

# LOOPING THE LOOPS

Isobel Gibson of Leadon Vale Ramblers demonstrates three ways to enjoy the village of Bosbury

There is some excellent easy walking through the farms and orchards that surround the village of Bosbury.

The walks are taken from the book *Secret River* by Roy and Pat Palmer. This book of 14 walks, sub-titled *An exploration of the Leadon Valley*, follows the River Leadon from its source near Evesbatch, along its course through Bosbury and around Ledbury, into Gloucestershire and finally to the confluence with the River Severn just to the north-west of Gloucester. The book contains many interesting snippets of information about the river and its historical associations, including some fascinating photographs and can be purchased at local bookshops, price £6.95 (ISBN 095603128).

## THE WALKS

### All start from the main street

• **Loop 1** is about a mile long and forms an easy pre- or post-prandial stroll lasting about half an hour. From the church follow the road south westwards towards Ledbury, passing the village hall advertising the "Bosbury Barber". Cross the bridge and immediately turn right onto a footpath along the river bank. At the time of writing, the Leadon was an archetypal babbling brook but the river is known for its volatility and can become a powerful raging torrent after heavy rain. In early spring if and when the river is in a more placid mood, wild snowdrops can be seen along the banks.

• Go through the gate into an apple orchard and follow the grassy track between the trees and the river bank, although at this point the water will not be visible through the thick growth of trees and shrubs. The footpath comes to a stile; climb over and walk to the diagonally opposite corner of



The beauty of Bosbury

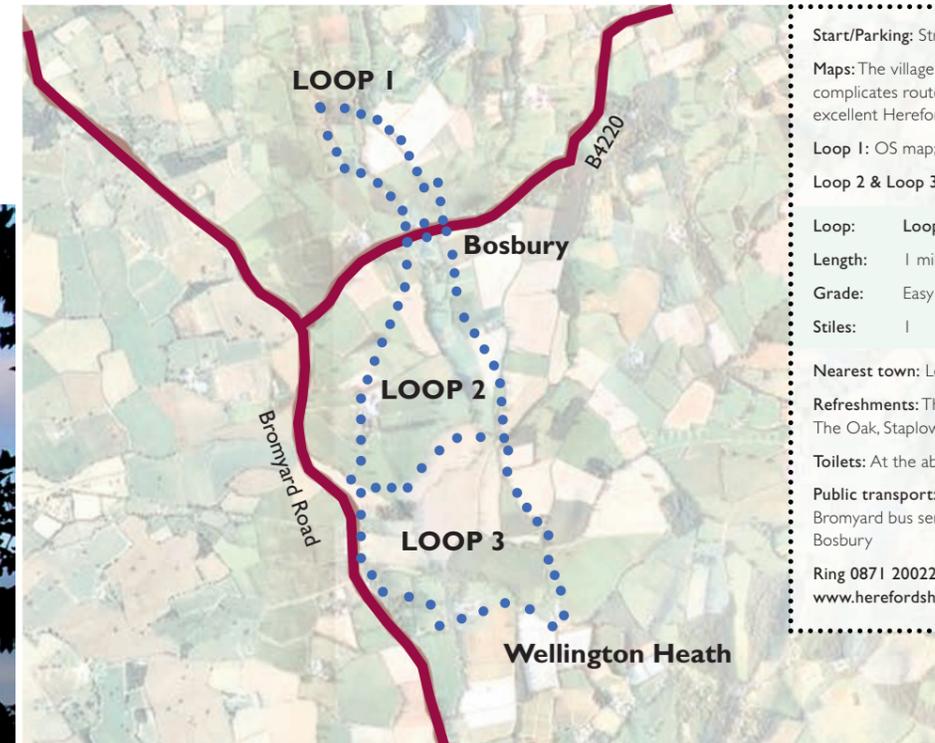
the field and pass through a metal gate onto a grassy track. The track leads to a quiet metalled road. Turn right and follow the road back to the village, crossing the river at England's Bridge. Do any readers know the origin of this name? The road also takes you past hop fields, the restored village pound with a water pump and Old Court Farm which is built on the site of the 13th Century 'palace' used by the Bishops of Hereford in their role as Lords of the Manor of Bosbury. The medieval gateway remains.

• As you come back into the village, you could pay a visit to the church, one of seven in Herefordshire with a detached tower. The Bosbury tower, built between 1230-1240, was probably constructed as a sanctuary for the local population in times of civil unrest. The pub could be your sanctuary now!

• **Loops 2 & 3** also start in the main street.

With the church behind you, go down the lane to the left of The Bell. Opposite the Severn-Trent sewerage works (discreetly hidden and no detriment to the joy of this walk), go through a gap in the hedge and turn right. Walk along the wide track between the hedge on your right and the rows of hops on your left. The ground tends to be muddy. After a few yards, the hopyard becomes an apple orchard and the path is grassy and smooth. When the overhead cables are directly above the path look for a stile in the hedge and cross into a field.

• Cross the field to a point where the telegraph pole sits in the hedge. Go over the stile and turn right into the lane. Follow the lane for about 300-400 yards until you pass a white house on the left; the gate bears a plate saying "Beware of the Cat". A few yards further on, on the right next to a pole, there is a stile into a field.



**Start/Parking:** Street Parking in Bosbury village. (GR: 695494)

**Maps:** The village is on the border of two Ordnance Survey maps which complicates route planning. It is possible to buy bespoke OS maps from the excellent Hereford Map Centre in Church Street, Hereford

**Loop 1:** OS map; Explorer 202, Leominster and Bromyard

**Loop 2 & Loop 3:** OS map; Explorer 190, Malvern Hills

Loop:	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3
<b>Length:</b>	1 mile	2½ miles	4 miles
<b>Grade:</b>	Easy	Moderate	Moderate
<b>Stiles:</b>	1	11	10 (+ 3 if cut-off path used)

**Nearest town:** Ledbury

**Refreshments:** The Bell Inn, Bosbury (01531 860468)  
The Oak, Staplow (01531 640954)

**Toilets:** At the above

**Public transport:** The 417 Ledbury to Worcester and the 673 Ledbury to Bromyard bus services both stop at the Oak in Staplow and the Bell in Bosbury

Ring 0871 2002233 for details or visit

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport/public\\_transport/38331.asp](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport/public_transport/38331.asp)

• For **Loop 2**, go over this stile and walk along with the hedge on your left; then go through a gate into another field. When I checked this walk in mid-August the path in this field was very overgrown and high on impassable but I have walked it at other times of the year without let or hindrance. If the vegetation is high and dense, I advise retracing your steps to the road and following the long loop instead. Thick undergrowth is one of the commonest footpath problems, especially in the summer. It is the landowner's responsibility to keep the path clear but problems should be reported to Herefordshire Rights of Way team on 01432 260572.

• Assuming the path is usable, turn right at the gate and follow the field edge. Eventually you will come to the River Leadon. Turn left and follow the river for a few hundred yards until you see a gate on your right. Cross the river on a wide, grassy bridge, go through the gate, and turn left so you are still following the river. When you reach the fence facing you, there is a stile a few feet from the corner. Cross, go through a narrow orchard and cross another stile into a field.

• Go diagonally right across the field and over another stile. At this point Loops 2 & 3 converge. Turn right and after a few yards head for a gate. Go through the gate and

make for the stile at the nearest corner of the orchard ahead of you. Cross the stile and head for the gate in front of you, go through this gate towards another letting on to a farm track. At this point the route is very close to a large farmhouse (on your right) and the privacy of the residents should be respected.

• Cross the farm track, enter a field and cross to a stile. There will be a pond on your left. Go over the stile and head towards the right hand end of the line of trees that follow the opposite boundary of the field. Cross another stile and head diagonally right through an orchard of young apple trees; the path is marked by gaps in the lines of trees. At the other side of the orchard there is another stile, cross this, continue diagonally right across the field to the last stile which lets on to the main road through Bosbury. Turn right and make for the village centre – and maybe the pub!

• If you are following **Loop 3** continue walking along the lane after Loop 2 goes off right into Hollow Lane. This road crosses both the old Hereford Gloucester Canal, at a section that's been converted into a fishery. Shortly past Prior's Court on the right, cross the River Leadon, here split into two channels. When the road comes to a T-

## THE RAMBLERS



The Ramblers is Britain's biggest charity working to promote walking and to improve conditions for all walkers. With 139,000 members in England, Scotland and Wales, The Ramblers has been working for walkers for 70 years. In Herefordshire we have four local groups, Hereford, Mortimer, Ross on Wye and Leadon Vale and organise about six walks a week.

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junction, turn right onto the Ledbury-Bosbury road and follow this, past The Oak inn at Staplow, over the canal again, until you get to a stile on the right. Go over the stile and rejoin the Loop 2.

• Loop 3 has the advantage of providing easy walking on lanes but there is a need to look out for traffic, particularly on the busier road past The Oak. There is a cut-off footpath (shown on the map of Loop 3, but not recently checked) which leaves Hollow Lane via a gate just after you cross the River Leadon. Follow the waymark signs through fields, and over three stiles which brings you into an orchard. Turn left, through the orchard and private garden (respecting the residents' privacy) to reach the road and turn right towards The Oak – and maybe a pub stop! ■