

Roger Gosling tells his personal experience of the Walk Herefordshire project

I joined the team of the Walk Herefordshire Project in November 2013 and since then have walked the footpaths in 132 1 km grid squares submitting 25 different reports on my findings. The findings have been very varied. The following incidents are from my latest batch of grid squares around Shobdon.



A footpath does cross the western end of the runway at Shobdon airfield. (*see above*) Today the runway has been shortened presumably because the airfield is only used by light aircraft, but did the path cross the runway when larger planes used the airfield and if so did pedestrians have to run the gauntlet of planes landing and taking off?

Is a motor bike scrambling track being constructed across the line of a footpath? It looked to me as if that is the case. A caterpillar tracked bulldozer has been used to construct a track that includes what looks like jumps, that crosses the line of the footpath. Though there were no motorcycle tyre tracks on the ground should motorbikes ever race round the track how will the safety of pedestrians be assured?

Identifying the line of a path depicted on a map on the ground can be challenging and rewarding. More often than not it is a problem to determine the actual route of a path but in this batch of grid squares I came across way-marked paths that are not depicted on the OS map. This is an unusual problem and only when I approached the paths from both ends did I determine route of the paths and begin to understand what has happened on the ground.

I have also encountered a way marker post right in the middle of a lake near Kenchester (*see below.*)



I endeavour to make use of public transport to get me to and from the grid squares allocated to me to walk. This can also be a challenge. The rural bus services in Herefordshire are designed to get people from the rural communities into either the city or the market towns at the start of the day and back at the end rather than the other way round. I planned to catch the 496 bus from Eardisland departing at 15:33 to return to Leominster at the end of one walk such that I could catch the 492 service from Leominster back to Hereford. When I arrived at Kingsland I looked at the bus timetable displayed at the bus shelter and was dismayed to see that this bus was not listed. If I waited for the 495 bus at 17:02 I would miss the last bus back to Hereford. I enquired of a local, posting a letter in the adjoining letter box. She could not help me. The Community Support Officer arrived to put up a notice in the bus shelter, and whilst he had no knowledge of the bus times he did offer me a lift back to Leominster courtesy of "Blue Light Taxies" my first ride in a police car. I subsequently checked with the bus company and a 496 bus does depart Eardisland at 15:33, but only on school days. On another occasion I made use of it to get back to Leominster. It deposits a number of school children in Eardisland and transports others back to Leominster and I was pleased to be able to travel with them.

I always expect the unexpected when participating in the Walk Herefordshire Project and above all I enjoy whatever surprises I come across.

Roger I. Gosling