

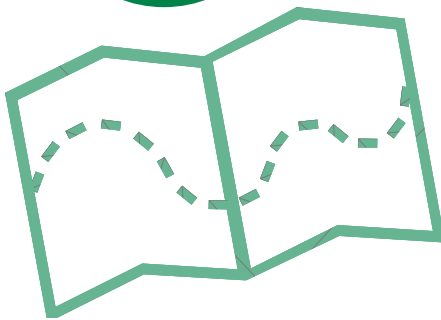
# Taking in the views from Tretawdy Farm

BY NIC HOWES

A walk with enclosed secrets and wide, far-ranging views that bring new angles on popular sites in South Herefordshire.

5 Miles

Grid Ref: SO524190  
Map:  
OS Explorer OL14  
Wye Valley &  
Forest of Dean



**Start:** Tretawdy Farm Nature Reserve car park, adjacent to Tretawdy Bungalow, Llangrove.

Exit the car park into the lane along which you arrived and walk up to the cross-tracks just beyond the bungalow; turn left up the narrow green lane. Pass Woodbine and Myrtle Cottages and turn left on a rough surfaced lane. At the next fork (**Point 1**) bear left downhill on tarmac and at the next fork bear left again, downhill on rough tarmac, signed Hazelbank, The Lookout and The Hideout. Follow the rugged green lane steeply downhill after Quarry

Cottage. Note the Devonian Brownstone rock that forms the bed of this lane; this grainy sandstone weathers to form the rich soils of much of South Herefordshire.

Ascend the green lane to a sharp right-hand bend (**Point 2**) and pause to look left over Tretawdy Farm towards Llangrove. After a short distance further along the green lane look out for two magnificent oak tree boles on the right. Further up the lane a wide opening with a gate appears on the right (**Point 3**), allowing sweeping views northwards, including Aconbury Hill. Further on, thinning of the hedge on the left begins to open up southward views to The Great Doward and Little Doward, the latter distinguished by a crown of conifer points. Pass Little Hall on the left and proceed along the tarmac lane; the view on your left now widens to include Coppett Hill to the left of the two Doward hills.

Climb the pitch to Newton Lodge and aim to pass to the left of the large beech tree (**Point 4**), following the fingerpost towards the high stone wall with the

footpath close on its right. Ascend the narrow footpath and emerge onto a track beside a cottage and go straight across that track as directed by the waymarked post opposite. Continue along the path, ignoring the waymarked stiles to left and right, and emerge onto a tarmac lane (**Point 5**) and turn left.

At this point you might consider walking a short clockwise loop along footpaths through much of the common land hereabouts, taking in the tiny St Faith's Chapel and some tantalizing views through trees and gaps in hedges towards the Black Mountains in the distant southwest. There is also an atmospheric grove of beech trees towards the end of the circuit, as you approach Point 5 again.

Continue from **Point 5** past the bus shelter (with the ruined Methodist Chapel behind it) and stay on the tarmac ahead, pausing to admire the views of the eastern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park off to your right, opposite Woodside Stables. Carry on along the tarmac lane, passing a "Monkey Puzzle" tree and Common Gate and – after the



latter group of buildings – note the newly-laid hedges either side of the lane; the slanting stakes are indicative of the Welsh style as opposed to the characteristic vertical stakes of the Midland style.

Pass Westwood Archery Centre on the right and superb views open up on your left, sweeping from the Malvern Hills to the Forest of Dean and Wye Gorge; it is possible to pick out distinctive local landforms and buildings such as Huntsham Court. The geology and geomorphology of this world famous landscape is interpreted in the Earth Heritage Trust publications referenced later.

Where the tarmac ends (Point 6) turn right along the signed bridleway. After a left-hand bend in the bridleway look north to the Woolhope Hills, with the distinctive Ridge Hill mast on their right-hand end. Continue on the bridleway to reach and then follow a signed branch at 90 degrees on your left (Point 7); there are great views of Little Doward with the Wye Gorge on its right.

Proceeding downhill, the map indicates woodland on your right but the land is now open space. When you reach a faint grass track doubling back on your right (**Point 8**) you should be alert to soon spot a cut through the hedge on your left, leading to a metal gate through which the bridleway – and you – continue. Keep the hedge line close on your right, go through a gate by a metal farm gate and continue ahead, downhill with the hedge line now on your left. Walk on via another two farm gateways to the buildings of Great Hillshone (**Point 9**), including the classroom and astronomical observatory. Follow the broken tarmac drive down to Lewstone; join the surfaced lane by abandoned tennis courts and turn left.

At the end of the barn on the left (Point 10), just before the green, turn 90 degrees left into the no through road signed for Stocklands. Proceed past this large pink house; when the surfaced lane stops in front of Stocklands, switch to the green lane ahead and descend to a footbridge crossing a tributary before meeting the bank of the Slatybrook and following this upstream. As the path climbs above the brook you will pass a ruined stone



building on your right, the remains of the remote Slatybrook Cottages, marked and named on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps well into the twentieth century.

Some way beyond the ruins the path descends to meet and cross the Slatybrook on a grass bridge to a stile. Cross the stile and aim 45 degrees left in a straight line across the slope towards a metal farm gate in a new fence, with wooden stiles either side. Once at this metal farm gate, pause and listen for the rhythmic thump of a hydraulic ram; this device uses the flow of the stream to pump water uphill to locations above. The ram is linked to the nearby pond and dam; all were marked by the OS as far back as their 1888 map.

Do not pass through the metal farm gate but turn to its right, following the new fence to reach a steep stile into a surfaced lane (**Point 13**). Ignore the stile and path opposite and turn left down the lane. At the next bend turn right off the lane through a kissing gate with a fingerpost. Follow the fence line on your right and pass below the terraced garden

of a house above on your right to arrive at a metal gate in the corner of the field (Point 14).

Go through the metal gate and cross the footbridge; ascend the footpath directly opposite, between The Draw Well and the hedge. Cross the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust signed stile and climb the slope, keeping the new fence close on your right. Leave the field via a new, HWT signed gate and ascend the path to a wooden stile with a low stone slab stile beyond. Proceed to a wooden gate, down onto a concrete drive and up to another wooden gate to pass through, turn right and access the start via a metal farm gate.

### References:

*Herefordshire's Rocks and Scenery; A Geology of the County*, Editor John Payne, Logaston, 2017

*Explore Wye Gorge; Landscape and Geology Trail*, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust, 2004  
*Explore Symonds Yat; Landscape and Geology Trail*, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust, 2001