

WALK

Right Thirteenth century St Bartholomew's

Below Ancient Yew in Marcle churchyard



Herefordshire Trail, a 154-mile long distance walk, entirely within the county. It was devised and implemented by the Hereford Group of the Ramblers and is very popular with visitors.

The Ridge Hill TV mast is now clearly visible ahead as is, in the distance, May Hill, a much-loved landmark. Cross two fields, enjoying the views as you go and enter a third field. Just before the end of the third field you reach the highest point on the walk, 211 metres above sea level. Much Marcle is at 61 metres, so you have climbed 150 metres or 487 feet. The panorama is truly wonderful encompassing the Malverns and the Cotswold Escarpment. Pass through a gap into a fourth field and after about 50 yards go through a gap in the hedge to the right and turn left on to a clearly defined footpath. As you pass through the gap there is an equally stunning view across the beautiful rolling Herefordshire countryside to the Sugar Loaf, the Black Mountains and Hay Bluff.

5. Continue along the footpath until one of the massive concrete anchors for the TV mast guy ropes can be seen on the other side of the hedge. Go through a gap in the hedge and turn right. Gaze in awe at this 400-foot high engineering marvel and think that without it, it would be difficult to watch the football or your favourite soap. Continue gently downhill

until you cross a stile onto a track. There is a lovely view straight ahead. Turn left along the track, for about 300 yards, to reach a crossroads. Go straight on down the lane until you reach an ornamental lamppost outside Little Nuttall. Turn right here and go along the track. At the entrance to Little Puckmore take the path to the left and cross a stile into a field. Keeping the hedgerow to your left follow the field boundary around two sides of the field. On completing two sides of the field turn left in the corner cross another stile and go straight ahead with the hedge to your right. Once again there are lovely views.

After about 100 yards turn right over a stile onto a track. Go downhill along the track. Much Marcle church is now clearly visible down the hill on your left. Follow the track downhill and, ignoring a waymarker post pointing to the left, continue until the track meets a lane. Go straight across and into a field. Go approximately 45 degrees to the left to cross a field that goes down slightly then climbs gently. The path then descends gently to a stile. Cross the stile into a lane. Cross the lane and go to the right of a pair of large galvanised gates. Proceed downhill with the hedgerow on your right. Much Marcle church is now clearly visible straight ahead. Go straight ahead across the next field to cross a footbridge

into another field. Cross the field, over a plank bridge and through a gap in the hedge onto verge of the A449 road. Beware; this is a very busy road with high-speed traffic on this section.

Go straight across with great care. After crossing the road, go through a kissing gate and cross a field towards the church. Climb a final stile and go into the churchyard of the 13th century Church of St Bartholomew. The church houses one of only two wooden figures in Herefordshire, that of Walter de Helyon as well as the graves of the ancestors of John Kyrle, the "Man of Ross". In the churchyard an ancient yew tree can be found. It is estimated to be at least 1,500 years old and in its hollow trunk seats have been placed.

You have now completed the walk that includes easy flat walking, a little gentle climbing, superb views, a little historical whimsy and a good example of agricultural diversification with a superb end product, a wonderful piece of modern communications technology, a famous tree and a magnificent old church. Not bad in a mere eight miles. ■

