

30 Mile Circular Walk around Bromsgrove

Among the papers I inherited from the previous footpath secretary, Mervyn Martin, were the outlines of several circular walks around Bromsgrove. With the 30-year celebration approaching it seemed a good idea to see if one such walk, that of 30 miles would be feasible. With the multitude of footpaths around Bromsgrove many different combinations are possible, so the walk as described could have many variations. The walk utilises footpaths, bridleways, canal towpaths and the minimum of roads, passing through varied countryside, although unfortunately, it has to cross several main roads, the M5 and M42 motorways and the railway line.

Since there is now greater emphasis on using public transport whenever possible the walk is set out in four sections of approximately 7.5 miles, each section being accessible at both ends by bus services.

The four sections are Wychbold to Chaddesley Corbett, Chaddesley Corbett to Lydiate Ash, Lydiate Ash to Tardebigge and Tardebigge to Wychbold. The only reason for ending a circular walk at Wychbold is the proximity of Webbs Garden Centre for a well-earned celebratory afternoon tea!

The walk is on three Explorer Maps, No.204 Worcester & Droitwich, No 219 Wolverhampton and Dudley and No.220 Birmingham & Redditch. The short section on this last map is straightforward and with the lucid description of the route it is not necessary to have this map!

Robin Woodbury Footpath Secretary

On weekdays buses run along the A38, both north and south at ½ hourly intervals, there is also a bus to and from Redditch every ½ hour. There is an hourly service along the Kidderminster Road. There is a restricted service on Sundays in all directions.
Please check timetables

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Wychbold to Chaddesley Corbett

If you have just finished the previous section cross the road and go left a short distance to the drive to Little Gains Farm on your right. If you have used the bus from Bromsgrove cross the road and go right to the farm drive on your left

Just past the first gate in the drive take a metal stile on the left by the electricity pole and bear right to a wooden fence with a crossing point in it, carry on to a stile in the corner and cross a small field to another stile. Over this stile go left to a stile into a wooded area by the River Salwarpe and turn right through the trees to a stile and underpass beneath the MS. Turn right at the lane and carry on past Kingsland Hill Farm to Coley Pitts Farm. (It is possible to miss this lane walking by going right to Kingsland Hill Farm, passing through the buildings and going left down the fields to a track which leads behind Coley Pitts Farm to the lane. Unless conditions have changed from the time of writing this is unpleasant and muddy with two loose gates and a fence to climb)

Take the footpath on the left opposite Coley Pitts Farm and with hedge on the right pass a stile and carry on to a stile in the hedge on the right, cross this and then go through the gap on the left. Turn right for a short distance and then turn left to follow the edge of the field up the slope to a stile in the corner, cross and go alongside the hedge to a stile and steps down to a lane.

Turn left and then take footpath at stile up a slope on the right. Bear left across the field to a metal gate. Pass through this and the second one to go slightly left to a stile. Go up the hill to a stile (electric fence with warning and protection at time of writing) and ahead to another stile and electric fence. Carry on with the hedge on the left to a gate on the left. Go through here and carry on to cross a stile on the right, cross the field and follow the hedge on the left to the drive to Radnall Farm. (The footpath should go straight on to The Hill Farm, but at the time of writing there is no sign of it. It should go through the paddock and follow the hedge on the right to the farm. If this has been opened up then follow it, if not continue as below)

Turn left down the drive and then right at Crown Lane and again right into Elmbridge Road After 300yds go right at a signpost through a gateway and follow the hedge on the right to the corner. Turn left, following the field edge below the power cables to turn right through another gap just before a wooded area. Follow the hedge to a somewhat overgrown and damaged stile in the corner into The Hill Farm. (This is the point where the obstructed footpath should also go into the farm) Go ahead between the houses and the farm buildings and turn left immediately past the barn on the left into a track, which leads to a gate into a narrow field. Carry on climbing a gate on the left and then going right to the corner and left a few yards to a stile. Over this stile carry on to the next stile and then turn right to follow a hedge

through a plantation and up a slope to a fenced area. (The footpath continues along the fenced path next to the hedge, but as this is usually badly overgrown most walkers bear left and follow the fence to the lane via the small gate.)

At the lane turn left for about 1/4 mile to a sign-posted stile on the right just past the other end of the plantation previously referred to. The top bar of this stile lifts up for easier access, but be careful not to let it drop on your head or fingers. Follow the hedge on the right to a gateway and then bear

to the left of the house ahead, to another stile with a lifting top bar. Turn right along the lane for another 1/2 mile to a stile on the right just past a bridge. Over this double stile bear slightly left uphill until the hedge around the house comes into view. Dropping down pass between the hedge and a solitary tree, continuing across the field past two isolated trees and then bearing slightly left in the general direction of the pylon aim for a gate in the corner where a post with waymarks can be seen. Go through and turn right following the hedge to another gate and stile. Through this gate, head across the next field, (moving on to map 220), to a corner of the hedge, in line with another pylon. At the corner turn left away from Purshull Hall to pass between the pond and hedge and carry on to a footbridge. Go on through a boggy section, passing a small gate on the left to a stile ahead, follow the hedge round to the left and then through the next gateway turn right and follow the hedge past a stile on the right. Go left to a ditch crossing and stile and then bear left across the hummocky field to a double stile and ditch crossing. Go straight ahead to emerge through the garden onto Clattercut Lane.

Take the footpath opposite and slightly right, cross a narrow field to a corner and carry on with the hedge on your right, go left round a corner to descend to the lane, opposite a cottage. Turn right and 200 yards past Lunnon Cottage go right at a gate and stile with the Monarch's Way Logo, after a short distance go through the gateway on the left and bear right across a field to a stile and cross Park Lane to another stile. Bear left to a stile almost opposite a large white house. Go right for 50 yards and then enter the field with a pond on the left via a gate (un-signposted at time of writing) and bear right to a gate into the churchyard of Rushock Church. Leave the churchyard by the main gate and turn right for a few yards and go right onto a track to a field, still following the Monarch's Way. The correct line is along the sunken track slightly to the right next to an old orchard and then left at the far end down to a stile. Over the stile go right and cross the field ahead, then follow the hedge on the left and cross another field to part of the Point-to-Point Course which is crossed by two stiles. Carry straight on following the waymark across another field to a track with two stiles to cross it and carry on in the next field to find another part of the Point-to-Point Course and a stile onto the A448. Cross to the opposite verge and go left to the footpath on the right between the car parks for Rowberry's Nurseries.

To use the two bus services back to Bromsgrove carry on to Chaddesley Corbel. The 134 comes through the village so you need to wait on the Bromsgrove side of the road to the village. The 33 comes direct from Kidderminster and the stop is on the Kidderminster side of the road outside the churchyard.

Chaddesley Corbett to Lydiate Ash

Take the footpath to the right of Rowberry's Nurseries, continuing as a headland path with a stream on the right. Ignore the first stile on the right and carry on round the field to the next stile on the right. Climb this stile and turn left along the side of the hedge to the track. Turn left and after approx. 100yds take a track on the right at a gap in the hedge. This field is usually cultivated and a path is normally present, although this can be very muddy. Aim for the highest of the pylons that can be seen ahead, passing through a large gap in a hedge aim just to the right of the pylon to a stile in the next hedge. Carry straight on to cross a track into another field. Go straight on ignoring footbridges on the left to a metal farm gate and kissing gate ahead where you join the Foresters Walk. Walk through a small field with hedge on your left, pass through hedge and bear to the right to cross a footbridge and on to a kissing gate to a drive. Cross the drive to the metal gate and continue past the pylon slightly uphill to a gap in the hedge, bear slightly left and continue on to the corner of the hedge in front. With the hedge on the left, go on to the gate into the woodland and through the field to the lane.

Turn left and then right alongside the house and through the fields ahead to another gate into Chaddesley Woods. Cross the footbridge and then bear left (leaving the Waymarked Route) over another footbridge into a field. Follow the hedge on the right to two wooden gates. Pass through and continue ahead with the hedge on the right and pass through the farm buildings to a wooden gate into the lane.

Turn right and follow the lane passing a footpath on the left. Continue along the road to the footpath on the left by Dordale Green Farm. Go through the gate and down to the pool. Past the pool bear right up the slope to a stile that can soon be seen in the hedge ahead. The path then bears right around the edge of the field to the waymark post on the field corner ahead and then straight on to another lane. Turn left and then in a few yards take the footpath on the right, go straight on to a gate, follow the line of the four trees on the right and a stile can soon be seen ahead which leads to another lane.

Turn right and just past the buildings rejoin the Foresters Walk at a kissing gate on the left. Follow the path ahead through three more gates to the Bridleway at the top of the slope where you turn left through the metal gate and the next one to Royal Content Farm (This is not the original house on the right), carry on along the track and cross the lane into Pepper Wood. Pass through the parking area and follow the bridleway ahead through the wood and onto the tarmac surface for 400 yards. Immediately before the houses on the left turn left up a track and pass the bungalows to a stile. Over the stile turn right and follow the hedge. After crossing the second stile bear right to a stile that leads out to the main road near the Swan Inn at Fairfield.

Turn left and when opposite the drive to Orchard Farm CAREFULLY cross the main road and go along the drive through the farm buildings bearing right to emerge into a field. (Note the footpath ahead has been officially diverted and is probably not as shown on your map) Go straight ahead down the field with the fence (and a hedge a short distance further away) on your right to a stile. Cross the stile and go right to the gate ahead. Officially the diverted footpath then follows the hedge on the right all the way round to the first stile that you would come to (I leave it to you which way you go). Over this stile follow the hedge on your left for a short distance then go through the gap in the hedge and carry on with the hedge on your right. After a short distance LOOK CAREFULLY for an overgrown gap in the hedge on your right which leads down a slope to a stile into the field. (It is there, honest, but it is easily overlooked). Over this stile turn left following the hedge to another stile and then finally out into Swan Lane. Turn left and follow the lane past Wildmoor Mill Farm and round the left hand bend. At the right hand bend ahead take the footpath straight ahead passing behind the gas pumping station to emerge onto a drive. Go right for a few yards and then left, pass between the pool and the fencing to the large house and continue on to emerge into the car park of the Wildmoor Oak.

Go right-out of the car park and taking care on the corner, go right again into Wildmoor Lane. After approx 50 yards take the footpath on the left at a gate (the signpost is hidden in the hedge), and follow the hedge and fence up the slope to the edge of the reclaimed land (This used to be a very deep hole in the ground). Go right and then left at a stile and continue along the edge, turning right at the hedge ahead. After 100 yards take the stile on the left which leads to a fenced path alongside the MS. (This can get rather overgrown and a stick will be of great benefit here). At the footbridge turn left to cross it and then right at the end to continue the battle to the stile at the end of the fenced path. Go straight down the field through the gate into the caravan site and on to Woodrow Lane. Turn left and at the bend take the footpath ahead, crossing the next stile bear right to a stile onto the A38. Go left to where a Pedestrian Refuge allows a relatively safe crossing of the road.

Lydiate Ash to Tardebigge

If you have arrived by bus from Bromsgrove, parked at the top of Woodrow Lane or are continuing from the previous section please use the Pedestrian Refuge to cross the A38

Go along the footway to cross Lydiate Ash Road towards the island and then, at the first gateway turn right to the footpath. After a short distance pass a stile on the right, going in front of the buildings to another stile. Go down the slope to another stile and then by the side of the house to a gate and a stile onto the road (The original A38 before the M5 was built). Turn left and go straight ahead to the footpath on the right along the drive to Winsell Cottage, passing through a gate at the edge of the garden. Go right over the small footbridge and follow the path through the woodland (Note the Dedication on the Stone Seat to Jack Wood erected by Ramblers' Association Members 24th October 1970) and carry on up the slope through the beech woods, pass a small pool and carry on past the farm to the lane. Turn left and then after 100 yards take the footpath on the right across two fields to a drive. Cross the drive and carry on to Monument Lane. Turn right (It is possible to cross the road and go through the hedge and follow a path for some distance before crossing back to the footway) until you come to the metal fencing around the reservoir. Immediately past the fence turn right and then bear left through the trees to the Lickey Monument. The dedication to Other (pronounced O-ther) Archer, 6th Earl of Plymouth is on the south side. Leave the clearing by the path in the southeast corner to the Old Birmingham Road. Cross and turn left to the cemetery gates and walk through the cemetery to Twatling Road. Cross and enter the woods for a few yards then turn left along tracks leading to the access road to the Visitor Centre. Turn right to the Visitor Centre for refreshments and toilets. (If you have Map220 you will now be Oil it)

Take the path down in front of the Centre and following the sign to Barnt Green carry on following the broad track (Leaving Map 219 at this point) through the woods to Cherry Hill Road. Cross to a footpath slightly to the left, which leads to Fiery Hill Road opposite Barnt Green Station. Cross and enter the station, climb the footbridge to cross the line and descend to Platform No.2 (for Bromsgrove) go to the far end of the platform and exit via a slope left to Hewell Lane. Turn left and at the bottom of the hill turn right and follow Blackwell Road for 100 yards to a fenced footpath (signposted to Cobley Hill 1 mile) on the left. Follow this into a field and up the slope to a footbridge over the M42, and then follow the broad track to the lane. Cross to Foxfield Lane opposite and proceed to the footpath to Withybed Green on the left just before Foxfield House. After the fenced section, follow the path down to a stile in the bottom right corner, then on through two kissing gates past the Crown Inn to the Birmingham and Worcester Canal at Alvechurch.

Cross the canal, descend to the tow path turn left and follow it until at the approach to Shortwood Tunnel the path leaves up a slope, turns right and left and then right and left again to a field. (There is no right of way across the field but a well worn track is usually obvious.) Having crossed the field turn left through a kissing gate and after passing through a second gate descend to the towpath and follow it until at the approach to the boatyard a track goes right to the lane. (This is just 011 the bottom right hand corner of Map 219) Turn left to pass in front of the boatyard and carry on to the T junction ahead. Turn left, go over the bridge and then immediately right following the road alongside the canal. (Passing from Map 219 to Map 204) The entrance to Tardebigge Tunnel can be seen in the cutting to the right. At the T-junction take the footpath ahead on the opposite side of the road along the edge of the field to descend to the A448 Dual Carriageway. Using the pedestrian crossing break in the central barrier CAREFULLY cross and go up the slope opposite to descend through a field to the old Redditch Road above the south portal of the tunnel.

Tardebigge to Wychbold

Descend to the canal by the side of the parapet and follow the canal towpath until you come to the reservoir on the left. As you pass the overflow from the reservoir to the canal climb the embankment and walk along the top, turning left and continuing at the high level to a stile in the hedge at the far end. Over the stile go left along a hedgerow to a gate ahead and turn right along a track towards Patchetts Farm. Follow the track past the farm on your right and carry on for about 100yds until it turns sharp right. At this point go straight on along a rough track for a few yards and then cross rough ground on the right to a small gate into a bridleway (Not shown as such on the Explorer Map) to emerge at a bend in the lane. Immediately take the footpath on the left across a field to a footbridge then bear right to cross another footbridge to a track to Copyholt Lane. Cross the lane to the steps and stile opposite then follow the hedge to the first gateway on the left. Pass through and continue with hedge on the right to another stile (Derelict at the time of writing). Pass a pool on the left and continue to another stile (a gateway a few yards left may be easier) and then continue across the field to a gateway near a stile and ditch crossing in the corner. Turn left up the slope to a stile between the hedge and a tree. Carry on up the slope to the top and then go slightly right to descend to a double stile. Cross the next field past Lower Bentley Farm and bear right to a stile at the junction of the drive and lane. Turn right and go on to the T junction.

Cross the road and take the track opposite between two hedges, when the hedge on the right ends carry on to the gateway ahead. Pass through and then bear right across the large field to a gateway in the corner (Not the footpath in the hedge on the right). Bear left up the slope to the next stile where several footpaths converge, under the power cables. Cross and follow the hedge on the left down to the lane on a corner. Turn left, and follow the lane (Not the bridleway on the left) to where the lane bends left and a footpath leaves on the right. Carry straight on through an orchard, pass into the drive to Pipers Hill Farm by a new metal gate and climb the drive to the woodland ahead. As the drive goes left past the cattle grid follow the footpath on the right inside the edge of the wood of Piper's Hill Common to the B4091. Cross to the parking area and descend following the track round passing the pond on your left and Knotts Farm on your right. Take the left hand fork in the track and further on, the right hand fork, then look out for a stile a few yards away down a narrow track on the right (This is about 200 yards from Knotts Farm), which leads to a field. Go straight ahead to a ditch crossing and then carry on to a footbridge on the left, after which, continue with hedge now on the right to a stile into a sunken track. Take the stile directly opposite and follow the hedge on your right (pass a footpath on the right) to emerge on to a lane. Go right for a few yards then take the signed footpath left into a narrow fenced section. Bear left to an awkward stile in the corner then follow the hedge on your left to cross a footbridge to another difficult stile to the canal.

Turn right and follow the canal to Astwood Bridge (Number 41). Go under the bridge and then turn right up the bank to the road, turn right and then right again at the T junction towards Stoke Works. Just past the 30mph sign take a footpath on the left to cross the main railway line at a level crossing (CARE). cross the next field on a line with the right hand of four radio masts that can be seen ahead to join another footpath at the hedge. Go left then pass through the hedge and carry on to a footbridge that crosses the railway line to Droitwich at a footbridge. Over the bridge go straight on for a few yards then go right, over a stile into an orchard, follow a line passing to the left of a tree with a white board to a stile with white markings into the drive to Sagebury Farm. Go left and then in a few yards bear right down a slope to a stile, which leads to a narrow field adjacent to a lake. Carry on and after another stile emerge into the field with a Radio Transmission Pylon ahead. Pass beneath the cables and then heading to the left of the houses ahead take a fenced path, which leads to the A38 at Wychbold.