) set up Ludlow Castle (pictured below left), as a household for his older children Edward and Edmund, and it’s certain that Richard would have visited as a toddler. He was also here when the castle was besieged by Lancastrian forces under Henry VI, and his father and older brothers were forced to flee into exile. Richard and his mother stayed at the castle until they moved into the care of his aunt.

►WALK HERE: Download **Ludlow** at lfto.com/bonusroutes

YORK

York was the seat of Richard’s Council of the North and was under his patronage for most of his adult life. This is the reason he is still warmly regarded in the city. You can find

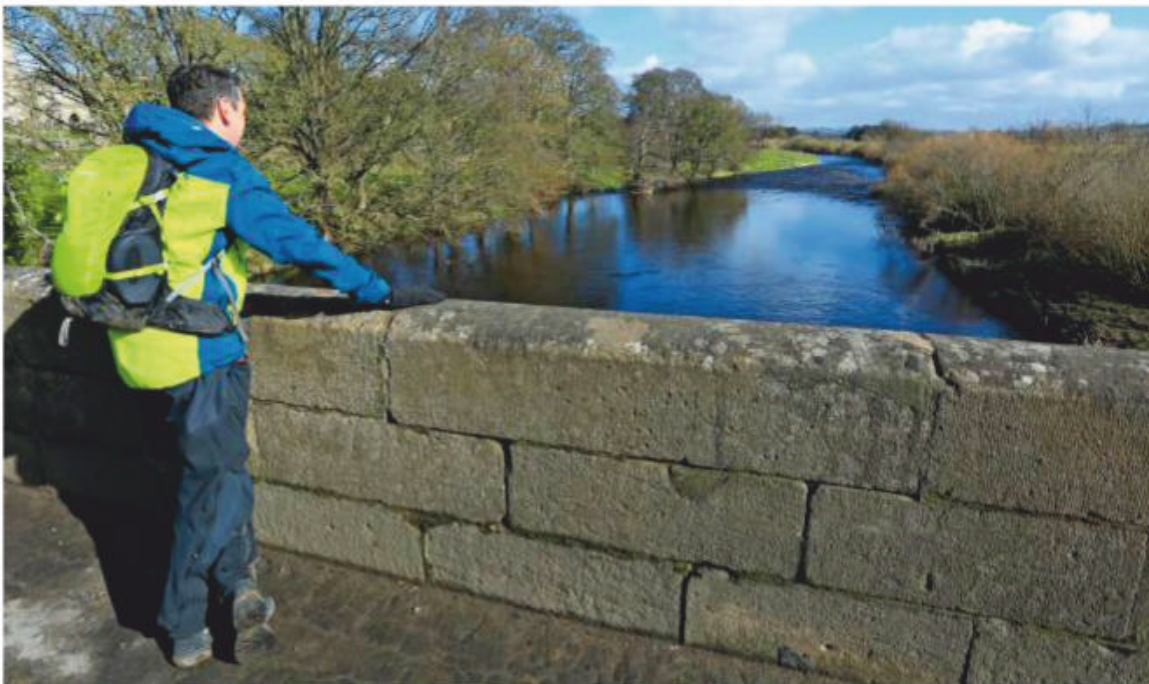
My whole pilgrimage to Middleham has been about looking for Richard. It's still true that he *might* have murdered the Princes in the Tower and he *probably* liquidated rivals, traitors and other enemies with the brutality that was commonplace at the time. He *might* even have arranged the murder of another of his brothers, George, by having him drowned in a vat of wine.

But go to Yorkshire and you'll hear something different. You'll hear of a sportsman, a man of honour, a generous benefactor and a loving father. It tells you something that the city of York expressed outrage when it was announced that Richard's newly-discovered skeleton would reside in Leicester, a city he had no affinity for and no connection with, save for dying nearby. York wanted its most famous son back.

And that's why a pilgrimage to Yorkshire – and to his happy childhood home in particular – works so well. Because it's a pilgrimage on his behalf, for the Yorkshire lad who will never come home.

It's also – and here I dare to believe that he would agree – a damn good walk.

Exeunt omnes. Curtain. CW



Plan your trip



WALK HERE

Follow **Walk 18** in this issue.



GETTING HERE

Middleham is on the A6108, a mile south of Leyburn.



WHERE TO STAY

The Richard III (01969 623240, richard111hotel.co.uk) is the obvious

choice, sitting on the main market square in Middleham. Eight lovely rooms, including one that is said to be haunted. Doubles with breakfast for £85. Alternatively, just across the square is the **Wensleydale Hotel** (formerly the White Swan), with doubles from £90. 01969 622093, thewensleydalehotel.com



WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Both of the above have great food and drink to offer. **The Richard III** has Black Sheep ales and main meals such as trio of Masham sausages with cheesy mash and onion gravy for £13. The upmarket **Tack Room** at the **Wensleydale** offers Swinton Estate grouse with fondant potato and hispi cabbage for £23.



MORE INFORMATION

Middleham Castle is managed by English Heritage (english-heritage.org.uk); admission fees apply but the ruins and the exhibition are well worth a visit. For general tourist information, go to yorkshire.com. And if you're *really* interested in defending Richard's honour, seek out the **Richard III Society** (current patron: the present-day Duke of Gloucester), which promotes research into his life and times and a reassessment of his reputation and legacy. richardiii.net



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



the fascinating Richard III Experience (richardiiiexperience.com) housed in the Monk Bar (pictured above), which is one of the four main gatehouses to the medieval city. The city's medieval walls are a pleasure to walk (especially around York Minster), and you can follow the River Ouse southwards for a more rural wander.

► **WALK HERE:** Download **York** at lfto.com/bonusroutes

TEWKESBURY, Gloucestershire

The Battle of Tewkesbury on May 4th 1471 was one of the defining conflicts of the Wars of the Roses. It was a decisive victory for the House of York, mainly thanks to superb tactics on the part of Richard – aged just 18 – who led the vanguard of the Yorkist attack. The battle resulted in the death of the Lancastrian king Henry VI and the accession of Richard's brother as Edward IV. The action of the play *Richard III* begins shortly after the battle.



► WALK HERE: The Severn Way

winds through the historic centre of Tewkesbury, passing close to the battle site (known as the Bloody Meadow) – as does, aptly enough, Shakespeare's Avon Way, as this is where the Avon joins the Severn.

BOSWORTH FIELD, Leicestershire

And here's where it all came crashing down. On 22nd August 1485, the combined forces of the Lancastrians and the Tudors overwhelmed

Richard's Yorkist force – mainly thanks to a rare error by Richard (an otherwise brilliant tactician) when he split his forces to gamble on an all-out charge at Henry Tudor's position. Richard was killed and the Tudor dynasty began. (The battle is also the final scene of *Richard III*.) The location of the battle site, pictured left, was only accurately established in 2009. You can also visit Richard's Well, marking the alleged spot where he last took a drink on the eve of the battle.

► **WALK HERE:** Turn to **Route 11** at the back of this issue.

► And of course, for the whole story, you can visit the **King Richard III Discovery Centre** in Leicester, where the full story of Richard's life and times is told – as is the story of how his skeleton was unearthed from beneath a car park in 2012. kriii.com

PHOTOS: TOM BAILEY; SHUTTERSTOCK

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Pilgrim paths

Pilgrims of peace

How a 1981 walk from Cardiff to Berkshire changed the way politicians perceive the power of people on foot.

 Greenham Common

WORDS: JENNY WALTERS PHOTOS: TOM BAILEY



THE ARMS RACE

Top: Protesters against nuclear weapons link arms right around the perimeter of Greenham Common in 1982.

Right: Today, the common is – mostly – a wild place of turf, scrub and woodland.



PHOTO: GEOFFREY WHITE/DAILY MAIL/SHUTTERSTOCK



A LONE POLICE OFFICER guarded the gate. He turned to the small group of women: “You’re early. The cleaners don’t usually get here until 8am.” But these women weren’t here to clean. These women were chaining themselves to the fence of the air force base at the start of what would become one of the largest, longest peace protests ever seen on British soil.

Today, Berkshire’s Greenham Common is an airy shelf of grass and heath. Its close-cropped turf is peppered with clumps of gorse and heather. Its fringes turn shaggier, where the scrub morphs to woodland. Beyond that the land tumbles towards Newbury and into the valleys of the River Kennet and Emborne, with tributaries carving gullies down the slopes. The control tower behind me, now home to a museum and community café, is a reminder that 40 years ago you’d have needed to cut the fence and face arrest to stand here.

In the early 1980s, Britain was in the grip of the Cold War as tensions escalated between East and West, between communism and capitalism. The USA and the USSR were in a race to develop nuclear arsenals that would guarantee Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), and the NATO alliance agreed that 464 American cruise missiles needed to be housed in Western Europe. 64 of those would come to RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire and 96 would come here to RAF Greenham Common. ►



▲ FIRE FIGHT

This rusting plane was installed at Greenham in 1986 for training crews. It was linked to a pipeline that sprayed aviation fuel across the fuselage.

Each missile had a nuclear tip with an explosive power equivalent to 16 Hiroshima bombs.

Not everyone supported the idea. On August 27th 1981 a small group – 36 women, six men, four babies in pushchairs – gathered at Cardiff's City Hall and started a 120-mile walk to Berkshire, with the goal of provoking a televised public debate. By Newport, Chepstow, Bristol, Bath, Melksham, Devizes, Marlborough, Hungerford and the US Tactical Weapons Store at Welford they walked. On 5th September the Women for Life on Earth Peace March arrived at Greenham Common and delivered a letter to the Base Commander: 'We fear for the future of all our children and for the future of the living world which is the basis of all life.'

That walk was meant to be the protest. The marchers' plan was to return home soon after arriving here. "We thought it was quite a big thing," said one of the organisers, Ann Pettit, in a TV interview. "Surely they won't ignore this."

"But they did," she continued, "and because we were ignored we had to do more." Inspired by suffragettes fighting for women's right to vote a century earlier, they decided to chain themselves to the perimeter fence at Greenham. They bought the necessary supplies from a local hardware store: "We didn't have any money. We could only buy tiny padlocks because we couldn't afford big ones."

I walk west from the control tower along a flat path that would once have been a taxiway for the airfield. A makeshift camp soon mushroomed by the base's main gate over to the south; the women wouldn't leave until they had been heard. Sleeping

bags from nights spent in village halls on the walk were supplemented with shelters and cooking utensils, and the protesters settled in. All winter they stayed, joined by more supporters, and the following February they decided the camp would be for women only – to leverage their roles as mothers and carers of future generations, and to give them a voice away from the traditional dominance of men. Eventually there were groups at every gate around the base, named after the colours of the rainbow.

If I'd have walked this way on 12th December 1982 I'd have seen women arm-in-arm along every foot of fence, as 30,000 joined hands to encircle all nine miles of the perimeter in a protest known as Embrace the Base. On 1st April 1983, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) organised 70,000 protestors into a human-chain that stretched 14-miles along 'Nuclear Valley', linking an ordnance factory at Burghfield to the nuclear research centre at Aldermaston and up to Greenham Common. That same day, 200 women dressed as teddy bears broke into the base to try and have a picnic.

As skylarks pour their song from the sky and cattle with curly top-knots graze the grass, it becomes obvious the protests didn't halt the missiles. Crouching ominously in the south-west corner of the common, behind three high fences, I can see six missile silos. They look exactly like the set of a James Bond movie, or some dystopian sci-fi film. In fact, they did appear in *Star Wars*:

▼ WAR DANCE

American cruise missiles with nuclear warheads were held at these shelters on Greenham Common for eight years. On 31st December 1982, 44 women scaled the fence and danced on the silos in protest.



The Force Awakens as the Resistance base on D'Qar. One has daffodils nodding merrily at its foot and a sign tells me I'm looking at a scheduled monument; you normally see those on castles.

The vast concrete silos are wrapped with earth and turf and were built to withstand intense enemy attack, such as a nuclear explosion overhead or a direct hit from 2500 pounds of conventional bomb. Together they were known as the GAMA (Ground Launched Cruise Missile Alert and Maintenance Area). One Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) shelter included crew quarters so it could be manned at all times. On 14th November 1983 the first missiles arrived, flown in on huge C-5 Galaxy planes.

I turn and walk away from the silos, passing watery dips in the airfield that are rapidly rehabilitating to wetland. But the women didn't walk away. Their protest continued, with a strict policy of non-violence. In December 1983, 50,000 took part in a second Embrace the Base. Toys, ribbons, baby shoes and photos of loved ones were tied to the fence. Week after week, month after month, the women sang, they keened, they danced, they climbed the fence, they cut the wire, they spun webs from wool to block the gates. Every time the United States Air Force (USAF) tried to move the cruise missiles out on exercise the women blockaded the convoys by sitting or lying in the road.

Hundreds were arrested as you might remember from the news: confrontations between the police and the Greenham women were a regular fixture of evening bulletins. The council was constantly trying to evict them and some locals were hostile too, but even at the best of times life in the camps was hard. There was no power, no running water, and only rudimentary shelter in all weathers. One US Air Force Base Commander, Colonel Butch McGehee, described it as post apocalyptic: "It reminded me of the Monty Python movie *The Holy Grail*. All the peasants. Their condition. There

GREEN SHOOTS

Walk here in late summer and you might see hundreds of lady's tresses orchids blooming by the control tower.



▲ YOU CAN'T KILL THE SPIRIT

Those words are etched in the spiral sculpture in the Greenham Peace Garden, built to remember the protest.

◀ CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Trail markers show the two sides of the common today: one wildlife themed; the other leading to the Cold War silos.



“Being at the camp gave me a very good relationship with the outdoors – the sun and the moon and the weather. The common itself was quite beautiful...”

MARY MILLINGTON, GREENHAM PROTESTOR

►BEEN IN THE WARS

Right: More evidence of Greenham's military past near the control tower.

Below: Conditions for the women at the peace camp were often tough.

The bypass was the site of another famous protest in the 1990s, as Swampy and hundreds of other people took to the branches to try and stop the felling of 10,000 trees to make way for a new stretch of the A34. Much of Greenham's runway was used to build that road.

was a lot of squalor. It really bothered me that women were going to live like that. In fact they were very well organised and they had a very definite purpose but you couldn't see it just by watching them.”

One of the protestors, Mary Millington, later described how tough it was, but also remembered: “Being at the camp gave me a very good relationship with the outdoors – the sun and the moon and the weather... The common itself was quite beautiful: birch trees, silver trees, butterflies; but the ugliness of the military might was quite shocking.”

Aside from the silos and control tower, little of that might now survives at Greenham Common. I wander out into the centre of what was once the longest military runway in Europe at over 10,000 feet. The only tarmac remaining is the 250ft stretch I'm standing on; the rest has been removed and is greening over. The bucolic view beyond stretches to the chalk swells of Hampshire's Watership Down (of rabbit story fame) and the North Wessex Downs.

This common has seen many military footsteps over the centuries: Parliamentarians and Royalists in the English Civil War of the 17th century; Redcoats waiting to head north during the Jacobite Rebellion of the 18th; troop camps up to 20,000 strong in the 19th century; and in the 20th, infantry training for World War I. During World War II the



land was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and used first by the RAF and then by the USAF. The base closed for a short period after the war ended, but was soon re-requisitioned amidst the ratcheting tensions of the Cold War.

I leave the open common and drop down through a business park to a garden by a roundabout on the A339. This is the Greenham Peace Garden, a permanent memorial to the women's protest on the site of the main Yellow Camp. It's designed with the four elements of earth, air, wind and fire – the last with a rust-red steel sculpture to represent the warmth and camaraderie of the campfire. A plaque also remembers Helen Wyn Jones, the only woman to die here during the protest, tragically struck by a passing horsebox as she waited to cross the road. The garden is sown with native plants, including an oak sapling rescued from the development of the nearby **Newbury bypass**.

It's an intense experience to walk somewhere I've known from afar for so long and I arrive here as a pilgrim. I'm inspired both by the women's message of peace and by the non-violent determination of their activism. I think our planet desperately needs more defenders like them. You might vehemently disagree, but personal pilgrimage is about going somewhere that resonates deeply with you. And whatever your political beliefs, Greenham Common is a very special place to walk.

I return through the business park and out onto the open heath, where the knocking of machinery is replaced by the drumming of a woodpecker on a tree. The common, with its neighbour Crookham, is now a haven for birdlife in the bustling south-east of England. I spot lapwings and a Dartford warbler. Later in spring you might see – or more likely hear – rare birds like nightjars or nightingales, while red kites and buzzards patrol the high skies.

Your right to walk here now was part of the



PHOTO: TRINITY MIRROR/MIRRORPIX/ALAMY



Greenham women's fight. On 8th December 1987, the USA's President Reagan and the USSR's General Secretary Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty which banned all land-based nuclear missiles. In August 1989 the first weapons left Greenham; by March 1991 all had been removed and destroyed. In 1992 the USAF handed the base back to the RAF, barring three areas including the silos, which the Russians are still allowed to inspect as part of the treaty.

The women stayed though; they wanted Greenham Common returned to the people. They'd already taken the Ministry of Defence to court – and won with a ruling in the House of Lords – in a battle over common rights. In April 2000 the perimeter fence was demolished and this wild heath officially reopened to the public, in a partnership between the Greenham Common Community Trust and Newbury District Council. That September, after an astonishing 19 years, the peace camp disbanded.

I continue east, moving from Greenham to Crookham Common. Together they form one of the largest surviving tracts of upland heath in the south of England. Author Victor Bonham-Carter described it as a 'mighty wilderness' in the early 20th century and William Cobbett less sweetly called it a 'rascally heath' and a 'villainous tract'.

As I drop off the common and down towards a scenic stretch of the Kennet and Avon canal, I think about the women's legacy. Some dismiss the 19-year protest and suggest other factors influenced the eventual nuclear treaty, like the crippling cost of the arms race and the 1986 nuclear accident at Chernobyl. Yet Gorbachev cited the European peace movement – and the Greenham women in particular – as crucial to his decision to negotiate. And this mother of all peace camps inspired, and still inspires, non-violent protest right around the world. It's all the more astonishing when you think back to the handful of walkers who left Cardiff, one of whom, Karmen Thomas, revealed the worries she had: "What if we're the only two there? What do we do? Do we go home and pretend it hasn't happened or do we carry on and walk on our own?" I, for one, am grateful that they carried on and walked. **CW**

▲ **WINGING IT**
Looking back along the common that was once an airfield and now attracts the more delicate wings of purple emperors, white admirals and silver-washed fritillaries.

▼ **STILL WATERS**
The Kennet & Avon Canal runs north of the common, on its 87-mile journey from London to the Bristol Channel.



Plan your trip



WALK HERE

Turn to **Walk 5** in this issue.



GETTING HERE

Greenham Common is a couple of miles south-east of Newbury. No public transport to start, but 103B bus from Newbury and the LINK Newbury-Basingstoke service stop at Greenham Business Park (near point 4 on route). Alternatively, Thatcham station is 600m along the canal towpath from point 6.



WHERE TO STAY

For a rural getaway try **Colthrop Manor** (01635 226552, colthropmanor.co.uk) just to the north-east of the common, with five bedrooms in a red-brick Georgian manor house. Doubles from £70pn, breakfast extra (£5 continental, £8 full English). They also offer apartments to rent in nearby Thatcham, from a single night to longer stays (sleeping 5, from £149pn). Lots of options in Newbury from the **Premier Inn** (premierinn.com) to the homely **Alma House** (alma-house.co.uk).



WHERE TO EAT

The **Greenham control tower** (01635 44145, greenhamtower.org.uk/visitus) is now home to a community café serving lunches, coffee and cake from Thu-Sun. Wide choice down in Newbury from fine dining at **Henry & Joe's** (henryandjoes.co.uk) to award-winning Japanese food at **The Sushi Maki** (thesushimaki.co.uk).



MORE INFORMATION

See visitsoutheastengland.com or call Newbury information centre on 01635 30267.



“I’d rather be in the outdoors than in a church thinking a

THOSE ARE THE words of naturalist John Muir, and many of us feel something deep in our souls when we walk in the mountains, hills and valleys. Maybe it’s a closeness with the god you worship; maybe it’s a oneness with the universe; maybe it’s a sense of peace you find nowhere else.

It’s a feeling that inspired another John – John Fleetwood – to create the Lake District Pilgrimage. He plotted a wandering 175-mile loop around Lakeland that takes in seven natural cathedrals, which he describes in his film about the route as “the rock pinnacles and cliffs I find more awe-inspiring than any man-made cathedral”. There’s Dove Crag with its Priest Hole cave above Dovedale; Great Gable and its iconic Napes Needle; Pillar Rock above Ennerdale; Scafell Crag on Lakeland’s highest massif; Dow Crag in the Conistone fells; Cathedral Cavern near Little Langdale; and Pike O Stickle in the Langdale Pikes. Pillar Rock is a particular favourite of John’s: “I can’t help but feel very small in such

a powerful place. It’s awesome in the truest sense of the world.”

This journey is not only about mountain highs. There are scenes of quiet reflection, “thin places where the distance between you and heaven is reduced”. There’s the camaraderie of pilgrimage too, with seven historic hostelries like the Old Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale and the Wasdale Head Inn on route. It’s about the tiny beautiful things too, like lichen gently painting rocks green or drops of water jewelling a spider’s web: “Sometimes the small things are just as extraordinary as the big if only you take the time to look. I’ve started to notice things that I never did before and I wonder how I ever missed them. I’m seeing with new eyes.”

You can walk a bit of the route or you can walk it all, although the full circuit is a tough test with over 60,000 feet of ascent (that’s the top of Everest from sea-level, *twice*), some trackless terrain and the often wild Cumbrian weather to contend with. On his inaugural trek John got caught in torrential rain on the Langdale Pikes, but said



“it’s intense experiences like these where I feel plugged into the natural energy that flows through creation.” And as one last decidedly corporeal (as opposed to spiritual) reward to inspire you, John invites anyone who walks the entire pilgrimage to tea and scones on the patio of his house in Garnett Bridge. **CW**

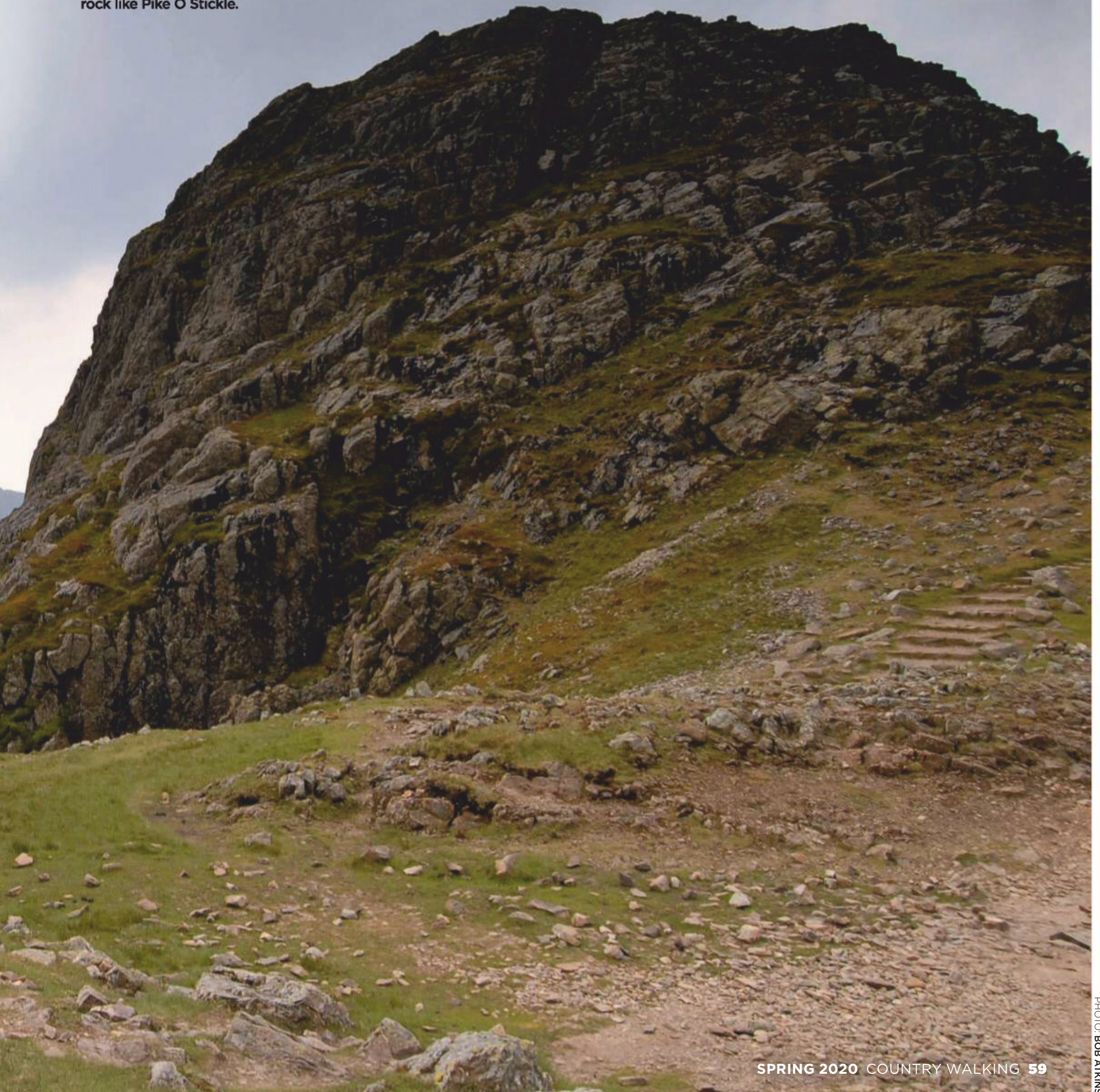
WALK HERE: Find out more at lakelandpilgrimage.blogspot.com



Thinking about God, about the mountains.”

▼ LAKELAND CATHEDRAL

There are no man-made cathedrals in the Lake District National Park, but there are awe-inspiring natural cathedrals of rock like Pike O Stickle.



Pilgrim paths

Japan's sacred heart

Only two pilgrim trails are UNESCO World Heritage listed: Europe's Camino de Santiago and Japan's **Kumano Kodo**, where pristine forests and misty mountains form their own religion.

WORDS & PHOTOS: RACHEL BROOMHEAD

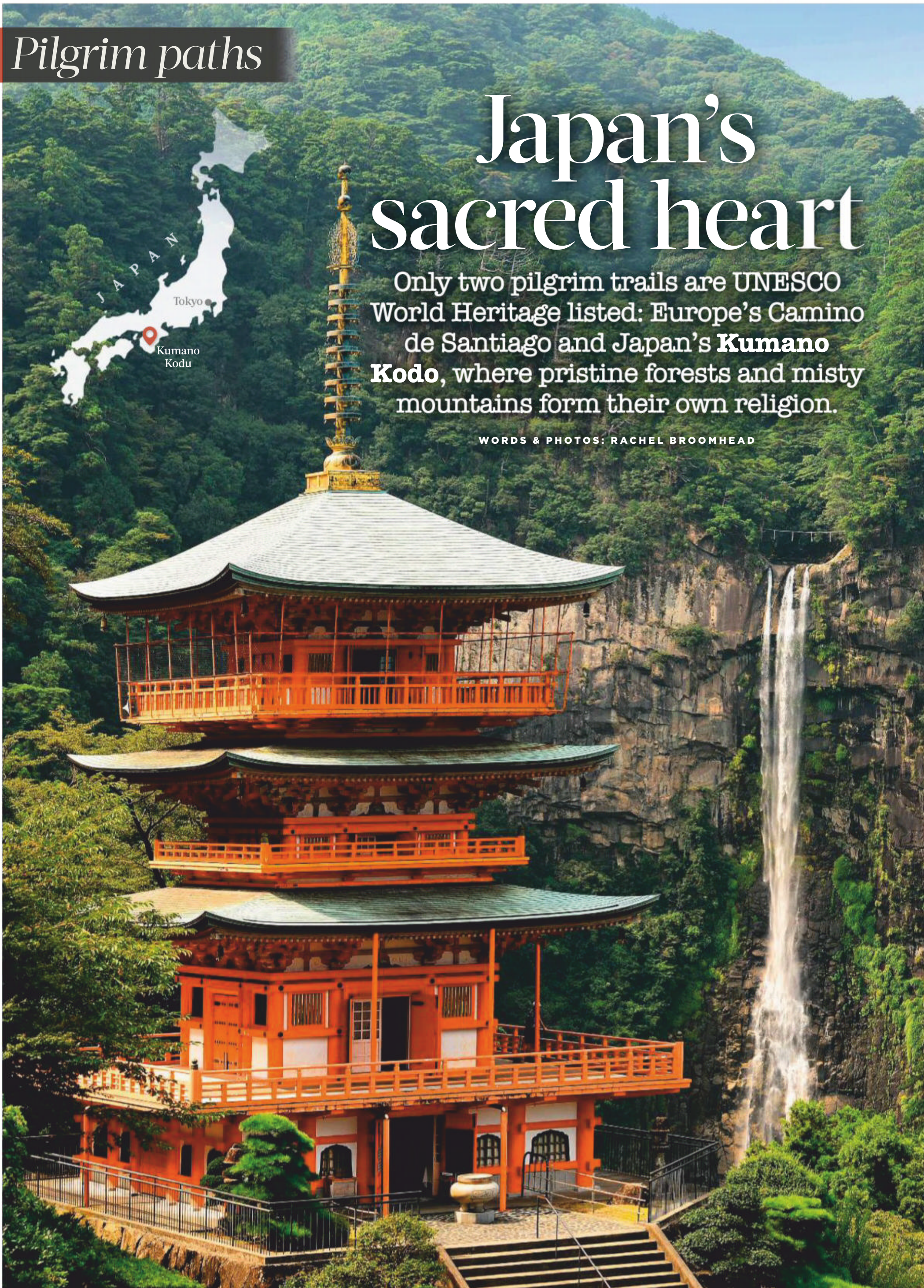
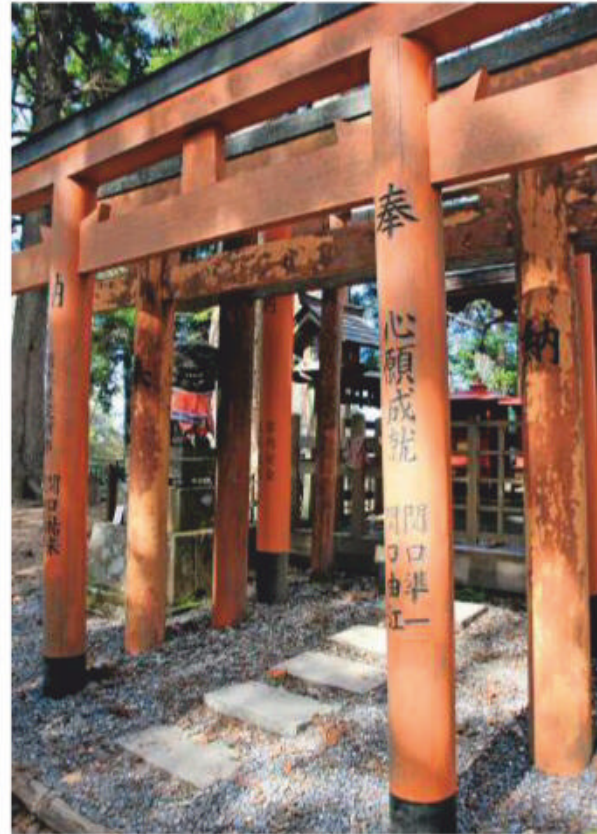


PHOTO: WALK JAPAN



◀ PILGRIM WAYS

Far left: A sign for Japan's sacred trail and a detail of the Konpon Daito pagoda at Koyasan. Left: The *torii* gate at the first shrine on the way to Koyasan. Below: A statue of Jizo, dressed in bib and woolly hat.



AT WHAT POINT do you start a pilgrimage? I've passed through many gates since I left London a few days ago: ones that scanned me for explosive devices and sharp objects, ones that granted me access to the efficient Tokyo metro system, and one that led me under railway arches to smoky food stalls and stand-up izakaya pubs where city workers loosened their ties as the sun went down. I should have looked behind me as I stepped through these portals to see what bits of my life I was shedding: maybe the omnipresent office clock, a few weighty obligations, and a good amount of British reserve. Because now I'm standing in front of my first *torii* gate and find myself entirely open to the idea that this simple orange structure marks an otherwise invisible divide between the mundane and sacred worlds.

It looks like a pi sign in mathematics except it has two cross-beams and, as far as I know, no precise formula. It's the first of five gates which line up to form a sacred bower in front of a small shrine, or *oji*. "Who wants to pray with me?" asks Toru Fujita, our guide for the next eight days. He's a chatty Tokyoite whose affection for this forested mountain trail is equalled only by his love of mischief. Praying, it seems, is serious, but not in an overwhelming, save-your-soul kind of way. "You're going to see many more of these, so best learn the ropes now!" He leads by example and we follow in twos and threes: bow before walking through the *torii* gates, ring the bell in front of the shrine to summon the *kami* spirits, bow twice, clap twice, pray, bow once more.

Pilgrims have walked the Kumano Kodo for over a thousand years in search of transformation, enlightenment, or whatever soulful desire it is that drives humans out of their homes and into the wild. The Kumano is a mountain range on the southern tip of the Kii peninsula, which hangs beneath Osaka on the main island of Honshu. Its bell-shaped peaks are draped in an evergreen canopy of cedar and cypress, and often veiled behind wisps of low cloud or rising mist. It's easiest to think of the religious landscape in terms of threes: the Kumano Kodo is



ILLUSTRATION: STEVEN HALL

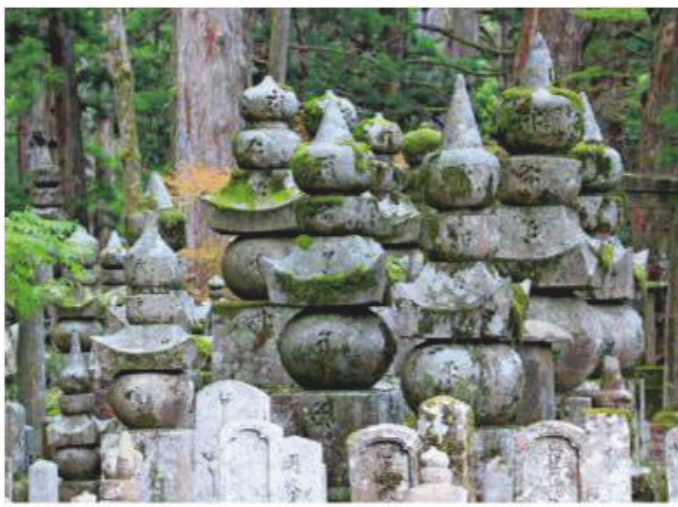
a series of pilgrim trails that connect three sacred sites: Koyasan, the Kumano Sanzan – itself formed of three grand shrines – and the grand temple at Ise Jingu. We'll spend most of our trek walking between the grand shrines of the Kumano Sanzan, but first we'll stop at Koyasan, a sacred Buddhist mountain.

From the shrine, the trail dips into a glade where dogwood vines cling in the shade of cypress trees. Spiritual symbols pop up at regular intervals along the path. One figure who soon becomes familiar is Jizo, a *bodhisattva* worshipped as the guardian of dead children, often dressed in a red bib and knitted hat in tribute to the young souls he protects. We saw him at the shrine as well, which is confusing for Kumano Kodo novices such as ourselves, because Jizo is rooted very much in the Buddhist tradition, while the *torii* gates designate a place of worship rooted in the Shinto tradition – Japan's indigenous religion. We soon learn that the more you try to disentangle the various beliefs, the more of a disservice you do this pilgrim route. "In my heart I'm Shinto, Buddhist and Christian," Toru tells us. "In Japan, we don't have just one God. We celebrate births with Shintoism, marriages with Christianity and death with Buddhism. We are many!"

HOLY WATERS

The Nachi Falls is the tallest single-drop waterfall in Japan and has been a site of worship for thousands of years.

PHOTO: IMAGEBROKER/ALAMY



◀ WALK IN WATER

Left: Pilgrims purify themselves in the Hiki-gawa River near Chikatsuyu village.

◀ RETURN TO THE ELEMENTS

Far left: Five-tier towers in Okunoin cemetery at Koyasan represent the body's return to earth, air, water, fire and ether.



PHOTO: TOM BEAN/ALAMY



▲ GUIDING LIGHT

Above: Toru Fujita, our guide on the Kumano Kodo.

▲ MOUNTAIN TRAILS

Above centre: Mist rises from the green peaks of the Kii peninsula, where a network of pilgrim routes threads through the forest.

The Kumano mountains can claim a good deal of credit for the fusion of Shintoism and Buddhism. It was here that Buddhism first arrived in Japan, carried over the waters from Korea, and met the Shinto spirits. In Shintoism, the spirits, or *kami*, are the rocks, the trees, the rivers themselves, so perhaps it's no surprise that Japan's early teachers of Buddhism – a religion that likewise sees no distinction between humankind and nature – were able to absorb these animistic spirits into their own practice. Koyasan, Toru tells us, is the 'most Buddhist' place we'll visit, and he points out glimpses of the main temple complex through the trees, referring mysteriously to a 'final grave'.

It's late afternoon when we step out of the trees and into a parking lot, only to be heartened by the sight of white-robed monks boarding a coach – not your average tourist trap, then. Not your average mountain town, either: the buildings that line the road running up and over the mountain are mostly Buddhist monasteries and training centres, with the odd hotel, souvenir shop and a bakery selling *mochi*, delicious sweets made with a thick rice paste. Toru leads us along the main street and up a rising gravel track lined with stone lanterns, which are just flickering on in the waning light.

We've entered a cemetery so full of life it's hard to believe it's home to the dead. The grave markers rise among 800-year-old cedar trees and delicate

maples. Pine needles muffle our steps and vibrant moss softens the edges of the graves, blurring where nature ends and the human world begins. Most of the graves take the form of *gorintō*: five-tier towers that represent earth, water, fire, air and ether (also translated as space, or void), and symbolise that in death the human body will return to the elements. These towers to the dead, of varying sizes and ages, have a benevolent presence, as if they've grown their own roots and breathe the air now too.

The 'final grave', or mausoleum, is the resting place of Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon Buddhist sect that practices on Koyasan. To reach it we first enter the main temple at the far end of the cemetery, where we follow the Buddhist custom of wafting ourselves with purifying incense and throw small coins into an offering box before praying. As we round the back of the temple, we reach the gates of the mausoleum beside a group of monks and nuns, who recite a sutra while looking to a low white building. This is as far as we can go. Followers of Kobo Daishi, who was born in 744, believe the monk didn't die, but entered a state of eternal meditation to await the coming of the future Buddha. "The monks," Toru whispers, "still take him breakfast, lunch and dinner." It seems a fitting gesture, in a place more about growth than death.

Next day we drive south to the Nakahechi trail, the most popular section of the Kumano Kodo,



PHOTO: AGEFOTO/STOCK/ALAMY

which we'll follow for 33 miles. The path rises steeply along a forested ridge on the first day, leaving us quiet and breathless as we walk into the small settlement of Takahara where we'll spend the night. It takes us a while to look up and realise, as Toru talks to a villager sitting on his porch steps, that we've arrived somewhere extraordinary. The forest has opened to reveal a sky full of mountains rippling bright green under the setting sun. There is no traffic, or even the usual tangle of electricity wires – only the lively hum of roosting birds.

For a couple of days the trail dips in and out of the forest, taking us from the incubated world of cypress trees into the open landscapes of tea plantations and rice paddies, dotted with the occasional patchwork house and persimmon tree. We buy eye-watering pickled plums from a roadside honesty box and stop at a café serving shiso juice – a refreshing drink made from a sweet mint the colour of cranberries. The Nakahechi trail links up two of the three grand shrines, and we set eyes on the first about an hour before we get there. From a high vantage point Toru directs our gaze down to an enormous *torii* gate – set in a river basin, it dwarfs even the surrounding trees. The shrine itself is set back from the river now, moved inland after a catastrophic flood destroyed the original structure. We pick up the pace to reach it, down a beautiful cedar-lined path with the roots pushing up under

our feet like hot veins. “You are lucky!” Toru tells us as we arrive: a wedding is underway, and the bride stands dressed in traditional silks as three women pin her hair and arrange the folds in her kimono.

Hongu Taisha is a whole city compared to the singular *oji* shrines we've encountered along the trail. We spend an hour exploring, paying respects at the multiple shrines, and buying good luck charms and sweet potato snacks from the souvenir stalls. Down on the shingled banks of the river by the *torii* gate, Toru boils water on his stove and we have an impromptu tea ceremony in the warm sun.

Our fifth day dawns with thunder and rain, and we're dressed in gear that make us twice our usual size, as if we're about to attempt a moon landing. “Today is the second most difficult day and the one with the best view,” Toru tells us, wearing a hat with a mini-umbrella on top. We're all silently thinking: view? Fat chance. We climb without a word into the low cloud on slippery paving stones. I secretly love it: the hush of the mist and the way the trees loom out one by one. The odd peal of thunder reverberates through our hoods, but it's getting more distant now, and we start to glimpse shapes behind the fog. “Was that a mountain?” I ask, but we're all strung out now and I'm speaking to the cedars and the ferns, which vibrate with the final drops of rain. As we re-group the sun bursts through in a beam so angelic only the Gods could have conjured it. We reach the viewpoint



▲ WEDDING DAY

Above: A bride at the Hongu Taisha shrine.

▲ SACRED SPACE

Top: The *otorii*, or great gate, towers over the rice fields at the entrance to the Kumano Hongu Taisha shrine, and marks a passing from the secular world to the sacred.



◀ NATURE WORSHIP

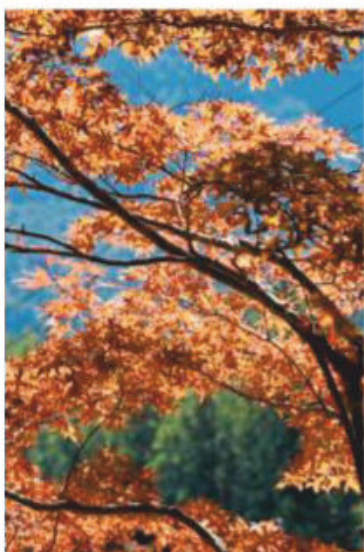
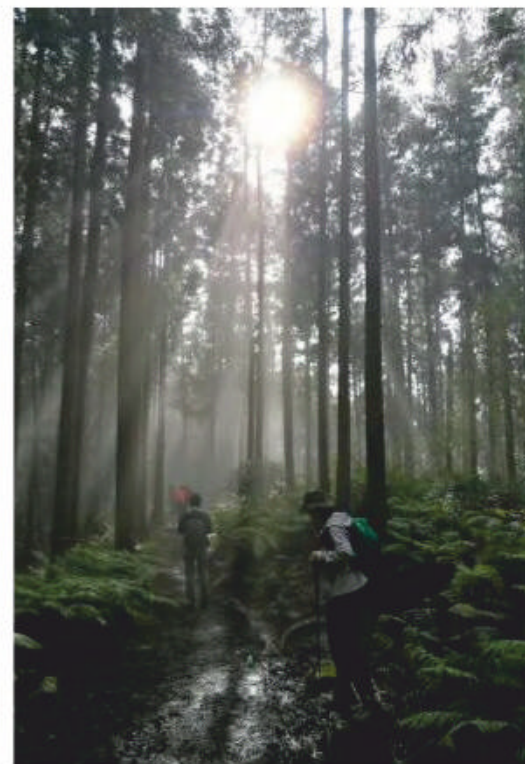
Gotobiki Iwa, the giant rock revered as a natural deity near Hayatama Taisha shrine, is reached by a very steep ascent of Mt. Gongend.

▶ IN THE CLOUD FOREST

Right: Sunshine lights the mist on the 'way of the small clouds' to Hyakken-gura viewpoint.

▶ FRAGRANT WATERS

Far right: Incense burning at the foot of Nachi waterfall.



▲ FALL COLOUR

In autumn, maple trees paint the Kumano Kodo with bright shades of gold, copper, red and russet.

as the final scraps of cloud settle in the valleys. "We call them the 3600 peaks of Kumano," Toru says. We spend our lunch stop losing count, mesmerised.

In the remote village of Koguchi, where we'll spend the night, we're served beer and crisps by a cheerful woman who uses an abacus to add up our supplies. A few days ago I was walking the famous Shibuya crossing in Tokyo, staring at skyscrapers flashing advertisements. At some point it seems I made a crossing of an entirely different kind.

"Today's path was called Kogumotori," Toru tells us over dinner, "which means 'passing over small clouds' and tomorrow we'll walk over the large clouds – the Ogumotori." We smile through our pain at this prospect, rubbing aching legs under the table. The first person to walk the Kumano Kodo was Emperor Uda in the year 907. We'll never know his true motivations for the journey, but it was linked to the Buddhist idea that religious experience is an ongoing practice – pilgrimage isn't just about reaching a certain place, but about travelling *into* a place. A strenuous climb was all part of the process of the gradual fusion between man and the natural environment. Those who took the idea of strenuous physical effort to the extreme were the *yamabushi*, or mountain priests. Blending shamanistic beliefs, Shinto animism, and esoteric Buddhism, they wore white robes with deerskin leggings, carried a conch shell to trumpet from the mountain tops, and

practised seclusion, fasting and sutra recitals, and performed physical feats such as precipitous mountain climbs or standing for long spells under freezing waterfalls. We're all feeling rather nervous about tomorrow – our penultimate day.

To our amazement, the morning brings not only sunshine, but a conch shell propped by the door. The *horagai*, as it's called, belongs to Michi Koshino, a member of staff at the guesthouse who reveals she's in training to become a *yamabushi*. Michi offers to sound the shell, to wish us luck on our journey, and we gather round as she produces long, deep notes that echo off the walls and up into the valley.

The climb is both gruelling and strangely energising. We've hit what we call 'pilgrim pace' – our legs are light, our steps calm and easy. I have the feeling I'm half my usual weight, and that climbing steep mountains for hours on end is the most natural thing in the world. "I love this hill so much," Toru announces. A few of us get a little giddy and start composing haiku, but it's the descent the other side of the pass that finally silences us. Our legs gradually seize up, and we stagger down with sore knees for the last hour, glimpsing mirage-like views of the Pacific ocean, until finally we emerge at one of Japan's most iconic sights: the Nachi falls.

The grand shrine of Kumano Nachi Taisha is our second of the trip, and the last we'll reach on foot. All we can do is sit on the floor with an ice-cream



and look at it all. A waterfall cascades in one long ribbon down the mountainside, dropping the entire height we've just climbed in a matter of seconds, and a fiery orange pagoda stands on the ledge from which we're viewing it. The familiar smell of incense carries on the breeze from the shrines and temples behind us, and if there was any doubt left, we see exactly why for over a thousand years pilgrims have climbed to worship here. Buddhism and Shintoism are a large part of the story, but the Kumano mountains are at the heart of it all.

Toru has one last surprise for us. The third and final shrine, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, lies slightly off the Nakahechi trail so we go there by car the next day. We're greeted by Mr Hamamaka, a senior Shinto priest, who tells us each of the three grand shrines represents the past, present and future, meaning a visit to each one brings salvation, peace and good luck. This one, Hayatama Taisha, was the very first shrine and represents the past. "People used to worship the rock high up on the mountain where they believed the deities lived," he tells us, "but it was so hard to get to they built this shrine so that everyone could pray." He leads us into the temple, to a blessing ceremony in which the room ripples with the sound of the beating drum and the musical chanting, until gradually it merges with the distant chatter of birds, visitors, and the road traffic that passes by on the other side of the *torii* gate. **CW**

▲ PACIFIC HEIGHTS

The view from the trail down to the Nachi falls stretches across the mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

▼ GRAND SHRINE

A pavilion at the Kumano Hongu Taisha, one of the three grand shrines of Kumano.

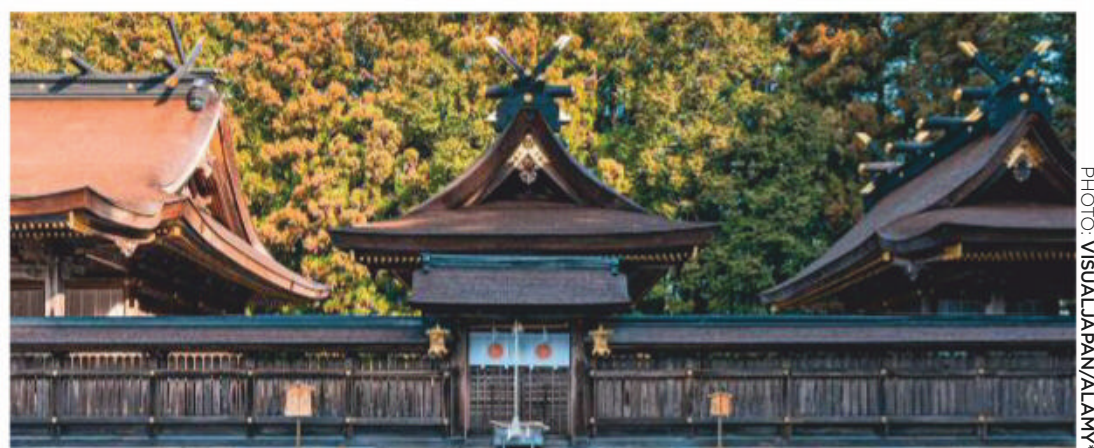


PHOTO: VISUALJAPAN/ALAMY*

Plan your trip



WHEN TO GO

The shoulder seasons are ideal for hiking. November boasts mild, dry days and spectacular autumn colours at Koyasan, while in April you might just catch the iconic cherry blossom season.



GETTING HERE

The nearest airport is Osaka, although many visitors opt to fly into Tokyo. **Air China** (airchina.co.uk) fly from Heathrow to both Osaka and Tokyo via Beijing, and **Emirates** (emirates.com) fly from Gatwick and Heathrow to Tokyo via Dubai. Returns from £500.



GETTING AROUND

The famous **Shinkansen** 'bullet' trains (global.jr-central.co.jp/en) shuttle between Tokyo and Osaka in a brisk 2 hours. From Osaka, local trains operate to Gokurakubashi, where a cable car and bus continue to Koyasan. Local buses operate between the shrines on the **Nakahechi trail**. See japanbusonline.com/en for more info.



WHERE TO STAY & EAT

Japanese hospitality is second to none, and you're guaranteed a comfortable night's stay with dinner and onsen (communal hot bath) facilities in most guesthouses. **Ekoin** at Koyasan (ekoin.jp) was a particular highlight of our trip. The working Buddhist monastery serves traditional vegetarian meals and invites guests to take part in the monks' morning meditations and rituals. Double with breakfast and dinner from £80. At Takahara we recommend **Kirinosato-Takahara** (kirinosato-takahara.com/en) which boasts enchanting views and delicious organic food. Doubles with breakfast and dinner from £90.



GUIDED OPTIONS

Country Walking travelled with **Walk Japan** (walkjapan.com) on the guided **Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Tour** which includes eight nights' accommodation, all breakfasts and evening meals, three lunches, luggage transfers, entrance fees, and all travel from tour start point to tour finish point. Tours cost from £2750 pp.

WIN GUIDEBOOKS!

Cicerone publish a superb guidebook to the Kumano Kodo with detailed route notes, maps and history. Five lucky readers can win a copy – go to walk1000miles.co.uk/japan to enter!

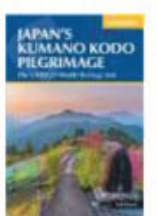




PHOTO: SIMOTION/GETTY IMAGES

MORNING GLORY

Birds fly in bluebell woods and the path beckons. There's no finer time to be alive!

We made it!

WELL, NEARLY. SPRING officially begins on 19 March, but already the tidal wave of life is breaking all around us, bearing us up in giddy optimism. Earthy and aqueous, leafy and somehow luminous, spring air is unmistakable. Growing plants are hungrily ingesting carbon dioxide and with more moisture to convey aroma to your olfactory organs, the air is literally juicy with the good news about the season. And the news is ever new, because uniquely among your neurons, the ones responsible for your sense of smell regenerate throughout your adult life.

Everywhere rises that feeling that everything's going to be *alright*. From the cheerful call of the chiff-chaffs, happy to

be back, to the cacophany of randy rooks, the bursting of buds, the stumblings of lambs, flopping of kits, busynings of ducklings, and the very smell of the ground – cake-mix rich from the decomposition of last season's cast – everything plays its part in the multi-sensory symphony named IT'S GOOD TO BE ALIVE. And as human beings and walkers we are best placed of all creation to appreciate it – part of both orchestra and audience.

It takes about 20 minutes in spring sunlight for your body to produce all the vitamin D it needs – but only about half as long to come to the conclusion that being out here, on foot, is all anyone could need, nevermind for vitamins, but for contentment, entertainment and belonging.

The LOST HORIZONS

Discover the outcast hills that orbit our most famous landscapes, drawing none of the crowds but deserving of your attention – starting with the Cotswolds' long-lost cousin...

WORDS: NICK HALLISSEY PHOTOS: TOM BAILEY



YOU'VE GOT TO love an underdog. When Leicester City won the Premier League in 2016, their anthem and warcry came from alt-rock local fanboys Kasabian. It was a song called *Underdog*, and when they played it at Leicester's once-in-a-lifetime (probably) victory gig at the King Power Stadium, the place went crazy. Because people love an underdog.

And believe it or not, there are underdog landscapes just as much as there are underdog football teams, boxers, racehorses and darts players. An underdog landscape is one that is achingly close to a humungously popular place, yet severed from it by just enough distance to mean it somehow misses out on the kudos, the glamour and the footfall. Alone, apart, distinct; it has the demeanour of a terrier standing outside, looking through the window at a party and going "why can't I be in there too?"

There are many of them around the country, but let's start with one of my favourites. It's called Bredon Hill, and it's the lost cousin of the somewhat better-known Cotswolds.

Many years ago I was wandering the Cotswolds in the company of a knowledgeable local. We were crossing pretty Cleeve Hill, and suddenly I spied a large, shapely, self-contained hill away to the north.

"What's that?" I asked.

"That's Bredon Hill," my guide replied. "The lost Cotswold."

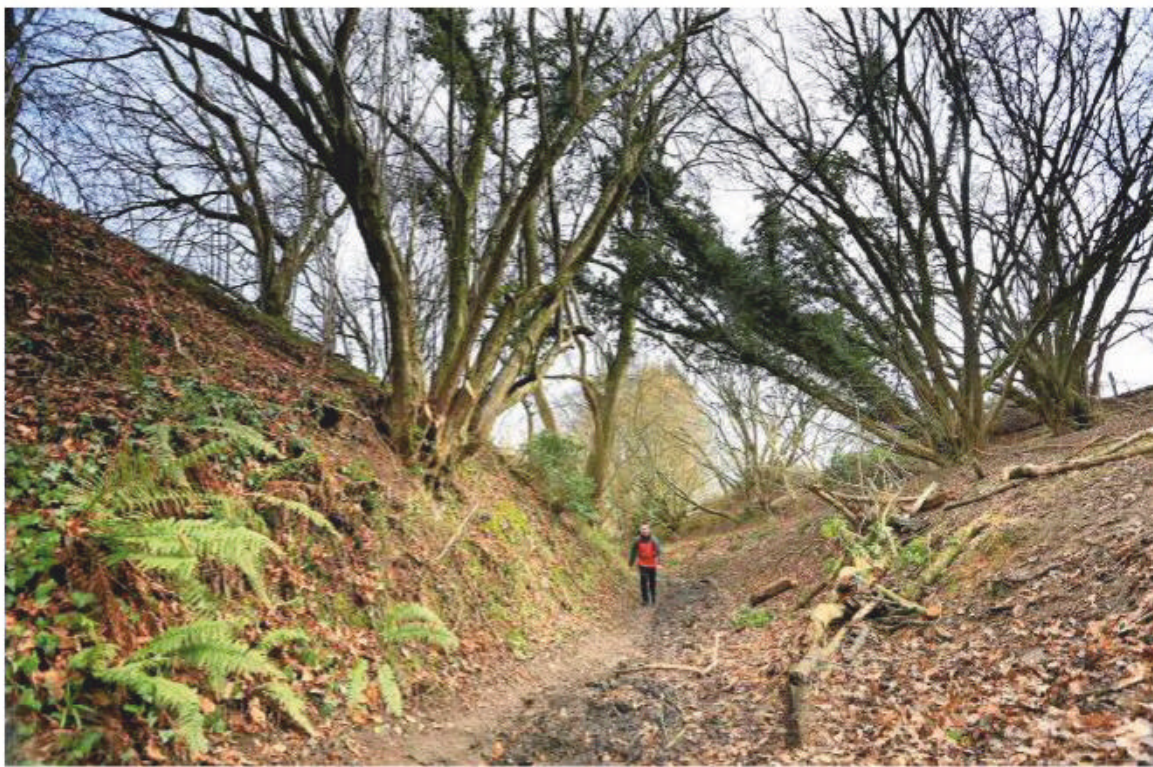
I was insanely excited by the idea of a lost Cotswold. Lostwold, if you will. Or Notswold.

Why was it lost? The answer is geology; although once part of the Cotswold upland, Bredon Hill was severed by aeons of glaciations and river movement, and now stands alone in the Vale of Evesham. In truth it's no more than three miles from the main Cotswold scarp – and it's still within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. But on the map of the AONB it's an enclave, off by itself; a side-chapel off the main cathedral, known only to those who know. The Cotswold Way avoids it; the Winchcombe Way can't reach it. It does have a trail – the Wychavon Way – but said trail doesn't touch the rest of the Cotswold scarp at all, adding still further to the idea that Bredon Hill just somehow *isn't* a proper Cotswold.

▼ A WORLD OF ITS OWN

Walking atop the pronounced northern scarp of Bredon Hill, with the Vale of Evesham stretching into the distance.





▲ ANCIENT HIGHWAYS

This sunken lane is one of many delights on the route to Bredon Hill from Elmley Castle.

► LANDSCAPE IN MOTION

Bredon Hill isn't too steady on its feet, as revealed by the remains of landslips on its north slopes.

The second time I saw Bredon Hill, it was from another superstar destination: the Malverns. Looking out from Herefordshire Beacon, I saw a fine-looking, free-standing hill away to the east. What was it, I wondered? A quick look at the map revealed the answer: oh, it's Bredon Hill. Again. The hill that looks magnificent from every honeypot hill in the west, but somehow you never get to. It has become a running joke with me: any interesting-looking hill I can't automatically identify, with a vague sense of isolation and loneliness, is Bredon Hill. Even in Scotland.

Of course, I can't make the case that *no one* knows about Bredon Hill. Its paths are well-trodden, and it's the local hill for anyone from the Evesham and Pershore neighbourhoods. But compared with the Cotswold megastars like Broadway Tower, Painswick Beacon, Devil's Chimney and Crickley Hill, I suspect its annual footfall is far smaller.

And the best news is, if and when you decide to visit Bredon Hill, it's incapable of disappointing you. It is packed with character, as befits a big, free-standing upland, and full of history and folklore. It's also fabulously nature-rich. It is both National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), blessed with gently sloping field systems and rough, untamed edges, where everything from bobbing foxgloves to wheeling red kites and the exceedingly rare violet click beetle can be part of the show.

▼ FROM A DISTANCE

Bredon Hill as it appears from the flatter ground to the west, rising splendidly from the Vale of Evesham.



Even its gateway/basecamp is a delight: the gentle village of Elmley Castle, with its charcoal-timbered lodges and elegant parish church, complete with adjoining pond.

The village's name derives from a prominent fortification which stood on a mound on the slopes of Bredon Hill, overlooking the village, from the Norman Conquest through to the 16th century. Abandoned and later pulled apart, its stonework was re-employed in the historic multi-arch bridge over the River Avon in Pershore. Today, nothing remains of the castle but earthworks, and they're out of bounds to walkers as they stand in a deer park on private land.

But this is still a village with noble leanings. Its pub, the Queen Elizabeth, recalls a visit by Elizabeth I in 1575. Apparently the most noteworthy event of this hallowed visit was that





“It is packed with **character**, as befits a big, free-standing upland, and full of **history and folklore**. It’s also fabulously **nature-rich**.”

the Virgin Queen was presented with a hat by the villagers, and thus one of its streets is still known as Besscaps. (A duller version is that the villagers all took their hats off to the Queen, but I much prefer the idea of great excitement being generated by the presentation of headwear. “She’ll not forget Elmley Castle,” they all cooed. “We gave her a hat.”)

A number of paths lead up onto Bredon Hill from here, as if pulled by the hill’s gravity. The climb via Hill House Farm is the most direct and pleasing, and on gaining the scarp it latches onto the aforesaid Wychavon Way, which is busy jaunting its way from Broadway to Droitwich. From here it’s a gorgeous mile on the edge of Bredon’s steepest flank, with green cliffs plunging into the vale beneath you, and the Malverns crowning the west horizon.

The summit of Bredon Hill is encompassed by a vast earthwork. This is, or was, Kemerton Camp; a Roman settlement turned Iron Age fort, abandoned after a major battle in the first century AD. It is home to a cluster of huge limestone boulders, which may have been part of the fortifications or simply exposed by quarrying. Among them is the Elephant Stone which, in a rare instance where romance is actually justified by realism, looks a bit like an elephant from one angle. It’s great for a bit of scrambling, especially through the crevice where Jumbo’s head joins his shoulders.



(Passing through rocks is a thing on Bredon Hill. Lower down and to the south west, near the village of Bredon’s Norton, are two megaliths known as the King and Queen Stones. It’s said that passing between them will cure you of illness.)

And if you’re a detectorist inspired by Mackenzie Crook and Toby Jones, Bredon Hill is a fine place to start looking. In 2011, a hoard of 3784 Roman coins was found just north of Kemerton Camp by a couple of detectorists, Jethro Carpenter and Mark Gilmour; it’s thought to be the largest treasure trove ever discovered in the UK. Imagine the joy.

But the centrepiece of Bredon Hill’s summit is the tower. Locals simply call it ‘the tower’, but its formal name is Parsons’ Folly, having been built in the 1750s as a summerhouse for local MP John Parsons. It’s squat and stumpy, but its height is very

▲ ON THE TRAIL

This elegant bench marks the point where the Wychavon Way meets the path coming up from Elmley Castle.

deliberate. By adding 19ft to the summit, its roof stands at 1000ft. Reaching this height was something of a fetish among the 18th-century gentry; Leith Hill Tower in Surrey was built with the exact same goal. All a waste of time, of course, as the Ordnance Survey has always made it clear that artificial additions cannot be considered part of a natural summit. Bredon Hill is 981ft tall and, until the OS says otherwise, not an inch taller.

But Parsons' Folly threw down a gauntlet; in 1794 it inspired one Lady Coventry to build something even more impressive a bit further east: Broadway Tower, which quickly became the very emblem of the Cotswolds.

If the walk so far has been all about landmarks and interest, the return leg is all about tranquility. From the tower you can peel away from the edge and delve into the field systems which range the Bredon plateau. Single straight lines stretch across the hillside; the path clings to the outer boundaries of fertile fields that are pregnant with the promise of spring colour. Fields are fields, but up here they feel slightly different from their lowland cousins. Separate, broad and friendly.

The descent route passes through the parkland which skirts Castle Hill, the mound where Elmley Castle's castle once stood. Although unvisitable, it's definitely spottable, and it's easy to see why this position was chosen: a fine, flat-topped hill, sheltered by the slopes of an even larger hill (Bredon), with a commanding view over village and vale.



Past the pond and the church, and we're back in Elmley Castle, where hopefully the Queen Elizabeth is open for hot chocolate or a glass of Mad Goose, a citrusy gem brewed a few miles away in Great Alne. You can raise it in salute to Good Queen Bess and her lovely hat.

But you can also use this moment to ponder why we love an underdog. From Eddie the Eagle and the Jamaican bobsleigh team to Susan Boyle; from the Karate Kid to Jamie Vardy and those Leicester champions, it's in our nature to root for someone or something that is regarded as having the odds stacked against them. And a hill that stands

▲ TAMING THE UPPER SLOPES

The route returns through the field systems on the south flank of the hill, passing remote Sundial Farm.



Plan your trip



WALK HERE

See **Walk 8** in this issue.



GETTING HERE

Bredon Hill is best accessed from the east via Elmley Castle, which lies in the Vale of Evesham, roughly equidistant between the towns of Evesham and Pershore. You can also access the hill from the south from Westmancote, Kemerton and Overbury, although the options are more limited.



WHERE TO STAY

Nestling between Elmley Castle and Evesham, **Haselor Farm** (01386 860591, haselorfarm.com) is a beautiful B&B offering doubles with breakfast for £80. For something more unusual, try the **Lime Treehouse** a little further away in Little Comberton: a luxurious treehouse with hot tub and balcony overlooking its own parkland; a two-night stay in April costs around £570. 0117 2047830, canopyandstars.co.uk



WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

The **Queen Elizabeth** (01386 710251, elmleycastle.com) is the obvious choice, with its characterful décor, warm welcome and a good range of local ales. Menu options include braised lamb shank with colcannon mash (£14.50) and Fladbury faggots with mustard mash (£12.95). On the other side of the hill, try **The Bell** in Eckington (01386 750033, thebelleckington.com) where there's local venison bourguignon for £15.95.



MORE INFORMATION

For general tourist information go to visitworcestershireshire.org and visitevesham.co.uk. Local website discoverworcestershireshire.co.uk also has some handy information about Bredon Hill. Evesham is also known for its **Blossom Trail**, a series of venues and destinations (including walks) devoted to helping you explore the picturesque Vale of Evesham when the spring blossom is out. Find out more at bit.ly/theblossomtrail

severed from one of Britain's premium landscapes definitely has the odds stacked against it. Bredon Hill is not dappled with honey-stone cottages or straddled by a world-class national trail. It doesn't have a Bourton or a Moreton or a Slaughter nestled in its shadow to overwhelm you with wool-trade churches and artisan delis. It is what it is: a calmer, quieter hill that does its own thing. It doesn't have the crowds that those other venues command – and it doesn't need them.

So it might be an underdog. But as far as we're concerned, give it half a chance and it'll prove it's Top Dog, too. **CW**

▼ THAT'S JUST CHEATING!

Parsons' Folly was partly an attempt to bring Bredon Hill to the height of 1000ft. Today it's bedecked with telecoms aerials.

◀ FINAL PAUSE

The route returns to Elmley Castle by passing this gorgeous pond which adjoins the village church.

More underdog landscapes over the page ▶

UNDERDOGS ASSEMBLE!

5 more underappreciated landscapes for you to explore...

THE BREIDDEN HILLS, Powys

The hills everyone glimpses for half a minute as they race along the A5 seeking more familiar locations like the Shropshire Hills, the Dee Valley or Snowdonia. The Breiddens look stunning for 30 seconds then disappear, and their hidden nature is their greatest gift. A dramatic, self-contained upland lying between Welshpool and Shreswbury, the Breiddens consist of three main summits: the striking volcanic

dome of Moel y Golfa, the soft crest of Middletown Hill, and sheer-edged Breidden Hill itself (although the latter is often known as Rodney's Pillar, due to the obelisk memorial to naval hero George Brydges Rodney that stands atop it). Together the Breiddens are a fabulous day's walk; unmanicured in places but full of character. A fabulous discovery, especially in autumn, when the woodlands of Moel y Golfa look phenomenal.

WALK HERE: Download **The Breidden Hills** at lfto.com/bonusroutes



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

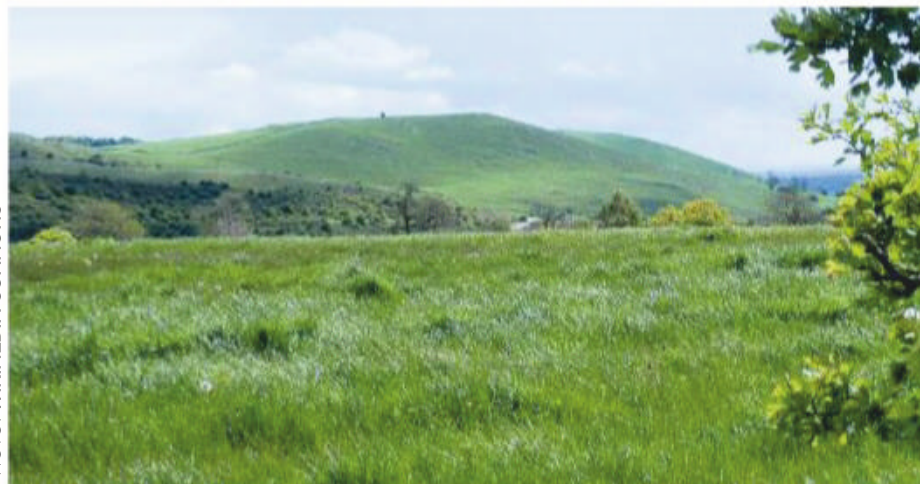


PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

THE WEAVER HILLS, Staffordshire

These two distinctive peaks rise above the winding, wooded glen of the Churnet Valley; in fact you're most likely to spot them on a drive to Alton Towers. They were private land until the Access Land legislation of 2000, and the fact they've only been accessible for 20 years just adds to their lonely allure. You are extremely unlikely to meet more than a smattering of other walkers on the Weavers. But as well as providing fabulous views (and still being within earshot of the screams from Oblivion and Nemesis), they have a remarkable geographical claim to fame: though small and obscure, geologically speaking they are the final southern terminus of the Pennines. A landmass that begins here at Alton Towers ends at the Cheviot on the Scottish border. If you're a certain kind of nerd (which we are), that's quite awesome.

WALK HERE: Download **The Weaver Hills** at lfto.com/bonusroutes

THE DENGIE PENINSULA, Essex

Underdogs don't have to be hills, of course. The Dengie is a vast stump of reclaimed farmland which was drained from its former life as a swamp so evil and pestilent, even the Romans shied away from it. But it's a lot nicer now: a green, verdant, low-lying chequerboard of fields and dykes, hovering between the serene estuaries of the Crouch and the Blackwater. A helpful branch line helps you connect some of its remote edges without having to retread your steps. Highlights include the riverside walk from North Fambridge to the chic yachting capital of Burnham-on-Crouch (the heartland of nature writer JA Baker's seminal book *The Peregrine*) and the tiny, remote but beautiful chapel of St Peter's, way out at Bradwell. Further up the Blackwater estuary is Northey Island, a National Trust-owned island rich in wildlife and reachable by tidal causeway – but you have to ring ahead (01621 853142) to arrange your visit. Björk summed up the atmosphere of the Dengie best: it's oh so quiet.

WALK HERE: Download **Burnham-on-Crouch** at lfto.com/bonusroutes



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

SCOUT SCAR, Cumbria

When Natural England announced the expansion of the Lake District National Park in 2014, even the most scholarly geo-geek would have been hard pressed to explain what ‘Helsington Barrows’ was. Listed as one of the new zones, it perplexed most people – except, possibly, the good people of Kendal, who knew it by a different name: Scout Scar. This wonderful ridge is Kendal’s doorstep walk, and it looks more akin to the Yorkshire Dales than the Lakes: limestone outcrops, a scrubby plateau, lonesome hawthorns. In fact, give it a dry summer’s day and it can look almost like Mediterranean *garrigue* up here. Even the acquisition of national park status won’t turn Scout Scar into an overcrowded honeypot though. So it reaps the best of all worlds: the highest level of protection and conservation, with the sense that most people still won’t have a bloody clue where it is.

WALK HERE: Download **Scout Scar** at lfto.com/bonusroutes

PHOTO: TOM RICHARDSON CUMBRIA/ALAMY



PHOTO: KEN CROCKET/ALAMY

THE OCHIL HILLS, Stirling/Perth

“Everyone drives past them because they’re full steam ahead for the Highlands and the Cairngorms,” an Ochils Mountain Rescuer once told me. “And I love that. More for the rest of us.”

The Ochils are an immense range stretching from Stirling up towards Perth. They’re no slouches either: highest point Ben Cleuch is a lofty 2365ft tall. But as my friend says, they lack the visitor numbers of the higher stuff further north. They are gentler, more rounded hills, with summits more akin to moorland than gnarly rock. Highlights include

the prominent domes of The Nebit and Dumyat, the unsuspected huddle of reservoirs in the Ochils’ wild interior, and some fabulous names like Muckle Law, Skythorn Hill, Frandy Moss and The Black Hill of Kippen. This was a Pictish heartland, and it’s thought that the scenic Katie Thirsty’s Well, on the western edge of Dumyat, takes its strange name from a combination of Christian (St Katherine) and Pictish (King Drustan) tradition. So I apologise to my friend the Mountain Rescuer for saying this, but – but go see the Ochils. They’re fantastic.

WALK HERE: Download **Ben Cleuch** at lfto.com/bonusroutes

Geot

Country
Walking

Expert advice on the kit that makes a difference

YOUR
COMPLETE
BUYING
GUIDE TO

WATERPROOF JACKETS

OUR TESTERS

Country Walking always tests products for both men and women. Our reviewers **Philip Thomas** and **Sarah Ryan** have notched up thousands of miles on foot, so they know the value of good kit at the right price. This test took them far and wide: to the Peak District, the Cotswolds, the Gower Peninsula and the Scottish Highlands.



IF WE'VE LEARNT ANYTHING from putting 12 waterproof jackets through their paces over the last few months, it's this. 1: It rarely rains when you need it to (i.e. when there's vital wet weather testing to be done). 2: When it does rain – which it eventually did in bucketloads – reliable waterproofs are worth every penny.

You've probably noticed it can sometimes get jolly damp in these muddled weather isles of ours. But with a good waterproof jacket, you can walk on through the showers in relative comfort. After footwear, investing in a waterproof (aka a 'hardshell') should be next in your walking clobber priorities, especially if you're heading for the hills. The good news is, you don't have to spend a fortune on a jacket to get you out there and relishing the rain.

As a general rule, you get what you pay for. Some are overhyped, but pricier jackets tend to deliver better fabrics, design and durability. Value for money is one quality we assess in our reviews, measuring price against performance. We cover every type of jacket out there, from low-priced to lightweight and top-of-the-range, and suggest the best matching different budgets and needs. Fit, features and fiddly zips... nothing's left out. We also explain how they work and are best looked after. For everything else waterproof, keep turning to page 84.

About our reviews

We've chosen 12 waterproof jackets which should be widely available in the UK at the time of going to press. Philip and Sarah tested six each, all but one available for both men and women (indicated by these dots ●●). We rate each jacket on **comfort** (fit and feel), **performance** (how it copes with rain and sweat), **versatility** and **value for money**. We don't select an overall winner, but Philip and Sarah have chosen their stand-out favourites and selected one jacket that represents best value for money.



WHAT'S THE 'TARGET PRICE'?

Shop around and you'll probably find the gear we review on sale for less than the RRP. Our **Target Prices** are the lowest prices we could find from reputable retailers (high street and online) at the time of going to press.



PHOTOGRAPHY: TOM BAILEY

Buying Guide Waterproof Jackets

HOOD

A good hood should fit snugly around your head and most are adjustable. Many have two shock cord toggles in the collar and another at the back you can pull tight for a head-hugging fit, so that the hood doesn't impede your visibility when you're looking around. A stiff or wired peak can also help keep your field of vision clear and will keep some rain off your face.

FIT

Jacket tailoring varies from loose-fitting, 'casual' cuts to figure-hugging 'athletic' fits, with longer 'articulated' arms. Your jacket should have ample slack and length for moving around in without riding up around the hem or cuffs and leaving you exposed to rain and wind.

FABRIC

Most jacket fabrics combine two layers: a robust, rain-shedding outer layer treated with a durable water repellent (often called the face fabric) and a waterproof, breathable membrane which is heat-bonded to the underside (see page 82 for the science). Seams are taped to stop rain getting in. Fabric performance varies, with some brands using third party membranes and others using own-brand technology.

POCKETS

Most jackets sport a few pockets both outside and in for stowing your phone, map, hat and gloves. On some jackets, the front pair of 'handwarmer' pockets are set above waist level so that they remain accessible when a rucksack hip belt rests over the jacket.

ZIP

The potential weak point in a jacket's rain-shedding armour, the zip is usually protected by at least one storm flap on its underside. Some jackets have a second storm flap covering the outside, held down by snap fasteners or Velcro to keep the rain out. Some pricier jackets (like this one) employ heat-bonded, waterproof tape to make the zip water repellent. Two-way zips (unzipped from top and bottom) give easier access to layers underneath and better movement in longer jackets when needed.

LENGTH

A longer jacket covers up your thighs and bottom more effectively, but can also impede your stride unless there's a two-way zip (see Zip). Shorter-cut jackets and those with scoop back hems, allow freer movement and are easier to take longer strides and scramble in.

CUFFS

Velcro adjustable cuffs let you seal out rain and gusts, but some ultra-lightweight jackets forego these for elasticated cuffs instead.

Turn over to read the tests...

UP TO £100



CRAGHOPPERS Toscanna ●●

RRP: £75 Target price: £50

At the time of writing, this great value jacket is on sale for £22.50 – an almost alarmingly low price. And it is a decent, does-the-job waterproof. The material is Craghopper's own AquaDry: waterproof to 8000mm, meaning it will keep you dry in most wet-weather conditions on low-level walks but may not stand up to relentlessly heavy rain. It coped well with most conditions on low-level walks and city strolls, though I did get sweaty quite quickly on a particularly gruelling muddy uphill. The mesh lining helps it feel more comfortable next to the skin but can still feel a little plasticky. Most key features are covered with adjustable cuffs, hem and hood. Here, with my bundle of thick hair, I found the capacity a little low and the peak short, so my face felt exposed in more stormy weather. There are three zipped pockets and the inner one is large enough for a map, but to accommodate this comfortably, it's placed around the abdomen so you have to undo the zip almost two-thirds of the way to access it. But these are all quibbles that might not bother you, and overall it's a brilliant value jacket. **SR**

INFO: Sizes: 8 – 20 **Weight:** 419g (10)
Fabric: AquaDry **Contact:** 0161 866 0583,
www.craghoppers.com

+ Price, features generally well covered.

- Inner pocket placement.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BEST FOR: Low-level and warmer weather walking.



REGATTA Highton Stretch Jacket ●●

RRP: £80 Target price: £72

The Highton is an innovative jacket at an attractive price, made for day-to-day walking. But it's not without downsides. Let's start with a positive. As you might have guessed from the name, its party pieces are the stretchy panels promising easy movement around the sleeves and shoulders. But frustratingly the cut is restrictively tight across the shoulders. The whole jacket rode up every time I lifted my arms. In this mesh-lined jacket's favour, its breathable Isotex 10,000 fabric and water repellent coating did the business in day-long drizzle, with an internal storm flap to cover the main zip (though no taping). It's not premier league performance, but it's sufficient. With hem and hood cords drawn tight, you can feel smugly cocooned when foul weather sets in. But it could do with some Velcro tabs on the elasticated cuffs. There are four pockets: an awkwardly placed internal security pocket, two roomy lower pockets and one in the chest (which unintuitively unzips sideways). **PT**

INFO: Sizes: S – XXXL **Weight:** 495g (M) **Fabric:** Isotex Stretch 10000 **Contact:** 0161 866 0486;
www.regatta.com

+ Fairly inexpensive.

- Unergonomic fit and pockets.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BEST FOR: Everyday, low-level walks throughout the year.



MOUNTAIN WAREHOUSE Rainforest Jacket ●

RRP: £100 Target price: £60

The Rainforest jacket felt warm and snug the moment I first pulled it on, appropriately in rain-sodden woodland. It uses own-brand IsoDry fabric, which is rated to 10,000mm and has a textured feel, like rough linen. It felt reassuringly tough and protective, especially zipped right up to the mouth with the soft, brushed cotton lining creating a cosy feeling – though it was also quite tight over the face. The mesh lining around the core and silky polyester lining in the sleeves add to that next-to-skin comfort. And a cut that completely covers the hips and part of the bum is welcome for warmth, though less suited for agile endeavours. I quickly became quite sweaty on steep climbs but it was great on wet and gusty low-level tracks. It also has loads of pockets: two hand-warmers, one outer chest, one inner chest – all zipped – and a phone-sized velcro pocket tucked right inside near a small elasticated earphone loop. It's not designed for long days up high in foul weather but is practical, comfortable and just fine for lower level walks. **SR**

INFO: Sizes: 6 – 28 **Weight:** 536g (10)
Fabric: IsoDry 10,000 **Contact:** 020 3828 7700,
www.mountainwarehouse.com

+ Comfortable, warm, multi-pocketed.

- Can get sweaty.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BEST FOR: Cold, wet weather walks on moderate ground.

£100 – £200



OUTDOOR RESEARCH Helium II ●●

RRP: £150 Target price: £120

The Helium II is so incredibly light and compact, I was sometimes worried I'd forgotten to pack a jacket at all. It weighs about the same as a can of tuna and stuffs down into a built-in Velcro pouch no bigger than a cooking apple. Designed with few frills, it's a waterproof you can throw on in a downpour and swiftly stow away again when the storm's passed. For all these reasons and more, it's a great summer waterproof, ideal for long-distance walking, but won't cut it as a year-round, everyday jacket. To keep you dry it combines a thin but surprisingly robust (if also rustly) 2.5 layer Pertex fabric and water repellent zips (though no full-length storm flap). I found this amply breathable. It's not a long jacket and the tailoring never felt restrictive. A single toggle lets you tighten the hem and another drawcord in the hood pulls it snugly around your noggin. The cuffs are elasticated, but not as effective as velcro tabs. On the pocket front, there's the pouch inside and one zipped chest pocket, with room for a smartphone. **PT**

INFO: Sizes: S – XXL **Weight:** 171g (M) **Fabric:** Pertex Shield 2.5L **Contact:** www.outdoorresearch.com

- +** Compact and wonderfully light. Great fit and breathability.
- Few pockets, not warm enough for year-round use.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

BEST FOR: Fast, light and long-distance walks in milder seasons.



JACK WOLFSKIN Eagle Peak ●●

RRP: £165 Target price: £165

This is a jacket you can feel confident soldiering up Snowdon in, but won't feel overdressed for walking the dog in either. It's a dependable all-rounder and eminently comfortable to wear, with touches of luxury. Everything's neatly thought out with the Eagle Peak jacket, right down to details like the tab on the soft chin guard behind the zip and the discreet toggles for adjusting the hood snugly. The two in the collar are sewn in, so they don't flap around or get entangled. Unlike the other jackets I was testing, I found the fabric relatively soft and it doesn't rustle excessively in the wind. On paper, Texapore O2+ matches Gore-Tex levels of waterproofness (30,000mm) and breathability, and I certainly wasn't getting wet or sweaty inside when out in rain showers. The 'Super DWR' is PFC-free. This layered set up is lined with a mesh and inside the collar there's a soft fleecy lining. The cut is loose and casual, and the adjustable hem and arms are average length. You get three, good-sized zipped pockets: two at the front and one inside – all roomy enough for phones, wallets and gloves. **PT**

INFO: Sizes: S – XXXL **Weight:** 500g (M) **Fabric:** Texapore O2+ 2L **Contact:** 00800 96537546, www.jack-wolfskin.co.uk

- +** Comfy, well-designed and good weatherproofing.
- None.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

BEST FOR: Day-to-day walking and occasional trips to wilder places.



KEELA Cairn ●●

RRP: £170 Target price: £170

This fluorescent beauty (available in less flashy hues) is the handiwork of Scottish brand Keela. Keela know a thing or two about staying dry, and it shows in this versatile, first-class jacket. You get a lot of bang for your buck. The 3-layer Aquaflex fabric is thin and lithe, and it kept me dry whenever the skies opened, 'breathing' well on the go as well. The main, two-way zip is water repellent, as are those for the three roomy outer pockets, complemented by a fourth inside (annoyingly a little too small for chunkier smartphones). The hood is helmet compatible and so rather large – prone to catch the wind. Happily it's also fully adjustable, but I had to pull all three shockcords quite tight for a snug fit. The wired peak helps keep vision clear too. The collar comes up fairly high, which was welcome in wind and driving rain, and the long, articulated sleeves gave my arms excellent freedom of movement. The Cairn is also very light and packs down small into its hood. My only qualms are the thin tabs on the zips, which proved slightly fiddly to grasp with wet gloves on. **PT**

INFO: Sizes: XS – XXXL **Weight:** 344g (M) **Fabric:** Aquaflex **Contact:** 01592 777000, www.keela.co.uk

- +** Light, compact, great fit, performs well.
- Fiddly zip tabs and small internal pocket.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

BEST FOR: Everything from upland day walks to a multiday hikes.

£100 – £200



SPRAYWAY Reaction Jacket ●●

RRP: £180 Target price: £180

Made from Gore-Tex fabric, which is reliably windproof and breathable (with a 28,000mm waterproof rating), the Reaction is well equipped for rough conditions from spring through to late autumn. It felt reassuringly robust in near gale-force winds on a cold wet hilltop and with the zip pulled up to the nose and the stiffened, wired peak pulled low, I was well protected against buffeting rain. It's long enough to cover the hips and falls partway over the rear, so the core stays warm even when reaching up or bending down. The satiny polyester lining means it feels soft next to the skin too with patches of mesh lining around the back and armpits to aid breathability. This makes it good for warm, wet days when you might want to throw it on over a T-shirt while still being roomy enough to go over a heavier midlayer. There are three pockets: two zipped OS map-sized hand-warmers set above backpack hipbelt level and one velcro tabbed inner pocket. The Reaction can get a little sweaty on more arduous climbs but it should suit all but the most determined, winter peak baggers. **SR**

INFO: Sizes: 8 – 18 **Weight:** 478g (10) **Fabric:** Shell 2 layer Gore-Tex 75D; lining taffeta and mesh
Contact: 0161 366 5020, www.sprayway.com

+ Robust, roomy, high pockets.

– Can feel a little sweaty.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BEST FOR: Traditional 3-season hillwalking.



MONTANE Pac Plus Jacket ●●

RRP: £180 Target price: £142

The Pac Plus feels and performs like a hardy mountain jacket, but it weighs in and packs down like the windbreakers joggers wore back in the 80s. It's light (under 300g), hard-wearing and when you don't need it, it will squash down to the size of a cabbage, stowing neatly in the right-hand pocket. A wonderfully versatile waterproof, it can serve as your day-to-day hillwalking jacket with other layers or be on standby in your rucksack as you 'thru-hike' the Pennine Way. The amply breathable Gore-Tex PacLite Plus fabric (the lightest, most 'packable' incarnation) kept me dry on the go in blustery deluges lashing the Peak District over winter, with every opening sealed up by water repellent zips. I liked how I could pull the hood tight to my head and over my chin using the drawcords, but not lose visibility thanks to the stiff, wired peak. A strip of soft fabric where the collar comes over your lips shows attention to detail. The tailoring is uninhibiting and the map-sized zipped pockets sit above waistbelt level – alas there are just the two on the outside. All in all it's a minimalist masterpiece. **PT**

INFO: Sizes: S – XXL **Weight:** 293g (M) **Fabric:** Gore-Tex PacLite **Contact:** 01670 522 300, www.montane.co.uk

+ Light, compact and comfy to wear. Great performance.

– No inside pockets.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BEST FOR: Spring to autumn hillwalking and long-distance trails.



SALOMON OUTline Jacket ●●

RRP: £180 Target price: £110

The OUTline is light to the point of almost feeling flimsy, so pulling it out in a wind so strong I had to lean sideways into it just to walk forwards, I felt quite nervous, convinced rain would lash through. Salomon though have heritage in climbing and mountain running so much of their kit is adapted to staying agile and dry in severe conditions. As a result, it kept me warm and dry in blasting wind and rain. It's mostly made from 2.5 layer waterproof fabric with a 20,000mm rating, making it flexible and light, with more durable 3 layer fabric at the upper arms, shoulders and hood – areas which take the most pummeling from weather and abrasion. It's unlined so doesn't feel immediately warm but is considerably lighter than other jackets on test and packs to the size of a grapefruit. It's not overloaded with features, prioritising freedom of movement and performance. So the cuffs and hem are elasticated and the hood is not adjustable, though it fitted me well, never obscuring vision. And there are two waist pockets, neither quite big enough for a map. Simple, yes, but astonishingly protective. **SR**

INFO: Sizes: XS – XXL **Weight:** 274g (10) **Fabric:** AdvancedSkin Dry **Contact:** 020 3510 0639, www.salomon.com

+ Light, high weather resistant fabric.

– Very few features.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	PERFORMANCE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VERSATILITY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BEST FOR: Fast movers on the hills and off.

£200 – £300



BERGHAUS Highland Ridge Interactive ●●

RRP: £220 Target price: £180

Warm and well-featured, the Highland Ridge is perfectly equipped for wet and wild conditions. It's generously cut: large enough for a thick midlayer underneath and designed to zip into fleeces from the Berghaus Interactive range, with long sleeves to protect the hands and almost entirely covering the rump. The 2 layer Gore-tex fabric is lined with satiny polyester and mesh down the spine, with brushed cotton around the collar and over the zip, so it feels snug from the off. There's an inner waist-cord too, designed to trap in heat but I found it awkward to adjust as the jacket needs to be open to access it and a little uncomfy when tightened. The chest pocket is great however, located under the stormflap so you needn't open the jacket to access it, and large enough for an OS map. There are two hand-warmer pockets too, just about accessible over a rucksack hipbelt, but I'd like them to be an inch or so higher. Happily, the hood is separate from the collar so you can pull it up and down without undoing the zip. All of this combines to make the Highland Ridge exceptionally equipped to retain body heat. **SR**

INFO: Sizes: 8 – 20 **Weight:** 583g (10) **Fabric:** Shell Gore-tex; lining 100% polyester/polyamide **Contact:** 0345 607 2477, www.berghaus.com

- +** Comfortable, robust, well-placed chest pocket.
- Waist cord, main pockets can be awkward to access with a backpack.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★★★★★
	PERFORMANCE:	★★★★★
	VERSATILITY:	★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★★★★★

BEST FOR: Staying warm on cooler, wetter days on all terrains.



RAB Kangri GTX ●●

RRP: £280 Target price: £252

The Kangri is a battle tank among jackets – expensive yes, but built to survive scuffs and drenchings on long, hard forays in the hills. Its main armour is a hardwearing 3 layer, 70 denier Gore-Tex fabric. Shedding rain and deflecting hooleys, it's waterproof, windproof and breathable – just what I needed on the high moors of the Peak District. The Kangri has a sturdy, two-way Aquaguard zip (water repellent), backed up by a storm flap. It's also equipped with a drawcord adjustable hem and a large hood you can close tight around your face, shutting out the elements. You can also make it snugger around your waist. I liked how the toggles for the hood closing are sewn into the high collar where they couldn't snag or flap in my face. The cut was amply long enough to cover my rear, while long, 'articulated' sleeves meant I could move freely without anything riding up and leaving me chilly. When things get warm, pit zips can be opened to let in cool air. There are three pockets: one inside for a smartphone or wallet, and two generous waist pockets set above rucksack harness level. **PT**

INFO: Sizes: S – XXL **Weight:** 570g (M) **Fabric:** Gore-Tex **Contact:** www.rab.equipment/uk

- +** Very robust, brilliant waterproofing, clever design.
- None.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★★★★★
	PERFORMANCE:	★★★★★
	VERSATILITY:	★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★★★★★

BEST FOR: Year-round hillwalking, whatever the weather.



PARAMO Alta III ●●

RRP: £300 Target price: £270

Paramo takes a different approach to others, using directional Nikwax Analogy fabric rather than a membrane. It actively moves liquid water away from your body, rather than just letting sweat vapour evaporate like membranes do. The durable water repellent coating sheds most water and the jacket dries out remarkably quickly. It's also noticeably soft, flexible and warm and doesn't rustle much, making it very freeing to move about in. The material is quite heavy and warm and it's easy to overheat on strenuous uphill in mild conditions although the zipped vents on both arms, opening to a mesh lining, do help combat this. You can also push the sleeves up and undo the main zip from the bottom as well as the top. The fit is loose and long, entirely covering the bum and the two zipped handwarmer pockets are backpack compatible but accessible under the belt rather than over it. The zipped outer, chest pocket easily takes a map. There's another, smaller, inner zipped pocket which probably accepts most phones but mine, in a bulky water and shockproof case, didn't quite fit. **SR**

INFO: Sizes: XS – XL **Weight:** 738g (10) **Fabric:** Nikwax Analogy **Contact:** (01892) 786444, www.paramo-clothing.com

- +** Soft, comfortable, excellent ethics.
- Unflattering, can get quite hot.

RATINGS	COMFORT:	★★★★★
	PERFORMANCE:	★★★★★
	VERSATILITY:	★★★★★
	VALUE FOR MONEY:	★★★★★

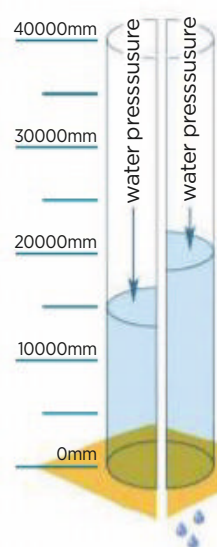
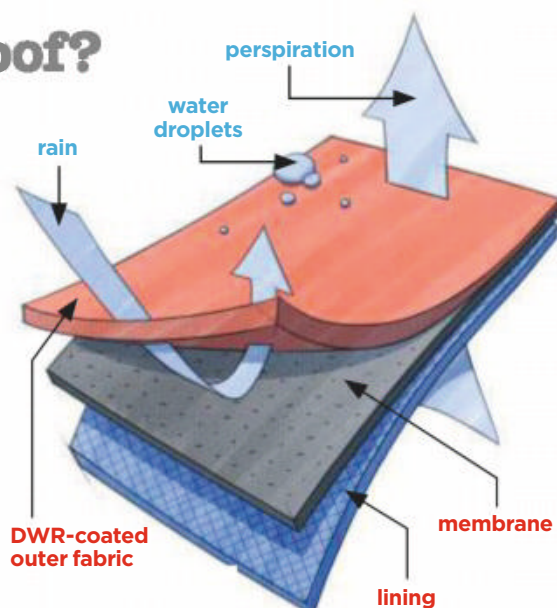
BEST FOR: Comfort in consistently cold and damp conditions.

THE KNOWLEDGE:

How your jacket works and how to look after it.

What makes it waterproof?

Most waterproof fabrics combine two or three layers to shed rain outside and let perspiration escape from inside. Many garments (but not all) combine a tough, coated face fabric with a 'breathable' membrane bonded to the underside. Membranes are perforated by millions of microscopic holes, which are small enough to keep out raindrops, but big enough to let out vapour (the 'breathing' bit). This transpiration process is most effective when the outer layer is dry and cool, drawing out the vapour, which is why it's treated with a durable water repellent (DWR) coating.



How waterproof is it?

A fabric's 'hydrostatic head' is a way of measuring how waterproof it is. Often quoted by brands, it's the water pressure at which it begins to leak, measured in millimetres. Replicating the effect of rucksack straps and wind in lab conditions, a pressurised water column is applied to the fabric to determine the hydrostatic head. A 1500mm rating is the minimum to be classed as waterproof, but most fabrics far exceed this, with top-end Gore-Tex topping 30,000mm. DWR and face fabrics also affect performance, and a higher rating can sometimes mean a trade-off with breathability.



BEST OF THE REST

KATHMANDU Trailhead £60

A good jacket at a great price, the Trailhead employs high spec 2.5 layer Pertex Shield fabric. The hood, hem and cuffs are fully adjustable and you can zip in the Trailhead fleece for extra warmth on easy walks. www.kathmandu.co.uk



MAMMUT Kento £189

The Kento is a tough but light hardshell designed for fast-paced adventures. Its fabric has a 20,000mm waterproof rating and all the zips are water repellent – including two under the armpits for extra ventilation on the move. www.mammut.com



SALEWA Puez 2 £225

A top-of-the-range Gore-Tex jacket, the Puez 2 offers the highest levels of waterproofness and breathability, and is sturdy enough to withstand the scuffs and scrapes of mountain life. It's mesh lined and the fit is fully adjustable. www.salewa.com



SHERPA Kunde II £120

Created for travelling in comfort, and stows easily into any rucksack, the Kunde is made from a ripstop nylon Sukatec fabric, with a 10,000mm waterproof rating. For every product sold, Sherpa invest in education in Nepal. www.sherpaadventuregear.co.uk



WATERPROOF CARE



How to... wash your jacket

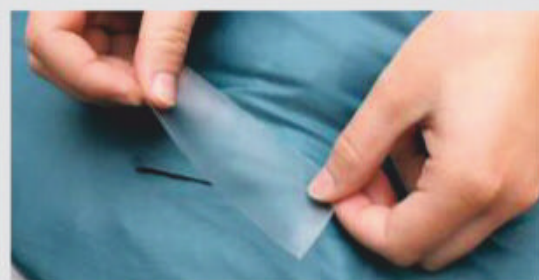
The occasional wash helps keep your jacket in tip top condition by removing the grease and grime which reduces its ability to shed rain and shift sweat. But *don't* chuck your waterproof in with a normal wash. And *never* use biological washing agents. Check the labels and follow these steps:



- ▶ Zip up the jacket and its pockets, and brush off loose dirt.
- ▶ Clean out residual powder/liquid in the washing machine tray.
- ▶ Pour in a dedicated detergent, like **Nikwax Tech Wash** (300ml, £4.75).
- ▶ Run the machine as directed by the detergent's instructions.
- ▶ Leave to dry naturally.

Reproof your jacket

A low-heat spin in the tumble drier can revitalise your jacket's DWR coating. But if water droplets still aren't beading and running off the surface, you need to reproof it. You can do this with a wash-in proofer or a 2-in-1 wash and proof solution, like **Storm's Eco+ Twin Pack** (75ml, £9). A spray-on proofer, like **Grangers Performance Repel** (275ml, £10) lets you apply a new DWR coating to just the outside.



Repair your jacket

Ripped your jacket on barbed wire? Taped seams coming loose? Don't fret – there's no need to shell out on a new jacket when you can make do and mend using McNett's **Tenacious Sealing & Repair Tape** or **Gore-Tex Repair Kit** (both £9; outdoor.mcnett.eu). For a professional fix, try **Lancashire Sports Repairs**, who can reproof, replace zips and re-tape seams. Tear repairs cost from £28 (lancshiresportsrepairs.co.uk)





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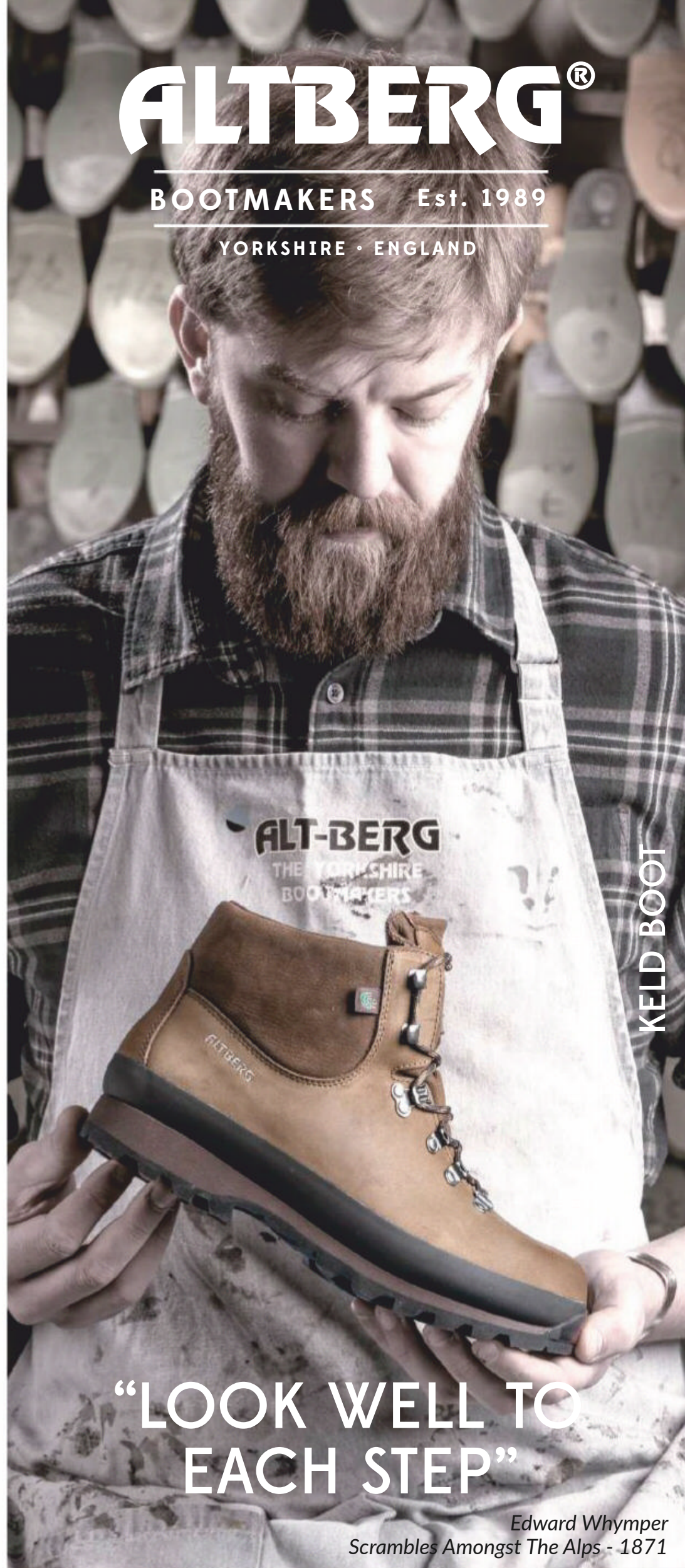


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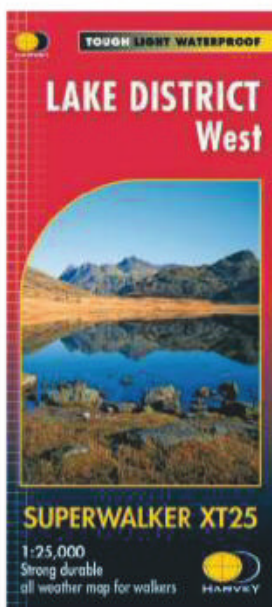


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MAPS

► HARVEY Superwalker XT25 £13.50 each

Lighter, more compact and deemed less cluttered than Ordnance Survey maps, Harvey Maps have their origins in the sport of orienteering. Every sheet in the company's range is printed on durable, waterproof paper, totally resistant to drenchings and rips. Their detailed 1:25,000 Superwalker series covers upland areas across the UK. harveymaps.co.uk



► ORTLIEB Waterproof Map Case £17.50

Protect any map from the rain and have it always on hand by slipping it into a waterproof map case. We like Ortlieb's tough and versatile design, with a Velcro sealed roll closure. Totally transparent, letting you see clearly through both sides, it comfortably fits an Ordnance Survey map folded to a square area of your choosing. Using the cord and attachment points, you can fix it securely yourself or your rucksack in a gale. ortlieb.com



► ORDNANCE SURVEY Active Maps £15 each

Every paper map in the Ordnance Survey's Explorer and Landranger series is available in a weatherproof 'Active' version, sealed in laminate to protect it from the elements. They're bulkier and pricier than the standard variety, but you won't need to fold and re-fold them neatly into a weathertight map case if you're map-reading in the rain. www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



TROUSERS

► CRAGHOPPERS Ascent Over Trouser £45

Weighing just 275g and stuffing down into their own mug-sized carry bag, these DofE Award-recommended overtrousers take up next to no rucksack space. But when called upon in a shower and hastily pulled on, they do the business, with a waterproof rating of 5000mm. Knee height zips and Velcro tabs make them easier to get on and seal up over footwear, and you also get two zipped pockets. www.craghoppers.com



► SPRAYWAY All day rainpant £80

If you want dry legs but hate the frenzied faff of donning overtrousers in a downpour, you could head out prepared in trousers that are ready for the rain. Sprayway's All Day Rainpants do what they say on the tin. You can comfortably wear them all day, and their stretchy softshell outer fabric is backed by a waterproof and breathable laminate. www.sprayway.com



► BERGHAUS Paclite Overtrousers £110

A more sophisticated, high-spec pair of overtrousers than the Craghoppers, these are made from light but durable Gore-Tex Paclite Shell fabric. Ideal for multi-day hikes or day-to-day walks, they compress into their own stuff sack and weigh in at just 228g. The ¾ length, water resistant zips come above the knees, making them much easier to pull on over chunkier boots. The two-way zips also give access to pockets inside and provide welcome ventilation in wet, humid conditions. www.berghaus.com



HATS, GLOVES, GAITERS & SOCKS

► BRIDGEDALE Storm Sock Midweight Boot £38

A cosy fix for unlined walking shoes or leak-prone boots, Bridgedale's Storm Socks have three layers. The inner layer is a merino wool blend for close-to-



feet comfort and anti-odour moisture control. On the outside, a stronger nylon blend protects a stretchy, waterproof and breathable membrane. bridgedale.com

► RAB Latok Cap £35

If you're always removing your hood for better visibility or just want a toasty and dry hat for winter snow, check out Rab's Latok Cap. Covering those easily chilled zones around your ears and neck, it's fully waterproof and breathable, made from Pertex Shield fabric with taped seams. The stiff 'baseball cap' peak helps keep rain and sleet out of your eyes. It comes in four sizes. rab.equipment/uk



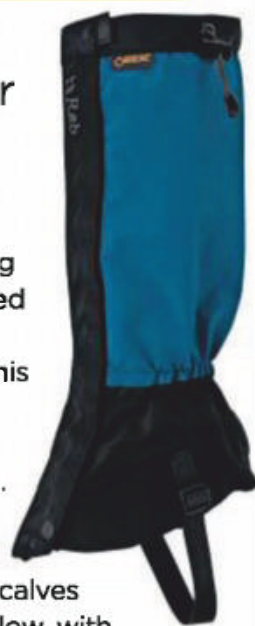
► TREKMATES Codale Gloves £25

They seem like any other pair of warm gloves, but these beauties are also lined with Trekmates' Dryshield waterproof membrane. They're stretchy, fit snugly and have touchscreen compatible tips – ideal for checking a smartphone or GPS. Their palms also have silicone grips. Unlike bulkier, ski-style gloves, these will see more wear across the year. trekmates.co.uk



► RAB Hispar Gaiter £45

Gaiters have been around for yonks, designed for wading through waterlogged ground and snow. The Hispars bring this timeless over-boot solution right up to date, with Gore-Tex. They're durable up top, with 70 denier fabric covering the calves and tougher still below, with 600 denier ballistic polyester protecting the ankles. They're zip closing with adjustable cords. rab.equipment/uk



CARRY

► AQUAPAC 25L Waterproof Backpack £75

With zips, seams and openings to seal up, few rucksacks can claim to be fully waterproof. This one's an exception. Aquapac's roll-top bag is made from a PU-coated fabric with taped seams, which rain can't get through. It also has an internal waterproof pocket you can use for separating wet and dry kit. Like other backpacks, it has mesh straps and a hip belt, and mesh pockets at the sides. www.aquapac.net



► EXPED Fold-Drybags from £11 each or £47 for 4

When a rustling rain cover won't hack it in the wind, a rolltop-sealed liner can be relied upon to weatherproof the contents of a conventional rucksack. A more versatile approach, especially for multi-day walks, is to use several smaller drybags, like the light and durable kind made by Exped. They can be bought individually or in a set of different sizes and bright colours, which are great for organising your kit and quickly finding what you need. www.exped.com



► AQUAPAC Waterproof waist pack £35

Have your valuables close at hand and safe from the rain with a nifty waterproof waist pack. The little brother of Aquapac's backpack, this robust 3-litre bag has a rolltop closing main pocket. It also sports a quick access pocket with a splashproof zip for a phone or wallet, plus a zipped pocket inside. The waist belt is padded for extra comfort. www.aquapac.net



WET-CETERA

► MOUNTAIN WAREHOUSE Soft FeelWaterproof Pouch £6

An inexpensive solution to water damage woes (currently half price), Mountain Warehouse's see-through soft feel waterproof pouch is big enough for a folded OS map or simply to bung in all your vulnerable valuables. Its seams are welded tight, while the opening rolls down to seal out water, dirt and dust. There's a handy lanyard attached as well. mountainwarehouse.com



► LIFEVENTURE Waterproof Phone Pouch Plus £16

Designed for large screen smartphones (or 'phablets', as they're called), Lifeventure's plus-sized and IPX7-rated pouch is amply roomy enough for an iPhone 11 or Samsung Galaxy S10 (anything up to 10x17cm). And once safely sealed inside with the LocTop closure, you can continue to operate your phone through the pouch's touch-sensitive window. lifeventure.com



► FJÄLLRÄVEN Poncho £100

Eschewing zips and sleeves, a poncho is like a tarpaulin for you and your rucksack. Versatile and simple, it's a timeless design and this deluxe version comes with thumb loops and push buttons down the sides for properly battening down the hatches in a downpour. www.fjallraven.co.uk



► RITE IN THE RAIN All-Weather Notebook 4x6in £8

Never let your wet weather notes disintegrate into an ink-smudged pulp with a notebook that's made for the rain. Sold in various page sizes and bindings, Rite in the Rain's notebooks use weather-resistant paper, which is stronger than normal paper and treated to shed water. The 4x6 inch version boasts 100 lined pages. www.riteintherain.com





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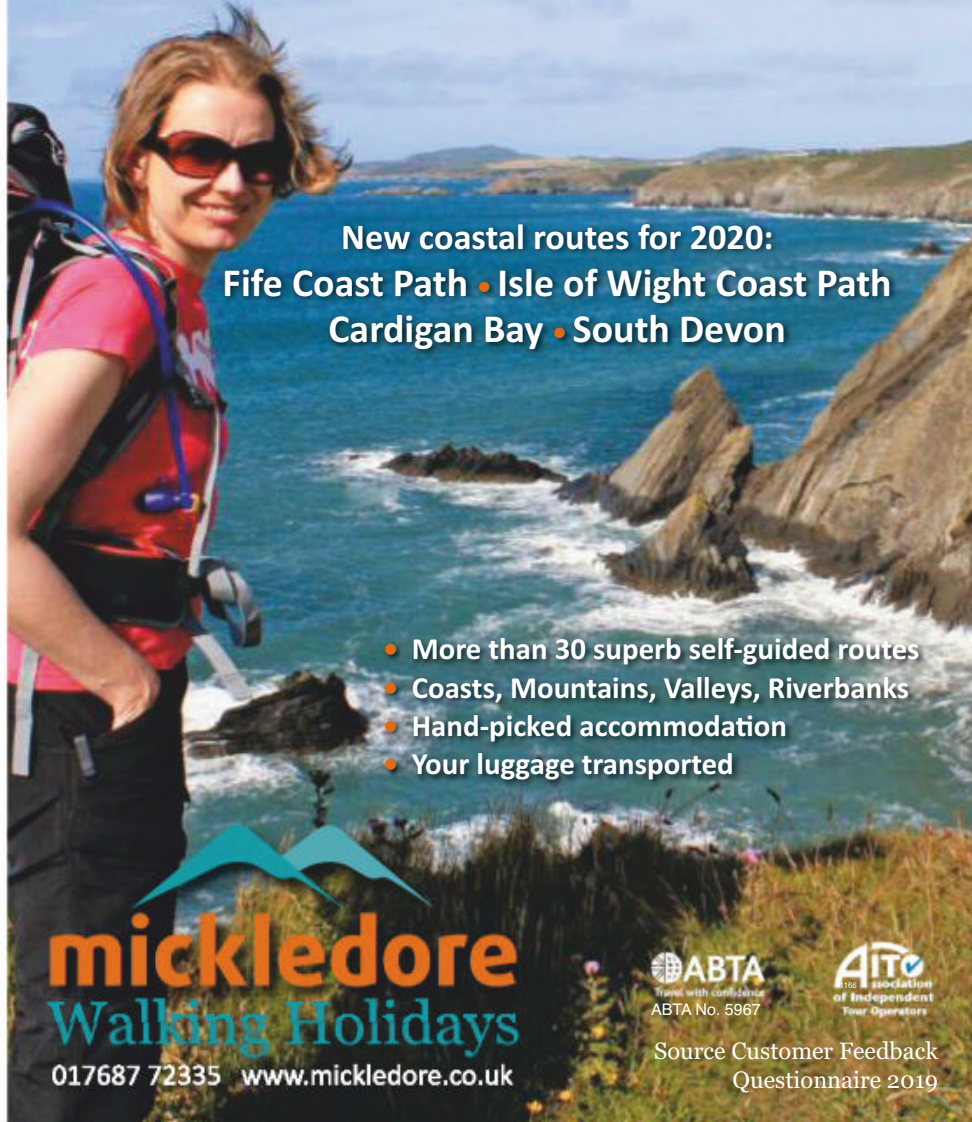
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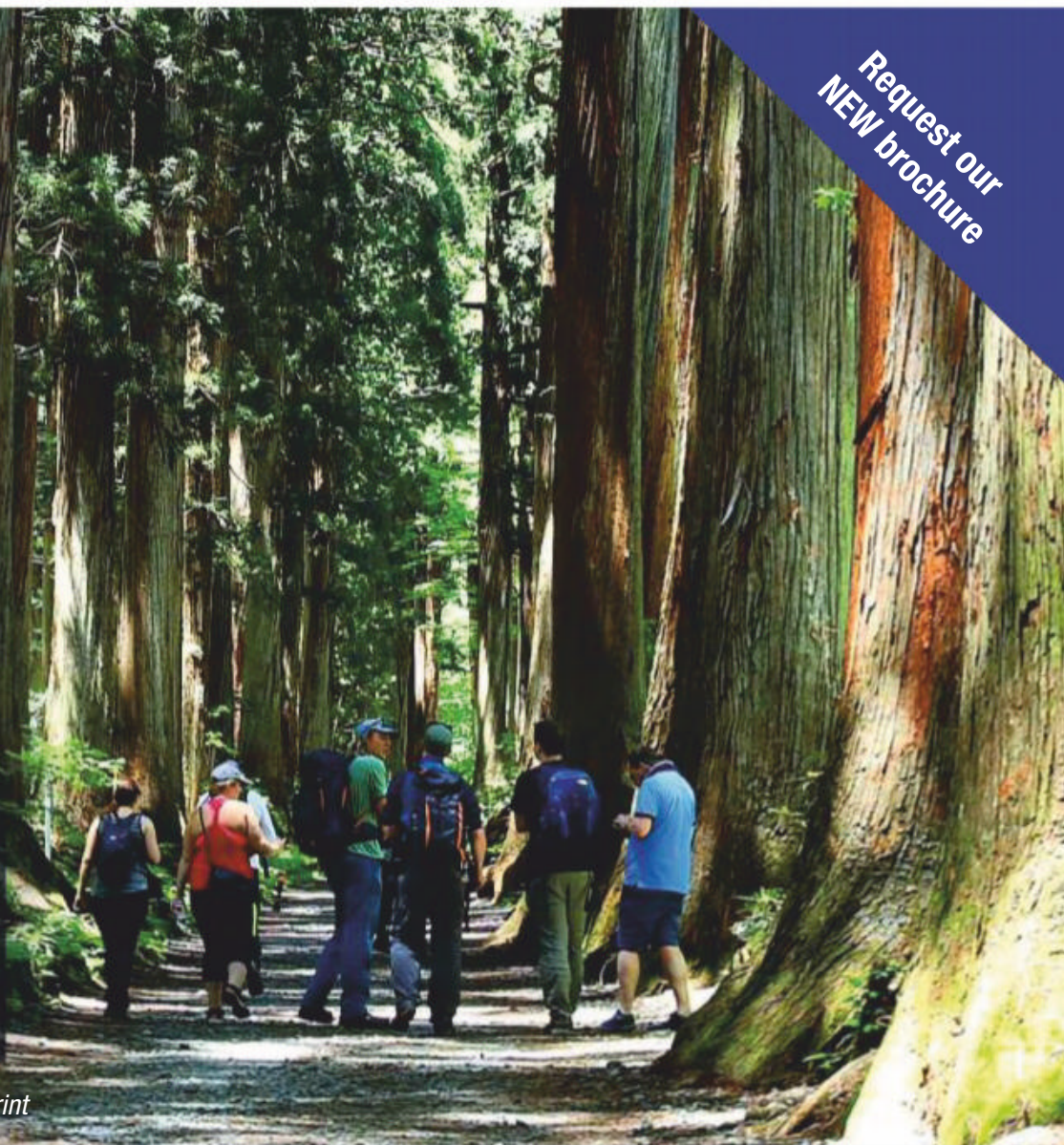
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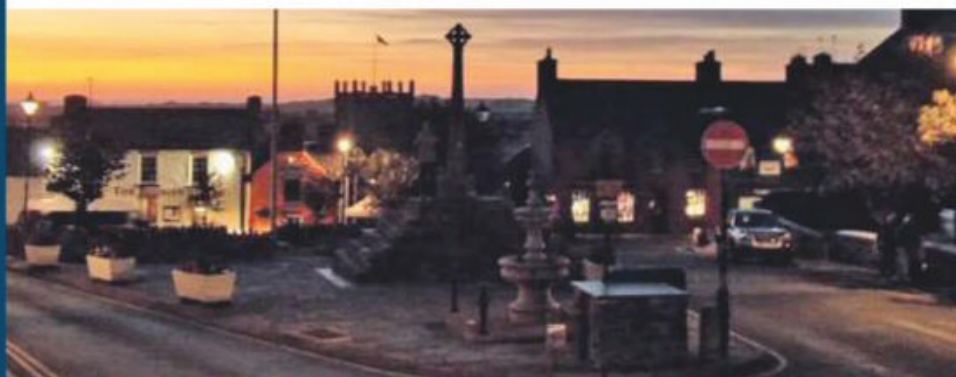
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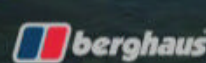
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SOUTH
WEST

SOUTH
EAST

MIDLANDS

EAST

NORTH
WEST

NORTH
EAST

WALES

SCOTLAND

IRELAND

PHOTO: JAMES FORREST

GREEN AND PLEASANT

Skiddaw looms regally across the Newlands Valley from Scope End. This lush view unfolds early into Walk 27's unsung round of much-loved Lakeland fells.



Step into spring

A loop at the feet of the South Downs | A castle walk on the Pembrokeshire Coast | A cross-border foray in the Cheviot Hills... and more great walks

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01	Devon	Swimbridge	
02	Dorset	Fiddleford Manor	
03	Wiltshire	Winsley	
04	West Sussex	Henfield	
05	Berkshire	Greenham Common	
06	Hertfordshire	St Ippolyts	
07	Essex	Bradwell on Sea	
08	Worcestershire	Bredon Hill	
09	Shropshire	Caer Caradoc & The Lawley	
10	Shropshire	Long Mynd	
11	Leicestershire	Bosworth Battlefield	
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15	Cheshire	Mouldsworth to Cuddington	
16	Cumbria	Hallin Fell	
17	South Yorkshire	Thurgoland	
18	North Yorkshire	Middleham	
19	North Yorkshire	Highcliff Nab	
20	Northumbria	Blackbrough Hill	CHALLENGE WALK
21	Pembrokeshire	Manorbier	
22	Ceredigion	Doethie Valley	
23	Denbighshire	Dyserth	
24	Argyll & Bute	Ben Donich	
25	Fife	St Andrews to Kingsbarns	
26	Highland	Carrbridge	
27	Cumbria	Hindscarth & Robinson	CLASSIC ROUTE



Route updates

- **Sidmouth & Weston, Devon, Feb 2020, Walk 3** – Point 1 Alma footbridge closed. Replacement opens in Spring 2020. Follow diversion signs for Beatlands Road to rejoin South West Coast Path.
 - **Stoney Middleton to Wardlow, Derbs, Nov 2018, Walk 11** – 66A bus no longer runs. Now take early 73 to Tideswell and change for 65 to Stoney Middleton.
- If you spot a route which needs updating, email cwroutes@bauermedia.co.uk

How to use your routes

WALK INFORMATION

An estimate of how long the route will take, based on a pace of about two miles per hour, with allowances made for slower, hilly routes.

OUR EXPERTS

All our routes are written by experienced and knowledgeable walkers who are experts at finding the best walks in their area and describing them clearly.

ABBREVIATIONS

We have abbreviated left to **L** and right to **R**.

GRADIENT PROFILE

Check the ascent and descent (hilliness) of the route with a quick glance at this profile.

CW routes online and on your phone!

Country Walking has partnered up with **Ordnance Survey's OS Maps** to bring you the ultimate interactive routes experience. Subscribers to CW get half-price access to OS Maps, where you can view and print 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 OS maps for all of GB at no extra cost, plan your own walks and view this month's routes online. In addition, the **OS Maps app** for smartphones and tablets turns this online tool into a powerful navigation aid. Subscribers can upload their own routes, download the routes from the magazine and browse more than 1000 more from previous issues. For more details, and to subscribe, visit www.livefortheoutdoors.com/cwroutes



GRADE

Our routes are graded **easy**, **moderate**, **challenging** or occasionally **extreme**, depending on distance, terrain, elevation and ease of navigation. Easy and moderate walks are usually less than 8 miles with relatively gentle gradients. The table below shows how we grade our more challenging walks:

challenging		TERRAIN: Min 2000ft ascent, sustained steepness and rocky or boggy ground.
		NAVIGATION: Good map-reading and compass skills required in places.
extreme		TERRAIN: 3000ft+ with sustained steep ascent/descent; possible scrambling.
		NAVIGATION: Sound navigation skills required; route may be trackless.

MAPS (on reverse of route card)

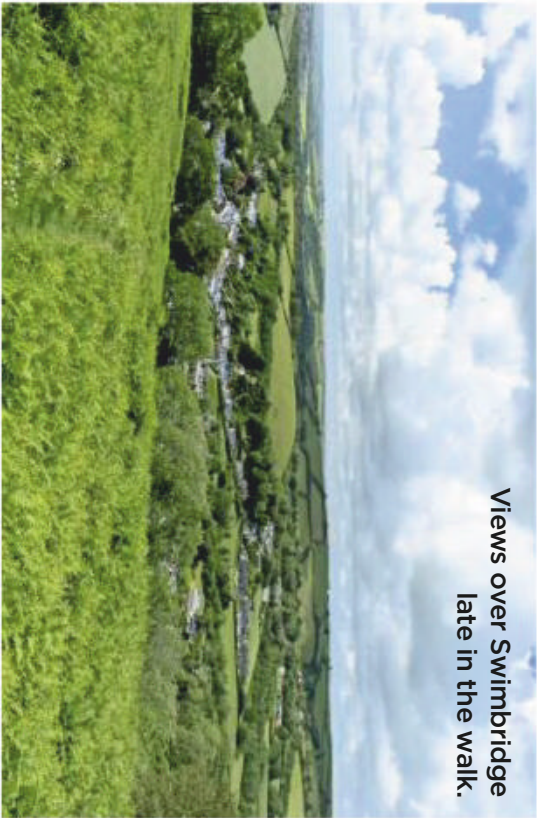
Follow the red route marked clearly on the map. **It's essential to take the relevant Ordnance Survey map with you** in case you get lost and inadvertently leave the area covered by our map.





01 DEVON SWIMBRIDGE

► Distance: 6 miles/9.5km ► Time: 3 hours ► Grade: Moderate



Views over Swimbidge late in the walk.

PHOTO: ROBERT HESKETH

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Swimbidge Square, EX32 0PN, grid ref SS620300

Is it for me? Footpaths, tracks, quiet lanes, short road section. One steep descent

Stiles 13

PLANNING

Nearest town Barnstaple

Refreshments Jack Russell, Swimbidge

Public toilets None

Public transport

Stagecoach Southwest 155 Barnstaple/South Molton route, Mondays-Saturdays, 0871 2002233 www.travelinesw.com

Maps OS Explorer 127, Landranger 180

More Walks Shortish Walks in North Devon, Robert Hesketh, Bossiney Books, 2015



CHOSEN BY...
ROBERT HESKETH

This exploration of North Devon's

rolling green hills follows in the hoof prints of that most famous of Victorian hunting parsons, Jack Russell, who bred his eponymous terriers here from Trump,

the original Jack Russell bitch he bought in Oxford when he was a student.

Perpetual Curate of

Swimbridge and Landkey from 1833 to 1878, Russell eventually went to earth in Swimbridge churchyard, but his photograph – in hunting togs and top hat – has pride of place in the Jack Russell, the friendly inn opposite. Naturally, Trump (the dog)



stars on the inn's sign and paintings of her descendants decorate the bar.

1 Start

Take lane signed 'Hannaford' behind pub. Turn L at Coombe Cross for 'Bydown'. Continue for 150m.

2 1 mile/1.4km

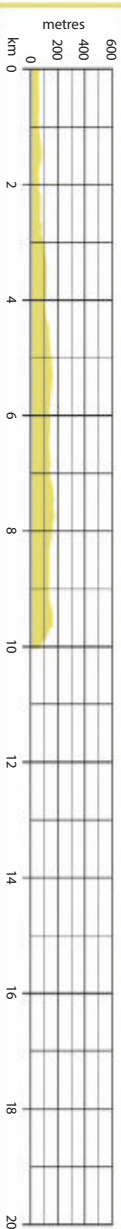
Turn R at gate. Bear L and downhill to bottom of field. Cross footbridge. Follow signed path L through scrub and trees, keeping to bottom fence line. Cross stile. Continue to far L corner of meadow. Cross another stile. Do not turn immediately L onto footpath, but L onto 'Public Byway' leading uphill to lane at Higher Wimstone.

3 1¼ miles/2.9km

Turn L, then R after 30m onto public footpath. Keep



GRADIENT PROFILE



SOUTH WEST



02 DORSET FIDDLEFORD MANOR

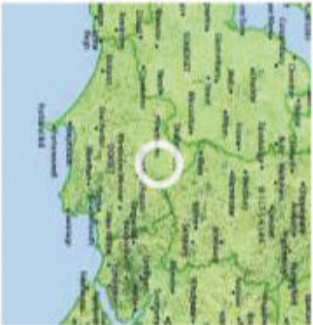
► Distance: 6½ miles/10.3km ► Time: 3¼ hours ► Grade: Moderate



The River Stour at Fiddleford Mill.

PHOTO: ROBERT HESKETH

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Fiddleford Manor car park, DT10 2BX, grid ref ST802137

Is it for me? Footpath, bridleways, tracks and quiet lanes. Moderate slopes. Follow directions carefully on field paths.

Stiles 5

PLANNING

Nearest town

Sturminster Newton

Refreshments

Fiddleford Inn; Royal Oak

Okeford Fitzpaine;

Okeford PO Stores

Public toilets None

Public transport X10

Blandford/Sturminster/

Yeovil route stops Okeford

Fitzpaine weekdays

www.travelinesw.com

Maps OS Explorer 129;

Landranger 194

More Walks

Dorset Smugglers' Walks, Robert Hesketh, Inspiring Places Publishing, 2019



CHOSEN BY...
ROBERT HESKETH

Starting from Fiddleford's

handsome medieval manor house (open through English Heritage) and its mill, this walk follows field paths and tracks to Okeford Fitzpaine. Both places were well known

to smuggler Roger Ridout (1736-1811) and his gang, who used Fiddleford Manor to store contraband. An

account describes "a string of horses in the narrow road between Okeford Fitzpaine and Fiddleford with contraband on horses. One or two men armed in the front, then ten or twelve horses connected by ropes followed at a hard trot, and two or three



men brought up the rear. This cavalcade did not stop for any person... The contraband goods were principally brought from Lulworth and the coast, through Okeford Fitzpaine to Fiddleford, and thus distributed."

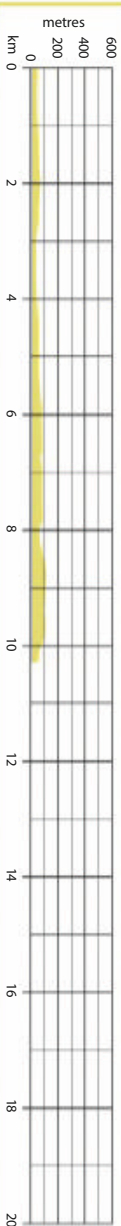
1 Start

Visit manor. Retrace steps to car park. Turn L and L again after 100m. Follow 'Railway Path' past Mill House and over bridge. Retrace steps past Mill House to path junction. Do not turn R for car park, but walk ahead for 200m. Bear R into enclosed path.

2 ¾ mile/1.2km

Reaching lane, turn L. Turn R 50m ahead into field

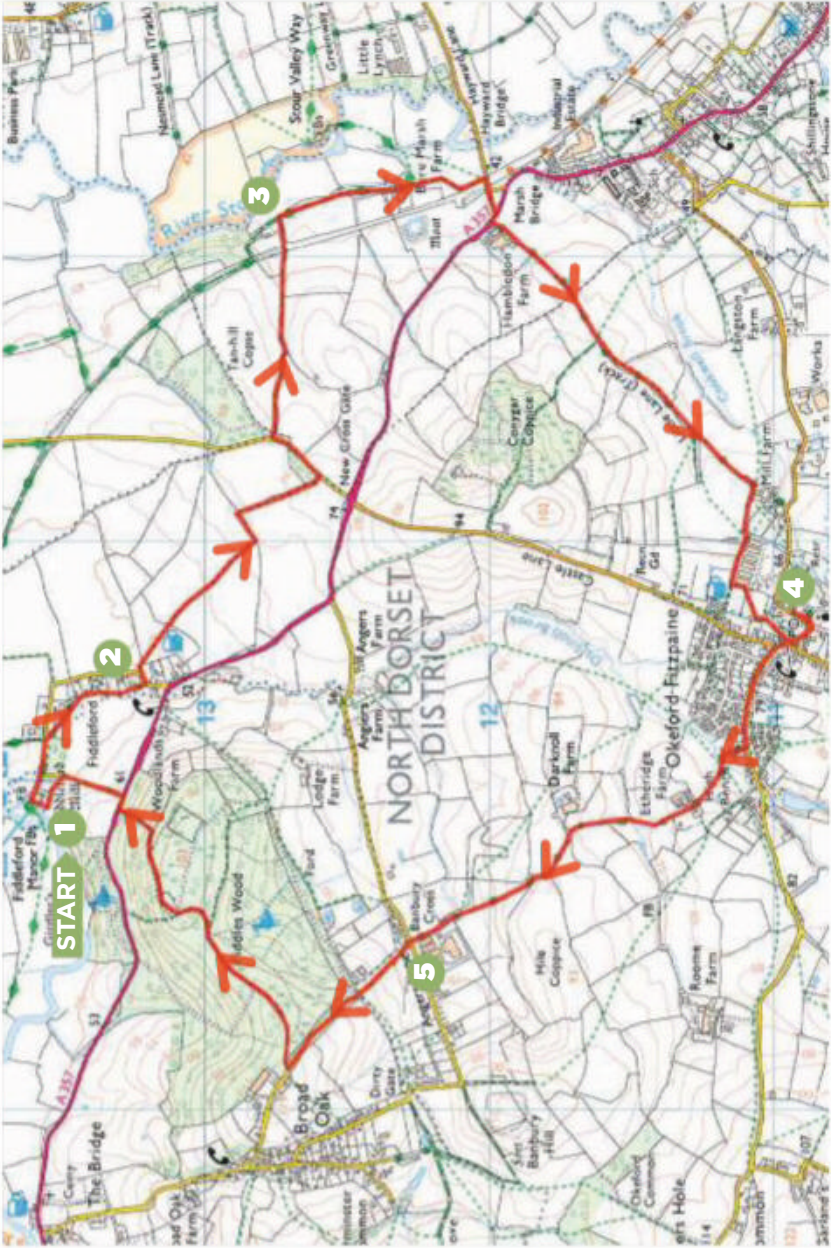
GRADIENT PROFILE



SOUTH WEST

02 DORSET FIDDLEFORD MANOR

► OS Explorer map 129 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

path. Turn almost immediately R again and cut diagonally across next field, heading south-east. Turn L along top edge of field. Turn R through large gap in hedge. Follow L edge third field. Exit via stile. Turn L along lane for 200m. Turn R through metal gate. Head east, following L field edge to far corner. Continue ahead, now with field edge on your R. Follow on under old railway arch.

3 2 miles/3.2km

Turn R onto cycleway/walkway. Reaching lane, turn R under the old railway bridge. Keep R at fork. Cross the main road carefully. Turn

5 5¼ miles/8.3km
Reaching lane junction, continue ahead for 500m. Turn R onto bridleway 'A357 and Fiddleford Mill'. Follow broad track through gate. At track junctions, continue ahead 'Fiddleford Mill'. Reaching blue waymark, turn L and steeply downhill. Cross main road. Turn R, then L 'Fiddleford Manor'. Continue to car park. **CW**

4 4 miles/6.2km

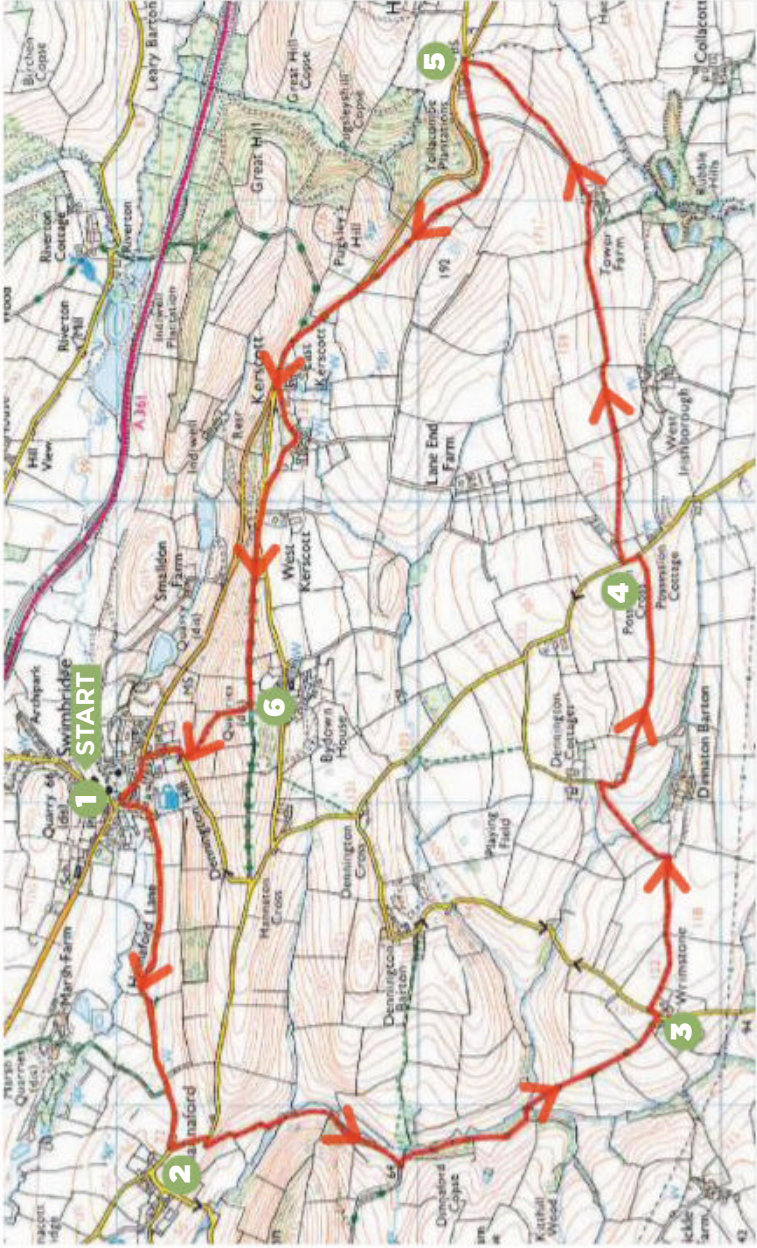
Divert L to church, where Ridout is buried. Retrace steps. Continue past post office and bear L into Lower Street by Royal Oak. Continue for 400m. Turn R into Darknoll Lane. Continue ahead for 1 mile (1.8km).

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01 DEVON SWIMBRIDGE

► OS Explorer map 127 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

Walk through field. Cross the stile. Continue as signed through series of fields and gates to concrete stile. Cross, continue ahead with hedge on L to enclosed path. When path forks, keep L. Cross stile and field to far stile. Turn L up concrete track to metal gate on R. Cross field in line with huge beech tree. Cross stile. Continue straight across next field.

5 4 miles/6.5km

Turn L onto track by the garage. Continue to Swimbridge road. Bear L along road for 350m. Turn L at Kerscott Cross. Divert immediately L. Follow lane through Kerscott to lane junction. Bear L. Ignore first

DON'T MISS...



Swimbridge church, with its handsome broach spire, carved screen and bench ends.

hedge on R through field to stile. Continue along grassy track. Reaching conifers; turn L over stile. Turn R 30m ahead. Cut diagonally L down to footbridge. Continue in same direction aiming slightly R of cottages. Turn R onto lane. Continue to Possession Cross.

4 3 miles/4.6km

Turn L, then R after 50m over stile onto Public Footpath.

path R. Bear R after 50m onto signed Public Byway (until about 1760 main Barnstaple/London road) for 500m.

6 5½ miles/8.75km

Turn R over stile. Cut diagonally L across field to bottom L corner. Turn R. Continue steeply downhill to stile. Turn R onto lane, downhill to Swimbridge. Turn L to start. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

ifto.com/cwroutes

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03 WILTSHIRE WINSLEY

► Distance: 6¼ miles/10km ► Time: 4 hours ► Grade: Moderate

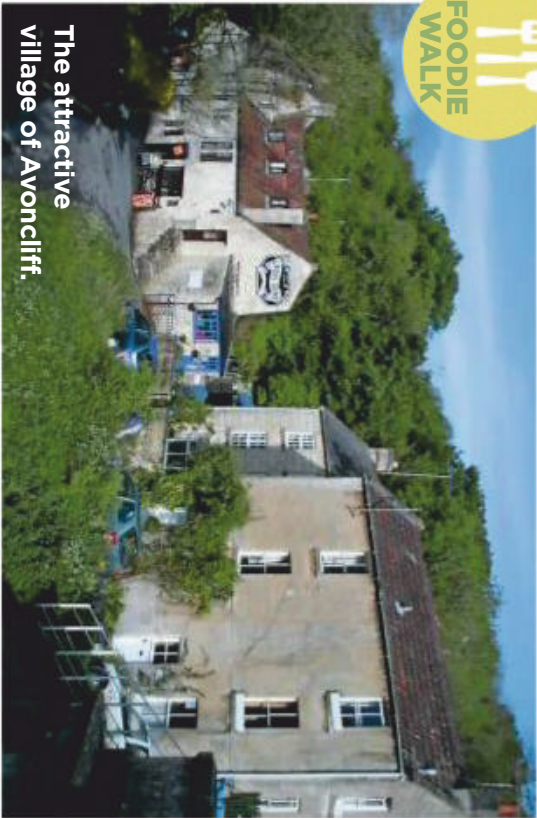


PHOTO: NIGEL VILE

The attractive village of Avoncliff.



CHOSEN BY...
NIGEL VILE
Hartley Farm near Winsley is

a family-run business: a farm shop and kitchen that boasts five generations and over 100 years of farming experience. 'Provenance is at the heart of everything we do, not only sourcing from our own farm but working with local farmers and food producers' says their website. From this foodies' paradise, this walk explores five picturesque villages – Winsley, Turlleigh, Avoncliff, Murhill and Conkwell – as well as a section of the Kennet & Avon Canal, featuring one of Britain's finest aqueducts. The natural landscape is also rather special, with the Avon Valley,

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Hartley Farm in Winsley, BA15 2JB, grid ref ST802618
Is it for me? One steep descent and ascent; mostly a flat walk on lanes, towpaths and field paths
Stiles: One

PLANNING

Nearest town Bradford-on-Avon
Refreshments Hartley Farm at the end (the best farm shop and café in the area), plus pubs in Avoncliff (The Cross Guns) and Winsley (The Seven Stars)
Public toilets None
Public transport The frequent D1 bus from Bath /Warmminster to Winsley, 2 mins walk from Hartley Farm (www.firstgroup.com). Trains to Avoncliff Station (after Point 2).
Maps: OS Explorer 155/156; Landranger 172 & 173



SOUTH WEST



04 WEST SUSSEX HENFIELD

► Distance: 10½ miles/16.7km ► Time: 5 hours ► Grade: Moderate

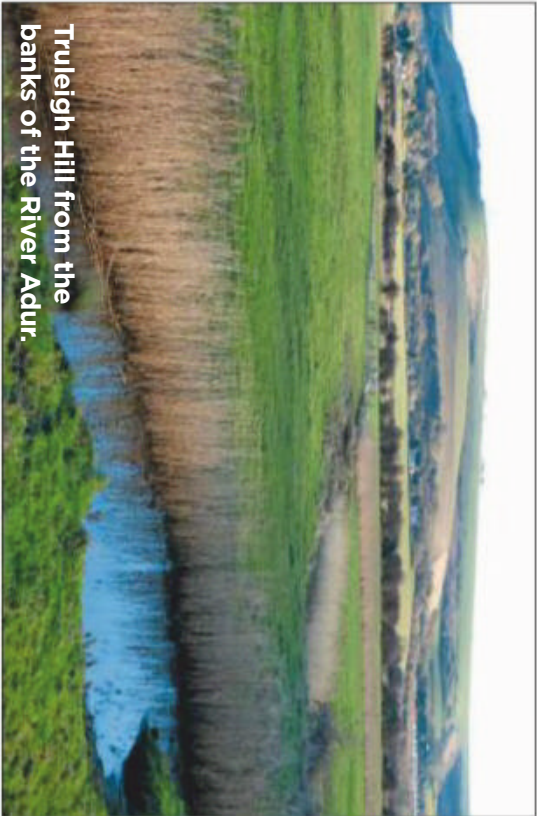
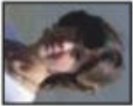


PHOTO: FIONA BARLTROP

Truleigh Hill from the banks of the River Adur.



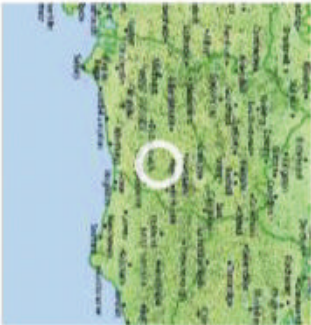
CHOSEN BY...
FIONA BARLTROP
Situated on a ridge above the Adur valley, with views towards the South Downs, the village of Henfield dates back to 770AD. Criss-crossed with footpaths, bridleways and twittens (a Sussex word for a narrow enclosed passageway), the village is well worth exploring on foot. There are numerous routes into the surrounding countryside, including along the Downs Link, which runs north to south on the west side of Henfield. This 37-mile surfaced route follows an old railway line, one of those closed in the 1960s as a result of the Beeching cuts. The outward leg of the walk

follows the Downs Link to Bramber, another historic village with picturesque castle ruins, returning along the river bank of the Adur and then across fields back to Henfield.

1 Start
L out of car park and R down Station Road opposite Cat & Canary past Beechings residential road on R. As road bends L turn briefly R into Hollands Lane, then L along Downs Link track. About 1km along where a bench is situated (another soon after) there are good views on R across Adur floodplain – fields (around Rye Farm) flood regularly in winter.

2 1¾ miles/2.8km
Meandering River Adur is

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

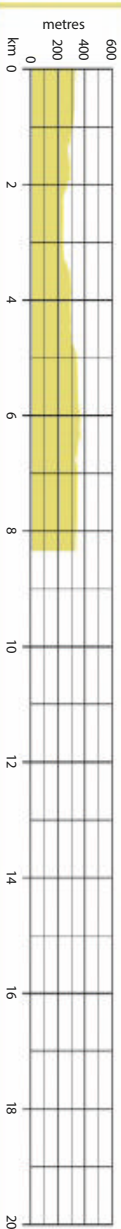
Start/parking Car park next to Cat & Canary pub, Henfield BN5 9PJ, grid ref TQ206162. Alternative start at Bramber (Street car park)
Is it for me? Easy, level outward leg along well waymarked Downs Link: surfaced track/lanes. Mostly level return along riverbank and through fields (some paths muddy during/after wet weather)
Stiles 10 (a few with gates alongside)

PLANNING
Nearest town Steyning
Refreshments Cat & Canary at start and other pubs and cafés in Henfield, and choice in Bramber
Public toilets Henfield & Bramber
Public transport Bus 17 Horsham-Brighton; Bus 100 Burgess Hill-Horsham
Maps OS Explorer OL11; Landranger 198

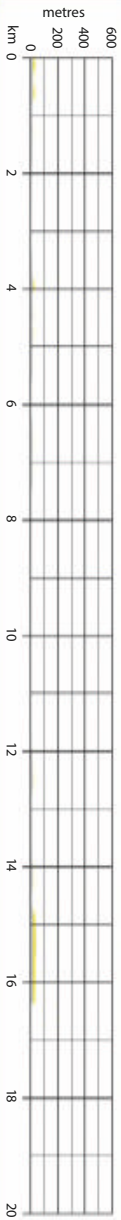


SOUTH EAST

GRADIENT PROFILE



GRADIENT PROFILE



04 WEST SUSSEX

HENFIELD

► OS Explorer map OL11 ► Buy maps at: [ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop)

crossed just after a path intersection, another on far side of bridge. After 0.5km Downs Link track bears R (footpath turns off L). Continue to T-junction and turn L, soon passing some dwellings. Carry on along lane, which becomes King's Barn Lane leading to Bramber. Follow road round to R then L along Kings Stone Ave and L at T-junction. Keep ahead at next junction along narrow lane to A283 roundabout. Turn immediately L just before it up access road to car park for Bramber Castle and church. Norman castle ruins situated on knoll above village provide good views of Adur valley – allow time to look round (castle in care of English Heritage, free entry, info panels). The church was built at same time by castle founder William de Braose.

3 4½ miles/7.5km

Follow path below church down to road and turn L past car park on L and 15th-century timber-framed St Mary's House on R. Continue along road to bridge over River Adur.

4 5 miles/8km

On far side turn L along river bank path. Beyond kissing gate Saltings Field passed on R (salt made here – see info panel). Head N passing footbridge on L. After about 2km river and path bend R heading E, before resuming N direction again. Two path

junctions passed here – bear L at second (can be muddy, after rain) over stile by gate.

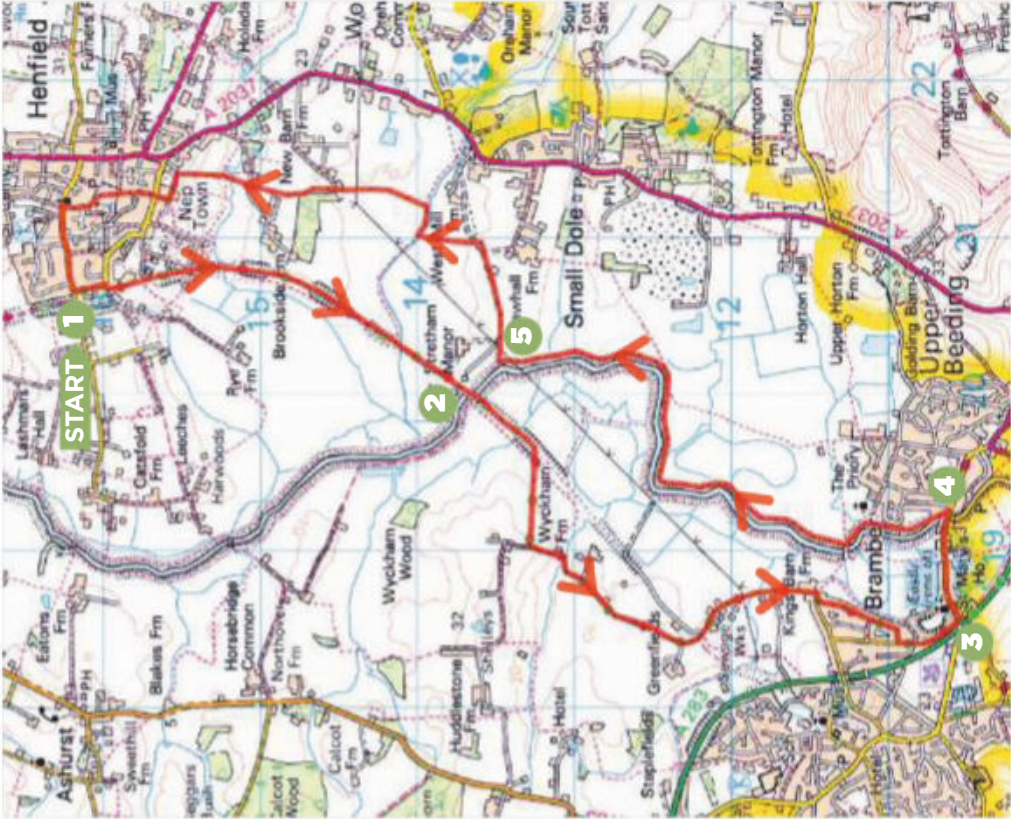
5 7½ miles/12km

R at next junction along field edge, then on access road. Next L along field edge heading N. Cross footbridge, turn R then L at field corner before gate. Head N through fields descending to five-armed fingerpost. Keep ahead uphill, L along top edge of field past benches joining residential road. Next R to crossroads

and ahead along Black Gate Lane, then paved path beside Tanyard (pond and pasture, site of former tanning industry) to Church Lane, passing church on R. L at Upper Station Road back to start.

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:
[ifto.com/cwroutes](https://www.ifto.com/cwroutes)

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

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03 WILTSHIRE

WINSLEY

► OS Explorer map 155/156 ► Buy maps at: [ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop)

DON'T MISS...
 Bradford-on-Avon, one of Britain's top 10 small towns according to media surveys. [bradfordonavon.co.uk](https://www.bradfordonavon.co.uk)

R along a track and walk along to a gateway and an open hillside field.

2 1¼ miles/2km

Turn L, and follow the L edge of the field downhill. At the bottom of the field, keep on the path as it bears R across to a handgate. Drop down a stepped path that to a parking area by the Kennet & Avon Canal in Avoncliff. Cross the aqueduct, and turn L down towards the Cross Guns Inn before turning L to pass under the aqueduct. Climb some steps on the L back up to the canal. Follow the towpath to the L across the aqueduct and on for 800m to bridge No. 174.

3 2½ miles/4km

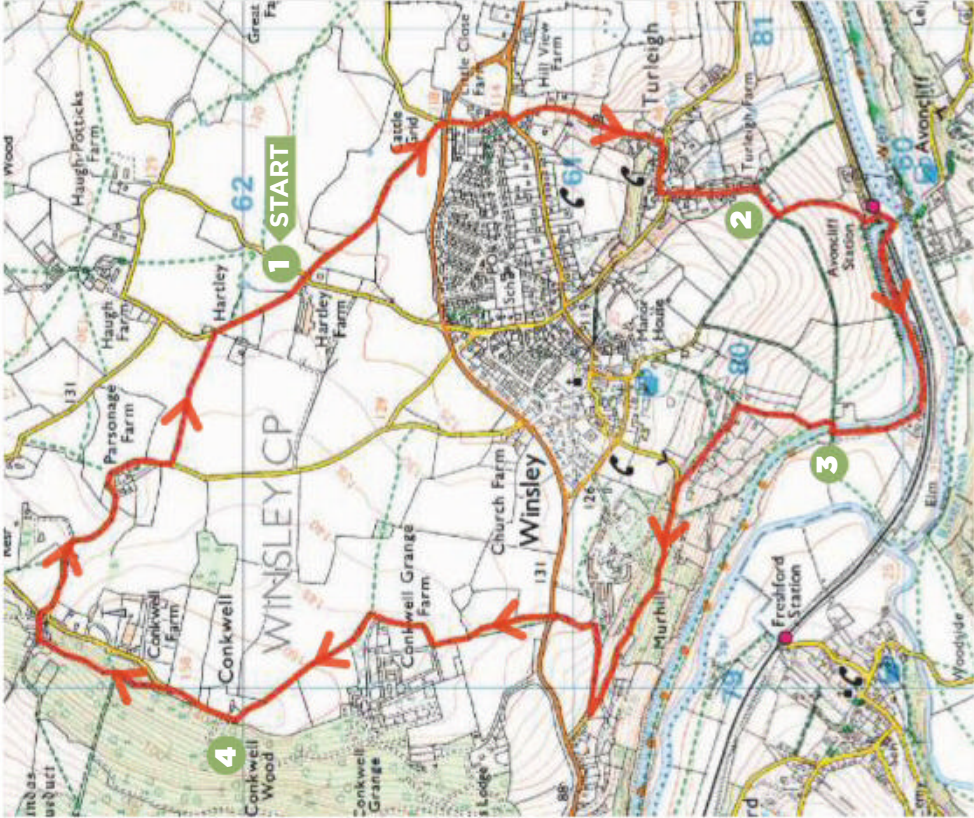
Cross this bridge and follow a footpath on the L up the L edge of a field and through woodland to reach a junction by some houses in 300m. Follow the lane to the L to a junction, turn L and in 700m, shortly before the B3108, turn sharp R onto a footpath. Walk along to a field and follow its R edge up to the

access road to Avonpark. Follow this drive to the L, cross the B3108 and follow Blackberry Lane opposite for 1.2 km to a point where it borders Conkwell Wood.

4 4½ miles/7.25km

In another 250m, veer L onto a footpath and continue ahead for 450m to arrive in Conkwell. Turn R and walk up through this hamlet to a junction, turn R and, at an early crossroads, follow the road ahead signposted to Bradford and Winsley. In just under

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

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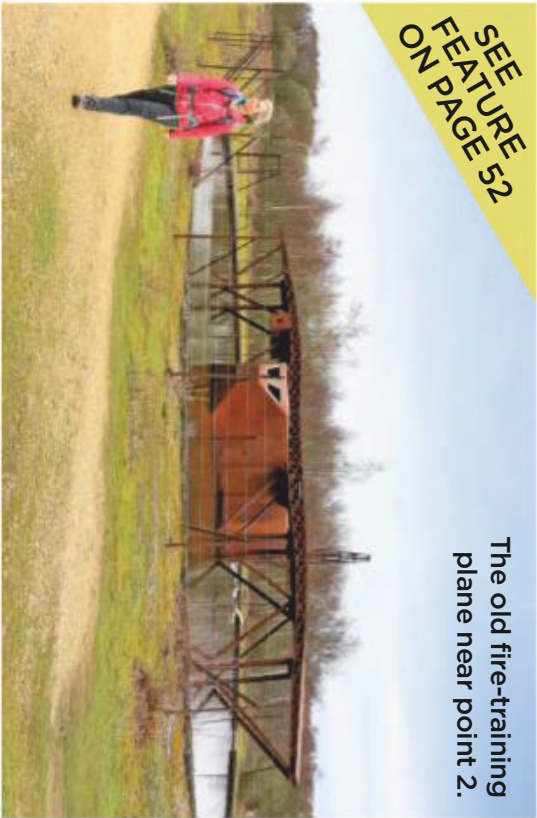


05 BERKSHIRE GREENHAM COMMON

► Distance: 9¼ miles/15km ► Time: 4 hours ► Grade: Moderate



SOUTH EAST



SEE FEATURE
ON PAGE 52

The old fire-training plane near point 2.

PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY...
JENNY WALTERS
Greenham Common is a name known

to many from news bulletins of the 1980s when a group of women set up a peace camp to protest the presence of American nuclear missiles.

The weapons were removed in 1991 and the airbase closed in 1993, but the camp continued until 2000 as the women campaigned for the land to be returned to the public. It is now a wild shelf of upland heath patrolled by buzzards and red kites, with a short stretch of runway at its centre and the missile silos in its south-west corner as a stark reminder of its history. This walk visits the Greenham

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Parking (£3 donation) at Greenham Common Control Tower, grid ref SU499651, nearest postcode RG19 8BZ (NB: this takes you to golf club on other side of the road!)
Is it for me? Gravel paths, towpath, short section by road

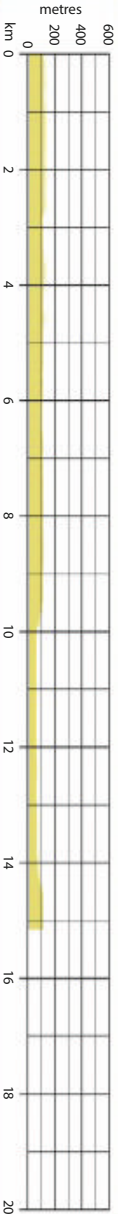
Stiles 1

PLANNING

Nearest town Newbury
Refreshments Cafe at control tower (Thu-Sun).
Public toilets None
Public transport None to start. 103B and Newbury-Basingstoke LINK bus stop at Greenham Business Park (point 4). Train to Thatcham, near point 6.
Maps OS Explorer 158; Landranger 174

and follow blue plane waymarkers to a rusting mock-up plane in a pool which was once used for fire training.

GRADIENT PROFILE

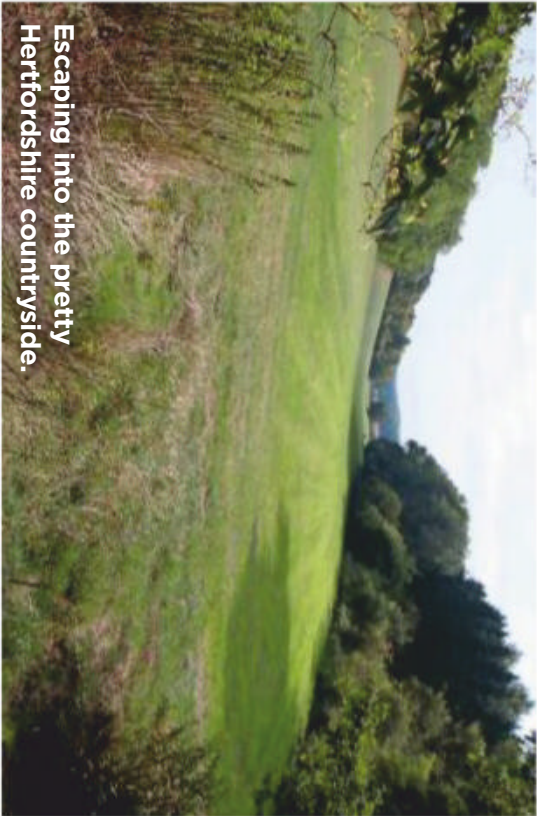


06 HERTFORDSHIRE ST IPPOLYTS

► Distance: 11 miles/17km ► Time: 5 hours ► Grade: Moderate



SOUTH EAST



Escaping into the pretty Hertfordshire countryside.

PHOTO: LEN BANISTER



CHOSEN BY...
LEN BANISTER
Floodlit at night the church on the

hill at the start of this walk is a magical sight. This typical Hertfordshire walk takes you over rolling countryside and suddenly deposits you in Hitchin's main square. A visit to Bunyan's Dell, where the 17th-century author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* preached to congregations of up to a thousand, is recommended. Towards the end of April, Wain Wood is flooded with bluebells.

churchyard, rejoin lane, go R. At T-junction, turn L, soon R. Reach road.

¾ mile/1.2km

Go L. Turn R at junction, fork L at next. After ½ mile, at farm, go R at barn then fork R following waymarker downhill on crossfield path. Reach road. Go R past Rusty Gun pub, L at fingerpost. Reach a holiday complex, continue for 200m to go R at field corner, continuing on L field-edge. Swing R past reservoir to lane.

3 miles/5km

Turn L, R then immediately R on permissive path. Exit L of gate. Continue into Preston, fork R at green. Fork L along Chequers Lane, R at dog bin.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Park in road near church and school, SG4 7PB, grid ref TL198271
Is it for me? Good field/woodland paths and road, little mud

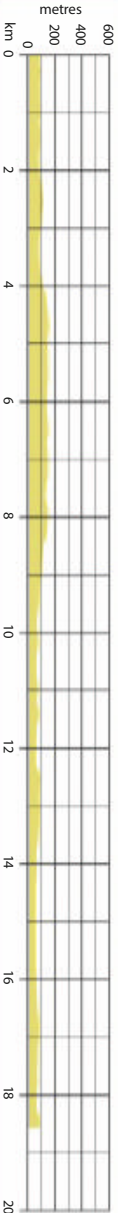
Stiles 1

PLANNING

Nearest towns Hitchin & Stevenage
Refreshments Two pubs on way; lots of pubs and cafes in Hitchin
Public toilets None on route
Public transport Regular bus services to bottom of St Ippolyts Hill – No. 330 St Albans-Wellwyn Garden City, 304 & 314 from Hitchin. You could also join the walk between points 6 & 7 if arriving at Hitchin Station.
Maps OS Explorer 193 Landranger 166

Turn R into wood, go ahead 200m to Bunyan's Dell (Bunyan's Cottage is further

GRADIENT PROFILE



06 HERTFORDSHIRE

ST IPPOLYTS

► OS Explorer map 193 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

along the path). Retrace steps turning R just before wood-edge. Follow path to be joined by two from L. Ignore all paths to reach lane after 1½ miles.

4 6 miles/9.1km

Go L. At bottom Go R through gate. Continue L of pumping-station and field-edges. Go L at lane, L at junction. Opposite house with black-painted post box set in wall, go R at the R-hand fingerpost through gate. Continue parallel to road, pass L of trees, straight across next field to go R, L to lane. Cross and go L. Reach T-junction.

5 6½ miles/10.6km

Go L with care. Go R; cross roads, up steps joining Russell's Slip which you follow across minor junctions. At main road by church, cross diagonally L up Gray's Lane. Turn R down Braun's Alley, before Westfield Lane, cross main road, then along Nun's Close; keep forward alongside shops and through passage. R into square, L and L again to church. Continue R then L alongside lake. At end, turn R to main road.

6 7½ miles/11.8km

Turn L, R at crossing, up on L of 2 surfaced paths. Cross road, keep forward onto fenced path. Continue across next road then go L. At bend keep ahead on Pine Hill Path. At junction go R onto recreation ground, diagonally L to path in corner.



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

Fork L along backs of houses, forward at junction, over railway, through subway. Turn R. Immediately after school, go L. Go R at end, crossing drive to find path at end of houses, go L. Eventually fork R past gate. Before road, go R across recreation area, keep straight, past basketball court to gap in hedge to path.

7 9½ miles/15.4km

Go R. Go through second of gates, R on waymarked Nature Reserve path. Emerge to continue on track to cross lane.

Go under railway, reach road, go R. Go R at roundabout; after few metres L. L field edge path goes under road; just before footbridge, fork R over stile. At farm track, go L over bridge. Go straight up field, cross drive, continue back to the start. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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YOUR RATING

05 BERKSHIRE

GREENHAM COMMON

► OS Explorer map 158 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

Continue on this wide path as it loops back to main perimeter track. Turn R and start walking past Greenham Business Park on R. Go L at next track junction to reach historic runway, the small surviving chunk of a runway that stretched almost two miles.

3 2¼ miles/4.6km

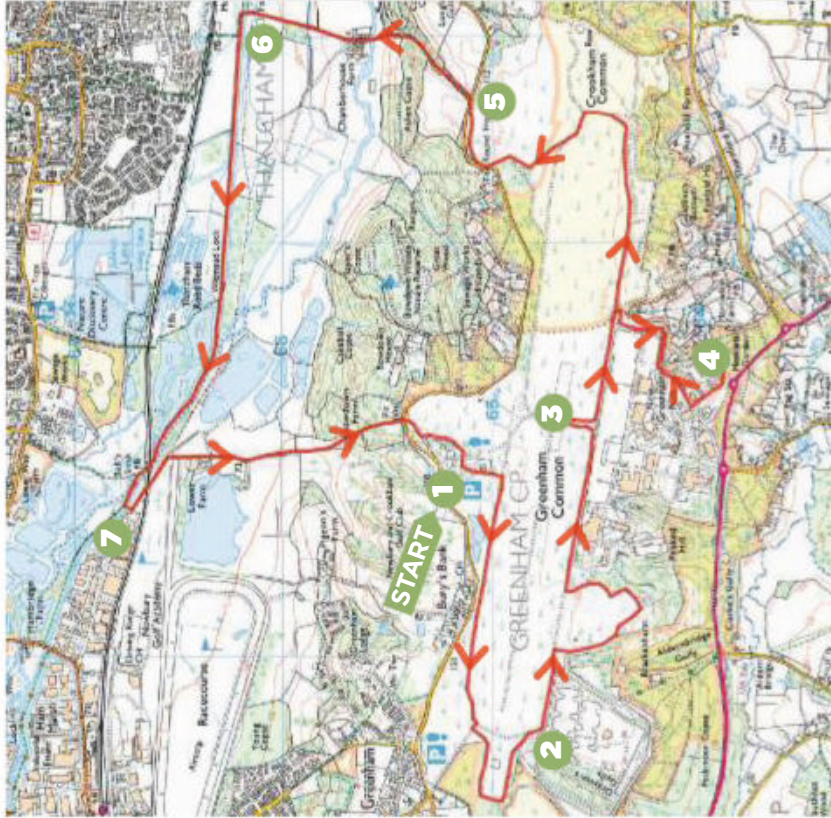
Return to perimeter track beside business park and turn L to continue east. Soon after last building, turn hard round to R to pass through gate and follow path through edge of industrial estate to road. Turn L, then L again when you reach t-junction. As you approach roundabout bear L to enter Greenham Peace Garden, built on the site of the Women's Peace Camp.

4 3¾ miles/6.2km

Retrace your steps back to common and turn R to continue east on perimeter path onto Crookham Common. When path splits into parallel tracks, keep to the L one, later curving L to join another track and reach a fork ahead. Go L, then R at next fork, on fainter path towards woods. When you meet a broader track, turn R and follow as it curves round to parallel the road and reach a gate on L.

5 5½ miles/9.2km

Go through and cross road to take bridleway ahead down the hill. Follow track down over



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

river and through farmyard beyond, and then on to cross bridge over Kennet & Avon canal to towpath on far bank.

6 6½ miles/10.5km

Turn L and walk along towpath for 1½ miles/2.5km, passing a lock and going under railway. Continue ahead over footbridge and past another lock to reach bridge over river on L.

7 8 miles/13km

Cross bridge and go ahead to tarmac lane. Turn L to walk back under railway and keep R at split beyond, signed footpath. Follow round to R with views along Newbury

racecourse, keeping ahead with track over stile and all the way up the hill to meet a road. Cross carefully and go up bank opposite, through gate onto common. Bear R towards control tower, keep R at next junction and just past gate, turn R again through trees. Continue through gate marked Greenham Common and back to car park. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

lfto.com/cwroutes

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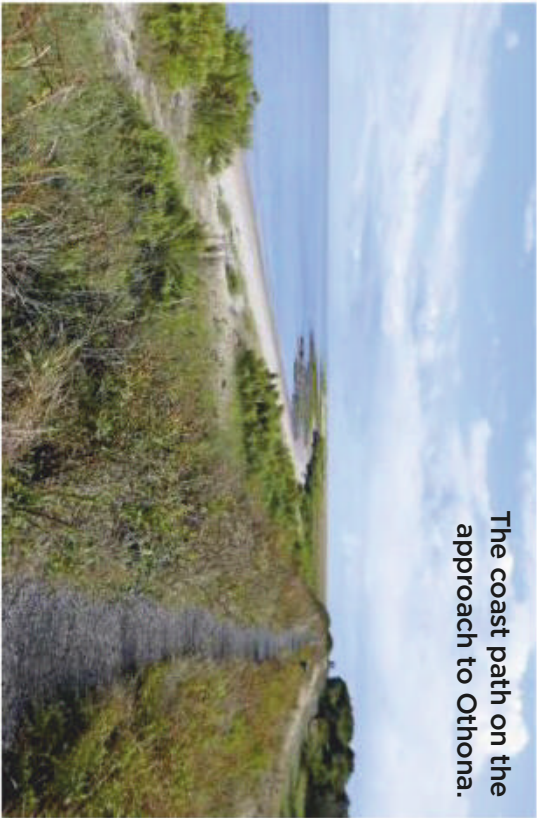
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YOUR RATING



07 ESSEX BRADWELL ON SEA

► Distance: 6½ miles/10.5km ► Time: 3 hours ► Grade: Easy



The coast path on the approach to Othona.

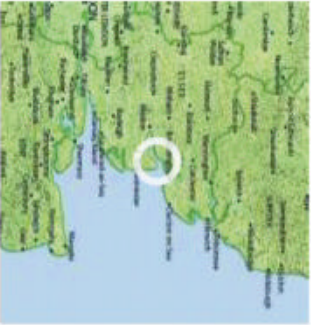
PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN



CHOSEN BY... PHOEBE TAPLIN

One of England's oldest churches, the remote seventh-century chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall is a highlight of this salty slice of Essex coastline. In 654 St Cedd, a Northumbrian monk and bishop, sailed from Lindisfarne and landed near a ruined Roman fort called Othona. He used stone from the fort to build the chapel, modelling it on ancient churches in Egypt and Syria. From the yachts at Bradwell Quay, this walk follows the sea wall along the bank of the wide, wild Blackwater Estuary, with views across the water to beach-hut-fringed Mersea Island. It goes on past a Saxon

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

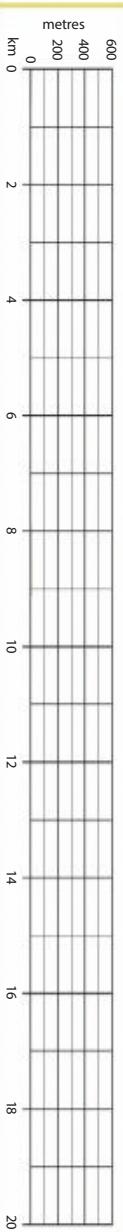
Start/parking King's Head pub in Bradwell on Sea; roadside parking nearby (alternatively, car park at point 6) CMO 7QL, grid ref TM003068
Is it for me? Easy flat paths and tracks. Final lane-side stretch can get a bit busy at weekends, but has wide grassy verge
Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Southminster
Refreshments King's Head (01621 776224), Green Man (01621 776336), Cricketers (01621 776013)
Public toilets Bradwell Marina
Public transport DaRT 4 minibus to Bradwell leaves from Southminster railway station five times a day and D1 (Hedingham) from Maldon four times
Maps OS Explorer 176; Landranger 168



GRADIENT PROFILE

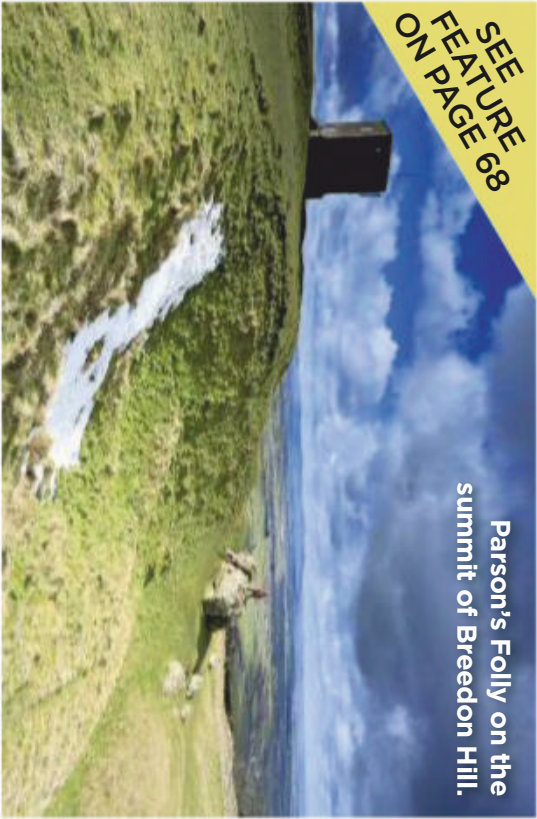


SOUTH EAST



08 WORCESTERSHIRE BREDON HILL

► Distance: 5¾ miles/9.35km ► Time: 4 hours ► Grade: Moderate



Parson's Folly on the summit of Breedon Hill.

SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 68

PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY... NICK HALLISSEY

Once part of the Cotswold upland, Breedon Hill now stands alone as a sort of buffer zone between the Cotswolds and the Malverns. But this independent spirit makes it all the more characterful; it is home to Roman and Iron Age relics and standing stones, and has inspired writers, musicians and artists from AE Housman to Ralph Vaughan Williams. This is a splendid walk around the whole bulk of the hill. The views from the summit tower – known as Parson's Folly – are superb.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking On-street parking on Main Street in Elmley Castle, just north of the Queen Elizabeth pub, grid ref SO982411, WR10 3HS.
Is it for me? Mostly easy walking on well-marked paths. Muddy after rain
Stiles 4

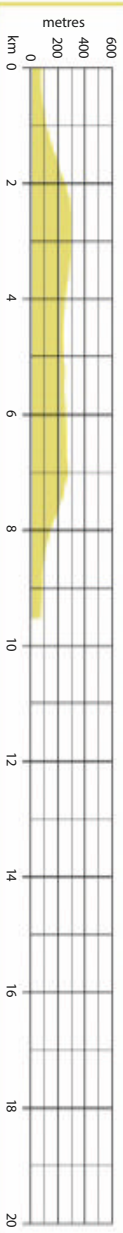
PLANNING

Nearest town Evesham
Refreshments Pub and café in Elmley Castle
Public toilets None on route
Public transport Buses 564 & 565, Evesham-Pershore
Maps OS Explorer 190, Landranger 150

ahead (Malvern Hills now in distant view). Continue with wall R, but divert L on grassy path just before summit to explore earthworks containing rocks including 'the King and Queen', separated by a slim



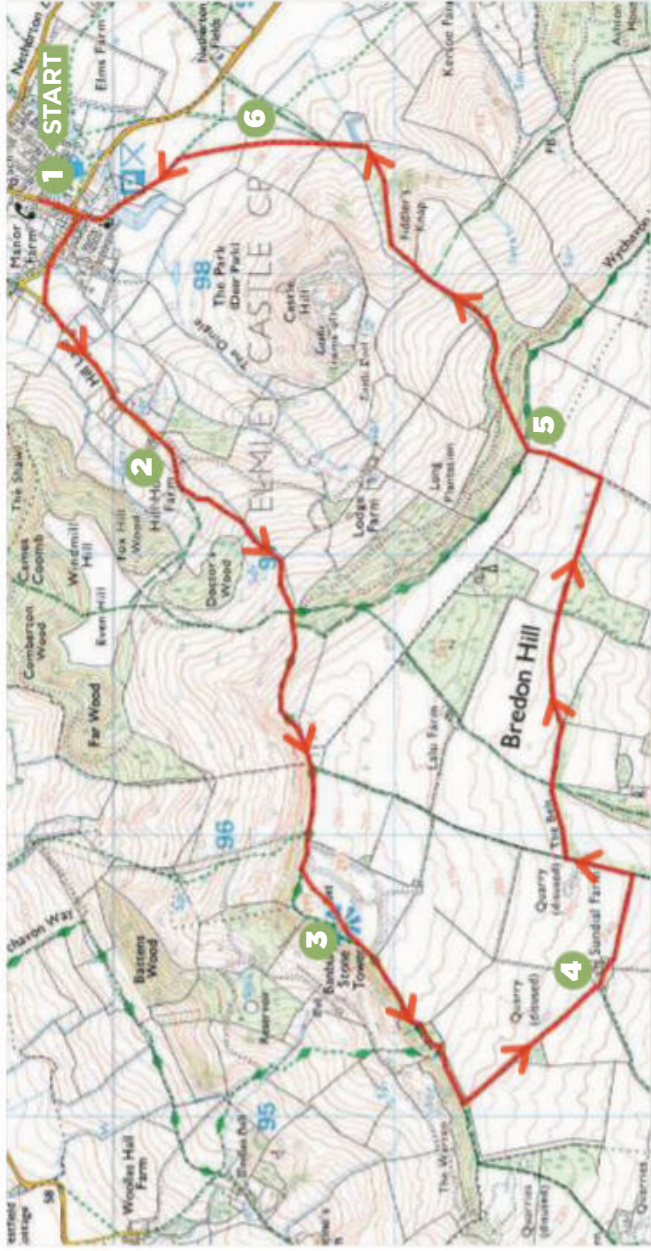
GRADIENT PROFILE



MIDLANDS

08 WORCESTERSHIRE BREDON HILL

► OS Explorer map 190 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

crevice. Climb slightly to reach tower at summit of Bredon Hill (Parson's Folly).

3 2 miles/3.2km

Descend south-west away from tower on Wychavon Way, joining wall-line R continuing on edge of scarp. Descend to gate and pass through woodland, continuing along scarp on far side. Pass through another gate and continue ahead. Take first branching path L across stile. Follow R edge of field by tumbledown wall, making for barn on horizon. Cross V-stile to reach Sundial Farm.

4 2¾ miles/4.4km

Join track passing R of farm. Go through gate and follow track, with line of trees L. At end of boundary, turn L on crossing track. Follow track

as it climbs slightly and veers R through gateway (do not take path continuing ahead uphill). Continue on track along R edge of field (marked 'The Belt' on OS Explorer map) with plantation R. Cross farm access track and continue ahead on bridleway with wall R, soon crossing a second track and continuing past plantation R. At far end of field boundary, take footpath L uphill to reach gate onto crossing track (Wychavon Way) with ornamental bench.

5 4½ miles/6.9km

Cross the Way, pass through gate and head downhill on footpath through woods. Path joins larger track briefly, and veers L downhill, skirting L of Fiddler's Knap. At bottom, take farm track veering R then L (path slightly unclear

at this point). Path becomes grassy track with small brook L. Go through gate, turn L over footbridge and pass through another gate. Indistinct path continues through parkland, crossing stile at far side.

6 5½ miles/8.7km

Right of way continues across a field, but field may be planted, with access provided around L edge. Arrive at stile L; cross and continue on track which emerges beside pond at church. R through churchyard back to Main Street. [CW](#)

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

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07 ESSEX BRADWELL ON SEA

► OS Explorer map 176 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



footpath heading diagonally L from junction. Follow path ahead, beside and then across fields to Bradwell Waterside.

2 1 mile/1.6km

Go through barriers near weather-boarded Timbercot onto tarmac path and keep straight beside road ahead, past Green Man inn. Opposite Yacht Club, turn R along grassy bank, between marshland and static caravans, towards looming towers of Bradwell's former power station ahead, in their protective cladding.

3 1¾ miles/

Follow waterside path beyond power station for another two miles beside beaches made of cockle shells

and saltmarshes rich in wildlife. At high tide, the water on your L is often higher than the land (and waterway) on your R. St Peter's chapel is already visible on the horizon.

4 3½ miles/5.6km

Eventually, after concrete section of coastal embankment, path heads south towards abandoned bird hide on stilts and Bradwell Shell Bank nature reserve. Continue beside sandy beaches, passing Othona Community hidden in trees on R. Reaching bird hide, head R on path over grass towards St Peter's chapel.

5 4½ miles/7.25km

Beyond chapel, walk along track (old Roman Road), away

from sea, with turbines away to L. At end of track, go through kissing gate and keep straight through small car park.

6 5 miles/8km

Continue along lane ahead with farms nearby, passing caravan site and pub. Follow lane through houses and keep straight on East End Road (here called Blackberry Grove), past school, to return to church and pub in Bradwell. [CW](#)

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

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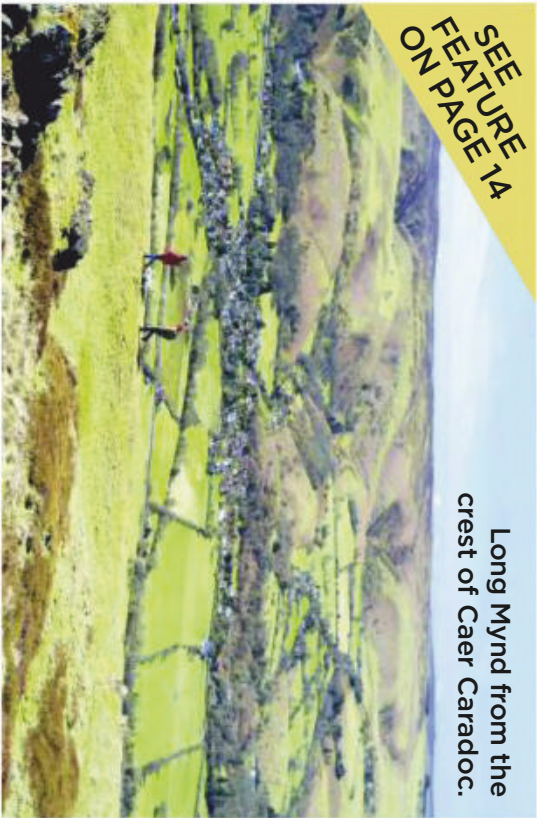


09 SHROPSHIRE CAER CARADOC & THE LAWLEY

► Distance: 8½ miles/13.5km ► Time: 6 hours ► Grade: Moderate



MIDLANDS



SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 14

Long Mynd from the
crest of Caer Caradoc.

PHOTO: ROGER BUTLER

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Lay-by on B4371, 1km east of Church Stretton, SY6 7ET, grid ref SO468932

Is it for me? Open hillsides with paths and tracks; a couple of steep ascents

Stiles 4

PLANNING

Nearest town Church Stretton

Refreshments Good choice of pubs and cafés in Church Stretton

Public toilets Church Stretton

Public transport Nearest station Church Stretton and regular bus links from Shrewsbury and Ludlow

Maps Explorer 217; Landranger 137



CHOSEN BY...
ROGER BUTLER

The heathery slopes of the Long Mynd almost tumble into the middle of Church Stretton but there are wonderful hills on the east side of town too. This walk links three breezy summits on the far side of the A49:

each has its own distinctive character and there are excellent views to Wenlock Edge and across Shropshire's 'blue remembered hills'. Hope Bowdler Hill extends across half a dozen rolling tops and culminates by a rocky exposure known as Battle Stones. Shapely Caer Caradoc is capped by the earthworks of a large Iron Age fort and local legends say this is where

Caractacus made his famous last stand against the Romans. In complete contrast, The Lawley rises like a rocket: it's steep, straight as an arrow and you'll feel like you are flying when you stand by the weathervane on the crest of this tapered grassy ridge.

1 Start

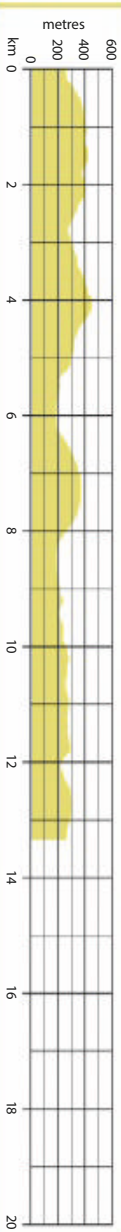
From the lay-by, take the track towards Gaerstones Farm and go through gate on R after 130m. Walk uphill, with fence on R, and go through gate to the start of Open Access land. Veer R of the Gaer Stone outcrop and climb north-west for 1.5km to the rounded top of Hope Bowdler Hill. Descend to a dip with a junction of paths.

2 1 mile/1.75km

Keep ahead, cross a stile and walk east, with fence on R, to the top of Willstone Hill and the prominent rocky outcrop known as Battle Stones with



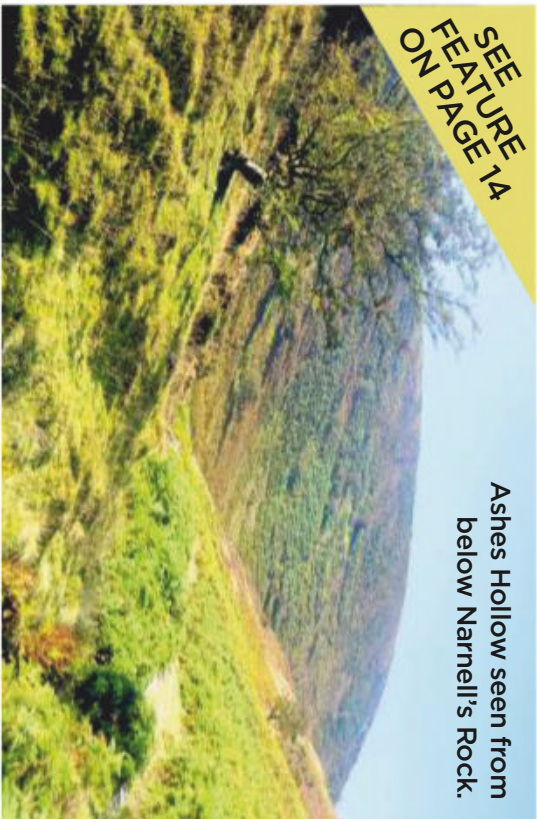
GRADIENT PROFILE



10 SHROPSHIRE THE LONG MYND

► Distance: 7 miles/11km ► Time: 5 hours ► Grade: Moderate

MIDLANDS



SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 14

Ashes Hollow seen from
below Narnell's Rock.

PHOTO: ROGER BUTLER

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Little Stretton, 2km south of Church Stretton, SY6 6AP, grid ref SO443917

Is it for me? Hills and valleys with established paths and tracks

Stiles 1

PLANNING

Nearest town Church Stretton

Refreshments Two pubs in Little Stretton and a wide range of eateries in Church Stretton

Public toilets Church Stretton

Public transport Nearest station Church Stretton and regular bus links from Shrewsbury and Ludlow

Maps Explorer 217; Landranger 137



CHOSEN BY...
ROGER BUTLER

The timber framed houses at Little

Stretton form the gateway to Ashes Hollow and this deep valley is the perfect introduction to the landscape of the Long Mynd. The path climbs past tinkling streams and interlocking spurs to emerge onto the airy whaleback next to a spring known as Boiling Well. It's just a short walk now to the summit at Pole Bank, from where carpets of dense heather stretch in every

direction: take in the extensive views towards Wales but also think what the Long Mynd might have looked like if conservationists hadn't once

campaigned against the ploughing and re-seeding of this valuable moorland habitat. You can wander at will up here but, after walking south from the top, this route then swings south-east over a number of gently rounded hills. The paths and tracks peer into Ashes Hollow to the north and little-visited Callow Hollow to the south, whilst Callow Hill offers a final flourish before the steep descent back into Little Stretton.

1 Start

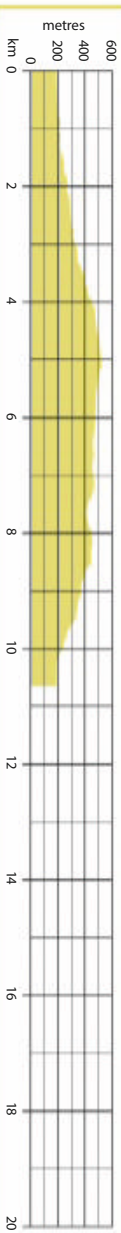
Walk through Little Stretton, with the stream on your L, and continue to end of lane. Cross footbridge at ford and take stile onto footpath leading north through camp site in

Ashes Hollow. Walk up valley, with steepening slopes on either side, cross footbridge

by a solitary house and



GRADIENT PROFILE



10 THE LONG MYND

► OS Explorer map 217 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

DON'T MISS...



Watch gliders take off from the crest of the Long Mynd: the gliding club, with café (and rooms if you fancy staying up on the hill) is 2km south of Pole Cottage and it's an easy walk along the quiet road www.midlandgliding.club; 01588 650206

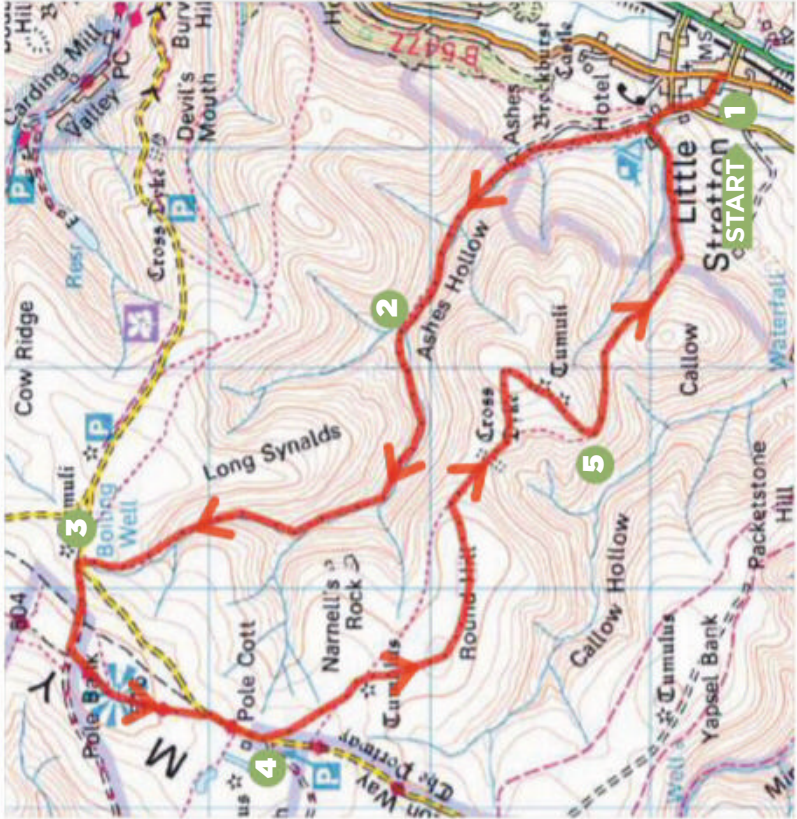
continue on good path next to meandering stream.

2 1¼ miles/2km

After 1km, keep L at a confluence and follow the path by the side of the main stream, with Narnell's Rock on L and Long Synalds on R. The valley bends north to meet the open road at Boiling Well and you will suddenly step out onto swathes of heather moorland.

3 2¼ miles/4.5km

Cross the road and take the track, west for 600m, to the trig point and viewpoint indicator on Pole Bank, with panoramic views in every direction. Leave the top by walking south on a broad path, turn R at the road and pass Pole Cottage in trees on R. Today, this is simple corrugated shed but, at one time, the site was occupied by a shepherd's lodge.



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

☐☐☐☐☐

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Hanging Brink, Sleekstone Bank and Streetbarn Rock. The path bends L for 400m to another dip by the head of Grindle Hollow, on R. Leave the path and turn south to walk up to the top of Callow, marked by a tiny cairn. Descend east to meet a good path which gradually slopes down to meet the lane by camp site. Continue back into Little Stretton. [CW](#)

4 3¾ miles/6km

Fork L on paths over moor and cross a track running south-east. Continue to the top of Round Hill and then walk south-east across the open moor to meet another track. Walk east, merge with a broad path and descend to a col known as Barrister's Plain, marked by the Bronze Age earthworks of the Cross Dyke. Fork L, uphill, to the smooth summit of Grindle, then turn south-west over a spur to descend back to the path.

5 5½ miles/8.75km

The path contours above the steep bowl of Callow Hollow with views to slopes with memorable names:

good views towards Wenlock Edge. Turn west and contour across the hillside to join a tractor track. Turn R downhill to a barn and go over a stile on L on an indistinct path through damp woodland. Cross a footbridge and head uphill through the next field to gate at track.

3 2¼ miles/3.5km

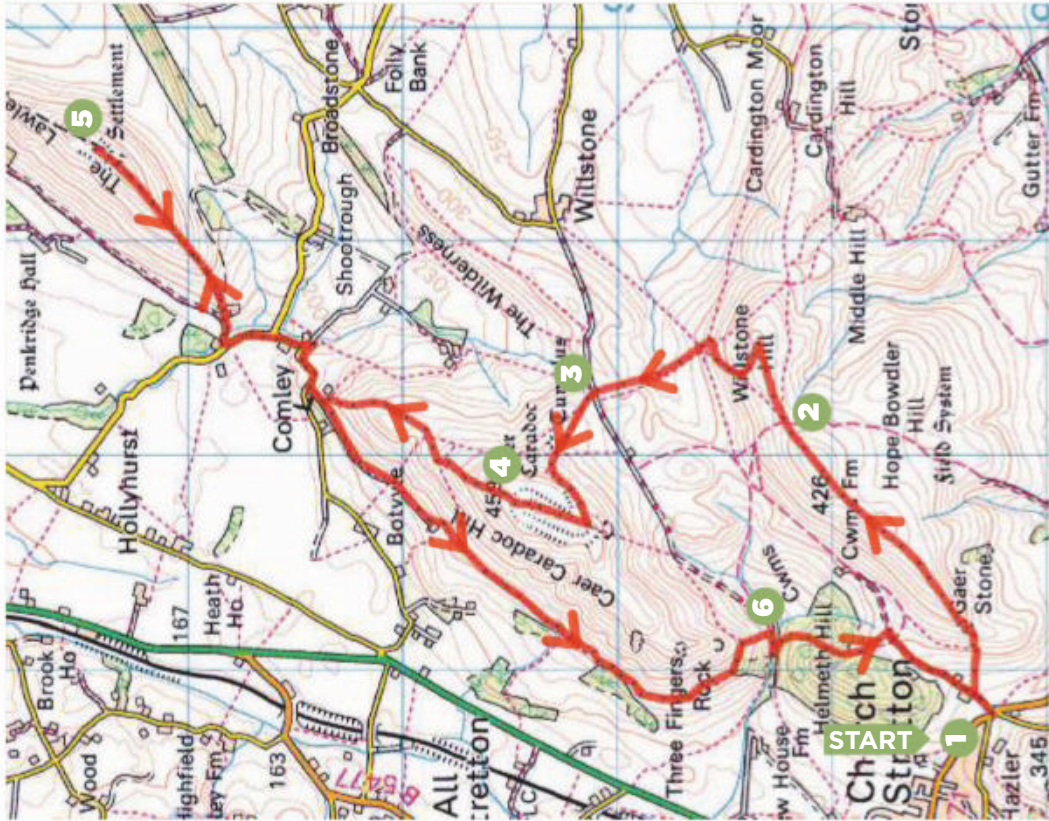
Go straight over, through gate, and trend L uphill through field to next gate. A broad grass path now leads south up the flanks of Caer Caradoc. Turn R at the top, past the ancient earthworks of a large Iron Age fort, and proceed to the summit plateau.

4 2¾ miles/4.5km

Descend north-north-east on a steep spur, go over a stile as the slope lessens and continue down to the next fence with trees. Turn L to a gate in corner of field and drop down to a track. Go R for 100m to lane, turn R around bends to Comley Farm and take path on R signed The Lawley. The path rises steeply, without a break, to the pointed grassy summit (marked by a tall weathervane capped by the silhouette of a crow).

5 4½ miles/7.5km

Retrace steps downhill to the lane and walk back to re-join the path at the foot of Caer Caradoc. Keep R and follow the track, south-west,



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

☐☐☐☐☐

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running along the foot of the steep slope. Go through gate and continue ahead for 2km as the path contours above the fence line and occasionally skirts patches of scrubby woodland before turning south-south-east on steep path below Three Fingers Rock.

6 7½ miles/12.25km

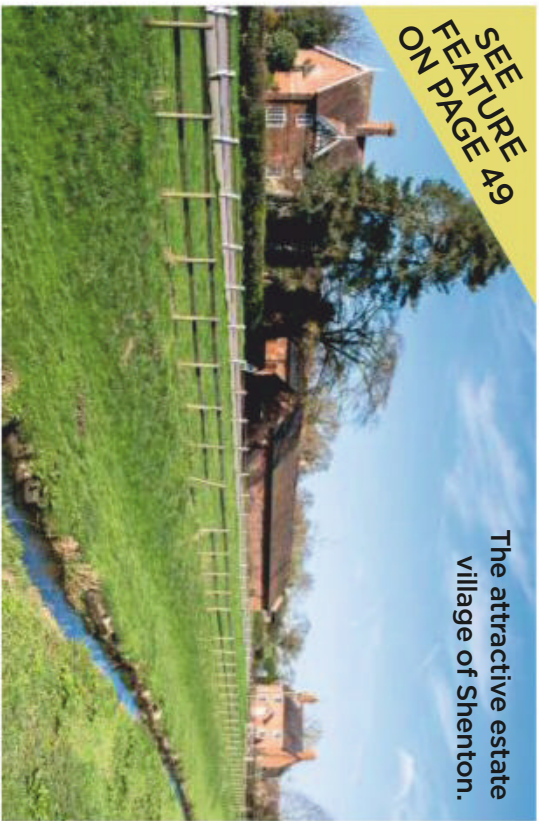
Go R alongside stream, cross footbridge and take bridleway climbing south through woods on the east

side of Helmeth Hill. Join farm track over open field at top, go through gate and turn R to walk down track. Pass through Gaerstons Farm and return to road and lay-by. [CW](#)



11 LEICESTERSHIRE BOSWORTH BATTLEFIELD

► Distance: 6¼ miles/10km ► Time: 2¼ hours ► Grade: Easy



SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 49

The attractive estate
village of Shenton.

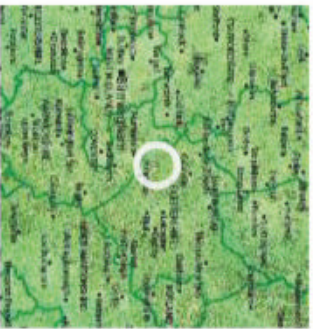
PHOTO: CAROL BURKINSHAW



CHOSEN BY...
**CAROL
BURKINSHAW**

Surrounded by verdant countryside, Ambion Hill is so peaceful that it's difficult to believe this is the site where the long-running Wars of the Roses was brought to an end in 1485 when the controversial King Richard III was killed at the hands of Henry Tudor's army, marking the dawn of the powerful Tudor dynasty. This walk begins at the excellent Bosworth Battle Heritage Centre, where you'll discover that in 2010 it was accepted that the true battle site is just over a mile away. Passing through Ambion Wood you reach the Ashby Canal, which

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre and Country Park, between Sutton Cheney and Shenton, CV13 0AD, grid ref SK403001
Is it for me? Easy navigation on a mainly level route along a canal towpath, fields, woodland and quiet country lanes
Stiles 20

PLANNING

Nearest town Market Bosworth
Refreshments Cafes at Heritage Centre, Sutton Wharf on the Ashby Canal and Whitemoors antiques & craft centre in Shenton
Public transport None
Maps OS Explorer 232; Landranger 140

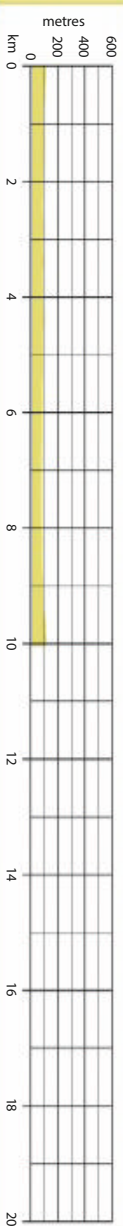
1 Start

From car park walk to heritage centre entrance and continue along track to pass through two small gates into Ambion Wood, which would not have existed at the time of the battle. Follow woodland track, bending L at its fringe

2 ¾ mile/1.2km

Go over Sutton Wharf

GRADIENT PROFILE

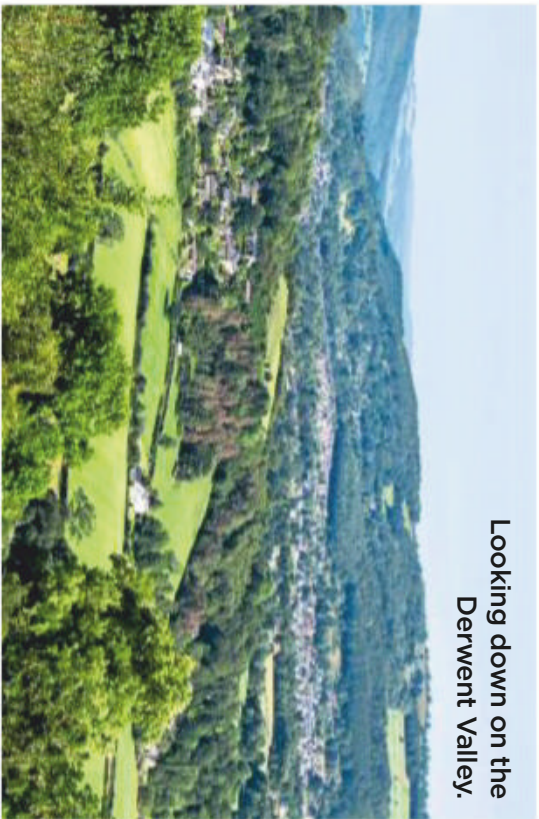


MIDLANDS



12 DERBYSHIRE WINSTER

► Distance: 7¾ miles/12.5km ► Time: 3 hours ► Grade: Moderate



Looking down on the
Derwent Valley.

PHOTO: CAROL BURKINSHAW



CHOSEN BY...
**CAROL
BURKINSHAW**

Hidden in the Peak District's limestone hills, surrounded by wonderful scenery, this undulating route visits three characterful former lead-mining communities. Winster's main street, with its showpiece Market House, is a testament to the village's once prosperous past. From here, you join the 46-mile-long Limestone Way to navigate across Bonsall Moor, studded with old mine workings. After passing through Bonsall's fine market place you climb to leave the Limestone Way. A descent then leads into Wensley Dale – no, not the one famed for the cheese

– and on to Wensley itself. Finally, woodland guides you back to Winster.

1 Start

Exit car park L into Winster. After Market House, go L up East Bank, and L onto footpath beyond Bowling Green pub. Bear R up field to T-junction, and head L across broken wall to negotiate gate near overhead wires. Mid-field meet signed Limestone Way (LW) to cross fields ahead via squeeze stiles/gates/markers to lane.

2 1½ miles/2.4km

Turn L 20m and then R to bear diagonally L over fields to track. Jink R and L on LW to continue diagonally L down fields to T-junction. Divert L to

PLAN YOUR WALK



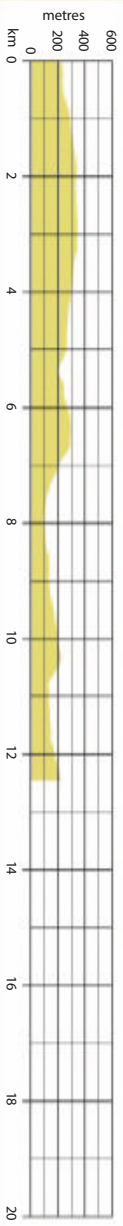
ROUTE

Start/parking Playground car park on Wensley Road, Winster, DE4 2DH, grid ref SK246606. Or park on The Square at Wensley, grid ref SK263610
Is it for me? Undulating across small fields and through woodland. Latter prone to seasonal mud and slippery descents
Stiles 9 stiles to climb, plus many squeeze stiles and/or small gates

PLANNING

Nearest town Matlock
Refreshments Pubs in Winster and Bonsall. Fountain tea rooms, Bonsall
Public toilets Winster village centre, and just off route in Bonsall
Public transport Bus 172 Bakewell-Matlock serves Winster and Wensley, and Bus 216 Matlock-Bonsall
Maps OS Explorer OL24; Landranger 119

GRADIENT PROFILE



12 DERBYSHIRE WINSTER

► OS Explorer map OL24 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

DON'T MISS...



Describing itself as a “small, quirky, boutique and fairly bohemian” pub, try the Barley Mow in Bonsall Dale, which has its own micro-brewery – Chickenfoot – on the premises.

crossroads, and go R at LW sign, to descend more fields to barn. Cross next small field, and at marker post stay forwards over final field to lane junction.

3 miles/4.83km

Keep ahead into Upper Bonsall, and switch L and R at T-junction into Bell Lane, which soon becomes path that drops down to Bonsall’s Market Square. Toilets and tearoom are 150m R, but route joins byway/LW opposite and climbs to intersection. Bear L, and, ignoring gates, stay L at fork to T-junction. Turn R along LW and climb to second large gate. LW is R, but you go L across two fields to lane.

4 4¼ miles/6.84km

Cross field opposite, and pass through hedge gap. Go over stream, but disregard stile ahead to drop steeply R through Jughole Wood. Branch R at unsigned fork to pass below overhead wires. Continue descending towards

Leaward Farm. Curve R around farm driveway to T-junction. Snitterton Hall is L, but you veer R to triangular junction.

5 5 miles/8.05km

Bear L, and go L, signed Wensley, into field. At next signpost, divert L across middle of field into Wensley Dale. Gradually ascend dale, but ignore uphill fork L to walk with fields R to barn. Stay forwards, climbing to crossing track. Turn R up track, signed Wensley, to lane leading to The Square.

6 6½ miles/10.46km

L along B5057, and go R at end of village, signed Clough Wood, up field. At signpost bear L across field ascending

to track. Cross track and turn R to enter Cambridge Wood. Descend sharply to signpost at valley bottom. Bear L 10m, cross track and in another 10m divert L (unsigned) into Clough Wood. Follow stream to exit woodland over footbridge. Veer R across field to climb stile beyond two stone posts. Passing more stone posts, curve L up fields to B5057. Turn R to start point. [CW](#)

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING



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11 LEICESTERSHIRE BOSWORTH BATTLEFIELD

► OS Explorer map 232 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

DON'T MISS...



Ride the Battlefield heritage railway line from its southern end at Shenton Station to its northern HQ at Shackerstone where there is a museum and loco shed (01827 880754, battlefieldline.co.uk).

bridge, drop back down onto towpath, and then head under bridge to walk beside lovely section of canal as it snakes for two miles to bridge 27 on the fringe of Dadlington.

3 2¾ miles/4.43km

Leave waterway and climb stile at side of bridge into field. Cross field and in next field track its perimeter L to unsigned grassy crossing of stream. Divert L over stream and walk across middle of fields – the flags at the top of Ambion Hill can be seen fluttering in the distance – to driveway of Dadlington House Farm. Continue, guided by yellow-topped marker posts, over disused railway embankment to lane. Go over lane to pick up well-marked field path that skirts Apple Orchard Farm and then takes linear course to lane at Shenton.

4 4½ miles/7.24km

Turn R into village and go R at T-junction over bridge and past Shenton Hall. Just beyond hall’s boundary wall branch R at signpost into field and go forwards, crossing stream, to lane. Walk L over Ashby Canal and veer R into Shenton Station car park of Battlefield Line heritage railway.

5 5¼ miles/9.25km

To immediate R of station negotiate railway line via gates, and bear L behind station to ascend L-hand field edge, which later swings R to flags and memorial sundial at summit of Ambion Hill. Poignantly hanging from the

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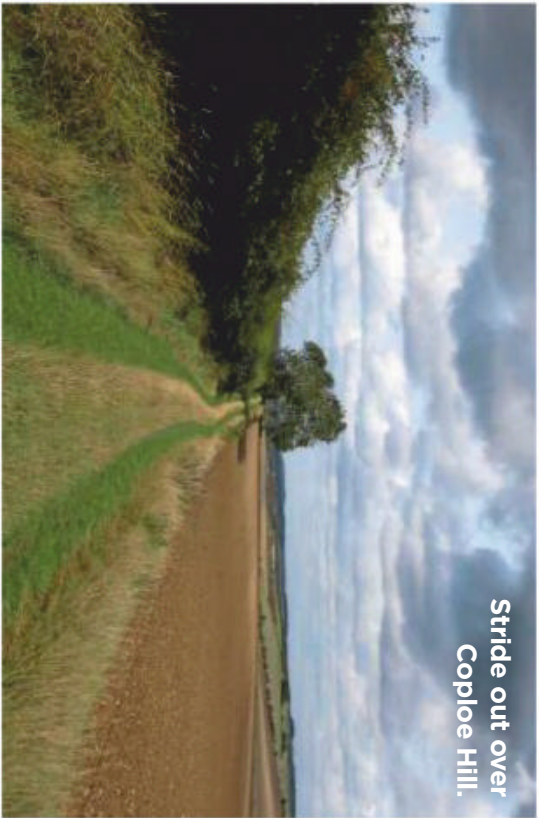




13 ESSEX/CAMBS

WHITTLESFORD PARKWAY TO WENDENS AMBO

► Distance: 11 miles/17.7km ► Time: 6 hours ► Grade: Moderate



Stride out over
Cople Hill.

PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN



CHOSEN BY...
PHOEBE TAPLIN

This station-to-station walk, devised by local ramblers, features several beautiful, ancient churches. It's a trek of two halves: the first part meanders along the Cam valley, through cosy villages with pubs. The second part strides into Essex over bare rolling fields with big, windswept views.

past Renault Trucks into Duxford. After creeper-covered house 11, turn R into St John's Street and L at church (wall paintings).

2 1 mile/1.6km

Continue past church and Green. Keep straight on tarmac path beside thatched house and on lane past flint cottage. Follow path ahead L and R to road. Turn L past Graystone's café and R onto Hinxton Road. Follow road out of Duxford, across railway and little River Cam. 150m beyond river, turn R on lane. Turn R again on footpath and follow it round Hinxton Watermill.

3 2½ miles/4km

Continue along permissive

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Whittlesford Parkway station, CB22 4PL, grid ref TL484472
Is it for me? Busy road to cross and roadside walking near start.

Otherwise, mostly tracks and country lanes. You could divide it into two shorter walks by doubling back near point 5 to Great Chesterford station
Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town

Saffron Walden

Refreshments

Graystones café in Duxford. Lion pub in Ickleton and Bell near end in Wendens Ambo

Public toilets

Audley End station

Public transport

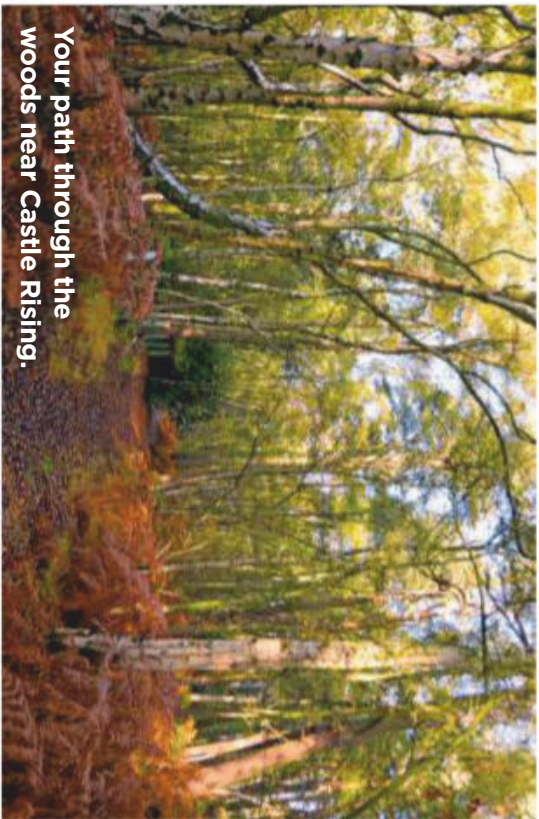
Trains from London & C'bridge. Bus 7 (C'bridge-S. Walden runs through Duxford, Ickleton and stations. **Maps** OS Explorer 209 and 195; Landranger 154



14 NORFOLK

CASTLE RISING

► Distance: 4½ miles/7.25km ► Time: 2 hours ► Grade: Easy



Your path through the
woods near Castle Rising.

PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN



CHOSEN BY...
PHOEBE TAPLIN

The 12th-century keep towering over the village of Castle Rising is one of the most impressive of its kind in England. This short route combines perfectly with a visit to the castle, whose huge grassy ramparts and maze of spiral stairs and walkways offer quite a lot of exercise in their own right. Don't be put off by the roadside stretches near the start; you'll soon be wandering through woods and commons under gnarled oaks and elegant silver birches.

Lane and walk for a mile. Reaching end of road, opposite Knight's Hill Hotel, turn R beside main road (easier path along far side).

2 1½ miles/2km

Just before the first bungalow in South Wootton, turn R onto signed footpath into trees. Continue for ¼ mile, skirting round any fallen trees along the way. At the edge the of wood, follow path L along fence. Keep straight across the golf course, following the grassy and sandy tracks ahead between bracken and birch trees. Where two tracks run parallel, stick to L hand path. Turn R beside Lynn Road for nearly ¼ mile.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Castle Rising's castle car park, (when open), PE31 6AH, grid ref TF666244.

(Alternative parking in village or at point 3.)
Is it for me? Some roadside walking, but mostly level paths/tracks; woodland paths not always waymarked, but fairly easy to find
Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town

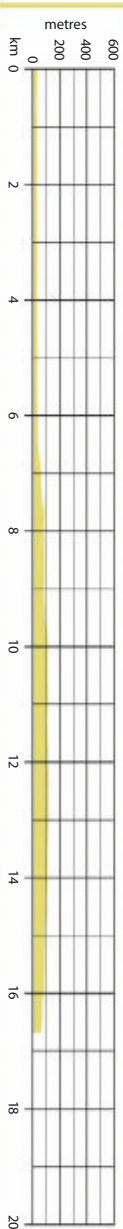
King's Lynn

Refreshments

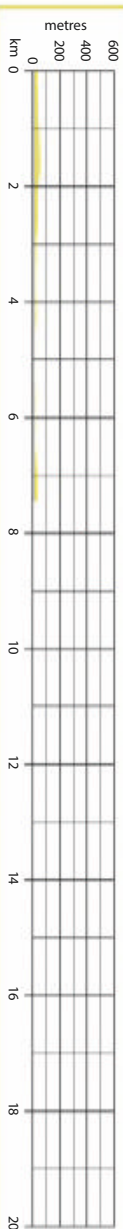
Unique Tearoom near point 6 and Farmers Arms at point 2
Public toilets Car park at start (when open).

Public transport

Buses 35 and 36 (Lynn) from King's Lynn to Hunstanton stop at point 2 every half an hour between then (hourly on Sundays). **Maps** OS Explorer 250; Landranger 132



GRADIENT PROFILE



GRADIENT PROFILE

14 NORFOLK CASTLE RISING

► OS Explorer map 250 ► Buy maps at: [ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop)



DON'T MISS...

With some fabulous late Norman details, look outside Castle Rising church at the ornate west front and inside at the arches and font.

3 2½ miles/4km At the far end of the small parking area, opposite golf club entrance, fork L onto sandy path running parallel with road. Skirt L and R around sandy hillock to continue with fence on R. Opposite end of fence, turn L on path into woods, crossing footbridge. Keep straight through the oaks and birches of Ling Common, forking R near end of path to reach road from North Wootton.

4 3 miles/5km Cross road and walk a few steps R, then diagonally L onto footpath. Keep to the main path, passing open grassy space on R and then cottage on L. Continue on sandy track, keeping straight through fields and past farmhouse. Turn L on the lane and go on through the village.

5 4 miles/6.5km Keep straight at end of lane along track with footpath sign, through kissing gate. Look L for a distant view



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of ruined St Felix's church in abandoned Babingley village. Keep on through two more kissing gates and turn R onto Old Hunstanton Road, passing Trinity Hospital. These almshouses were built of Norfolk brick in the early 17th century. Turn R into churchyard to visit St Laurence's church.

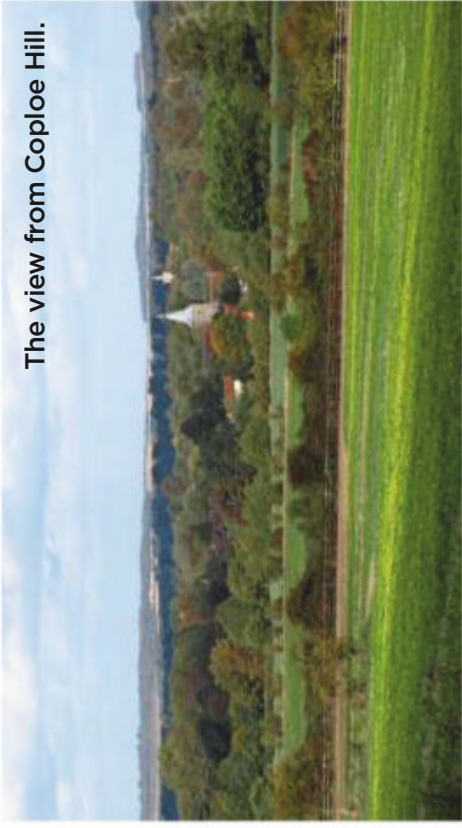
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6 4¼ miles/7km Exit through gate on the

13 ESSEX/CAMBS WHITTLESFORD PARKWAY TO WENDENS AMBO

► OS Explorer map 209 & 195 ► Buy maps at: [ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop)



The view from Coploe Hill.

PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN

waterside path. After ¼ mile, follow black arrow R and turn L on path parallel with railway. Turn R on road over level crossing and immediately L through wooden kissing gate. Follow path diagonally R over field, turn R on road and L onto footpath through metal gate. Fork L along edge of field. Turn L over footbridge and follow path ahead towards Ickleton.

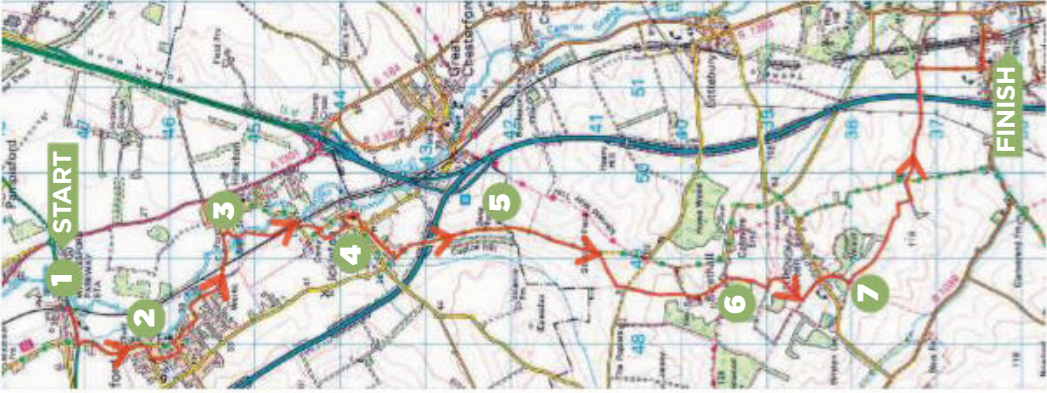
4 3½ miles/5.6km Turn L down Butcher's Hill and turn R onto Church Street. Enter the churchyard of St Mary's (more wall paintings). Leave through the other gate and follow road R. Cross Frogge St and continue through gate on grassy path between phone box and bus shelter. Keep straight along gravel track and Back Lane. At T-junction, turn L onto Coploe Road and follow it for 1½ miles, crossing M11 and passing Coploe Hill nature reserve on R.

7 8 miles/13km Turn L at end. Continue, with hedge on L, for a mile, following track R and L towards mast. Turn R on lane and L to continue on track for another ¾ mile, crossing over M11.

5 5¾ miles/9.25km A mile after nature reserve, turn R at isolated signpost across field. Turn L at hedge. Cross road, and keep straight for ½ mile. Turn R on lane. Near farm, bear L to church (11th century nave). Leave churchyard and continue down sunken path. Keep straight up path ahead, past thatched house. Turn L on lane and R, almost at once, onto grassy bridleway, passing wood.

6 7 miles/11.25km Turn L on track and follow it R. At end of conifers, fork R onto path beside ditch. Turn L on track at end, along tree tunnel into Littlebury Green. Continue straight across road, bear R onto track and follow it.

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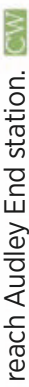
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TIME TAKEN

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About 300m beyond bridge, turn R along grassy track between fields. Keep straight down past house and turn L on road, over railway. Turn R to reach Audley End station.





15 CHESHIRE

MOULDSWORTH TO CUDDINGTON

► Distance: 9¼ miles/15km ► Time: 5 hours ► Grade: Moderate



NORTH WEST

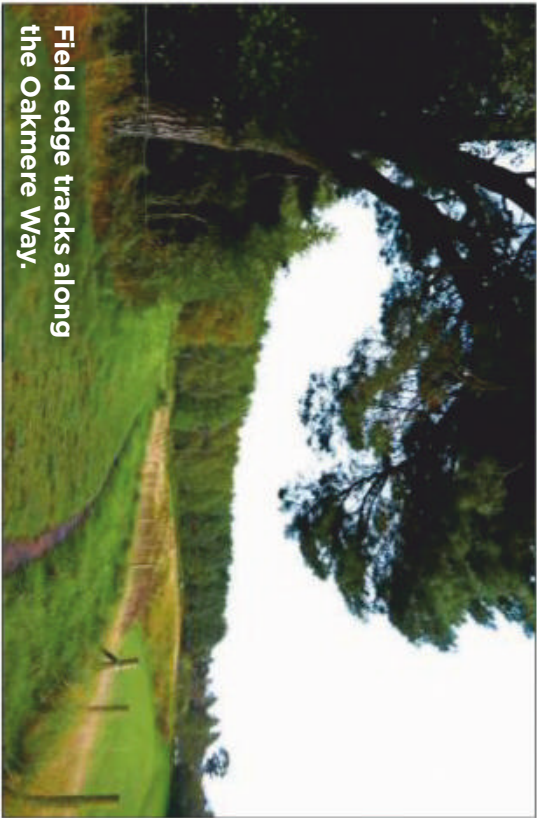


PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN

Field edge tracks along the Oakmere Way.



**CHOSEN BY...
PHOEBE TAPLIN**
This station-to-station route along a series of long-distance trails passes through a variety of Cheshire landscapes: fields, woods, lakes, bogs, and beautiful Delamere Forest.

1 Start
From Mouldsworth Station, walk downhill past Goshawk pub. 80m beyond Delamere Road, turn L through kissing gate onto footpath and keep straight. Turn L on lane for ½ mile and L again at signpost with yellow Baker Way arrow onto (rather overgrown) path.

2 1 mile/1.6km
Cross lane into wood, turn

L downhill and follow path through wood. Turn L on lane and, at junction, R up Woodside. Before railway, fork R onto footpath under arch, turn R up side of field and L through field. Fork L along far side and follow path over stile and footbridge into trees. Continue up side of field, turn L at top through bushes and R over stile. Keep straight on wooded path above gully.

3 1¼ miles/3km
Turn R over stile up side of field. Just before three oaks, turn L over stile onto grassy track. At top of field, turn L onto track. Cross stile near brick cottage, turn R and immediately R again onto path signed Sandstone Trail. Keep

straight into Delamere Forest. At foot of hill, turn L onto broad gravel path, winding gently uphill.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking
Mouldsworth station, CH3 8AQ, grid ref SJ512708
Is it for me? Paths near start can be overgrown or muddy. For a shorter walk, end at Delamere station
Stiles 4

PLANNING

Nearest town Chester
Refreshments Goshawk pub at start, White Barn at end, Delamere Station House at point 6
Public toilets Delamere Forest car park nr point 6
Public transport Hourly trains (every two hours on Sunday) from Chester and Manchester. Also between Mouldsworth, Cuddington and Delamere.
Maps OS Explorer 267; Landranger 117



16 CUMBRIA

HALLIN FELL

► Distance: 3½ miles/5.6km ► Time: 2 hours ► Grade: Easy

NORTH WEST



PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN

Sunrise from the shores of Ullswater.



**CHOSEN BY...
PHOEBE TAPLIN**
This short route around Hallin Fell is easy by Lake District standards, but manages to cover a huge variety of landscapes: lakeside paths and bracken-covered hills, mossy woods, rocky streams and mountain views. It makes a great combination with a trip on the Ullswater Steamers, which run all year (www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk).

If you drive instead, there is parking by the church at pt 5 – simply start the circuit from there. There is an optional detour up the hill itself, adding about a mile to the route. Alfred Wainright said Hallin Fell offers the “best views for

the least effort” and that “its grassy slopes can be climbed barefoot”. But walkers used to gentler terrain might find it challenging and there are still good views on the main walk.

1 Start
From Howtown Pier, turn R following Ullswater Way’s (UW) daffodil waymarks and sign for Sandwick. Cross footbridge and turn L on lakeside path. Continue through gates onto lane. Turn L off lane through gate onto path signed Patterdale/Sandwick. Follow path up steps towards slopes of Hallin Fell.

2 ¼ mile/0.4km
Go through gate and turn R along stony path with house on

PLAN YOUR WALK

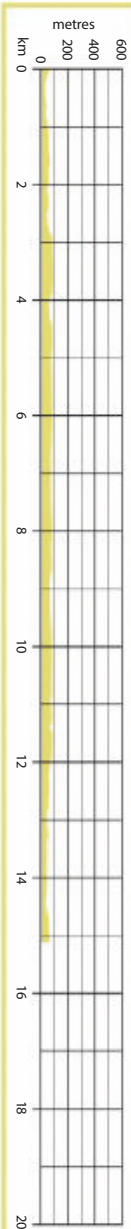


ROUTE

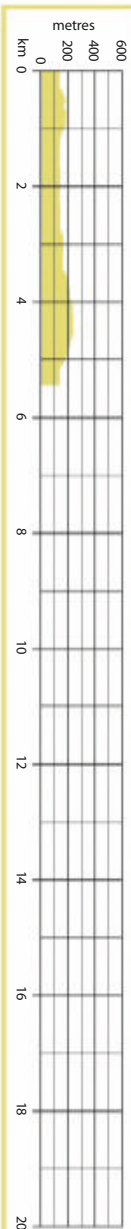
Start Howtown Pier, CA10 2ND, grid ref NY443199. Parking near St Peter’s church at point 5
Is it for me? Generally well marked and surfaced paths. A few quite rough and stony sections; small ups and down, plus one big (optional) climb
Stiles 3

PLANNING

Nearest town Penrith
Refreshments Howtown Hotel and Beckside Farm (both closed in winter) On board Ullswater Steamer
Public toilets None
Public transport Steamers stop at Howtown Pier several times a day even in winter (but not in rough weather; 01768 482229). The boats leave from Pooley Bridge, Aira Force or Glenridding, all served by bus 508 from Penrith.
Maps OS Explorer OL5; Landranger 90



GRADIENT PROFILE



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16 CUMBRIA
HALLIN FELL

► OS Explorer map OL5 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



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R. Continue on main path around edge of hill for ½ mile. Follow as path ahead slopes gently down to lakeside again. Go through gate into Hallinhag Wood (still on UW) and past beach onto path. Continue through trees, with water on R.

3 1½ miles/2.5km
Leave woods through gate, past idyllic picnic spot on wooded beach. Continue through gate and follow gravel path through several more gates towards Beckside Farm. Reaching Sandwick Beck, follow path L. Cross footbridge R through gate and L up lane.

4 1¾ miles/3km
Ignore UW waymark on

R and keep straight along lane ahead for ¼ mile. When sign points L to St Peter’s church, follow it over footbridge and continue. Turn L again over second bridge and R over stone stile by stream, following signs to Howtown. After gate, turn L on path heading along hillside towards cottage (Hallin Bank). Go through gate and follow track past cottage, through another gate and fork L onto footpath. Continue along path through more gates and stone stiles towards church in trees ahead.

5 2½ miles/4.5km
Opposite church, you can detour up to summit of Hallin Fell. Otherwise, continue along

lane ahead until you see lake again. Turn L towards it along defined path.

6 3 miles/5 km
Follow path down along side of hill to Point 2 again. If parked by church, keep straight here and follow directions from 2. If you came by boat, turn R and retrace steps beside water to pier (Howtown Hotel is R if you need to wait). **CW**

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15 CHESHIRE
MOULDSWORTH TO CUDDINGTON

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4 2¾ miles/4.5km
At junction, turn R leaving Sandstone Trail and joining Delamere Way. Continue on broad track and lane ahead. Cross road and keep straight on wide gravel path. After 250m, turn L on narrower path, following Delamere Way arrow into woods. Continue on path ahead for 650m. At junction by Doolittle Moss, turn R.

Moss. Keep going for a mile, passing under walkways. At junction with lots of arrows, before bench, turn sharp R following signs for Go Ape and Forest Centre. R on lane over railway. Turn L on path marked Baker Way. Continue through car parks to Delamere station.

6 5¼ mile/8.5km
Turn R at station, L over road, R over Golf Club Road and L onto footpath past new houses. Keep straight on fenced path. Nearing club house, follow path R and L. Turn L through gate with horseshoe sign. Continue on stony track beside Blakemere

and keep straight for ¾ mile along Oakmere Way.

7 6½ miles/10.5km
Follow path around edge of wood. Turn L on road and immediately R, following sign for Whitegate Way. Follow path L, parallel with road, and then R. Keep going on path through woods, eventually heading R onto Whitegate Way. Turn L and follow path under railway. Continue along Waste Lane. Turn L down road and immediately R onto path. Follow path R and over footbridge. Turn R up Mill Lane and L to station. **CW**

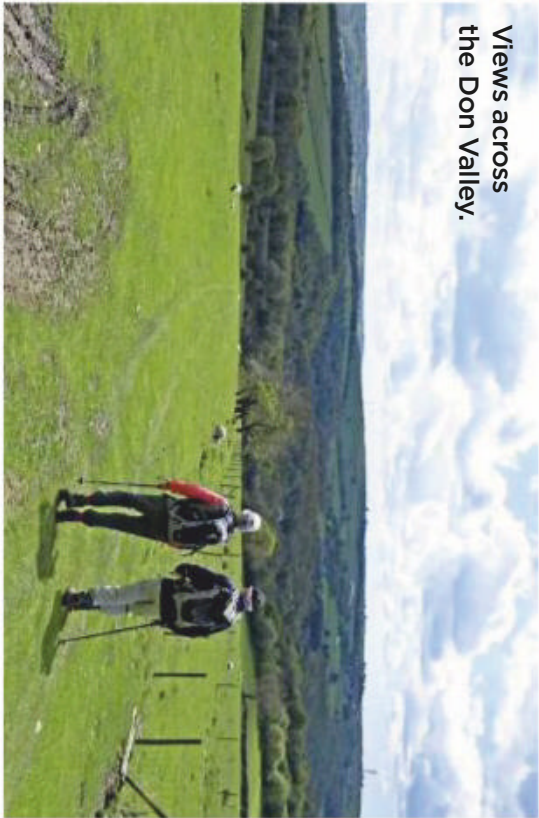
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PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN



Views across the Don Valley.

PHOTO: ARNOLD UNDERWOOD



CHOSEN BY...
ARNOLD UNDERWOOD

This walk is based

on the Thurgoland Boundary Walk which was devised many years ago. Since then, further sections of the Trans-Pennine Trail have been opened, providing possible variations to the route – one in particular being Thurgoland Tunnel. It's an undulating walk through surprisingly delightful countryside, with bluebell woods in the Spring, on the fringe of what was once the South Yorkshire coalfield.

1 Start
Walk along the pavement to Waggon & Horses pub and cross to head up Bower Hill.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Oxspring Sports Field car park, Sheffield Road, S36 8YA, grid ref: SE272019

Is it for me? Woodland paths, farm tracks and country lanes and sections of disused railway

Stiles 6

PLANNING

Nearest towns

Penistone & Barnsley

Refreshments

Pubs in Oxspring

Public toilets None

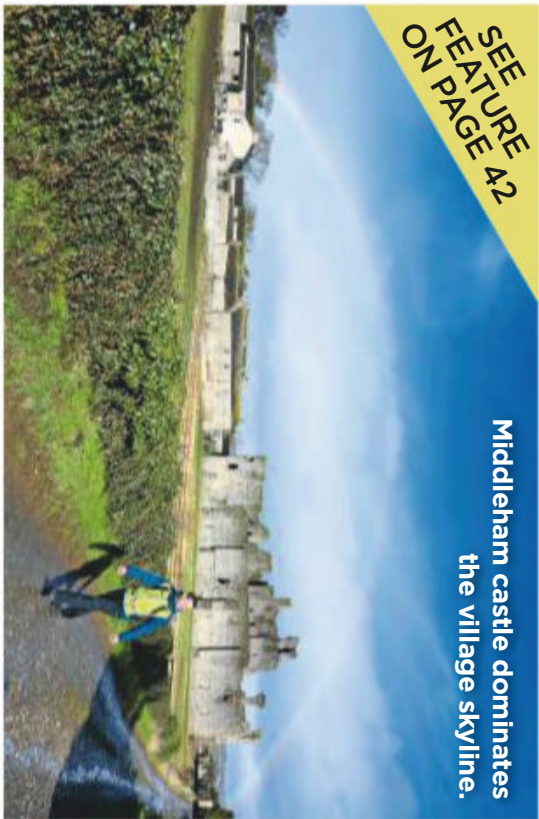
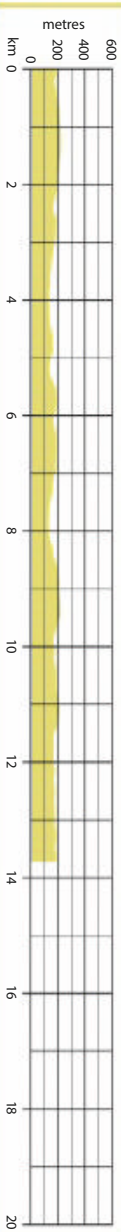
Public transport Buses from Barnsley Penistone and Sheffield

Maps OS Explorer OL1; Landranger 110

2 1¼ miles/2km
Just before railway bridge turn R joining the Dove Valley Trail – part of TPT network. This trail goes through woodland above a disused railway cutting and tunnel, then drops down joining former railway. After ½ mile on the old railway cross a bridge over a road. Here, leave the track by doubling back L down to road and walk under the bridge.

3 2½ miles/4km
Continue along road to Dodworth Moor End on R. Cross a stile and head down fields with extensive views over rolling countryside. Pass Berry Moor House and turn L down a

GRADIENT PROFILE



SEE FEATURE ON PAGE 42

Middleham castle dominates the village skyline.

PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

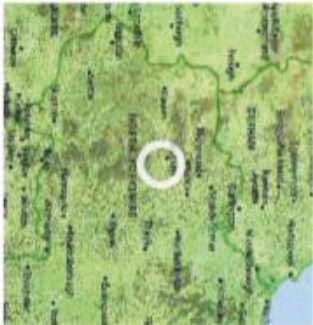


CHOSEN BY...
NICK HALLISSEY

Middleham Castle was the childhood

home of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who grew up to reign as King Richard III from 1483 to 1485. It's easy to imagine the young lad roaming the low hills and moors around here, at the eastern end of Wensleydale. This walk explores those uplands, passing the original motte and bailey castle that predates the modern-day remains, and flits between the rivers Cover and Ure, with a pause at a fine pub in the village of Wensley. You'll also explore the sweeping gallops on Middleham Low Moor and visit the tranquil waters of

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking On-street parking in centre of Middleham, grid ref SE127877, DL8 4PE.

Is it for me? Mostly easy walking on well-marked paths, can get very muddy after rain, especially by the two rivers

Stiles 6

PLANNING

Nearest town Leyburn.

Refreshments Pubs and cafés in Middleham.

Public toilets Middleham.

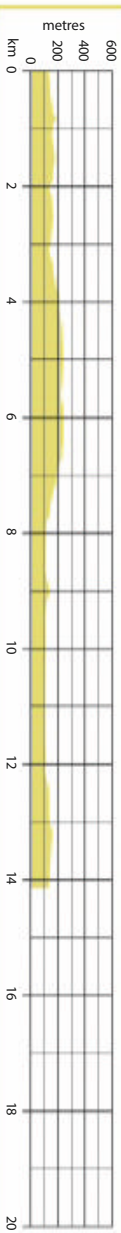
Public transport Bus service 159 links Middleham with Richmond, Leyburn and Ripon (dalesbus.org)

Maps OS Explorer OL30, Landranger 99

1 Start
From main square, follow main road A6108 west, but take first L on Back Street. Pass main entrance to Middleham Castle and turn R on Canaan Lane, passing eastern wall of castle. To visit original motte and bailey castle, detour R through squeeze-stile and gate, and head diagonally L uphill over field. Go through metal gate and continue to reach earthworks. Retrace steps back to squeeze stile and turn R on lane, which becomes path following R edge of field, with

wall R. Crossing brow of hill, cross stile by double gate and descend with wall now on L. Ignore branching paths and

GRADIENT PROFILE



18 NORTH YORKSHIRE MIDDLEHAM

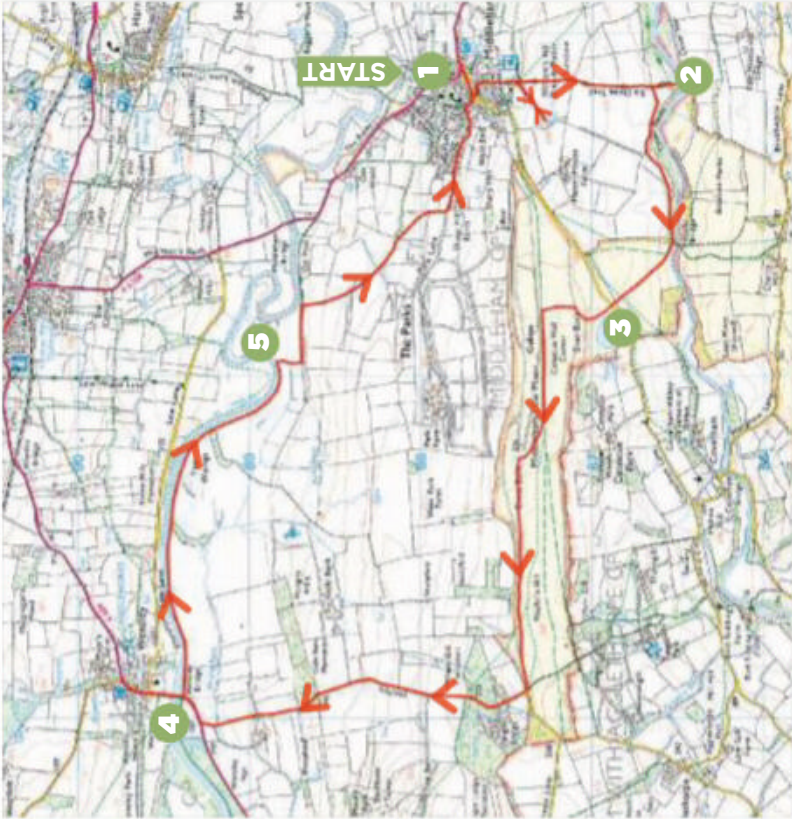
► OS Explorer map OL30 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

descend steep bank to reach River Cover.

2 1½ miles/2km
Retrace steps up bank, then take first path L, soon reaching fenceline. Follow fence L, running above and parallel to river. Nearing end of field, turn L over stile and pass through small copse. Cross stile on far side and descend over grassy field (Cover Banks on OS Explorer map). Path descends to riverside. Follow fence L, cross stile and turn L to visit Hullo Bridge. Then take grassy track rising north-west up bank. Go through gate to emerge on lane. Cross lane to reach Pinker's Pond.

3 2½ miles/3.7km
Take grassy track rising R of pond, climbing to reach large track on edge of Middleham Low Moor. Cross track and continue ahead to reach fences of gallops. Turn L and follow gallops across moor, eventually reaching trig point at Cross Bank. Continue over brow of moor, joining prominent track and heading west to reach corner of lane (Hollins on OS Explorer map). Turn R and follow lane downhill, passing Spigot Lodge L. Continue on lane, eventually reaching main road A684. Turn R on road and follow round to L to reach Wensley Bridge.

4 5.4 miles/8.6km
To visit Three Horseshoes



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

Inn, continue across bridge into Wensley Village; pub is at top of hill. Then retrace steps, re-crossing Wensley Bridge to Point 4. Turn L (R if pub not visited) through squeeze gap/gate to join track heading eastwards along southern bank of river. Follow river for 1½ miles, eventually reaching a prominent meander where path veers R (south) away from bank.

5 7¼ miles/11.8km
Cross field and turn L with hedgeline. Just before farm buildings, turn R through gateway. Pass through gate and continue over field, climbing gently on a slight diagonal. Pass through

a succession of fields and gates marked with fingerposts. After third field path splits; take R path diagonally across field. At top, go through gate and continue on stony track. Emerge on lane and turn L, passing through button-operated electric gate. Pass Key Centre R and follow lane to emerge at road junction in Middleham. Turn L and follow road back to start. **CW**

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YOUR RATING



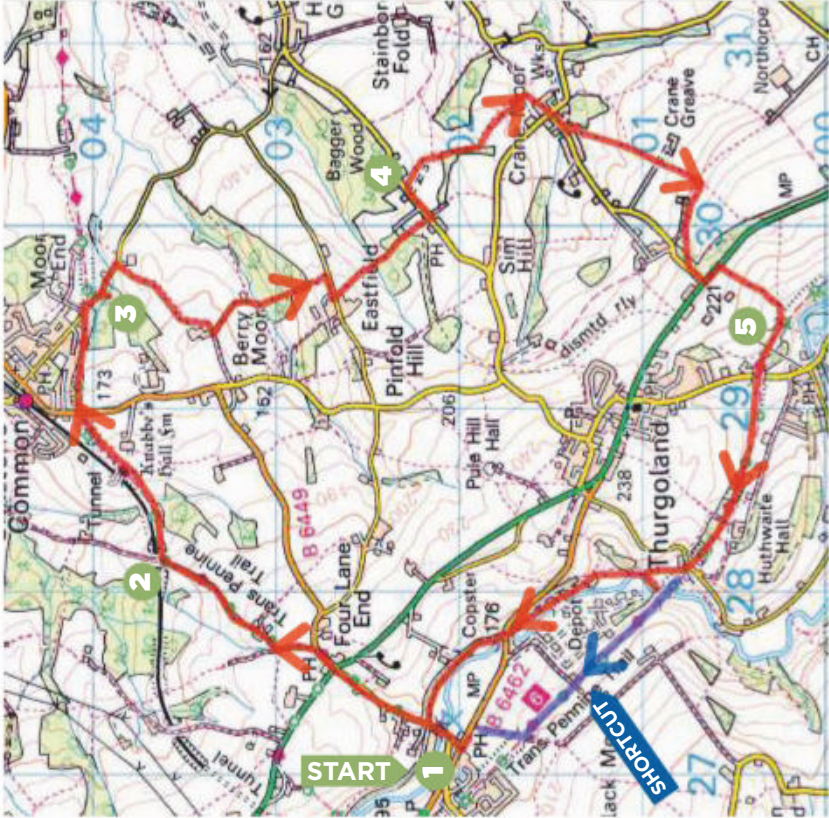
17 SOUTH YORKSHIRE THURGOLAND

► OS Explorer map OL1 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

lane. At the end of the lane bear R to a gate/stile and take the path L down by paddocks into wood. Cross a footbridge to face steady climb through Tom Royd Wood coming to a minor road. Go R for 100yds, then L along driveway of first house and over stile into fields. Follow the field side down to cross a stream at the bottom, then up through woodland. At the top you pass paddocks to reach another road. Turn L along the road and in about 200yds there is a car park for Bagger Wood.

4 4¼ miles/6.8km
Back at the road and opposite, near a Thurgoland boundary stone, take the signed path into fields. Head down towards Long Wood.

Half-way down the side of this wood, the path bears L across the field to a stile and down a grassy hillside. At the bottom take the path going R, by a fence, which drops down into Crane Moor. At road turn L, then R onto Crane Moor Road. In 100yds take signed path L alongside Methodist Church into Ayton Wood. After a steady climb past the farm at Crane Greave turn R at top of fields to join a track at The Clappers on Crane Moor Top. A footpath L avoids some road walking and continues through trees up to the A629. Go L here for 100yds then cross this road with care to a stile. Ahead is the wide expanse of the Don



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

Valley. Continue straight down hillside towards a railway embankment, now the (TPT). **5 6¼ miles/10km**
Bear R on a path that climbs to join the TPT. Walk along track-bed to enter the reopened Thurgoland Tunnel. The tunnel is curved, with lighting throughout, but be aware of cyclists. Back in daylight, the TPT soon crosses the River Don on a viaduct. You could continue along the TPT straight back to Oxspring. However, this route turns R after leaving tunnel to follow a track down hillside rejoining the Thurgoland Boundary Walk near the river. Turn R through

trees by river then cut across a field, passing R and above Cheese Bottom Farm. Join farm access road to its junction with B6462 road. Cross over by Thurgoland Bridge and continue through trees parallel with river to emerge on Bower Hill near old Oxspring Bridge. Turn L down the road to the T-junction. Turn L again onto Sheffield Road to finish. **CW**

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YOUR RATING



19 NORTH YORKSHIRE HIGHCLIFF NAB

► Distance: 7½ miles/12km ► Time: 4 hours ► Grade: Moderate

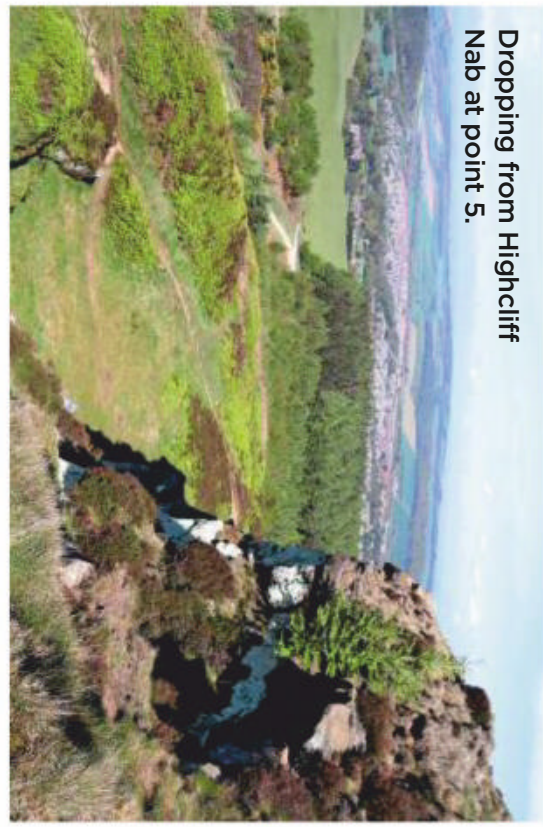


PHOTO: DENNIS KELSALL

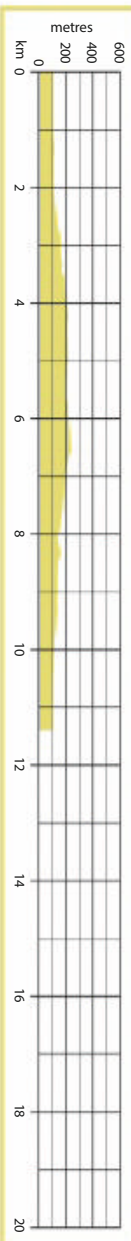
Dropping from Highcliff Nab at point 5.



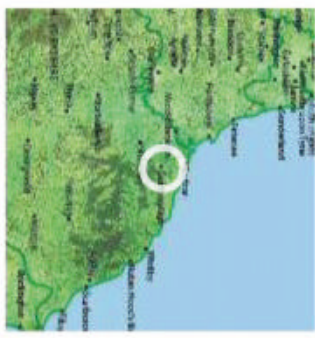
CHOSEN BY...
DENNIS KELSALL

The North Yorkshire Moors are at their most dramatic around the fringes, where the moorland abruptly falls to the broad vales below. The escarpment above Guisborough is just such a place, the rocky outcrop of Highcliff Nab giving a fantastic panorama from the coast to Captain Cook's Monument on Easby Moor and beyond. The town is attractive too, with weekly Thursday and Saturday markets and the imposing remains of a priory, endowed in 1119 by Robert de Bruce, ancestor of two Scottish kings.

1 Start
Leave St Nicholas's Church



PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Car parks in Guisborough (pay and display). Start from St Nicholas's Church, TS14 6HQ, grid ref NZ616161

Is it for me? A walk along field paths and woodland tracks with a sustained but steady climb. Suitable for active walkers.

Stiles 5

PLANNING

Nearest town Guisborough

Refreshments Choice of pubs and cafés in Guisborough

Public toilets Patten Lane car park

Public transport Various buses to Guisborough (travelinenortheast.info)

Maps OS Explorer OL26; Landranger 94

2 1¼ miles/2km
Head R up the track past Little Waterfall Farm, shortly crossing the course of a disused railway. Ignore

a fork to Old Park Farm, and continue climbing past Spa Wood. Emerging from the trees, look for a gate on the R.



NORTH EAST



20 NORTHUMBERLAND/BORDERS BLACKBROUGH HILL

► Distance: 13¾ miles/22.2km ► Time: 6 hours ► Grade: Challenging

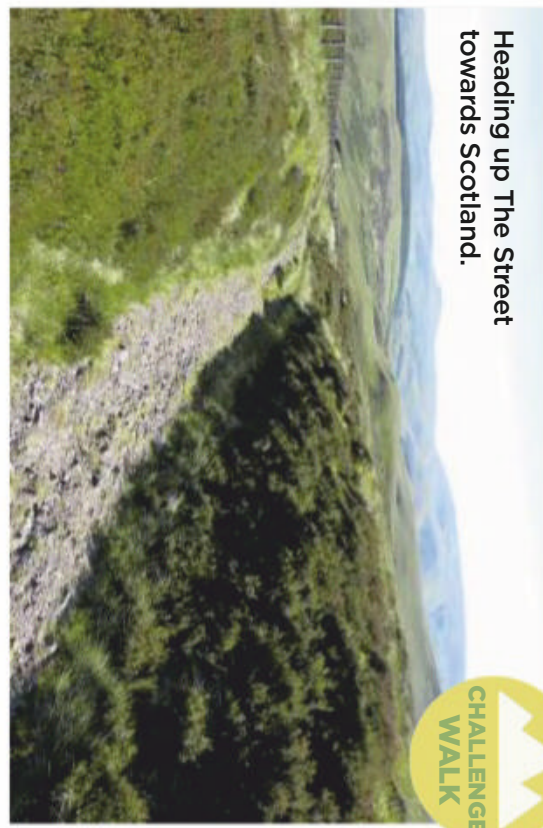


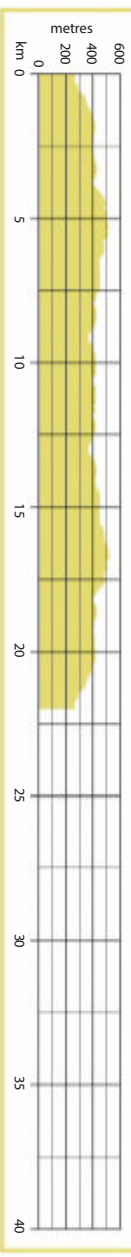
PHOTO: GEOFF HOLLAND

Heading up The Street towards Scotland.

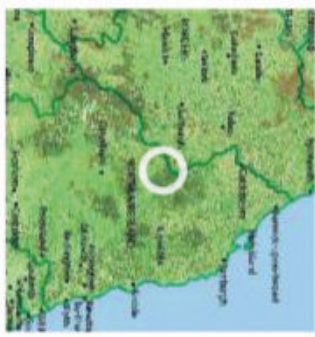


CHOSEN BY...
GEOFF HOLLAND

This delightful out-and-back walk follows the route of an ancient track called 'The Street' as it steadily climbs away from Upper Coquetdale towards the border with Scotland, while surrounded by a multitude of beautiful rolling hills and lonely valleys. Once on Scottish turf, the track gently descends towards Craik Moor and the half way point of the walk beside the fine cairn on the western flank of Berry Hills. Then, as you begin to retrace your steps back to Upper Coquetdale, a short detour will take you to the remains of the impressive hillfort on Blackbrough Hill.



PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Opposite the sheep pens beyond Windyhaugh (on roadside grass) grid ref NT861112

Is it for me? This is an undulating out-and-back walk on clear paths and tracks with some steep ascents and descents. Nav skills are useful

Stiles 9

PLANNING

Nearest town Rothbury

Refreshments Nearest are in Alwinton/Rothbury

Public toilets Nearest are in Alwinton

Public transport None

Maps OS Explorer OL16 Landranger 80

1 Start
Continue along single track road for 300 metres. After crossing Rowhope Burn (via White Bridge) go over stile on R This is 'The Street' (once referred to as 'The Clattering Path') – an ancient cross-border track from Upper Coquetdale to Hownam in the Scottish Borders. With fence on L head uphill to next small stile. To the R lies picturesque farm of Rowhope with Windy Gyle behind. Cross stile and continue with track to next stile. Cross over. Keeping fence, now on R, in close contact continue upwards, staying with track when it eventually contours Swineside Law and descends to broad col and stile. Cross over.

2 2½ miles/4km
Ahead lies the climb of Black Braes on clear track. As gradient eases cross stile. Enjoy superb view back over. Stay with rutted track eventually meeting Pennine Way at Plea



NORTH EAST

20 NORTHUMBERLAND/BORDERS BLACKBROUGH HILL

► OS Explorer map OL16 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

Knowe beside 4-fingered signpost. To R rises iconic Windy Gyle. Stay with 'The Street' and soon track becomes a sunken lane (suggesting ancient lineage) before reaching the Anglo/Scottish border at a five bar gate. Go through.

3 3½ miles/5.9km
The hills spread out northwards as you keep with track (fence now on L) passing almost immediately incongruous road sign. As you continue over fairly easy open countryside take time to soak up enormous view. Eventually, after passing linear earthworks (cross-dyke) near Green Knowe, stop at small gate on L. Detour through for peep down Muckle Sund Hope towards Heatherhope Valley. Return to 'The Street'.

4 5 miles/8km
Keep with track as it bends gently away from fence to cross Calroust Common before descending to col at head of delightfully named Singingside Burn. On the L is a gate through which you will arrive back here on the return leg. But for now, follow track heading upwards with fence on L. Cross over L fence at fence junction to join clear track heading R as far as large cairn on R side of fence.

5 6½ miles/10.5km
Now turn back keeping



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

6 12 miles/19.3km
Leave main track diagonally R to go over small rise of Bought Law descending at far end slightly L to join main track back to start. [CW](#)

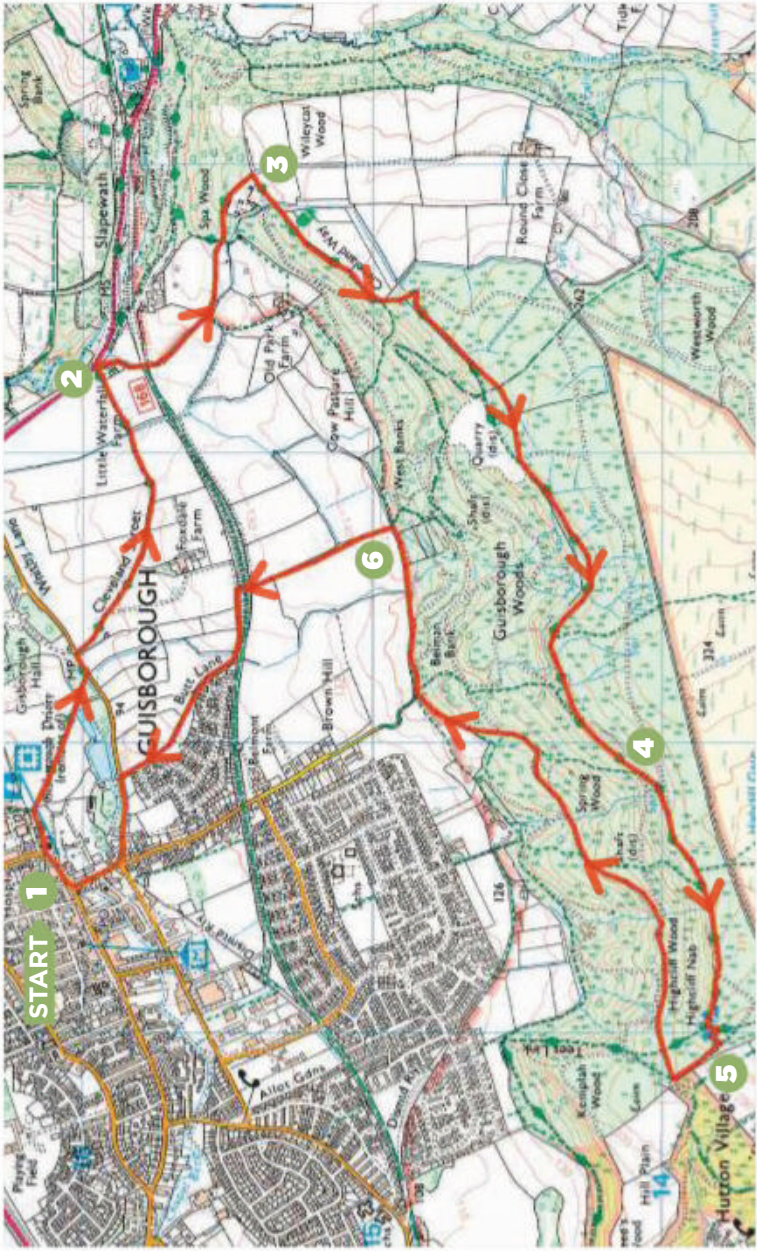
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fence to L. When track splits take R spur slightly downhill bending towards obvious Blackbrough Hill. Cross fence at convenient point continuing R to hillfort ramparts. Enjoy extensive view. Head back to fence. Turn R on track descending to gate on L (referred to in Point 4). Go through and bearing R rejoin outward track above Singingside Burn. Retrace steps along 'The Street' (passing Points 4, 3 & 2).

19 NORTH YORKSHIRE HIGHCLIFF NAB

► OS Explorer map OL26 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



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3 2 miles/3.2km
The path soon leads to another gate. Go L with the Cleveland Way along the top edge of Guisborough Forest. Large areas have been felled, giving views across a patchwork of clearance, regeneration and mature plantation that spills down the scarp. At a junction, turn sharp R, the path then curving L to continue along the edge. Ignoring junctions, keep with the main track for a little over 2km until a major fork.

4 3½ miles/5.6km
Branch L, climbing to another track. Keep ahead along the top of the ridge. Before long, as it bends L, take a narrower path off R. It follows

the edge of the escarpment onto the top of Highcliff Nab.

5 4¼ miles/6.8km
The ongoing path drops steeply off the top. Lower down, wind R beneath the impressive western cliff and then drop L to a broad track below. Follow it downhill to a T-junction. Go R. Ignoring an unusual sign for the Tees Link, keep going downhill on a broad foresters' track. Keep L at a main fork, the way falling more steeply to a junction by a stream. Carry on forward, shortly arriving at a fork. Bear L downhill once more to a junction of paths at the forest edge below Belman Bank. Walk ahead on lower path. As main path later swings R, remain by

the bottom boundary, soon reaching a junction.
6 6¼ miles/10km
L out of forest through a barrier and follow track away between fields. Beyond an old railway bridge, swing L then bear R with Butt Lane. It leads past housing estate to main road. Go L towards town, turning R and R again at successive traffic lights to return to start point. [CW](#)

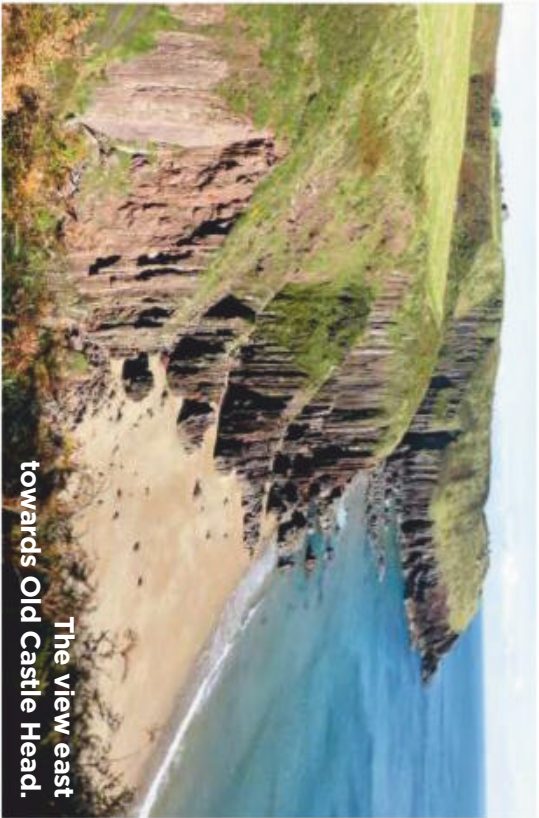
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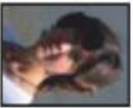
21 PEMBROKESHIRE MANORBIER

► Distance: 7¼ miles/11.5km ► Time: 3½ hours ► Grade: Moderate



The view east towards Old Castle Head.

PHOTO: FIONA BARLTROP



CHOSEN BY... FIONA BARLTROP

Situated on a beautiful stretch of the south Pembrokeshire coast, with a lovely sandy beach overlooked by a medieval castle, Manorbier is a delightful place to walk. The 12th century scholar, Gerald of Wales, who was born here, described the village as ‘the pleasantest spot in Wales’. Besides the well preserved castle there is also a fine Norman church and a restored 13th century dovecote. This route heads eastwards out to the National Trust owned Lydstep headland which affords amazing views, then returns along the coast path.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Manorbier beach car park, SA70 7SY, grid ref: SS064977
Is it for me? Much of the route follows well waymarked cliff top Pembrokeshire Coast Path – a few ups and downs. Inland stretch beyond Manorbier fairly level.
Stiles 4

PLANNING

Nearest town Tenby
Refreshments Manorbier Castle café (01834 870081); Beach Break Tearooms (01834 871709) and Castle Inn (01834 871268), Manorbier.
Public toilets Car park at start
Public transport Bus 349 from Tenby to Haverfordwest via Manorbier (Mon–Sat, hourly), First Cymru (01437 763284)
Maps OS Explorer OL36; Landranger 158



WALES



22 CEREDIGION DOETHIE VALLEY

► Distance: 7 miles/11km ► Time: 5 hours ► Grade: Moderate



Looking up Doethie Valley to Foel Fraith.

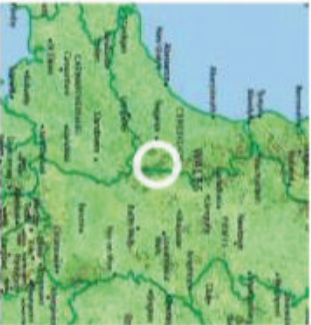
PHOTO: ROGER BUTLER



CHOSEN BY... ROGER BUTLER

Some people claim that the deep twisting Doethie is the most beautiful valley in Wales and if you're here on a sunny day it's hard to disagree. The six or seven miles of steep scenery have magically remained unspoilt – no tracks, no cars, not even a quad bike – and a narrow path follows the rushing river north from its confluence with the Tywi to its headwaters above the isolated hostel at Ty'n Cornel. This is a walk to savour, with high moorland and big skies; a deep gorge and an unexpected view you will remember for a very long time. The route follows good

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Soar y Mynydd chapel, SY25 6NP, grid ref SN784533
Is it for me? Good tracks over moorland; riverside path in valley
Stiles None

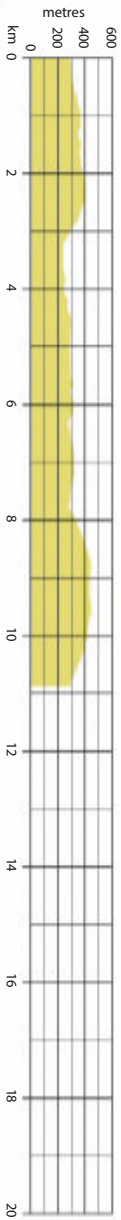
PLANNING

Nearest town Llandoverly
Refreshments Ty'n Cornel hostel – if the house is locked there are tea and coffee making facilities in the bike shed
Public toilets None, but hostel may be open
Public transport Nearest station Llandoverly, but no onward travel
Maps Explorer 187; Landranger 147

1 Start From the whitewashed chapel at Soar y Mynydd take the track heading south-east towards Llyn Brienne. After 450m pass through a gate on R and follow a bridleway over the hill, via two more gates, to the farm at Nant-llwyd.

2 1 mile/1.5km Pass to L of house and take the track rising uphill on R side of the broad valley. Go through a gate after 1km and as the track swings L, bear R (with

GRADIENT PROFILE



WALES



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fence on R) to pass through another gate. A tremendous view looking S into the defile of the Doethie valley suddenly appears, with the river snaking between steep spurs and craggy hillsides. The obvious path zig-zags steeply downhill to go through a small gate amidst patches of bracken – continue on, past a ruined building, and reach a fingerpost by mature trees near the river.

3 2 miles/3.25km

Turn R here and now follow the established path (it's fairly narrow) northwards up the valley, past streams, wooded gullies and the occasional ruined farmstead – this would have been remote place to make a living. The path takes a slight meander to climb over

a knoll and then descends to a gap in a fence near a ravine.

4 3 miles/5km

The main valley starts to widen and the rapids become a bit tamer, but keep ahead to pass through a gate. Continue over grassy slopes to another gate by a steep stony track. (If you don't want to continue to the hostel, turn R here to return to Soar y Mynydd).

5 4 miles/6.25km

Turn L, cross a footbridge by a ford and continue on the track for 750m to Ty'n Cornel. This is owned and run by the Elynnydd Wilderness Trust and, if at home, the volunteer warden will be happy to chat about the history of the hostel.

6 4½ miles/7km

Return to the footbridge at the ford that was crossed at point 5 and follow the track, which has recently been re-graded following flood damage, for 2½ miles over the hill to return to Soar y Mynydd. It's worth looking inside this small but atmospheric chapel where, at one time, worshippers used to come on horseback from the surrounding farms. [CW](#)

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church (which you could always do at the end of the walk instead) turn R down road towards car park and take first L (no through road) downhill and up to the church, St James, with its striking tower. Retrace your steps to the road/T-junction and turn R back uphill and R again onto B4585.

2 1 mile/1.7km

Almost immediately turn R at Castlemead (hotel) along a no through road. At a fork bear L at signpost (R is a private road) to reach a dwelling. Beyond this continue along a footpath keeping ahead at 4-way junction. Follow path as it turns L then R along a concrete track across a grassy area to a road (playground on L).

3 1½ miles/2.7km

Turn R and follow road towards Manorbier Camp (MoD range), which occupies the Old Castle Head headland. Joining the coast path follow road round to L, then turn R and take first L, soon on the cliff top. Church Doors (a high rock arch) cove accessed by steps is below and just to the west is Skrinkle Haven. Continue along the Coast Path to the road leading down to Lydstep Haven.

4 3 miles/4.8km

Just before the road turn R up to the NT car park. Keep ahead along the path on the northern side of the headland – good view of Caldey Island from the end of it – and make your way round (the cliffs on the

south side are popular with climbers), bearing L as you approach the car park to rejoin the Coast Path. Retrace your steps and once round the perimeter of Manorbier Camp you'll return to the cliffs again, now of old red sandstone, in contrast to the carboniferous limestone the other side of Old Castle Head. Rounding Priest's Nose note the prehistoric burial chamber, King's Quoit. From the beach a path leads inland back to the car park. [CW](#)

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

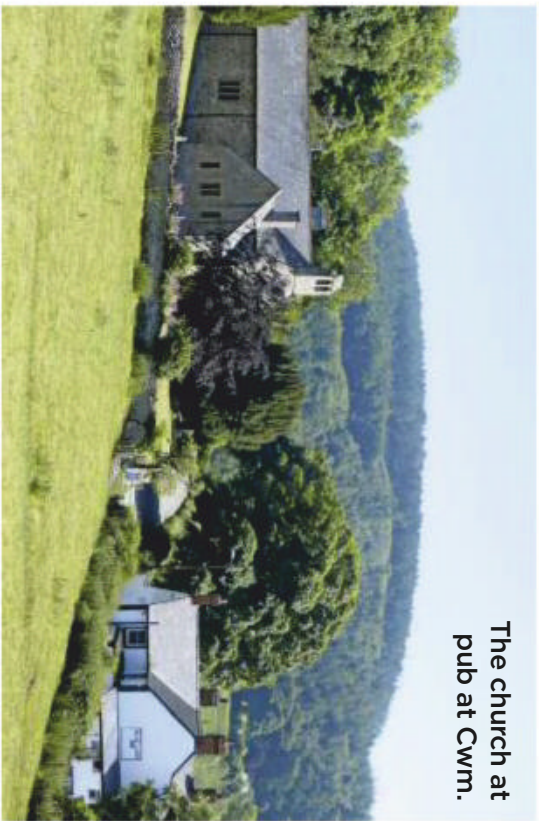
YOUR RATING





23 DENBIGHSHIRE DYSERTH

► Distance: 6¾ miles/11km ► Time: 3½ hours ► Grade: Moderate



The church at
pub at Cwm.

PHOTO: DOROTHY HAMILTON



CHOSEN BY...
**DOROTHY
HAMILTON**

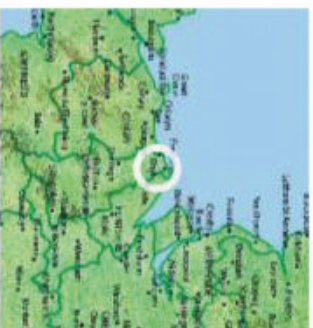
From Dyserth's 60 foot waterfall, this route heads to Maes Hiraddug, known for its butterflies, and a stroll along the former Prestatyn-Dyserth railway line. A short stretch of the Clwydian Way follows to former corn mills and the Offa's Dyke Path, which is traversed over Marian Frith with its extensive views. A woodland path descends to tranquil Cwm village and the last stage of the walk.

1 Start
From the car park, go out to the road and turn R (or walk through the churchyard) and,

just beyond the church, take narrow lane R uphill. Follow the winding lane to a junction and cross to a kissing gate. Walk through Maes Hiraddug nature reserve to a bench and information board. Go through nearby gate, cross bridge and immediately take railed stepped path down to former railway line. Turn L to a road.

2 ¾ mile/1.2km
Bear L 150m to signed track R (the Clwydian Way) and follow it to a field, then through trees on a path, with a stream L, to emerge on lane. Turn L and, when lane bends sharp L, keep ahead on a track (the Offa's Dyke Path) to a track junction. Turn R, ignore bridleway L and climb two stiles at gates across track. Before the next gate, take stile L and follow L boundary to stile. Go L then R on track signed Marian Cwm. At R bend, cross stile L and trace R side of field to stile then walk uphill,

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Car park near waterfall, Dyserth LL18 6ET, grid ref SJ056793

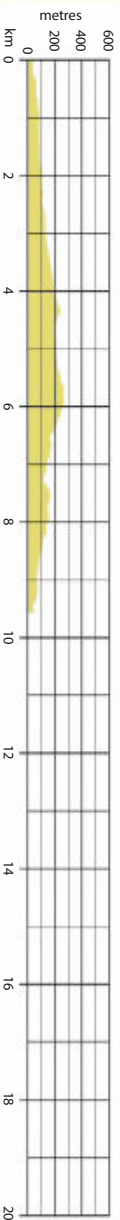
Is it for me? Mainly field and woodland paths and tracks, some ups and downs

Stiles 22

PLANNING

Nearest town Prestatyn
Refreshments Cwm village and Dyserth (pubs)
Public toilets In car park at start
Public transport Bus 35 from Prestatyn and 36 from Rhyl
Maps OS Explorer 264 or 265, Landranger 116

GRADIENT PROFILE



WALES



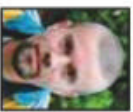
24 ARGYLL & BUTE BEN DONICH

► Distance: 4½ miles/7.5km ► Time: 4 hours ► Grade: Challenging



The Cobbler & Ben Lomond
from Ben Donich.

PHOTO: KEITH FERGUS



CHOSEN BY...
KEITH FERGUS

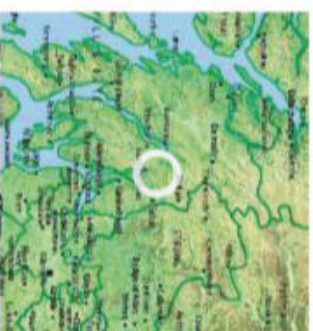
Surrounded by some of the most popular mountains in the Southern Highlands, Ben Donich is somewhat pushed into the background when compared its neighbouring peaks. And although seemingly retiring in nature, Ben Donich is actually a much more rugged mountain than first impressions suggest. Its higher slopes are studded with great crags – one of which requires a little scrambling – with a panorama that is perhaps the finest in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

1 Start
From the car park follow

a wide track south, enjoying fine view of The Cobbler, into Gleann Mor and Argyll Forest Park. Take track signposted 'Hill Access to Ben Donich'. After approximately 400m turn L onto waymarked path that begins to rise steadily above Gleann Mor.

2 ½ mile/0.75km
The path zigzags uphill, giving great views of Beinn Luibhean. Once through gate path, which can be muddy at points, climbs steeply south-southwest up open hillside onto the northern shoulder of Ben Donich. Here sumptuous views begin to open out to Beinn an Lochain and along Gleann Mor to Loch Fyne. Ridge

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Gleann Mor Forestry Commission Car Park, 0.5km southwest of the Rest and Be Thankful near Arrochar, G83 7AR, grid ref NN228069

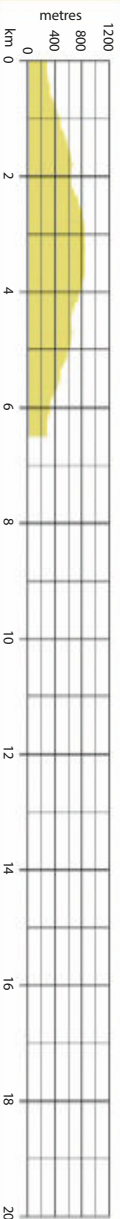
Is it for me? Out-and-back. Good paths along route, with one short scramble. Steep gradients

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Arrochar
Refreshments The Village Inn, Arrochar (Tel: 01301 702279)
Public toilets None on route
Public transport Buses from Glasgow-Cambeltown (926), Glasgow-Oban (976) and Helensburgh-Carrick Castle (302) to Rest and Be Thankful
Maps OS Explorer OL39; Landranger 56

GRADIENT PROFILE



SCOTLAND

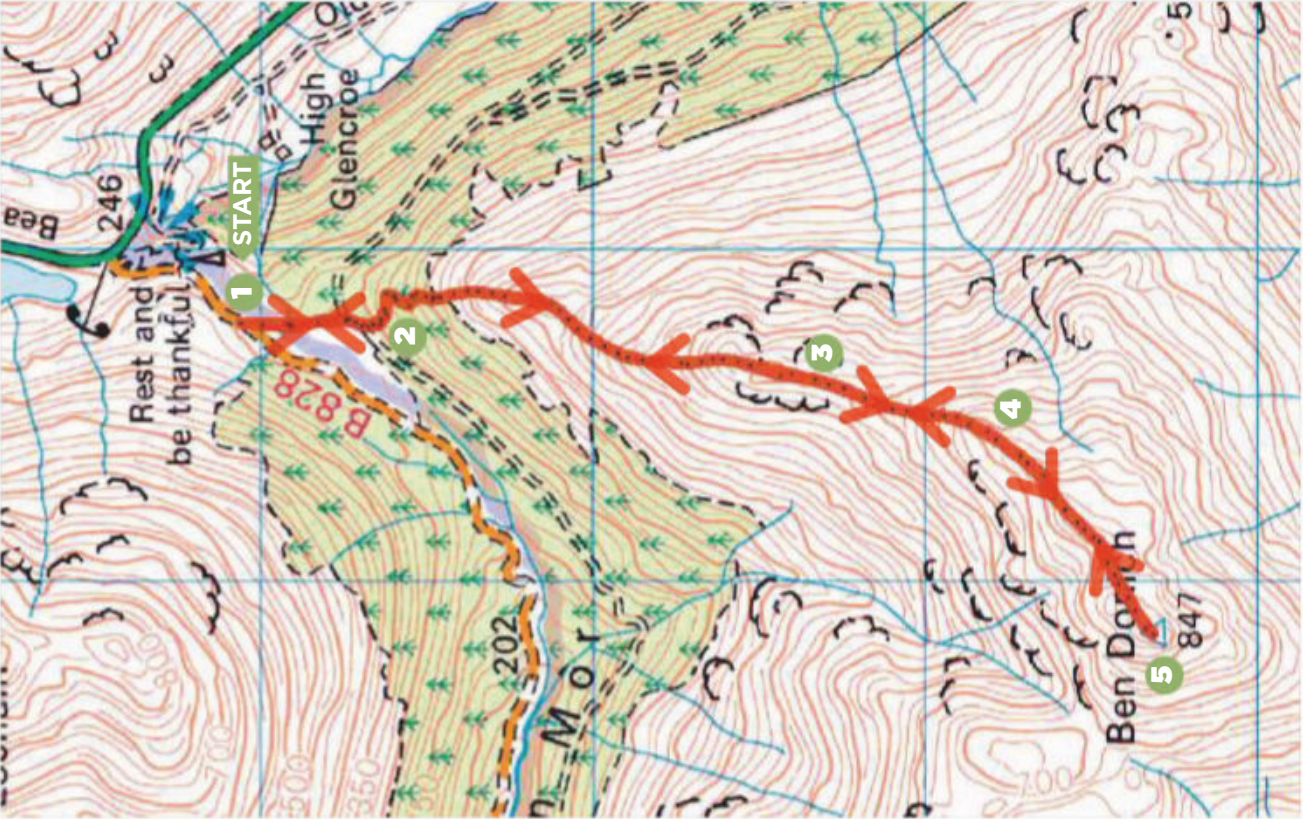
24 ARGYLL & BUTE BEN DONICH

► OS Explorer map OL39 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

consists of series of steep undulations, where height is gained quickly, with path always clear.

3 1¼ miles/2km Eventually flatter section is reached and here rugged slopes of Ben Donich's upper tier appear with the steep crags of Coire Culach dropping from summit ridge. Soon another steady climb rises towards the summit with the ascent picking its way through craggy outcrops. There are several large, deep crevasses dotted across slopes where care should be taken. It's best to stick to path. Walk then reaches steep crag, which has drop of around 15 feet. With a little care and attention descent down path and crag causes no real issues but hands and feet will be required – it also has to be climbed on return journey.

4 1½ miles/2.5km Path continues above steepish slopes before it rises to L of large craggy outcrop. Beyond this summit finally comes in to view with simple, gradual climb gaining 847m trig point. Summit plateau is broad, allowing for exploration, with breathtaking views in every direction, including Arran, Jura, Islay and Mull, Ben Cruachan and Ben Lui as well as nearby peaks such as The Cobbler and Ben Lomond.



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

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DON'T MISS...

In Cwm churchyard is the hooded tomb of Grace Griffith who died in 1642. It is Grade II listed, being a fine example of this type of monument.

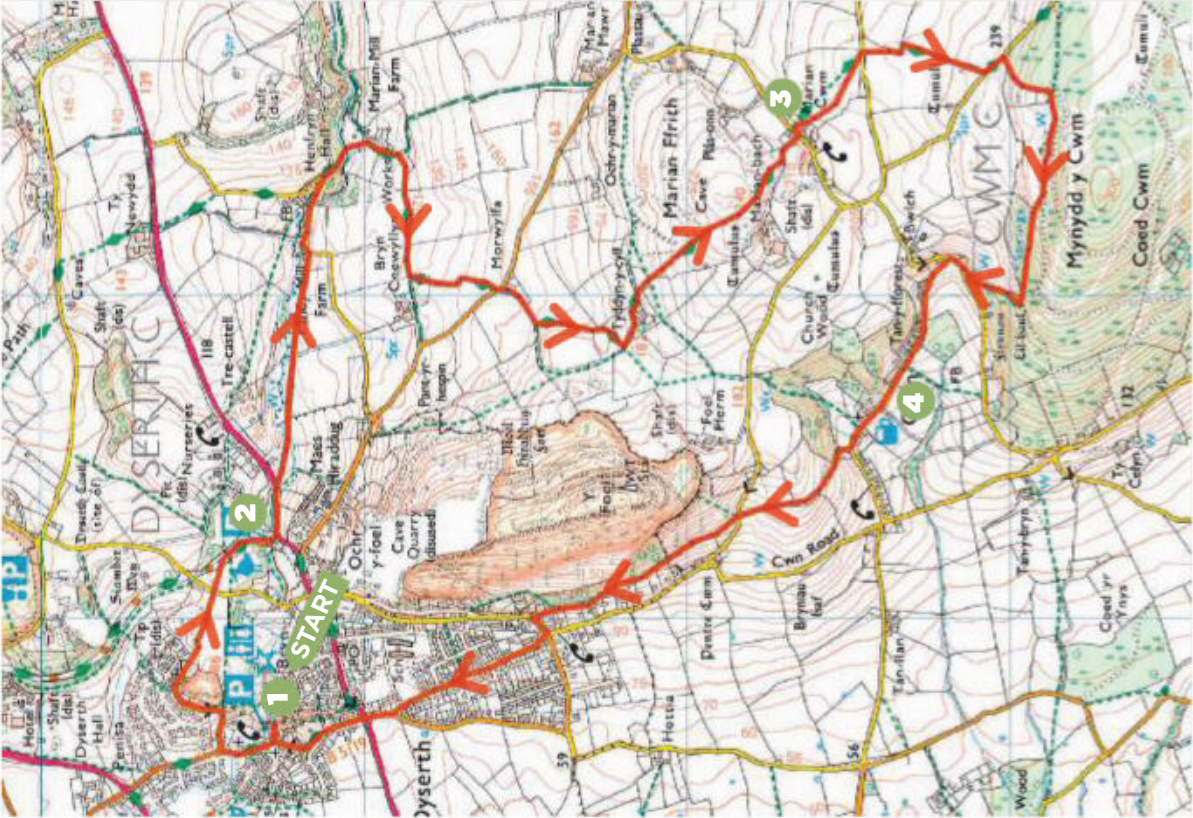
grassy mound R , to track. Turn L, pass Tyddyn-y-cyll and veer R to stile at gate. Walk up R side of field to footpath signpost and keep ahead over the hill to lane at Marian Cwm.

3 3¾ miles/5.3km Turn L and soon go R through kissing-gate and walk through fields to lane. Cross directly to stile and go through more fields to lane. Bear L a few paces then leave the Offa's Dyke Path by going R on track at footpath signpost. Walk uphill, ignore stile L and track L. Just before the track drops to a building, leave it by going L on to a grassy bank and follow an indistinct path to stile. Emerge on grassy track and keep ahead to stile at edge of forest. Continue on clear path along partly felled hillside, eventually turning sharp R to make a steep descent to lane. Turn R, then L into Cwm village.

4 5 miles/8.3km Pass church R, ignore footpath R, pass pub L and,

23 DENBIGHSHIRE DYSERTH

► OS Explorer map 264 or 265 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop



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before house take footpath R through field to stile at the edge of the wood. Go L and uphill to stile and continue uphill to stile L and continue L side of old field boundary to lane. Cross to kissing-gate and follow path along side of hill and through a wood to kissing-gate. Go ahead, turn L then R and over a

crossroads to Dyserth waterfall and the start of the walk. 

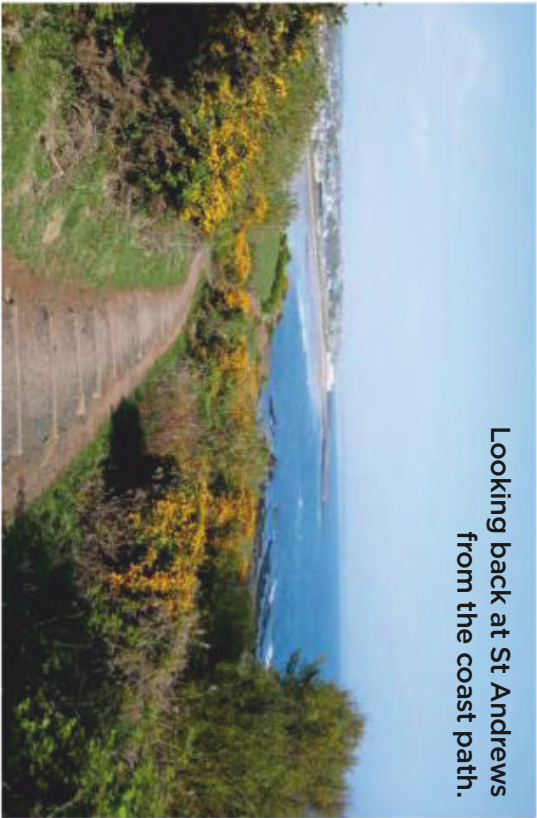


25 FIFE ST ANDREWS TO KINGSBARN

► Distance: 10 miles/16km ► Time: 5 hours ► Grade: Challenging



SCOTLAND



Looking back at St Andrews from the coast path.

PHOTO: PHOEBE TAPLIN



**CHOSEN BY...
PHOEBE TAPLIN**
From the grandeur of St Andrews to the enchanted gardens at Cambo, this is a magical walk. It combines one of the most beautiful sections of the 117-mile Fife Coastal Path, along a series of contrasting bays, with two pretty river valleys.

1 Start
From the Alexandra Place bus stop on City Road in St Andrews, walk a few steps south along the road and turn L through 16th century West Port. Walk straight along South Street to reach cathedral. Turn L in front of cathedral and R into narrow lane. Emerging

near sea, turn L a little way for views over castle before returning along Fife Coastal Path. Keep walking, following blue-yellow-green markers, with sea always on L.

2 1 mile/1.6km
Reaching harbour, turn R and then L over lift bridge. Continue along coastal path, passing university's new Marine Research building and walking beside East Sands. Keep on past chalets and fork R up steps through bushes. Follow blue, yellow and green markers to reach the dramatic Rock and Spindle formations. From here, the path crosses two beaches and involves climbing over rocks (at highest tide, wait for water to retreat).

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

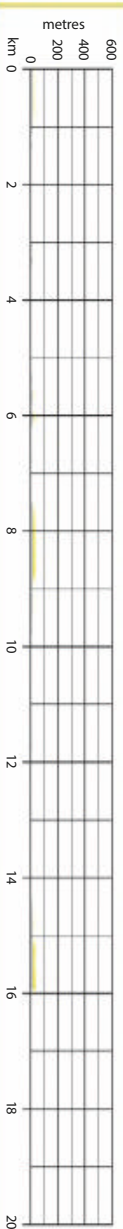
Start Alexandra Place bus stop on City Road, St Andrews (close to bus station)/Park & Ride is nearby. KY16 9XG, grid ref NO50516
Is it for me? Linear route with some rough sections across beaches and one tidal stretch over rocks. Quite a few ups and downs, but not extreme.
Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town St Andrews
Refreshments Choice at start; Seasonal kiosk in Kingsbarns car park. Cambo café near end
Public toilets St Andrews, Kingsbarns Golf Course.
Public transport Bus 95 joins Kingsbarns and St Andrews hourly. Several buses run to St Andrews from Edinburgh and elsewhere, including X58
Maps OS Explorer 371; Landranger 59

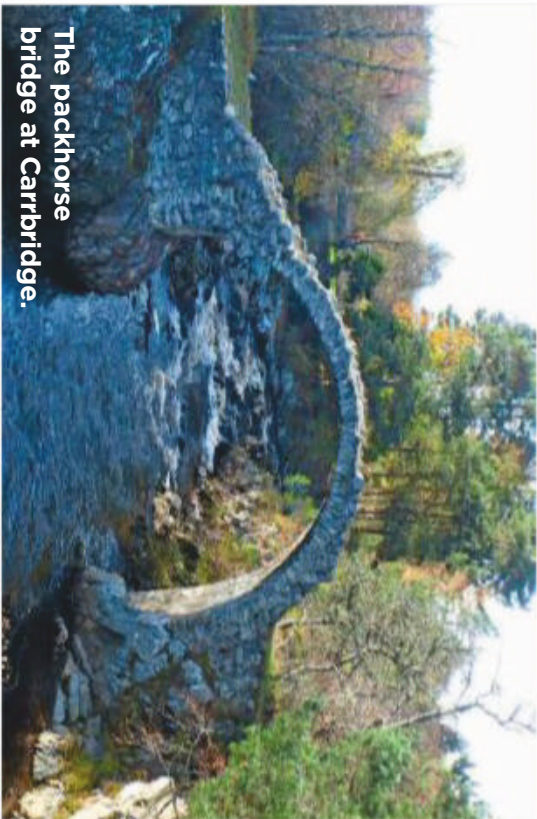


GRADIENT PROFILE



26 HIGHLAND CARRBRIDGE

► Distance: 6½ miles/10 km ► Time: 2-3 hours ► Grade: Moderate



The packhorse bridge at Carrbridge.

PHOTO: JENNY GILLIES



**CHOSEN BY...
JENNY GILLIES**
This circular walk takes in the famous packhorse bridge, peaceful pine woods and a view of the magnificent Cairngorm Mountains. Mainly on good paths and forestry tracks around the village of Carrbridge, this half day walk gives a gentle taste of the Speyside countryside.

1 Start
From the main car park in Carrbridge turn R to walk along the main street and over the road-bridge that overlooks the packhorse bridge. Cross the road and turn L just over the bridge to follow the gravel footpath

alongside the river and follow it over a suspension bridge.

2 ¾ mile/1.2km
The path reaches a track, cross over this and onto a path that runs alongside a field. Turn L along the road when you reach it and, after a wooden chalet on the R follow a green sign R into the wood. Bear L to go into the wood at first, then take R branch at first large junction. At next junction, turn R again signed Eilan Wood walk.

3 1½ miles/2.6km
Keep on the main track for a time. When the track splits again, turn R, this time following the sign for 'Railway Walk'. The path bends L to run alongside the railway. Carry

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Large car park in Carrbridge at grid ref NH907227
Is it for me? Mainly paths and tracks but some short sections of rough or boggy ground
Stiles 1

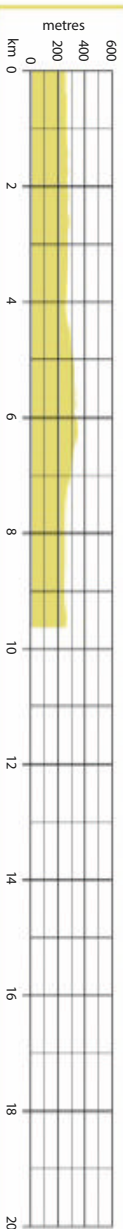
PLANNING

Nearest town Carrbridge
Refreshments Cafes and hotels along with a petrol station and shop
Public toilets At start
Public transport Trains from Inverness and Glasgow/Edinburgh stop at Carrbridge. Several local bus services from Grantown on Spey and Aviemore
Maps OS Explorer 57; Landranger 36

alongside the railway straight past a signpost then follow the path as it bends L and becomes a larger track before reaching the main road.



GRADIENT PROFILE



26 HIGHLAND CARRBRIDGE

► OS Explorer map 57 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

DON'T MISS...



If you're walking with children, the draw of the Landmark Forest Adventure Park in Carrbridge will keep them trekking round the walk. With tree-top trails, water slides and a runaway train rollercoaster amongst the forest there's something for kids of every age! landmarkpark.co.uk

4 2½ miles/4km

Turn R to walk alongside the road, crossing it when indicated to enter the wood on the other side. At the next junction head up the hill on a forest track.

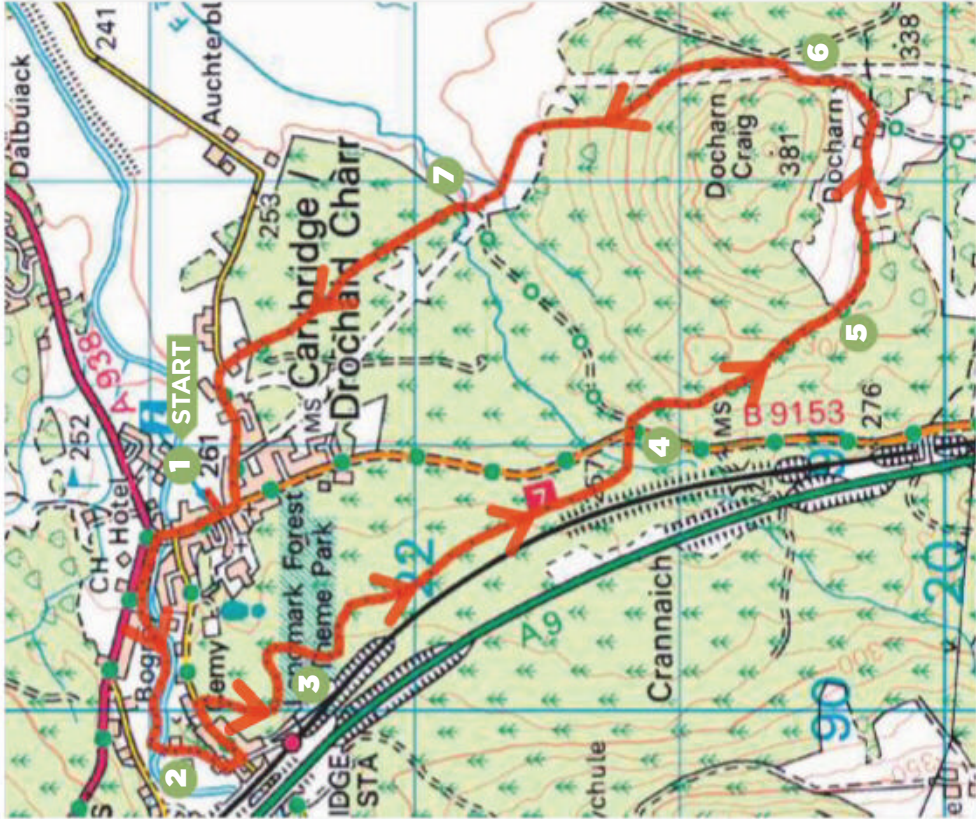
5 3½ miles/5.3km

A gate marks the edge of the forest and, once through this, the track passes between fields and through a couple more gates. After ½ mile Docharn Farm is reached and beyond the buildings turn L to follow a faint grassy track, keeping the fence on your L.

6 4 miles/6.4km

Enter the pine forest through a gate and at the next large junction take care to choose the L hand track. This is indistinct at first

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

☐

☐

☐

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7 5 miles/8km

Continue straight along the path, passing through a gate at the far end of the forest. Turn L when the track meets a minor road, the main road is reached after 1/3 mile. Turn R to return to the start of the walk. [CW](#)

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25 FIFE ST ANDREWS TO KINGSBARN

► OS Explorer map 371 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

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5 6½ miles/10km

Continue past ruined cottage and on around headland, with sections along beach, eventually reaching golf links. Climb stone steps and keep going on track beside golf course and through car park.

6 8¼ miles/13.25km

Keep straight beside golf course towards trees ahead. Follow Coastal Path sign, R beside trees. Follow waymark L into wood and turn R (leaving main coastal path) into Cambo Estate, signed Alternative Route. Keep stream on L and cross second bridge. Continue with stream now on R. Follow signed path L through arch.

7 9½ miles/15.25km

Continue along streamside

3 3½ miles/5.6km

Follow waymarks R up through tunnel of blackthorn bushes. Continue along clifftop path beside golf course and winding L back down to shore again. Keep going along coast, past Buddo Rock, an impressive sandstone stack. Soon after Buddo Rock, follow sign inland along edge of field.

4 5 miles/8km

At end of path, turn L onto lane, sharp L past barns and then R (still following signs) along track. Keep straight at junction onto surfaced road and follow it downhill. Bear R along metal fence above river. Cross footbridge and turn L with river below on L. Follow path through valley back to sea and turn R along coast again.

path following signs for “all walkers”, detouring R over wooden bridge by buildings if you want to visit Cambo gardens and/or café. Follow path over one more bridge and turn L on path signed Kingsbarns. Keep straight past sign for distillery (unless you want a detour), cross over driveway and continue through woods to main gate. Bus stops are close by: cross road to return to St Andrews; stay on near side for Edinburgh. [CW](#)

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27 CUMBRIA HINDSCARTH & ROBINSON

► Distance: 6¾ miles/10.9km ► Time: 4-5 hours ► Grade: Challenging



NORTH WEST

A HIGH LOOP IN THE LAKES



CHOSEN BY...

JAMES FORREST

The classic Newlands Horseshoe – a circuit of Newlands Beck that sticks to the ridges and takes in the tops of Cat Bells, Maiden Moor, High Spy, Dale Head, Hindscarth and Robinson – has a reputation as one of

Lakeland's most scenic walks. But is it the best horseshoe hike in the Newlands fells? This lesser-known, high-level loop of Scope Beck, ticking off the summits of Hindscarth and Robinson, offers similarly thrilling ridge walking. It's a route that might just tempt you away from the horseshoe.

Views over Derwentwater on the descent of Robinson.



PHOTO: JAMES FORREST



27 CUMBRIA HINDSCARTH & ROBINSON

► OS Explorer map OL4 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

1 Start

Cross the bridge over Newlands Beck and turn L towards Newlands Church. But just before reaching the quaint church turn L to head south down a track leading to Low Snab Farm. Cross a stream and a cattle grid and continue on what has now become a concreted drive to the white farm buildings. Pass through the farm buildings to a gate.

2 ½ mile/1km

Go through the gate and bear R towards spoil heaps. Turn R again to ascend north towards the nose of the ridge, following a fence. Veer north-west and, where the fence becomes a dry stone wall, turn L to climb steeply south-west. Ascend the ridge on a good, clear path and negotiate a few easy sections

of rocky scrambling to arrive at the top of Scope End.

3 1¼ miles/2km

Continue to climb south-west on the narrow ridge, which has a clear trod, to Red Knott and High Crag, before veering south on an all-too-brief flatter section to the base of the Hindscarth climb. Ascend the steep, wider path ahead to reach a prominent wind shelter cairn on the edge of Hindscarth. Beyond is flatter terrain and a gentle climb to the 727m summit of Hindscarth.

4 2½ miles/4.1km

Descend south on the shoulder for 300m and veer south-west and then west on a path that cuts a corner, dropping down to Littledale Edge. Ascend gently along a fence, sticking safely to the R

of Robinson Crag and Hackney Holes, before turning north to the 737m top of Robinson, the highest point of this route.

5 4 miles/6.4km

Descend north-east for 900m on a relatively clear path. Ignore the footpath descending east to Scope Beck and instead aim for the narrowing, dramatic ridge of Blea Crag to complete the high-level horseshoe. The descent includes small sections of scrambling over craggy steps that may require you to use your hands, but no major challenges are presented. Continue north-north-east along High Snab Bank towards the end of the ridge.

6 5¾ miles/9.1km

Turn R to descend east on a steep, grassy line through bracken and gorse. The steep path, which runs next to a small plantation, arrives at a track. Turn L aiming north-east, go through two gates and emerge at the cottages at the contradictorily-named Low High Snab. Continue north-east and then east along the road to Newlands Church before turning R, crossing Chapel Bridge and arriving back at the car park. **CW**



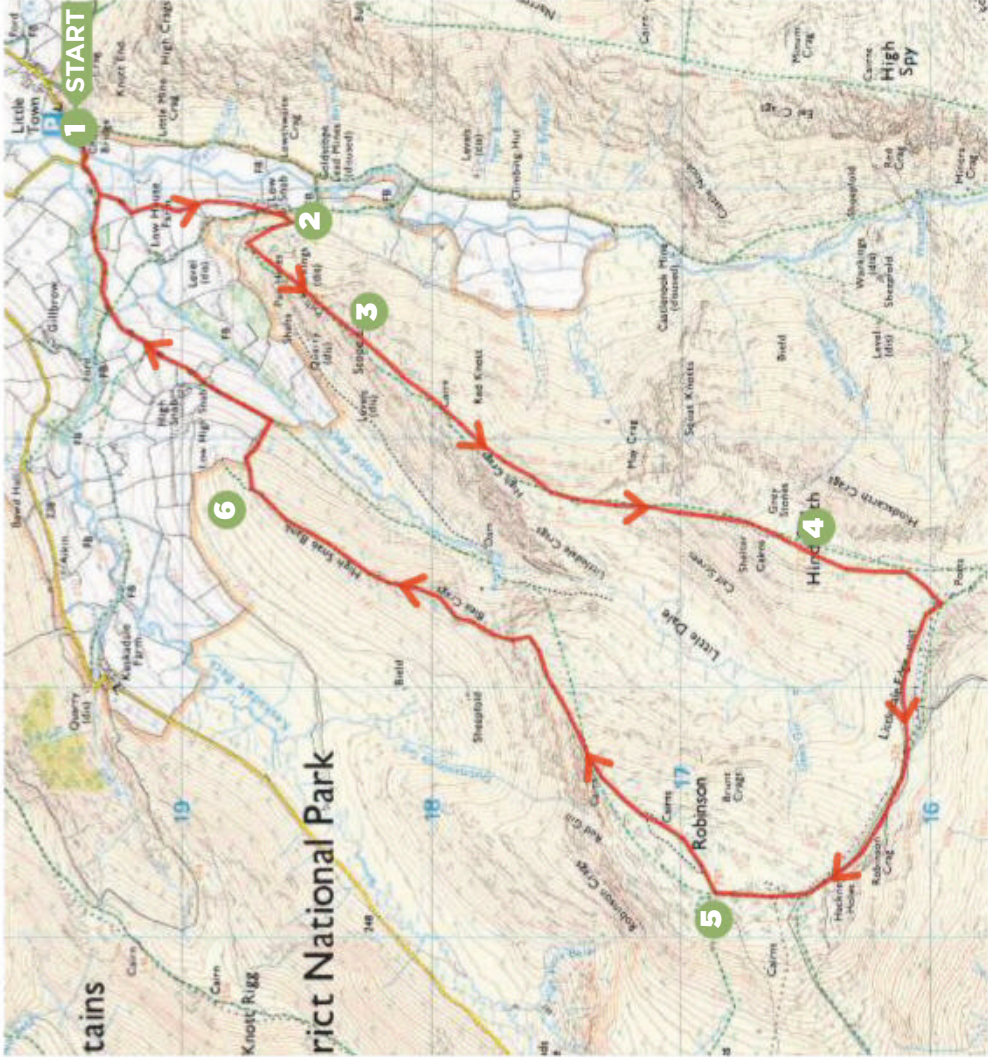
The ascent of Littledale Edge.

PHOTO: JAMES FORREST



Newlands Church, at the end of the walk.

PHOTO: JAMES FORREST



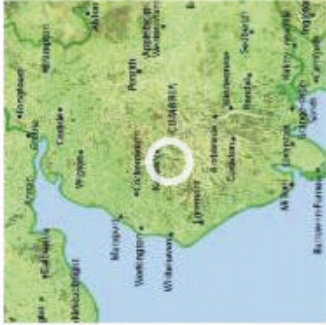
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Country Walking

SPRING 2020

CLASSIC WALK

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking

The small car park at Chapel Bridge, CA12 5TU, grid ref NY231193

Is it for me? A high-level ridge walk on good fell paths, with over 3000ft of ascent and a few short sections of easy scrambling

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Keswick

Refreshments Hobcartons

Tea Room, Braithwaite (Tel: 017687 78220)

Public toilets

Braithwaite or Keswick

Public transport X5

Penrith to Workington bus stops at Braithwaite, 3 miles from start

(stagecoachbus.com)

Maps OS Explorer OL4;

Landranger 90

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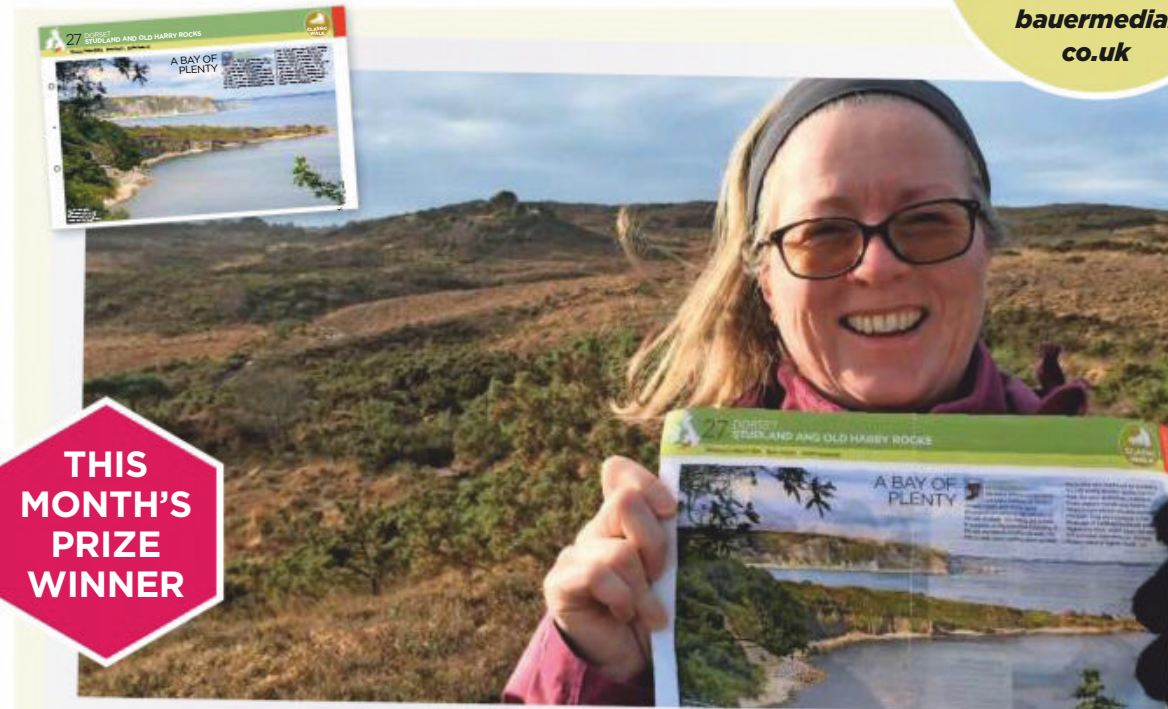
TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING

OUR ROUTES YOUR WALKS

Tackled one of the routes published in *Country Walking*? Send us a picture and a few words on your experience: you could win a fantastic prize from Ordnance Survey.

Email your picture, along with a few words about the walk and your contact details to **cwroutes@bauermedia.co.uk**



STUDLAND & OLD HARRY ROCKS, Route 27, July 2019

We walked from South Beach car park at Studland through St Nicholas' churchyard heading for Godlingston Heath, which was extremely muddy due to all the rain. From here we walked up to the **Agglestone; 400 tons of sandstone**. The view from here was spectacular. **Amanda Taft, Email**



PEWSEY DOWNS, Route 04, February 2020

My husband and I did this beautiful walk today in fabulous weather. He is not a keen walker but I managed to convince him to do the nearly 4 miles with our dog. All was well apart from being muddy in strange places!

A beautiful walk with amazing views.
Pam Garland, Email

ILKLEY TO MENSTON, Route 19, February 2020

It was incredibly windy along the moors but what an experience. I was so proud I was able to do it and see the amazing views along the way! **Certainly different from the hustle and bustle in Leeds City Centre!** Photography is a passion of mine, and it's been perfect to incorporate this on my walks. Can't wait to do more!

Polly Rodgers, Leeds



SIMONSIDE & LORDENSHAW FORT, Route 21, February 2020

Ruth Taylor and I planned on doing Simonside then the new issue arrived with this walk. Must have been fate. The route was straightforward to follow and it was **a lovely walk - windy at the top but beautiful views**. I think Ruth and I agreed that in the 'Is it for me?' section it says "seldom steep", but we found it steep. Maybe it was our age? **Helen Smith, Email**



CANNON HALL COUNTRY PARK, Route 18, January 2020

This is only a 15-minute drive from my daughter Hope's home so we decided to try it. The guide notes were terrific, although **we did lose our way a little** once we got to the farm, which is no longer part of the estate, and had to clamber over a barbed wire fence and through a bramble hedge to get back on route. It was also very muddy, it being early January, but a bacon buttie and cup of coffee at the Pavilion café was a welcome end to a very enjoyable walk.

Craig Bourne & Hope Robinson, Leeds



HIGH STREET, Route 18, September 2019

Amazing, tough in places and **never thought I would do rock scrambling, and climbing on hands and knees**. May manage Striding Edge next year! Views from the top were brilliant. I could see Morecambe Bay, Pennines and Helvellyn. **Alison Jackson, Email**

Win a personalised OS map!

The sender of our favourite **Our Routes Your Walks** photo will get to focus on their favourite area by winning a custom-made map worth £16.99, courtesy of **Ordnance Survey**. For more details, or to buy your own



Footnotes

Meanderings we couldn't fit into the issue, but which seemed terribly important at the time...



Philip Thomas,
Features
writer

Miles walked this month: 146

Splosh! Somewhere in the murk about 20 yards ahead of me, something cat-sized had taken a dunk. Not far from my house there's a backwater of the River

Nene where I sometimes walk to **clear my head. But this evening I was not alone.**

A tawny owl was twit-twooing somewhere close by as I crept forward with my headtorch fixed on the spot where I'd heard the noise. From the dark water, a pair of eyes met the light. But who they belonged to, I couldn't make out. As I moved closer, a second pair appeared; then a third and a fourth. I glimpsed a slick back as one of the newcomers bobbed towards me then dived again, resurfacing downstream.

Extinguishing my torch I waited on the bridge and peered into the moonlit water. Then it happened. An otter cartwheeling just yards from my face; all glossy and lithe-tailed. Sheer magic. A bevy of otters was corralling fish and I'd chanced upon their nocturnal feast. I left them to it, feeling honoured.

Note to self: Never take the nature on your doorstep for granted.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSOCK



Sarah Ryan,
Gear
tester

Miles walked this month: 102

"Patter, patter," said the rain at the window. "Hooooo-uuuuu-ooooo!" said the wind as it ran another lap around the house.

"Absolutely no way," said my cosy little self, bundled in a duvet it had taken a whole **night of sleep to warm. And yet.** The know-it-all whisper, telling me I'd enjoy it if I went out, the morning coffee would taste better and the fire burn hotter, somehow drowned them out. It got me dressed and out the door where the wind wasn't that cold, actually, and the rain blew away across the valley. Uphill took me to a park overlooking the city and big blue clouds moving through a yellow sky. A robin sang his defensive little heart out and a blackbird chucked leaves around under a shrub. The fresh wind brought sparkles to my eyes and warmth to my cheeks. That little voice was right. This was better.

Note to self: Get up, go on, get up. It's worth it, I promise.



*Stay inside,
all warm
and cosy?
No way!*



Tim Unwin,
Production
Editor

Miles walked this month: 49

Hidden in plane sight

Another beautiful beach walk (check out that sunset above), another fascinating find. Man-made this time, aluminium, well engineered and about 40x20cm. I was almost certain it was aircraft wreckage...

A bit of online research helped me identify a Bristol Aeroplane Company inspection stamp, so I passed the info across to the Aircraft Restoration Company at Duxford who told me what it was. It's a cylinder baffle plate from a Bristol Mercury engine. Well, of course...

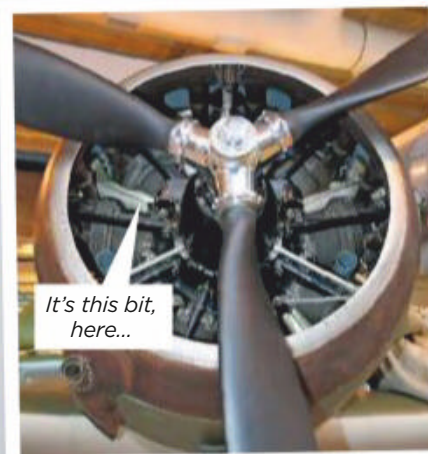


PHOTO: WIKICOMMONS

It's unlikely I'll be able to identify the specific plane it came from (a Blenheim, or a Lysander?), but I always love it when I pick up something interesting on a walk and learn something new from it.

Note to self: What's going to be the next bit of treasure to wash up on one of my beach walks?

PROGRESS TRACKER



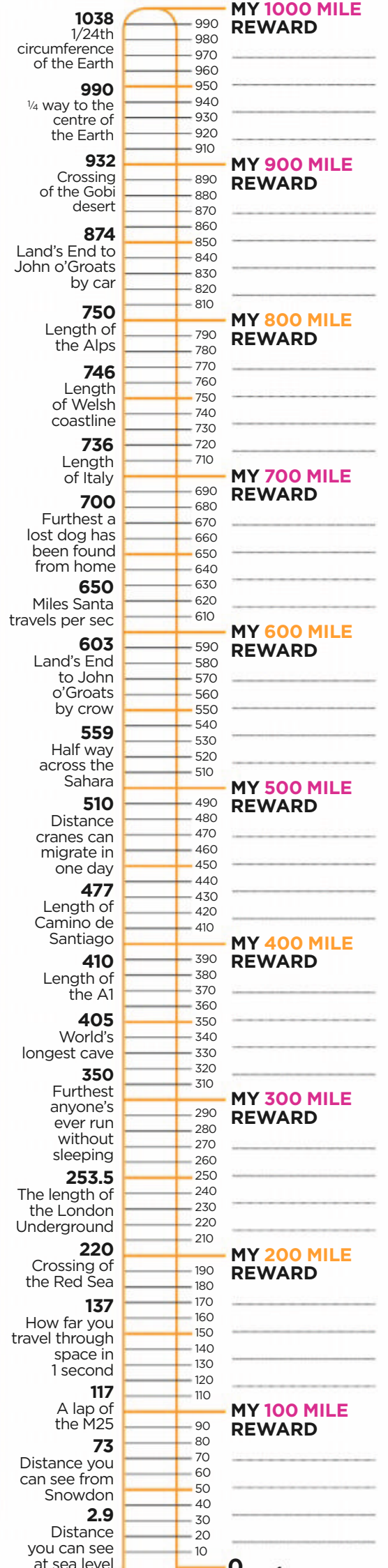
Average 2.74 miles a day over 52 weeks from when you start. Set yourself some enticing rewards in the column on the right and don't worry about the odd skipped day. And above all enjoy! Print me: walk1000miles.co.uk/downloadchart (the code is 8208 – please don't share it).

Name _____

Start date ____/____/____ End date ____/____/____

1000 MILES!
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	WEEKLY TOTAL	4 WEEK TOTAL
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									RUNNING TOTAL
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51									RUNNING TOTAL
52									



52 WEEK TOTAL **MILES!**

Bridgedale

SCARPA

Ordnance Survey

Rohan

deuter

FUJIFILM

Slimming

Photo



Fill me in!